INFORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 5 PM - CH-14

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 5:16 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber Conference Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present:  
Chair George Dunlap  
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham  
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller  
Commissioner Susan Harden  
Commissioner Mark Jerrell  
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake  
Commissioner Elaine Powell  
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell  
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda item(s) were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 19-5877 by Commissioner Leake
- 19-5880 by Commissioner Leake
- 19-5883 by Commissioner Jerrell
- 19-5891 by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake
- 19-5899 by Commissioner Leake
- 19-5900 by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake

STAFF BRIEFINGS - None

CLOSED SESSION

19-5887:  Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to Go into Closed Session to Consult with Attorney and Discuss Land Acquisition.

RECESS

The Board went into Closed Session at 5:17 p.m. and came back into Open Session at 5:49 p.m. The Informal Session recessed at 5:51 p.m. The Board then proceeded to the Meeting Chamber for the Formal Session.

FORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - MEETING CHAMBER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina met in Formal Session on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 6:01 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION - None

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

19-5892:  Public Appearance

The following speaker(s) appeared to speak during the Public Appearance portion of the
agenda on the following topics:

- Ashley Seguin - Selwyn Elementary School Parents Need Answers from CMS
- Omolola Campbell - Selwyn Elementary School Parents Need Answers from CMS
- Burr Farrar - Selwyn Elementary School Parents Need Answers from CMS

APPOINTMENTS

19-5878: Appointments

Information Services and Technology Advisory Committee

A vote was taken on the following nominees for one appointment for an unexpired term expiring February 28, 2021:

- Travis Burgess: Commissioner Cotham, Commissioner Fuller, Commissioner Leake, Commissioner Powell, and Commissioner Scarborough

- Steve Wainstead: No vote was taken since the previous nominee received a majority of votes.

Chair Dunlap announced the appointment of Travis Burgess.

19-5882: Nominations/Appointments

Air Quality Commission

The following board members were removed for not meeting attendance requirements; both have requested reinstatement to the advisory board to complete their terms expiring August 31, 2020 and August 31, 2022:

- Jeff Baker
- Aaron Levy

The Board discussed reinstating board members that have been removed for failure to adhere to established attendance requirements.

Commissioner Leake said that members should adhere to the attendance policy. If members request reinstatement, they should provide information about why they were unable to meet attendance requirements.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said that the Board entrusted the advisory boards to assist in decision-making. She said the Chair of the Air Quality Commission provided a letter recommending reinstatement of both members.

Chair Dunlap said there was nothing that precluded the members from reapplying and going through the appointment process again.

Commissioners Cotham said these members could go back and reapply if interested. If members do not show up for advisory board meetings, they cannot provide assistance to the Board. She said that the Board should establish more criteria for the requirements.

Commissioner Jerrell said the Board should not mandate more stringent requirements for a volunteer service to the community. The Board should exercise more grace to gain a better understanding of the life circumstances that could potentially happen. He said he respected the point that people can reapply and go back through the process; but the Board should look at the recommendations from those existing committees.

Commissioner Cotham said this had come up before and in prior years the Board had heard from the members as to why they failed attendance and they had been reappointed. In this instance, the Board received no explanation.
Commissioner Fuller said over the past few meetings, the Board had shown some hostility towards people that want to serve on committees. He said if the Board wanted people to perform volunteer service, the Board should encourage it. The Board should refrain from passing of judgement of people. He said the Board should look for more volunteer service from the community and the Board should exhibit a tone that is more welcoming. However, members must have some common courtesy; if a member has been removed from a board for attendance, that member should provide this Board with reasons for not adhering to established attendance requirements.

Commissioner Powell said she served on advisory boards for 19 years. She said it is a volunteer position in most cases, so the Board should exhibit grace and respect for privacy. Members may not want to share why they could not attend a meeting. She said she could understand both sides of the debate, but the Air Quality Commission members in question have already served for a number of years without any attendance problems. This is the first time they have not met attendance requirements. She said she was glad the Board was having a discussion about the value of advisory boards.

Commissioner Harden said that she hoped the members reapply if the Board decided not to reinstate them. She said there would be two additional vacancies on the Commission and urged the public to apply to serve on this commission.

Chair Dunlap said the Board had been very lenient; there had not been one person that came to the Board and provided a reason that was not reinstated. He asked the other Commissioners to be consistent, if they voted to reinstate members to this Commission, they should do so for other boards.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to deny the reinstatement of Jeff Baker and Aaron Levy to the Air Quality Commission. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Commissioner Cotham, Commissioner Dunlap, Commissioner Fuller, Commissioner Harden, Commissioner Leake and Commissioner Scarborough
No: Commissioner Jerrell, Commissioner Powell and Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell

Historic Landmarks Commission

The following board member was removed for not meeting attendance requirements; he has requested reinstatement to the advisory board to complete his term expiring July 31, 2020:

- Brian Clarke

Commission Leake spoke against reinstatement.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell spoke in favor of reinstatement.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake to deny reinstate to Brian Clarke.

Without a second, the motion was not considered.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to reinstate Brian Clark to the Historic Landmarks Commission.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Commissioner Fuller, Commissioner Jerrell, Commissioner Harden, Commissioner Powell, Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell and Commissioner Scarborough
No: Commissioner Dunlap, Commissioner Cotham and Commissioner Leake
Park and Recreation

The following board member was removed for not meeting attendance requirements; he has requested reinstatement to the advisory board to complete his term expiring June 30, 2020:

- Rufus Kearney

Commissioner Jerrell said that Mr. Kearney was at the meeting. Commissioner Jerrell said he wanted to advocate for the reinstatement of Mr. Kearney. Mr. Kearney provided a letter of explanation and the Chair of the advisory board also provided a recommendation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to reinstate Rufus Kearney to the Park and Recreation Commission.

Chair Dunlap said the Board recognized there were some issues with the process. He said he appointed an ad hoc committee that would study the issues. The following Commissioners were appointed to serve on the committee: Commissioners Cotham, Jerrell, Leake, and Rodriguez-McDowell, who would serve as Chair. It would also include the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:30 PM

19-5885:  Budget Public Hearing - FY2020-2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to open the budget public hearing for the FY2021 budget.

The following speakers addressed the Board on the following topics:

- Victoria Robinson - Meck Pre-K
- Lindsey Garner - Meck Pre-K
- James Lee - Funding for those at risk of being homeless
- Stephanie Watts - Meck Pre-K
- Mary Kelly - Establishing a Reinvestment Fund (handout is on file with Clerk’s Office)
- MaryBeth Simon - Meck Pre-K
- Felicia Perkins - Meck Pre-K
- Trinisha Dean - Meck Pre-K
- Tina Katsanos - Climate Change Education and Mitigation
- Peter Engels - Funding for parks and recreation
- Tommy Nichols - Funding for the arts
- Carmella Jarvi - Funding for the arts
- Jessica Finkel - Climate Change Mitigation
- Blanche Penn - Displacement in our Community
- Wendy Hickey - Funding for the arts
- Emily Stevens - Prosperity Village Operating Budget
- Darlene Heater - Funding for parks
- Belinda Alexander - Funding for the Arts and Science Council
- Dean Cikins - Access to Care
- Becky Schultz - Funding for arts
- Toni Tupponce - Funding for arts

Note: Robert Drakeford was registered to speak but did not appear; he did provide a handout regarding library funding that is on file with the Clerk’s Office.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS - None
MANAGER’S REPORT

19-5853: Purchase of North Carolina State Board of Elections Approved Voting Equipment

Dena Diorio, County Manager, introduced Michael Dickerson, Director of the Mecklenburg County Board of Elections, to provide a presentation on the procedure for procurement of voting systems.

The following speaker(s) addressed the Board regarding this agenda item:

- Marilyn Marks – in opposition

Commissioners made comments about the agenda item and asked questions which were addressed by staff.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Election System & Software (ES&S), a State-approved voting equipment provider, for the acquisition of 2400 ExpressVote Ballot Marking Devices and 350 DS-200 Precinct Ballot Tabulators and related equipment and maintenance of said equipment at prices guaranteed in response to the State RFP.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Commissioner Cotham, Commissioner Dunlap, Commissioner Fuller, Commissioner Jerrell, Commissioner Harden, Commissioner Leake, Commissioner Rodriguez- McDowell and Commissioner Scarborough

No: Commissioner Powell

Note: Before any election equipment can be used in North Carolina elections, it must be certified by the N.C. State Board of Elections (SBE). This ensures that voting systems remain reliable, accurate, user-friendly, accessible to persons with disabilities, and capable of secure operation. G.S. §163-165.7(a): states that only voting systems certified by the SBE in accordance with state law and the SBE certification program shall be permitted for use in elections in North Carolina.

In December 2019 the current voting machines were decertified by the state and beginning in 2020 the new voting systems must produce a paper ballot. On August 23, 2019, the State Board of Elections certified three new voting systems: Clear Ballot: ClearVote 1.4; Elections Systems & Software (ES&S): EVS 5.2.2.0 and EVS 5.2.4.0 (12/13/19); and Hart InterCivic: Verity Voting 2.2.

Under G.S.163-37 and 165.8 the Board of County Commissioners, with the approval of the County Board of Elections, may adopt and acquire only a voting system of a type, make and model certified by the State Board. A county Board of Commissioners “shall appropriate reasonable and adequate funds necessary for the legal functions of the county board of elections.”

A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS - None

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS - None

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

19-5870: Board Committees Affirmation

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) reaffirm the following Board committees for calendar year
2020: 1. Economic Development Committee; 2. Health and Human Services Committee; 3. Intergovernmental Relations Committee; 4. Performance Review Committee; 5. Audit Review Committee; 6. Environmental Stewardship Committee; and (B) receive as information, the Board Liaison Assignments as assigned by Chair Dunlap.

Note: The Board's Policy and Standard Operating Procedures for Board Committees states that at its first regular meeting in January each year, the Board will establish, reaffirm or dissolve standing committees as determined by a majority vote of the Board. The policy also states the Board Chairman will appoint members and the chairs of the standing committees for one-year terms, or until the Board reaffirms or dissolves the standing committee. The Board's Chair also appoints members of the Board to serve as liaisons to various internal and external committees. Board approval is not required.

Copies of the documents are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the following Consent items:

19-5888: Architect/Engineer Selection – Mecklenburg County Detention Centers – Modernization Project

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate fees and execute a contract with HDR for Architectural and Engineering Services for the Detention Centers Modernization Project. In the event negotiations with HDR are unsuccessful, approve negotiations with the alternate firm.

Note: An architectural firm is being selected to design the Modernization Project for Detention Center-Central (801 E. 4th Street) and Detention Center-North (5235 Spector Drive). This modernization project includes, but is not limited to, roof replacements, mechanical and plumbing systems replacements (air handlers, cooling towers, boilers, water heaters, pumps, etc.), front lobby restroom renovations, locker room renovations, finish replacement (flooring, painting, ceiling tiles), and housing pod renovations.

19-5889: Set Public Hearing - Closing a Portion of Rights-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane

(A) Set a public hearing for February 18, 2020 to hear all interested parties who appear and wish to be heard with respect to the closing of a portion of rights-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane and direct the Clerk to the Board to publish the required notice of public hearing; and, (B) adopt a resolution declaring its intent to close a portion of Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane.

Note: The current property owner, Mattamy Carolina Corporation has petitioned to close a 1.51 acre portion of the public right-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane in the unincorporated area of Mecklenburg County. The portion of said right-of-way is located through the current and future development of the Ridgewater Subdivision Phase 4. As part of the development of Phase 4, the gravel roads will be abandoned and residents currently using these roads will have ingress and egress through the new paved roads of the approved subdivision. NCDOT informed the petitioner on March 22, 2019 that the portion of rights-of-way petitioned to be closed are not State maintained.

General Statute § 153A-241 requires the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a resolution declaring its intent to close a public road in the unincorporated part of the County and call a public hearing. Attached as Exhibit A (consisting of “Map 1” and four depictions of the current rights-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane in the unincorporated area of Mecklenburg County. The portion of said right-of-way is located through the current and future development of the Ridgewater Subdivision Phase 4. As part of the development of Phase 4, the gravel roads will be abandoned and residents currently using these roads will have ingress and egress through the new paved roads of the approved subdivision. NCDOT informed the petitioner on March 22, 2019 that the portion of rights-of-way petitioned to be closed are not State maintained.

General Statute § 153A-241 requires the Board of County Commissioners to adopt a resolution declaring its intent to close a public road in the unincorporated part of the County and call a public hearing. Attached as Exhibit A (consisting of “Map 1” and four depictions of the current rights-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane in the unincorporated area of Mecklenburg County. The portion of said right-of-way is located through the current and future development of the Ridgewater Subdivision Phase 4. As part of the development of Phase 4, the gravel roads will be abandoned and residents currently using these roads will have ingress and egress through the new paved roads of the approved subdivision. NCDOT informed the petitioner on March 22, 2019 that the portion of rights-of-way petitioned to be closed are not State maintained.

Proposed improvements to Lahania Lane and Ogden Lane and replacement ROW are to be built pursuant to the Charlotte Subdivision Ordinance requirements. The Order for Closing will be recorded only after Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Planning Department approves the replacement ROW as shown on Phase 4 Map B. Once closed, the 1.51-acre portion of former the right-of-way will become vested in the adjacent parcels owed by the petitioner.

Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency has determined that in its opinion the closing of the portion of said right-of-way of a portion of Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane will not deprive any individual owning land in the vicinity of said right-of-way of reasonable ingress and egress to their property and would not be contrary to the public interest.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning and the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal’s Office reviewed the petition and have no objection to the closing of the requested portion of said right-of-way. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning also verified that the residents in the area that are currently utilizing these roads have safe ingress and egress to State maintained roads.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute Book 48-A, Document #107.

19-5890: Health Department Amended Fee Schedule

Amend the FY2020 Adopted Public Health Department Fee Schedule to add a new fee of $17.40 for the Flucelvax influenza vaccine in the Immunization Program.

Note: The Mecklenburg County Health Department offers the new egg-free flu vaccine as an option to the regular flu vaccine. This vaccine is given to clients ages 4 years and older who have an egg-allergy. The cost of the vaccine is $17.40 per dose.

19-5893: Minutes

Approve Minutes of the Budget/Public Policy Meeting held October 22, 2019 and the Regular Meeting held December 17, 2019.

19-5894: Donation - Long Creek Greenway

Accept donation of Tax Parcel 031-421-99 (+/- 0.029 acres), 031-421-97 (+/- 3.518 acres), 031-421-96 (+/- 5.663 acres), 031-421-95 (+/- 5.6 acres), 033-181-96 (+/- 7.76 acres), totaling +/- 22.57 from North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) along Long Creek for future greenway purposes.

19-5897: Tax Refunds

Approve tax refunds with interest in the amount of $49,608.44 as statutorily required to be paid, as requested by the County Assessor.

**THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT**

19-5877: Grant Application - Office on Violence Against Women (OVM) - Justice for Families 2020

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (1) approve submission of renewal grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women for the Justice for Families Program for up to $550,000 over three years to enhance operations of the Supervised Visitation Safe Exchange Center and provision of civil legal assistance for victims of domestic violence; and, (2) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the award amount to the grant fund within Community Support Services.

Note: The Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Center, which opened in November 2014, provides a secure environment for exchange or supervised visits between children and their parents when there has been domestic violence in the home. The Center, which was created via a partnership between Mecklenburg County, the 26th Judicial District, and
Safe Alliance, increases safety for adult and child victims of domestic violence while decreasing opportunities for further abuse before, during and after services. This grant will fund a court liaison position that works towards increasing the immediacy of court referrals for visitation. In addition, the grant will fund civil legal assistance in custody cases for the non-offending parent.

**19-5880: Budget Amendment – Land Use & Environmental Services Agency – Revenue Increase**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $25,000 from the State Air Quality Gasoline Tax to the General Fund (0001) within the Land Use and Environmental Services Agency.

Note: Mecklenburg County Air Quality requested to recognize additional state air quality gasoline tax revenue to be used for installation of fencing and electrical service at air monitoring sites. This funding will be specifically designated for local air quality programs.

**19-5883: Donation - Vocational Skills Funds from Lowe's of Charlotte - Sheriff's Office**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to accept the donation of a $14,000 Lowe’s gift card to the Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office in the Special Revenue Fund (8251) and authorize use of the donation to provide starter employment kits for graduating construction and electrical vocational students.

Note: Lowe’s Community Relations is working on a special project with the Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) Vocational Program to provide a $14,000 store gift card to provide starter employment kits for graduating construction and electrical vocational students in support of the Sheriff’s Office National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) construction skills program. The construction skills program provides residents the opportunity to obtain a five-year national NCCER certification once they have demonstrated competency in the nine modules associated with the curriculum. Participants must demonstrate and apply skills in basic safety, construction math, power and hand tools, construction drawings, etc. and pass each module exam before obtaining their NCCER certification. The gift card provided by Lowe’s will allow MCSO to purchase needed supplies and equipment that supports participants’ employment after graduation. The donation will be received to and spent from the Special Revenue Fund (8251).

**19-5891: Atlantic Coastal Conference (ACC) Football Official Donation**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $3,765 from the ACC to the General Fund (0001) within Park and Recreation.

Note: The Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) is a collegiate athletic conference located in the Southern United States. The ACC Football Official has made a monetary donation to Park and Recreation in the amount of $3,765 to be used for the purchase of equipment or programming to help kids within the community understand the fundamentals of football.

**19-5899: Grant Application - DSS: FY 19-20 NCDOT Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm the Certified Statement for the FY2020 Rural Operating Assistance Program in Mecklenburg County; (B) approve the application for the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) Grant for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 in Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services; and (C) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive
and appropriate an increase of $92,498 from the State to the General Fund (0001) within the Department of Social Services.

Note: Annually, the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services submits a Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) grant application. This NCDOT grant provides funding for transportation services to elderly and disabled citizens, Work First clients requiring transitional employment transportation services, and the general public living outside the urban area boundary and not in the metropolitan boundary of Mecklenburg County and does not have a human service agency or organization paying for their transportation. The Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS) of DSS’ Services for Adults Division operates this program.

The Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP) allocation was $342,265 and did not have a County match. This was an increase of $49,545 above FY20 budgeted amount. The Elderly & Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP) provides operating assistance for the public transportation of elderly and disabled citizens.

The Employment Transportation Program (ETP) allocation was $254,770 and did not have a County match. The allocation was $34,624 above the FY20 budgeted amount. The Employment Transportation Assistance Program provides operating assistance for the public transportation of persons with employment related transportation needs.

The Rural General Public Program (RGP) allocation was $54,601 with a required County match of ten percent. This was an increase of $8,329 over the FY20 budgeted amount. The County match was included in the FY20 DSS Budget. The Rural General Public (RGP) Program provides operating assistance for the public transportation of persons living in non-urban areas of Mecklenburg County.

Resolution recorded in full in Minutes Book 48-A, Document #108.

19-5900: Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) – Raise the Age Expansion Funds

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to (1) recognize, receive and appropriate FY20 NC Department of Public Safety for Raise the Age expansion State funds in the amount of $381,715 in the General Grant Fund (G001) for the Criminal Justice Services Department; and (2) approve FY20 Raise the Age expansion funding allocation plan as recommended by the Mecklenburg County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

Note: The Mecklenburg County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council received an additional $381,715 in FY20 funding from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. These funds are being allocated by the State to support programming associated with Raise the Age.

Commissioner Leake said she wanted to view the JCPC Budget.

Chair Dunlap said that he signed letters to remove five members from this board for not meeting attendance requirements.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.
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BUDGET/PUBLIC POLICY  

CALL TO ORDER  

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget Public Policy meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 2:36 p.m. in Conference Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

Present:  
Chair George Dunlap  
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham  
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller  
Commissioner Susan Harden  
Commissioner Mark Jerrell  
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake  
Commissioner Elaine Powell  
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell  
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chair Dunlap said the purpose of the meeting was to receive a presentation regarding the Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) funding options and potential tax rates. He said the public would have an opportunity to weigh in on the recommendations at budget public hearings.

Ebenezer Gujjarlapudi, P.E., Director of the Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA), said in his presentation he would review the legislative history of VFDs, the tax rate calculation, tax rates and funding history of VFDs, the contractual history, the commitment for fiscal year 2021, and service delivery options. Mr. Gujjarlapudi listed the Charlotte District VFDs:

- Carolina Volunteer Fire Department (one station)  
- Cooks Volunteer Fire Department (one station)  
- Charlotte Rural (contract with the Charlotte Fire Department)  
- Huntersville Volunteer Department  
- Long Creek Volunteer Fire Department (one station)  
- Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department  
- Robinson Volunteer Department (one station)  
- Steele Creek Volunteer Fire Department (two stations)  
- West Mecklenburg Volunteer Fire Department (two units)

Mr. Gujjarlapudi said that prior to 2012, each VFD was provided $80,000 from the general fund. In 2020, the Board adopted a resolution setting a fifteen-cent property tax rate limitation for five proposed Fire Protection Service Districts (FPSD), one of them being for extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City of Charlotte. Available revenue was calculated based on tax values of FPSDs and the tax rate. He said in FY2013 through FY2017, grant amounts were established based on requests and service areas. In FY2018 staffing requirements and contractual agreements were standardized. In FY2019, the Steele Creek VFD’s contract was adjusted to include an increase of $100,000. In FY2020, contract amounts were further adjusted to increase the hourly pay rate of firefighters and to provide capital funding to each fire station.

Mr. Gujjarlapudi reviewed the contractual requirements that were established in FY2018. The agreements stipulated the continued use of volunteers, established a minimum of two personnel to be available on a 24-hour, seven day per week basis, provided funding to compensate the two personnel, standardized equipment replacement and maintained the mandate for an annual audit. He stated in FY2020 further enhancements were implemented. Enhancements included increasing the hourly rate of pay to $15 per hour, providing $50,000 in capital funds to each station, allowing for the transfer of unused operational funds to the capital fund balance, capping capital fund balances not to exceed $1 million per VFD, and requiring capital fund expenses to be pre-approved by
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Mecklenburg County.

Mr. Gujjarlapudi reviewed the VFD funding history and trends. Mr. Gujjarlapudi said there was a need for a change to the current funding model due to the acceleration of development, the evolution of the operational model, the increase in capital needs and the need to update infrastructure. He said that Mecklenburg County’s commitment for FY2021 was to evaluate operational needs during FY2020, explore collaboration/ partnership opportunities with the Charlotte Fire Department (CFD), evaluate mutual-aid performance and explore opportunities, make recommendations as part of the FY2021 budget, and provide potential strategies for FY2022 and beyond.

Mr. Gujjarlapudi provided a summary of five options. Option number one was to remain the status quo with a third firefighter. Option number two was to grant the VFD request for FY2020 and beyond. This request included increasing staffing from two to three personnel per station, advancing the construction of one station with the addition of three personnel for Steele Creek Station 3 in the future years, and providing additional capital funding of $35,000 per station and miscellaneous expenses. Option number three was to partially transition one or two VFDs to CFD. Option number four was to partially transition more than two VFDs to CFD and option number five was a preliminary staff recommendation. Option number five recommendations included providing additional capital funding, as requested, excluding Robinson and Cooks VFDs, providing six-month funding to Robinson and Cooks VFDs with the remainder held in fund balance until discussions with the CFD were completed, holding $150,000 in capital funds requested by Steele Creek VFD for Station 3 loan until strategy is finalized in collaboration with CFD, and planning for six-months of funding for CFD transferred areas. Mr. Gujarlapudi concluded his presentation by providing a summary of options and estimated tax rates.

Comments

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the County was becoming more urban, only 5.5% of the County remains rural. She said the Fire Commission, that is inactive, could have been useful in this discussion and if revived could become a vehicle the County could use; firefighters know what is best for providing fire protection services.

Commissioner Fuller asked, absent involuntary annexations, if the County should rethink the entire structure? If the County did not transition everything to a partnership with the CFD, would the solution be a County Fire Department? Instead of adding a little money here and there, the County could look at capital needs holistically.

Commissioner Leake said that the County provides human services. She asked if the County had met with the communities to talk about this issue of increasing taxation for fire services. She said she had concerns about the community being involved.

Commissioner Powell asked if Cooks VFD was consulted, which was addressed. She said that she wanted to revive the Fire Commission and use them as an advisory body. She said she did not mind paying more for fire protection in taxes because improved fire services would drive down insurance rates.

Commissioner Scarborough said she wanted to see the option of being able to service every community and not pick certain communities.

Commissioner Cotham asked the VFD Fire Chiefs and Fire Marshal that were in the audience if they agreed with the staff recommendation in option number five.

VFD Fire Chiefs responded that they agreed with parts of the proposal but also had concerns.

Ted Panagiotopoulos, Chief Fire Marshal, said the County needed to provide more staffing to the fire stations one way or another; we all agree that the model has changed considerably.

Commissioner Cotham asked was $15 per hour sufficient pay for firefighters. She said that
the County must protect their investments and ensure the retention of firefighters.

Chair Dunlap said he used to be the Board liaison to the Fire Commission when there was one. He said the Fire Commission recommended the current tax structure. He said he was concerned that County residents would be paying more for three VFD firefighters than they would pay for CFD fire services that provide four firefighters per truck. He said he was also concerned about parity; if the County maintained the status quo there were residents in some districts that would be taxed at higher rates because they would be subsidizing other districts; this would create a system where you pay more based on where you live.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the Board should go out in the community and explain the funding model.

Chair Dunlap said he suggested that the two district representatives hold Town Hall meetings where staff could provide a presentation to residents.

Commissioner Fuller asked what was the Charlotte Fire Department’s position on consolidating provisional fire services?

Mr. Gujjarlapudi said the City already contracts with the County in some ETJs; this model would not be new, there would be additional areas. He said the CFD is reviewing data to understand if there are enough resources to provide services to the additional areas. He said the County would not transition any area to CFD if they could not provide equal or increased service to the entire proposed area.

Commissioner Cotham asked about fire prevention efforts, which was addressed by staff.

Chair Dunlap said the ultimate goal was to get our fire protection services to the same place our police protection services were, where the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department polices all of Mecklenburg County, except those that have their own districts, and the same would be for fire services.

No action was taken or required of the Board at this time.

A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
INFORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 5 PM - CH-14

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 5:11 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber Conference Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda item(s) were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 19-5884 by Commissioner Leake
- 19-5903 by Commissioner Leake
- 19-5914 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5917 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5918 by Commissioners Leake and Rodriguez-McDowell

It was the consensus of the Board to move Item 20-5918 – Joint Proclamation – Human Trafficking Awareness Month, from the Consent section of the agenda to the Awards/Recognition section of the agenda.

STAFF BRIEFINGS - None

CLOSED SESSION

19-5887: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to Go into Closed Session to Consult with Attorney and Discuss Business Location and Expansion.

RECESS

The Board went into Closed Session at 5:12 p.m. and came back into Open Session at 5:41 p.m.

Commissioner Harden left the Informal Session during the closed session at 5:25 p.m. to attend a Metropolitan Transportation Commission meeting.

RECONVENE

Dena Diorio, County Manager announced that the binder for the Annual Retreat would be available at each Commissioner’s seat at the dais.

Commissioner Leake requested that each Board committee provide a report to the entire Board.

Chair Dunlap said that if the Committee has a report, the Chair should be notified so it can be placed on the agenda.
Commissioner Leake said that there are many meetings, with various groups or municipalities, that the Chair and Vice-Chair attend and the rest of the Board should be informed of the meetings and any decisions that come out of those meetings.

Commissioner Powell said she was concerned that Cardinal was not providing the same level of service in their Mobile Crisis service.

Manager Diorio said that Cardinal has stated that no reductions in service have occurred. She said that Chair Dunlap, that sits on the Cardinal board, should raise the issue with the Cardinal board.

Commissioners Leake stated she wanted to be part of planning what items appear on the agenda when the Board meets with the CMS Board of Education.

Manager Diorio stated that the two boards want to meet every two months; any agenda items should be forwarded to her. The Chair, Vice-Chair, Board of Education Chair, Superintendent and herself can review the items when they meet.

Commissioner Jerrell said the Board needed to find a way to make accommodations, for instance, an all-day workshop, that would allow for more in-depth and robust discussion with the school board.

County Manager Diorio stated for that meeting to be successful, it would need to be scheduled on a Saturday.

Commissioner Jerrell said that some people may have misinterpreted the meeting with CMS; the Boards weren’t able to drill down into the issues that occur in the community and walk away with some action items.

Commissioner Fuller said that the Boards had a similar meeting like that in the past.

Chair Dunlap stated that there was a structure in place; that was the purpose of establishing the Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Committee; to bring issues that are cross-governmental and legislative for discussion and review.

Commissioner Jerrell, Chair of the IGR Committee, stated the first meeting the Board’s IGR Committee held with the City of Charlotte’s IGR Committee members was very successful and they came out of the meeting with action items. He said that if the Commissioners wanted to bring issues to the IGR Committee it would not be a problem.

Chair Dunlap asked if CMS had an IGR Committee.

Commissioner Jerrell said yes.

RECESS

The Informal Session recessed at 5:57 p.m. The Board then proceeded to the Meeting Chamber for the Formal Session.

FORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - MEETING CHAMBER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina met in Formal Session on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 6:07 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-5920: Zebulon B. Vance High School Football Champions

Commissioner Leake recognized Curtis A. Carroll, Principal, and read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to recognize Zebulon B. Vance High School Cougars football team and staff and adopt a proclamation declaring January 27-31 as Zebulon B. Vance High School week.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
20-5918: Joint Proclamation – Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adopt a joint proclamation declaring January 2020 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month in Mecklenburg County and City of Charlotte.

Mike Sexton, All Things Possible Ministries, was presented with the proclamation. He made comments and introduced representatives of organizations that provide programs and services that assist survivors and combat human trafficking. He said in Charlotte, in 2017, 51 illegal massage parlors were identified. He stated CMPD did not have resources to address the problem. He requested the Board place this issue on their agenda to address.

A copy of the list of the remaining 31 illegal massage parlors is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

19-5911: Public Appearance

The following speaker(s) appeared to speak during the Public Appearance portion of the agenda on the following topics:

- Karl Froelich – Fire Commission (handout on file with the Clerk to the Board)
- Jeffrey Pinnow - Preserve Park behind Olde Providence Elementary
- Richard Boner - Preserve Park behind Olde Providence Elementary

APPOINTMENTS

19-5901: Nominations/Appointments

City of Charlotte Zoning Board of Adjustment


A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to reappoint Lissette Torres.

Lissette Torres was reappointed.

Citizens’ Transit Advisory Group

One appointment for an unexpired term expiring April 30, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to appoint Jeffrey Parker.

Jeffrey Parker was appointed.

Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee


A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Debbie Bradley.

Debbie Bradley was reappointed.

Women’s Advisory Board

Two appointments for unexpired terms expiring April 30, 2021 and November 30, 2021.

This item was pulled by the Clerk to the Board and will be brought back to a future meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:30 PM - None

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

MANAGER’S REPORT - None
DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS
A copy of the monthly report is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS - None

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS - None

CONSENT ITEMS
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to approve the following Consent items:

19-5902: Ad Valorem Tax Advertisement
Order the advertisement of delinquent 2019 real estate and personal property taxes.

Note: The advertisement is a notification to taxpayers of outstanding tax balances due. As of December 20, 2019, $458,955,857.40 of the $1,090,620,870.24 net levy remained unpaid. In accordance with NCGS 105-369(a), the governing board must order the Tax Collector to advertise the tax liens. The Tax Collector is ordered not to advertise tax bills included in approved payment arrangements as governed by Senate Bill 159 ratified by the General Assembly and Governor of North Carolina. The Tax Collector will contract with the Charlotte Observer to publish the advertisement on April 5, 2020.

19-5904: Land Acquisition – Irvin’s Creek Greenway Tax Foreclosure
Authorize the County Manager to execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcels 135-365-01 (±7.19 acres) and 135-365-22 (±9.11 acres) on Irvin’s Creek for future greenway construction.

Note: Tax Parcels 135-365-01 and 135-365-22 (±16.3 acres) are located in Mint Hill between Beaver Dam Lane and Lawyers Road and owned by Bob McLemore & Co, Inc. The current property owner has not paid taxes on the properties since 1997 and the properties have gone into tax foreclosure.

On September 17, 2019, the Board authorized staff to bid up to $85,000 for both properties. The properties were auctioned for back taxes on November 19, 2019. The County submitted a total initial bid of $43,000 which was upset by a bid of $45,150 filed on November 27, 2019 during the 10-day upset bid period. On December 9, 2019 staff submitted a final upset bid of $47,407.50. The total purchase price of $47,407.50 will cover back taxes, legal fees and court costs associated with the closing. The purchase amount will come from the approved Land Account.

19-5905: Budget Amendment – Storm Water Management Fund Balance Appropriation
(A) Amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance and approve the FY2020 appropriation of $19,687,081 of fund balance from the Storm Water Management Fund (7005) for the transfer to the Storm Water Capital Reserve Fund (8910) to finance future Storm Water Capital Projects; and, (B) Appropriate fund balance in the amount of $33,106 from Storm Water Multi-Year Fund (MY07) for the transfer to the Storm Water Capital Reserve Fund (8910) to finance future Storm Water Capital Projects.

Note: The Storm Water Capital Reserve Fund (8910) was established to provide monies to fund the Storm Water Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Annually, approximately $6.4M in Storm Water revenue is transferred to the Storm Water Capital Reserve Fund since Storm Water CIP is 100% PayGo funded. In addition, over the past several years Storm Water revenues exceeded expenses and that has created a Fund Balance of $19,687,081. Lastly, a Multi-Year Fund (MY07) was established in the past and the projects within that Fund have been closed out. There is a need to transfer both the funds in Fund Balance ($19,687,081) and the Multi-Year Fund ($33,106) to Storm Water Capital Reserve Fund (8910) to allow flexibility in the Storm Water CIP.

19-5906: Tax Refunds
Approve tax refunds in the amount of $5,935.96, as statutorily required to be paid, as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve tax refunds resulting from clerical errors,
audits and other amendments, including revaluation appeals. There is an estimated accrued interest of $29.77 included in the $5,935.96 refunds.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

19-5907: Minutes

Approve the Minutes of the Regular meeting held January 7, 2020.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

19-5884: Budget Amendment – DSS (Revenue Increase)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the 2019-2020 Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in revenue of $71,000 from the USDA to the General Fund (0001) within the Department of Social Services.

Note: Annual collections of revenues from the USDA support the increase in revenue and expenses for the senior nutrition program. The current congregate meals budget in DSS Services for Adults - Senior Nutrition Division supports an average of 515 meals per day and current meal orders are running at 582 per day with a projected increase to 575 meals per day. The budget increase will purchase an additional 13,000 meals.

The congregate program authorized under Title III C-1 of the Older Americans Act, provides meals and related nutrition services in a group setting to people 60 years and older, their spouses regardless of age, and to people under age 60 with disabilities who reside with and accompany eligible people to meal sites. The purpose of the program is to keep older Americans healthy, reduce hunger and food insecurity, delay the onset of medical conditions and prevent the need for costly medical interventions. In addition to serving healthy meals, the program presents opportunities for social engagement, information on healthy aging, physical activity and meaningful volunteer roles, all of which contribute to an older individual’s overall health and well-being.

19-5903: Revenue Increase – Charlotte Air Awareness Grant

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate a $15,000 increase in funding in the General Grant Fund G001 from the North Carolina Department of Environment Quality (NCDEQ), Division of Air Quality, for administration of the “Charlotte Air Awareness Program”.

Note: The action would increase grant money from the State of North Carolina by $15,000 to pay the cost of the “Charlotte Air Awareness Program”. The grant was extended by six months from March 31, 2020 to September 30, 2020 and the budget increase would be necessary to pay 100% of the costs associated with performing the work outlined in the scope of work during the additional six-month period.

The Charlotte Air Awareness Program partners with the community to improve local air quality by providing outreach and education to residents, businesses and schools on topics including health impacts of air pollution and voluntary pollution-reduction strategies. Mecklenburg County’s Air Quality division administers this multi-county program in the Charlotte region on behalf of the NCDEQ Division of Air Quality.

19-5914: Grant Application - WBTV Grant for Urban Outdoor Connections Camp - Park and Recreation

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application to WBTV for a Summer Camp Grant of up to $20,000 for Urban Outdoor Connections Camp scholarships; and, (B) if awarded, amend the budget ordinance to recognize and receive the award amount to the General Fund (0001) within the Park and Recreation Department.

Note: The WBTV Summer Camp Fund awards grants to summer camps to provide scholarships to low-income children grades K-12. Grants must be used to expand the opportunities available to low-income campers. This grant will allow Park and Recreation staff to provide up to 29 100% scholarships to low-income children for four weeks of nature-based summer camp.
Commissioner Leake asked when people turn guns into the Sheriff’s Office, what happens to them?

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said the law does not allow them to destroy the guns, but they can resell them. She said her understanding was that CMPD has not resold any guns and have amassed a large stockpile of weapons because the law does not allow them to destroy the weapons that they take into their custody. CMPD does not want to sell the weapons because they do not want to put the weapons back on the street.

Chair Dunlap said he was glad Commissioner Leake raised the question and said the issue should be placed on the Board’s legislative agenda.

Manager Diorio said staff would do so.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application to the North Carolina Governor’s Crime Commission for Patrol Rifles up to $24,500 for replacement of law enforcement equipment; and, (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the awarded funds to the General Grants (G001)

Note: This grant application meets one of the NC Department of Public Safety Governor’s Crime Commission’s funding priorities: Fiscal Year 2020 Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). The maximum grant award is $24,500 (minimum $10,000) for a one-year period and is intended for law enforcement equipment only. There is no requirement for matching funds. The Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) will submit this grant to procure approximately 35 Smith & Wesson M&P 15 Sport II Patrol Rifles plus additional fittings with a preliminary estimate of $700 each for a total of $24,500. The rifles will be a new addition to patrol field operations as part of the plan to move from the use of shotguns, which have limited accuracy and to provide a more rapid response during an incident. The grant application is due January 31, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.
SPECIAL MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Special Meeting, a Joint Meeting with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 2:04 p.m. in the Conference Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Elyse Dashew and Chair George Dunlap and presiding.

Present:

Mecklenburg County
Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough
County Manager Dena Diorio

Board of Education
Chair Elyse Dashew
Thelma Byers-Bailey
Rhonda Cheek
Jennifer De La Jara
Dr. Ruby M. Jones
Margaret Marshall
Lenora Sanders Shipp
Carol Sawyer
Sean Strain
Superintendent Earnest Winston

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dashew and Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Scarborough arrived at 2:10 p.m.

2. IT SECURITY PROJECT

Earnest Winston, Superintendent for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), provided an update on the badge-based crisis alert security system that was installed at CMS high schools. He said the technology was provided by an Atlanta based company named Centegix. He said when the system went live CMS discovered the system did not work well and there were other problems. He said CMS staff had been working with Centegix staff to fix short-comings but they had not been able to resolve the issues. He said more than $1 million had been invested into the security system. He said funds had been provided by Mecklenburg County. He said that CMS had multiple security protocols in place before Centegix; this system would have added an additional layer of security.

Mr. Winston said he spoke to the Centegix CEO and told him CMS was frustrated that they did not get the product for which they paid. He said that Centegix was given a deadline of February 10, 2020 to deliver what had been promised. He said if the company did not meet the deadline, CMS would go in a different direction and exercise a provision in the contract to recoup the funds that had already been used to pay for the project.

Mr. Winston responded to questions and comments from the County Commissioners.
3. COMMUNITY AND STUDENT HEALTH

Dr. Cotrane Penn, Executive Director of Student Wellness and Academic Support, discussed increasing social, emotional, and health support in CMS schools. She provided an overview of staffing and student-to-school counselor ratios, student-to-school social worker ratios, and student-to-school psychologist ratios and the impact on students. She said Mecklenburg County had provided funding to increase staffing and the ratios had declined. The recommended ratio for school counselors was 1:250; in CMS schools in FY2018 the ratio was 1:392, in FY2019 the ratio was 1:363, and in FY2020 the ratio was 1:332. The recommended ratio for school social workers was 1:250; in CMS schools in FY2018 the ratio was 1:2957, in FY2019 the ratio was 1:2302, and in FY2020 the ratio was 1:1614. The recommended ratio for school psychologists was 1:700; in CMS schools, in 2018 the ratio was 1:2105, in FY2019 the ratio was 1:1797, and in FY2020, the ratio was 1:1597. Dr. Penn said that there still was a need to increase staffing to meet recommended ratios. She said CMS needed to hire 146 additional school counselors, 497 school social workers, and 118 school psychologists.

Dr. Penn said increased staffing of school social workers resulted in increased referrals for support; increased numbers of school psychologists increased school-level support services and exceptional children's evaluation services. She said that CMS had shifted from the guidance counselor model to a school counselor model that was focused on social emotional, academic, and college and career support; they focused on direct services for all students.

Dr. Penn said there was a need to reduce ratios and increase availability of counselors, social workers, and psychologists in all schools. This goal was been sought by obtaining financial support from Mecklenburg County and acquiring NC legislative support, HB75 provided an additional 25 positions. She said there was a need to raise school counselor skillsets and improve practices. She said CMS was engaged in the American School Counselor Association National Model training series (Title IV funded), adopted of Naviance college and career readiness training and system (district funded) and making available a wide range of evidence-based intervention professional development (Title IV and district funded). Finally, she said there was a need to promote and support the impact of comprehensive school counseling programs on achievement and behavior; to achieve this the District had an emphasis on data driven student services program and use of annual school-wide counseling program plans with behavior, attendance, and/or academic outcome goals.

Gibbie Harris, Mecklenburg County Public Health Director, discussed how the Mecklenburg County School Health Program addressed the health needs of CMS students. She said there was a nurse position for every CMS school; however, the national recommended student-to-nurse ratio was 1:750, in CMS the ratio averaged 1:900. She said school nurses had experienced significant increases in children with complex health needs and chronic health issues. She said there were more children that were on medications or required procedures performed by a nurse or required counseling and suicide assessment. Ms. Harris listed health program data from FY2019 which included 358,341 health room visits, 104,222 counseling sessions, 103,518 parental/guardian contacts, 74,191 health conditions, 62,471 plans of care, and 3,225 multidisciplinary conferences.

Ms. Harris said there were opportunities for nurses to pursue continued education with a focus on health and well-being; including, youth mental health first aid, CMS suicide assessment protocol training, youth tobacco trends, Section 504 for school nurses, Special Education 101, ACES training, case management for school nurses, Reconnect for Resilience training, Bridges out of Poverty, CMS August Learning Symposium, and mental health and wellness for LGBTQ students. She said the County and CMS found opportunities to collaborate, including the Charlotte Resilience Project, the County Mental Health Task Force, ReCAST and NC School Safety grants, DSS-Behavior Health and CMS school-based mental health and substance abuse programs, and DSS-Youth and Family Services and CMS-DSS liaisons.

Dr. Penn and Ms. Harris responded to comments and questions from the County
4. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Tameika Leslie, Mecklenburg County, Early Childhood Education Project Manager, said early childhood education is important because it leads to stronger families, healthy communities, economic development and upward mobility. She said the County had a six-year plan to provide universal public Pre-K to a target of 80% of four-year old children in Mecklenburg County by 2024. She said MECK Pre-K was created to supplement existing CMS Pre-K (Bright Beginnings) and NC Pre-K programs; it would address the unmet needs of children eligible for but unserved by NC Pre-K. The new program would create capacity with local funding, provide a community solution by partnering with high-quality community-based child care providers, prepare children for school readiness, and enable parent to work and/or seek educational opportunities.

Ms. Leslie provided an overview of MECK Pre-K. She said there were 37 participating four- and five-star licensed community-based child care centers. To qualify, the family income must be greater than or equal to 300% of the federal poverty level. She said the registration process included parents completing and application and providing proof of family income; followed by a developmental screening assessment. Placement was based on a combination of family preference and provider capacity.

Melody Greenhouse, CMS Director, Pre-K Programs, provided an overview of CMS Bright Beginnings. She said classrooms are located within 53 elementary schools. The registration process includes parents completing an application and providing proof of birth and residency. To qualify, a developmental screening assessment is completed, students are rank in order of academic need, and enrollment is offered to those with the greatest needs first. She also provided an overview of NC Pre-K. She said there were classrooms located within four- and five-star community-based centers and CMS classrooms. The registration process consisted of parents completing an application and providing proof of family income; a developmental screening was also required. She said to qualify a family whose gross income must be at or below 75% of the State Median Income (SMI). She said placement was based on a combination of family preferences and provider capacity. She said when looking at the combined three programs, there was currently a capacity to serve 66.4% of eligible children.

Ms. Greenhouse discussed the Pre-K program collaboration. She said CMS Administrative Leadership and Pre-K Program Leadership were represented on the County’s ECE Executive Committee. There were regular calls and meetings to discuss program successes, challenges and financials. She said there was a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with CMS to create PowerSchool IDs for MECK pre-K students to enable long-term evaluation. The programs shared data for children that were on the waitlist or deemed ineligible. There was coordinated mapping of all Pre-K locations and discussions about future expansion. The collaboration ensured parity in curriculum, child assessments, teacher standards and program evaluation criteria and professional development. In addition, they participated in NC Pre-K Committee meetings and there was collaboration between directors’ meetings for cross-program professional development.

Ms. Greenhouse discussed next steps. She said they were working to identify future collaboration opportunities including, introducing a universal application for all programs, universal screening and placement, universal marketing for enrollment, and blended classrooms and funding.

County Commissioners and the Board of Education discussed the presentation. Ms. Leslie and Ms. Greenhouse responded to questions and comments about the programs.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
5. CLOSING REMARKS AND NEXT STEPS

Chair Dunlap thanked his colleagues for participating. He said he heard some concerns about the agenda for the meeting; if there were suggestions for an agenda item, it should be submitted to the County Manager or Superintendent.

Chair Dashew said she learned a lot and had a lot of information to share with her constituents.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 3:44 p.m.

________________________________           ______________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk                                      George Dunlap, Chair
RETREAT – DAY 1

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. in the Harris Conference Center of Central Piedmont Community College with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Commissioner Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent Until Noted: Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent: Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

SECTION I: CONFERENCE PURPOSE & AGENDA OVERVIEW

Welcome

Kandi Deitemeyer, Central Piedmont Community College President, gave introductory remarks.

County Manager’s Introduction

The Chair recognized County Manager Dena Diorio who welcomed everyone to the 2020 Annual Board Retreat and gave the Board an overview of the goals and expectations for the board retreat. She then introduced Michael Bryant, Management & Budget Director.

Agenda Overview & Binder Materials

Michael Bryant, Management & Budget Director gave a review of the agenda for the board retreat and reviewed the binder materials and introduced Dr. Monica Allen.

SECTION II: 2020 COMMUNITY PULSE REPORT

Dr. Monica Allen, Strategic Planning & Evaluation Director, presented the 2020 Community Pulse Report.

Population

- Although the population rate is still raising, it has slowed down from a 2% to 1.7% since 2018. Wake County is currently projecting to be the largest County in North Carolina.
- Charlotte is currently ranked 6th for young adults and 11th for Senior Citizens Nationally for migration.
- In primary language, English is still the most spoken language with Spanish and Asian languages following.
Education

- Mecklenburg County is doing well in education when compared to the North Carolina and the United States in a whole percentage. Mecklenburg County excelled in the percentage of those who have bachelor’s and Graduate degrees in Mecklenburg County.

Income

- Although the population rate is growing, so has the poverty rate.
- The cost of living is increase in Mecklenburg County is something to keep watch of when it comes to affordability challenges that we are currently monitoring.

Housing

When prices in the market increase faster than wages and inflation, several things happen:
- Gentrification starts to occur.
- When it becomes difficult for wealth people to find a house they want, they will purchase down: renovate, teardown or build a new home.

Health

- Cancer and Heart Disease ranks highest when it comes to leading causes of death for all Race/Ethnicities in Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Leake stated that she kept hearing Ms. Allen state that education improves living conditions for people. She stated the quality of education is most important. When you stated the number of students that’s coming from CMS going into CPCC having to take remedial courses bothers her, that meant someone is failing to provide quality education for the neediest in this community. If we share this information or compare it with the City of Charlotte information on these same topics, if they would be similar or different?

Dr. Allen stated they can reach out to the City to see if there is some comparison.

Commissioner Harden stated that giving they are in the eleventh year of the longest economic boom Mecklenburg County has ever had, that they need to be aware that the High School graduates are losing ground in a period of extreme economic prosperity.

Commissioner Harden asked for explanation of the slides (27 & 28) pertaining to Housing: Neighborhoods with growing poverty concentrations exceed gentrifying ones. She wants to understand the gentrification and where it’s happening better.

Dr. Allen stated that the green areas are the economic expanding areas with overall growth. These areas are where there are significant new housing construction and where residents across the overall income spectrum are arriving. It does not specific means there a huge gentrification increase in that area.

Commissioner Harden stated that it was different than what she thought. She thought uptown was becoming less income diverse. In your reports, it saying there is income diversity in uptown.

Dr. Allen stated that the report is showing that the different neighborhood with incomes profiles are improving while the low-income population is increasing. Not all incomes are improving, there are some challenges where you see low incomes individuals in that area that’s not positively being affected.

Commissioner Harden stated that the results from the report surprises her because she was under the impression that the low-income individuals where being moved from uptown.
Dr. Allen stated the net effect of what’s occurring with inside of Highway 277 is more on the income is improving because there are a large amount of people moving in the housing options that are there. There are some individuals that are within that area that are being affected. It's just not to the extent of what's in the blue area.

Commissioner Cotham stated she had some questions regarding the housing shortage for starter homes. She has attended several presentations on economics through the perspective of development and real estate and I was wondering how much you interact with other groups to present these results because I hear them say that during the recession, interest prices went down, and a lot of homeowners refinanced their homes. So, there were a lot of older residents who have very low interest rates and they are not leaving their homes. Also, she heard from developers that the banks don’t want to loan money like they did years ago. Then from the County perspective, the developers tell her that they want to have inspectors dedicated to affordable housing to speed up the process and not have to wait. Also, if they had a reduction in fees and regulatory compliance that would help the developers. So, my question is, as you get to the results of the report, do you ever interact with other groups to see what their point of view is on the results?

Dr. Allen we have not. Our results were all internal, but she sees there is a great need for this information. They have attended different events or engaged in presentation from a listening standpoint, but not shared their information with anyone.

Commissioner Jerrell stated that in regard to slide 15 (Education: Graduation Rates and Remediation), he is currently on a task force where their focus is on disconnected youth. Youth that are not engaged, educationally or in the workforce; 59% that refers to that needed remediation is really concerning. Do you have any information, based on that number, how many students continue to matriculate through CPCC? Do we know what that dropout looks like?

Dr. Allen stated they do not have that information but can reach out to CPCC to obtain it. They do know that it’s about 2,100 students that are enrolling to CPCC from CMS system. It has been very difficult to get this data, because it’s not typically information most people would like to share.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he would like to see what the fall through ratio would be. That would perpetuate that underclass that they are seeing in the disconnecting youth. Also do we have any idea from our colleagues from CMS why close to 60% of the students that go to CPCC would need remediation in one or two classes?

Commissioner Jerrell asked if the individual earning data could be broken down by race and gender.

Ms. Allen responded that she would look into that.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if the data of more diversity among income around areas where they did not suspect it could be due to certain people have not been displaced yet.

Ms. Allen responded it could be, but it was data for four years but only went up to 2016. She said the University had not produced anything to show if they were eating into a greater percentage of those individuals in terms of displacement and what their income looked like. She said that was the best way they thought to show what was occurring as it related to the overarching story around gentrification and replacement but that they did not have the latest data. She stated the information was based on census tracts.

Ms. Harden requested maps by district.

Ms. Allen stated they would get that created for them.

Commissioner Scarborough arrived at 9:08 p.m.
Chair Dunlap requested to know if the companies had incentivized was paying a living wage.

Ms. Allen responded that she would bring back that data.

Chair Dunlap requested data on home ownership versus home rentals in the areas that were becoming increasingly gentrified.

Ms. Allen stated they just produced their 2022 Corporate Strategic Business Plan, and a lot of the things in the plan reflected the Board priorities

SECTION III: FY2020 OPERATING BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Board received a presentation by Management & Budget Director Michael Bryant, highlighting the investments approved in the adopted FY2020 operating budget, including funding aligned to their five budget priorities.

Revenue Neutral Calculation

Management & Budget Director Michael Bryant described the calculations used to figure out the FY 2020 Adopted Property Tax Rate of 61.69 cents.

*A short video was played.

FY2020 Adopted Budget Overview

Management & Budget Director Michael Bryant explained the FY2020 adopted budget Revenue and Appropriation changes.

FY2015-FY2020 Efficiency Savings & Repurposed Funds

Management & Budget Director Michael Bryant explained how County Manager Diorio Repurposed County dollars to benefit Mecklenburg County priority goals.

He said that each year a diligent effort would be set forth to identify savings that could be repurposed to offset the need for additional funds. He said the approach resulted in repurposing $14 million in the FY20 adopted budget, with the savings having included department operational savings that would have no negative impact on services and the replacement of county dollar funds from the debt service and pay-as-you-go funds with an appropriation from fund balance in the amount of $12.1 million. He said that Ms. Diorio had identified $73.4 million in efficiency savings and funds repurposed to support expenses that would require additional funding. He said those savings were an equivalent of 4 cents of the FY20 value of a penny.

Board of County Commissioners FY2020 Budget Priorities

Management & Budget Director Michael Bryant explained the Board of County Commissioners FY2020 Budget Priorities, which are the following:

- Reduce Racial Disparities - $6,012,400.00 (9%)
- Early Childhood Education - $21,112,000.00 (32%)
- Affordable Housing - $15,180,700.00 (23%)
- Mental Health Support - $6,823,600.00 (11%)
- Parks & Greenways - $15,913,900.00 (25%)
More Pieces to the Puzzle

County Manager Diorio considered other factors while developing her recommendation. These factors include:

- Community Priorities
- Department Strategic Business Plans
- Public Education & Community College
- Internal Support Departments
- Environmental Services (air, water, land)
- Health & Human Services
- Public Safety
- Technology

He said major investments that were recommended by the Manager and supported by the Board, and are an addition to the $65 million in new funding to support the budget priorities,

- 1.8 million for new IT positions, security focused hardware and software upgrades
- $1 million to fund new positions to inspect pools and restaurants
- $554,000 to enhance security at our parks, libraries, and government facilities
- $250,000 for facility maintenance
- $925,000 maintenance and medical services increases and 3 positions for community engagement efforts
- $400,000 for alternatives to placement in facilities for individuals who desired to live independently
- $312,000 to increase the kinship provider payments
- $153,000 in additional funding to support the Home Bound Delivery Meal program
- $115,000 to support the increased demand for home delivered meals for the aging population.

Mr. Bryant stated 11 new customer service grant percipients were approved in the 2020 budget. He said there was also funding set aside to pay a 5.5% pay increase for all employees.

Fund Balance Appropriation

Mr. Bryant stated the two slides were a summary of the appropriation of fund balance and the total amount $79.4 million dollars to support non-recurring expenses. He stated that $21.6 million was pursuant to the fund-balance policy and would fund technology, fleet, and capital maintenance needs. He said the remaining $58 million would support non-support operating expenses, such as $9.9 million for a primary election, as well as voting machines that would meet state requirements. He said that $8 million would be for other post-employment benefits, $5 million for CMS facility maintenance, $4.9 million for park maintenance and one-time operating expenses, $3.2 million for the establishment of a small-business revolving fund, $3 million for an ERP system for public schools, $2.5 million signing bonuses for the MCSO to assist in recruitment of hard to fill and retain detention and sworn-officer positions, and $13 million for affordable housing, which would include $11 million for rental subsidy programming. He said that $6.4 million in PayGo was repurposed to the affordable-housing, subsidy program and a million for the revaluation to support the shift to a four-year cycle. He reviewed the other expenses supported by fund balance.

Mr. Bryant stated there was a $37 million increase in fund-balance appropriation, which would net to $24.2 million after eliminating the $12.9 million appropriation for state certification and CMS employee pay. He said the 39% increase supported the guiding principles to spend down excessive fund balance.
Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools would receive additional:

- $41.6 million in Operating Funds.
- $5 million for facility maintenance
- $3 million for an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System

Totaling: $49.6 million for Operating and Maintenance

Central Piedmont Community College would receive an additional:

- $1.1 million to support their operating expenses this FY2020.

Mecklenburg County’s Investment in Education and Literacy

Mr. Bryant stated the slides summarizes the County’s total investment in Education and Literacy categorized in the funding for CMS, CPCC and public library which includes:

- Arts and Science Council
- Read Charlotte
- The County’s investment in maintaining one school health nurse per school
- Child Care Subsidy Program
- Investment to make universal Pre-K to all 4-year old’s

Total: $661 million dollars

Mr. Bryant stated that the County’s FY20 investment in education and literacy, which included operating, enterprise reserve funding, and one-time fund balance and the deferred maintenance plan funding was $661 million. He said that was a $72 million increase or 10.4% increase above FY19. He said if you added CMS and CPCC debt service payment, it would account for 52% of the $1.4 billion County-funded portion of the adopted budget funds education and literacy.

Chair Dunlap reminded the Board that it did not have to be a priority to be funded, since a number of people had talked to him about some new concerns for the year.

Commissioner Leake stated she had the lowest performing schools in the district with the least number of trained teachers and administrators to impact the quality of education of the children in Mecklenburg County. She stated what she was seeing was that the County was providing the funds and she was not sure the equity process was in place for quality education for the children. She stated there should be no question about what they do and how they do in serving the community with funds for CPCC and CMS. She asked how they would say to the legislator to provide some means of accountability in Raleigh for them to have to continue to perpetuate funding with failure. She asked if the school system was providing a means to perpetuate poverty with poor people and not providing what the law said it had to do by the report from the courts with quality education. She said they had two office sites and did not need two sites so why was the County paying for it. She asked why they were paying $10,000 per teacher for a program that the County does not reap the benefits nor do the children.

Board Budget Priority: Early Childhood Education

Mr. Bryant said that of the $65 million in new investments, as of the second quarter, $21.1 million had been spent as of mid-January. The Board received a presentation highlighting the status of investments in the adopted FY2020 operating budget that are aligned to early childhood education.

*A short video was shown.
Tameika Leslie, Sr. Assistant to the County Manager presented details on the importance of early childhood education.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Five Point Plan:

1. Clear the childcare subsidy waiting list for children under age 5.
2. Adopt a six-year phase-in for voluntary, universal public pre-K for all 4-year old children.
3. Implement ECE workforce talent development and retention strategies to meet ECE workforce needs.
4. Develop a strong evaluation component tied to ECE investment.
5. Consider a revenue source for an ECE expansion, tied to evaluation for accountability and continuous quality improvement.

Point 1 – Childcare Subsidy: Update

From the $20 million allocated in FY20; As of Jan 2020,
- 1,905 families with children ages birth to five were enrolled in County-funded childcare subsidy from the $20 million allocated in FY20.
- 587 children from birth to five who have applied for childcare subsidy remain unserved but are scheduled for intake; 64% decrease in children 0-5 on waitlist since June 2019.
- 95% of children served are enrolled in 4 and 5-star (higher rated) licensed childcare programs.

Point 2 – Universal Pre-K: Update

- Year 1: (FY19) Serving families who were in the 220% Family Poverty Level (FPL) 600 children were funded, and 33 Pre-K classrooms opened
- Year 2: (FY20) Serving families who were in the 300% FPL, 1,242 children were funded, and 69 Pre-K classrooms opened
- Year 3: (FY21) Prediction of serving families in the 400% FPL, 1,890 children will be funded, and 105 more Pre-K classrooms will be open.
- Year 4-6: (FY22-24) 4,950 children will be funded by year 6, and 275 Pre-K classrooms will be open by Year 6

Point 3- Talent Development: Update

- $6.2 million dollars committed over five years from philanthropic and private sector funders
- Funding provides tuition, books and materials, transportation and childcare assistance support for early education students at CPCC and UNCC
- Scholarship recipients will be prioritized for teaching positions within MECK Pre-K
- Funding requires 3-year service commitment upon degree completion and job offer
- Working with JSCU to identify ECE program and scholarship opportunities

Point 4- Evaluation

Updates

- External evaluation of program equality
- Internal evaluation of program efficacy
- MECK Pre-K child data management system
- Public results dashboard

Timeline

- June 2019: Executed multi-year evaluation contract with UNV – Child Development Institute
- Aug/Sept 2019: Data review and collection and finalized details for Year 1 and MECK Pre-K evaluation approaches for subsequent years.
December 2019: UNC evaluation approach presentation to the ECE Executive Committee
April 2020: Year 1 UNC’s MECK Pre-K Program Evaluation Report expected

Point 5- MECK Pre-K Funding

Key Research Questions - Program Implementation:
- What are the Key characteristics of MECK Pre-K?
- What is the quality of MECK Pre-K classrooms?
- What factors are associated with better quality?
- Child Outcomes
  - What are the outcomes of children attending MECK Pre-K and what factors are associated with better outcomes?
  - What subgroups of children (e.g., DLLs) or areas of instruction show differential impacts (e.g., languages immersion)?
  - What child outcomes will we see over time? (Child outcomes through 5th grade)
- Proposed Expansion Budget for MECK Pre-K.

Ms. Leslie and Mr. Bryant answered Commissioners’ clarifying questions.

Commissioner Harden asked if they were allocating enough money towards mental health.

Mr. Bryant responded that the bulk of that investment was tied to CMS.

RECESS
The meeting was recessed at 10:21 a.m.

RECONVENE
The meeting was reconvened at 10:29 a.m.

Board Budget Priority: Affordable Housing

Lashonda Hart, Senior Assistant to the County Manager presented the details on the Board budget priorities as it related to affordable housing.

Affordable Housing
- Mecklenburg County is playing an internal and external role in funding and providing services for affordable housing and rapid rehousing.

Supportive Housing
- Community Support Services (CSS) Homeless Services Division connects people who have experienced chronic homelessness to permanent supportive housing in several programs. Serving over 554 people in FY 2019.

Habitat for Humanity
- Received over $1 million dollars from the County for FY19.
- Our towns Habitat and Habitat Charlotte will be merging at the end of February.

Eviction Prevention Assistance
- Legal Aid of North Carolina Received a contract for $809,000.00
- Approximately 30,000 evictions are filed in the County courts each year.
Legal Aid of North Carolina provide eviction prevention assistance, legal advice, and representation to low-income tenants to avoid evictions, get repairs of unsafe and unhealthy conditions and preserve federal housing subsidies. In the 2nd Quarter if FY20, they have aided over 600 tenants.

Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, Inc.

- Received a contract for $408,000.00
- Provide a wide arrange of civil legal assistance to eligible low-income persons in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area through a variety of legal advocate strategies including individual advice, representation, community education and outreach, representation of groups, self-help remedies, collaboration with other agencies, community economic development, legislative and administrative advocacy and impact litigation.
- Rental Subsidy Fund

Lake Arbor

- United way led Lake Arbor response team, that included over 10 nonprofit agencies, in helping over 80 families.
- With new information, 87 households have been helped, and 3 more with future move in dates.
- Resolve the immediate housing crisis and help residents and homelessness where possible.
- Mecklenburg County Criminal Justice Services (CJS)
- Mecklenburg County CJS received an additional funding amount of $95,000.00 to expand reentry services housing program to the other CJS divisions; Forensic Evaluations, Pre-trial services, and recovery courts. The additional funding has assisted 37 clients through December 2019.
- Re-entry services currently have four contracted property owners for housing for 14 houses; additionally, one property manager, one property management pending in procurement and another will move into procurement next week.

MeckHome

- The Foundation for the Carolinas will receive $5.8 million from January 2020 to June 2025 to provide rapid rehousing, rental subsidy and supportive services to families, youth and individuals who are homeless and earn less than 30% AMI.
- The agency consists of Salvation Army Center of Hope, Urban Ministry Center, Men’s Shelter, and the Relatives.

LinkHousing

- Contract consist of $2 million with the Charlotte Center for Urban Ministry through June 2022 to provide rental subsidy assistance to household experiencing homelessness and moving to housing stability.

Keeping Families Together (MeckKFT)

- Contract consist of $2.5 million with Supportive Housing Communities. The FY20 contract was fully executed and two families were identified.

Housing for Good (H4G)

- A rapid rehousing program for families fleeing domestic violence.

Commissioner Leake stated she had received a complaint over the years of not employing black contractors. She said this was a concern in the community and one of her budget requests was to provide refurbishing homes for senior citizens. She asked to view a report.
Ms. Hart referred Commissioner Leake to the dashboard for that information.

Commissioner Leake inquired on how many homes had been done thus far.

Ms. Hart responded that Habitat of Charlotte’s contract goal was 25 and they had completed 16. She stated that Habitat Our Towns had not completed any, and Habitat of Mathews had completed one out of five.

Commissioner Leake requested for Ms. Hart to include how much money had been provided for Habitat for Humanity for the work they had done to the County.

Ms. Diorio stated thus far the County had paid them $90,000 for the projects they had completed. She said that a lot of the projects were internal, not necessarily external. Commissioner Leake expressed her dissatisfaction with Habitat for Humanity and its work across the district from not using black contractors.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell was wanting to know if Ms. Hart believed that they would be able to spend the full million before end of year.

Ms. Hart stated she was informed they would be beyond what their contract goal was before the time it would end, which would be in June 30, 2020. Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if they would come close to the million that was allocated.

Ms. Diorio said there is a lag, start-up time, and invoices which would continue to come in as the work would be completed.

Chair Dunlap said in terms of Habitat for Humanities, he hoped they would notify commissioners when working in their district. He stated to date there had been four projects in district one, 20 in district two, 18 in district three, two in district four, one in district five, and three in district six. He said there was one in progress and 30 upcoming.

**Board Budget Priority: Parks and Greenways**

Lee Jones, Park and Recreation Director said they would talk about their operational budget update, masterplan update known as Meck Playbook, capital improvement program, capital reserve and deferred maintenance programs, and an update on the land acquisition process. He presented the details on the Board budget priorities as it related to Park and Recreation.

Mr. Jones said in terms of staffing, that 24 of the 58 positions had been filled and 14 of the 58 were funded for six months and related to a lot of the openings to the new facilities they had coming online. He said that included Eastway Recreation Center and Steven’s Creek Nature Preserve and Nature Center. He said the funding for mowing and tree removal was being used as intended. He said there were three properties that were worked on and completed in terms of invasive species. He said they would be utilizing all funds for the initiative by the end of the fourth quarter.

Mr. Jones said in terms of their senior programing, for their senior trips and other senior activities came out of their $15,000 for trips for the seniors. He informed the Board of their senior discount program which allowed seniors to qualify for five, five-dollar coupons, and through the process they could take classes or go on trips and do fitness activities. He stated there was a good turnout with that, as last year, 445 seniors received the coupons.

Mr. Jones said for the masterplan update that they were very excited about Meck Playbook and did an online survey and will continue for the community engagement process. He said their goal was reaching at least 800 residents. He said as it related to the process itself, they had completed the first two phases. He said the first was known as discover and the second was known as assess. He said they had three public meetings
since last November and have three scheduled for March. Mr. Jones reviewed their marketing efforts.

Mr. Jones said for the capital improvement program, it was key initiatives that were taken on. He said Eastway Recreation Center was 60% complete; the Northern Regional Recreation Center was almost complete, and they hope to have it open in summer of FY22. He said that the completion date for Marion Diehl and Sugar Creek renovations was scheduled for May 2020. He reviewed the accelerated greenway plan and stated there would be a total of 308 miles; by FY23 he stated they would have completed 98 miles of greenway.

Mr. Jones said the capital reserve was $3.875 million included 19 projects, which were equally distributed through Mecklenburg County and included upgrades for parks, field lighting, outdoor fitness equipment, and restrooms that were added to four parks. He said the deferred maintenance program of $4.5 million, there was over 30 projects underway, including 16 tennis courts, 11 playgrounds including surface replacement, 3 restroom renovations, and trail repairs, athletic field fencing and dugouts, and upgrading water services. Ms. Jones said for land acquisitions, they pretty much stand with their methodology as designed to identify gap areas and trying to expand to add where they could where needed. He stated that of the 59 parcels, eight of them were identified to have potential benefits for future park facilities. He said that they were upgrading their Park and Recreation Commission on a regular basis with their land acquisition activities at the minimum of quietly. He said for land acquired from July to December of last year was approximately 160 acres and 20 acres for greenways. He stated out of $16.9 million they had about $1.9 million that they had influx for additional properties for greenways in their other facilities.

Board Budget Priority: Mental Health Support

Michael Bryant, Budget/Management Director presented the details on the Board budget priorities as it related to Mental Health Support and CMS Student Supportive Services. Mr. Bryant stated that 82% of the investment of the $5.6 million funds CMS Student Supportive Services with 55 new positions. He said in terms of students to position, there was progress made over the last three years; however, there was a significant ground to be covered in all areas. He said CMS would need approximately 500 additional supportive support positions to achieve the national recommended ratio. He said the contracts had been finalized, and payments had been made to the therapeutic foster care vendors. He said the County had received a $400,000 grant to provide services for Raise the Age Youth, so the $340,000 would be used to support the escalating foster care and therapeutic foster placements for children in custody. He said other investments in this priority includes the creation of two social worker positions, one which had already been filled.

Board Budget Priority: Reduce Racial Disparities

Michael Bryant, Budget/Management Director presented the details on the Board budget priorities as it related to Reducing Racial Disparities. He said that over 50% of the investment supported local small businesses, at $3.3 million, and $460,000 supported the mobile library. He said $400,000 supported the 2020 census project, and the campaign was on track. He said that $50,000 supported an assessment on the County’s MWSBE program. He said that $147,000 supported the Sheriff’s Community Engagement Team and that two of the three new positions were filled. He said that one of the community engagement positions were not a good fit, said the Sheriff. He said that $250,000 was for a MWSBE Program Assessment. He said that the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program, supported by the $125,000 investment was well underway.

Mr. Bryant said there was a little over $300,000 in investments in public health and HIV and STI Communications and Marketing assessments, prep expansion and immunization. He said the HIV awareness campaigns were being created. She said the
prep expansion was underway and 100% of the immunization funds had been spent to provide Hepatitis A vaccinations.

Appendix

Mr. Bryant they mainly touched on the larger investments and a status of the other investments could be found in the appendix. He said there was a total of 77 individual investments that supported the five budget priorities. He said of the 77, six were in set up; 56 were underway, and four were pending or on hold. He said that 10 were completed, and one had been canceled.

Mr. Bryant answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Harden said for the status report of the parks and greenways, as it related to the capital reserve, if you look at the total spent to date, only six percent had been spent. She asked why that was.

Mr. Bryant responded that out of the $3.8 million, there was $222,000 spent. He said if you look at the second quarter update for the item, all 19 projects were currently in one of three stages, either design, planning, or under construction. He said that would have an impact on how much money was being spent and the projects were underway. He said it was very likely the expense would care over into what they would call FY21 but still associated to the projects identified for FY19.

Mr. Lee said their goal was to try to get them completed by the end of the calendar year.

Mr. Harden asked if they would complete them by the end of the calendar year. Mr. Lee responded yes that they were on point to be able to do that.

Chair Dunlap stated as a reminder that when they fund projects, if they were not completed when encumbered, it means they were set aside so they do not go into fund balance and could still pay for the completion of the project. He said the project would still be funded throughout whatever it was they agreed to fund.

Mr. Lee said it takes about three months to get them up and going and get them coordinated with finance.

Chair Dunlap spoke about the issue with veteran suicide prevention, stating that when the Secretary was there recently, that was one of the things they highlighted, because there was a rise in suicide among veterans. He said that was one thing he hoped they would highlight when they have the Benefits’ Action Center. He said that was something they hoped to do for the entire community.

RECESS

The meeting was recessed at 11:24 a.m.

RECONVENE

The meeting was reconvened at 11:40 a.m.

Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses

Michael Bryant, Management and Budget Director, said this was an opportunity for each Commissioner who submitted a topic of interest to provide additional commentary, ask any questions regarding the responses that were provided. He also stated this would be the Boards’ time to ask questions of Mr. Jones if they had any. The Board would discuss the written responses to the topics of interest.
Arts, Education, and the Environment

i. Chairman Dunlap - Would like for the ASC to provide an update on its future funding needs.
ii. Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell - What is the plan of action following the failure of the ¼ cent sales tax option?
iii. Commissioner Harden: Consider expanding Studio 345 funding and create an arts district. What will happen if workplace giving for the ASC goes to zero? Is it likely some cultural organizations will close? What do peer counties of our size allocate to public funding of arts & culture? What do the CRBA & CRVA predict will happen when workplace giving goes away? Will the business sector do more? Are there counties that pair or couple arts sector funding with sports funding? With transit funding? Are there creative funding mechanisms for the arts sector?

Response: The Board would receive an update from Jeep Bryant, President of the Arts & Science Council, at the February 11th Public Policy Workshop.

Commissioner Harden - Provide a status update on teacher assistants, field trips, and music program. How might the County expand our commitments in these areas?

Response: As of January 10th, the State had not adopted a final budget for FY2020. Consistent with CMS’ practice in prior years, the Board of Education (BOE) has not adopted a final budget given the significance of the state funding and impact the state decisions can have on our overall budget. Nevertheless, recent state actions on some salary increases as well as “micro” budgets that have been approved to date made it necessary for us to recommend funding approval for several budget items, which were approved by the Board of Education in November.

Mountain Island Lake Marine Commission

Commissioner Powell requested for staff identify estimated funding needed to support the Mt. Island Marine Commission if there was a decision to reestablish it.

Response: The last year that it was funded was in 2014 to the amount of $23,000, and in the FY20 budget, Lake Norman Marine Commission and Like Wylie Marine Commission were funded at $31,000, at $25,000 respectively. If it was reinstated, the funding would be expected to be similar to the other commissions.

Commissioner Powell asked that it be included in the budget, because she believed it to be important.

Ms. Dena reminded the Board that this would be part of their meeting with Gaston County on March 11, 2020.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Science Education

Commissioner Powell asked for a summary of funding in the operating budget dedicated to science education.

Response: $5.3 million in County funding for science education was in Park & Recreation and the Public Library operating budgets. This excluded County funding provided to CMS & the ASC that funded Science programs.
Commissioner Powell stated she was disturbed that Arts & Science funding did not include science enough. She requested a better breakdown of the funding with the dollars spent in the Arts and Science Council.

Mr. Bryant stated they would be briefed from them in April.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Workforce Development Partnerships in Healthcare

Mr. Bryant stated the first question was for Small Business from Commissioner Jerrell who wanted to know what could be done for more support. He stated that he would be briefed on the item later in the day.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he would wait for that information.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Small Business

Commissioners Powell and Jerrell asked what could be done to provide more support to small businesses.

Response: An update would be provided at the Board retreat.

Transit

Commissioner Harden wanted to know what they should know about transit to prepare them for understanding the funding model. She anticipated the Board would be asked to support a special sales tax to support transit.

Response: CATS Director John Lewis would present the 2032 Transit Plan to the Board at the February 11th Public Policy Workshop.

Workforce Development Partnerships and Healthcare

Commissioner Jerrell wanted to explore the possibility of establishing partnerships with the two major health-care organizations to provide workforce development and employment opportunities.

Commissioner Jerrell said it gave him a sense of scale, he would like to understand and/or see was that out of the 14,000 who had been served through NC Works, where were they in terms of economic mobility and living wages. He also requested a breakdown of job types.

Response: Refer to the written response for details regarding the County’s workforce strategy.

Commissioner Cotham requested a timeline of organizational changes.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Emergency Shelters

Commissioners Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell requested a summary of the decision process and criteria for opening the shelters.

Response: Refer to the written response for details regarding the criteria for opening the shelters and other relevant information.
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“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Restroom for Homeless in Uptown

Commissioner Cotham said when she traveled to other cities, she saw dignity for homeless people. She spoke about models that other cities have. She requested that staff explore restroom options for the homeless population.

Response: Refer to the written response to learn more about the restroom options available for this population, in addition to how other communities are responding to this problem.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Safe Parking Program for the Homeless

Commissioner Jerrell requested the exploration of the implementation of a safe parking program for the homeless. He said there was good opportunity for public/private partnerships. He stated there were a lot of people in the community who needed a safe space.

Commissioner Cotham said that over the years there have been a lot of people in cars at the Women’s Shelter and Crisis Assistance. She stated that CMPD had issues and wanted those associations to hire security. She stated they should think about security with this.

Ms. Diorio responded that they would look at both issues more closely, particularly on the restroom piece around zoning with bathrooms.

Response: Refer to the written response.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Human Capital

Commissioner Powell stated she kept hearing there was a need.

Commissioner Cotham spoke on the need for more just to focus on affordable housing.

Ms. Diorio said this had been a topic that has been with Building Development for some time, we are waiting for a recommendation

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Environmental and Energy Sustainability Officer

Commissioners Powell, Harden, and Rodriguez-McDowell requested an Environment Energy Manager for overseeing energy audits and lead sustainability efforts.

Response: Refer to the written response.

Commissioner Powell requested they accessed the need for adding more COVID-19 enforcement positions to facilitate engineering judgements. She stated she kept hearing there was a need.

Commissioner Cotham added the need for someone who specialized in affordable housing to focus on it to help reduce the cost.
Ms. Diorio stated that was a topic with the Building Development Commission for some time, and the County was waiting for them to come back to making a recommendation to staff.

Commissioner Powell believed this was one of the most important things they could do as it was their job as elected leaders to protect natural resources. She said while they had an excellent staff in LUESA and Asset and Facility Management, they needed more and better. She said the position would be very important to her and to the County to have someone who was an Environment Energy Manager focused on intergovernmental coordination with CMS, Towns, City, and neighboring counties.

Chair Dunlap said it was their job to identify areas of concern and interest, not their job to create positions to do that. He asked if staff could address the concerns in other ways, why that would not be a viable option. He stated that everything had implications on what would likely be a tight budget.

Commissioner Powell said they needed someone who was dedicated to environmental plans, to coordinating them, to managing goals, to reports and tracking. She stated they needed momentum, and the collective impact of working together and someone coordinate this could make a difference. She did not see how they could solve that with their current infrastructure.

Commissioner Harden wanted to elevate Commissioner Powell’s comments. She stated that in District 5, climate change was a priority.

Chair Dunlap stated they agreed and that they would let staff do the research on how to solve that.

Commissioner Cotham stated that if Commissioner Powell was open to input on her experience on the Board with different issues. She appreciated her passion, but that community data did not show this as one of the top ones. She believed they needed to do more education on the topic.

Commissioner Powell said clean air and clean water mattered to everybody.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Livable Meck

Commissioner Powell requested the need be explored for increasing staffing levels to enhance community engagement. She said when she was in Huntersville yesterday, they were discussing how important it was to them, and she wanted to be sure they had the resources to give it what it needed. She wanted to expand community engagement and do the education.

Response: It was a normal practice that department heads evaluate their resource needs and discuss it with the Executive Team.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Livable Wage

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell requested a design of a multi-phase plan towards a livable wage.

Response: Refer to the written response that makes reference to the County’s efforts to modernize our classification and compensation structure across all position classes.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.
Greenway Master Plan

Commissioners Jerrell and Rodríguez-McDowell asked for an explanation on the plan for funding land acquisition needs as determined by the new master plan. Be certain to include community engagement in east Charlotte to validate needs.

Response: Refer to the written response.

Commission Jerrell asked for an update on the greenway master plan and asked for the connection in east Charlotte to be highlighted.

Response: Refer to the written response.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Land Acquisition

Commissioners Powell and Jerrell asked for an update on all land purchases.

Response: Refer to the written response that provided an update on all land acquisitions.

Mr. Bryant said it was an opportunity for the Board to ask Lee Jones any Park and Rec questions.

Chair Dunlap asked in terms of land acquisition if they were moving at a rate to expend those funds by the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Leslie stated they had $1.9 million and that they had no land identified. She stated they try to keep $1 million available at any given time for greenway since they had to get easements and things like that. She stated you would never want to have that balance at zero, because you are always doing things for greenways as the projects were moving forward. She stated there was $6.5M allocated each year in the budget for land acquisition. He said that $6.5 million would be put back into the FY21 budget, and there would be a continual ability to purchase.

Chair Dunlap said that in order to accelerate greenway expansion, he said he thought they were told there was sufficient funds to purchase the land. He asked what was sought was some acknowledgement that the amount of money allotted would allow for them to increase the rate of acquisition for those parcels.

Ms. Diorio responded that when they put out the greenway acceleration plan, the plans were selected, because they already had that land, and that it was two separate things, and the acceleration was already allotted and would not interfere with future land acquisition. She stated that it was already taken care of and accounted for, so they would not have any issues around land acquisition as it related to the acceleration of the greenway projects.

Commissioner Jerrell stated it was a really important topic. He said it could be perceived as a “want” rather than “need” and that it was needed in District 4 with the density of people. He asked if they could really meet the 308 miles for greenway build out.

Mr. Jones said he thought they could and that the 308 miles plans was a living goal. He stated that number could increase. He said Mecklenburg County was 504 square miles, and they had 22,000 acres. He said they may need to buy easement instead of just fee simple.

Commissioner Jerrell asked Mr. Jones if he felt like down the road, they would run out of land to reach the 308 miles goal.
Mr. Jones responded that he did not think so. He said they knew what it would take to achieve connectivity.

Commissioner Jerrell asked with Eastland coming online if they were drilling down on that for 5 to 6-mile radius, understanding the density issues on eastside Mr. Jones density increasing everywhere, particularly in those areas. They were looking at their current standards of number of greenways per 1,000 and looking at the National P&R Association and what they have identified. He said they were working with a developer that was building up the site.

Chair Dunlap that they were all aware that CMS brought to them at least two parcels they wanted to purchase. He said I thought that it could be spent from bond dollars. He asked if there were insularly parcels connected that may help increase the footprint. He said they knew for example there was a question about libraries at Prosperity Village.

Ms. Diorio stated they were always trying to be opportunistic and spoke with Mark Hahn about an area they were interested in development and told him to look at adjoining parcel, because she believed it would add value to a development they were thinking about. She said from the library perspective, they needed Library Master Plan… for acquisition of land for libraries. She said they were in some discussions with one of the westside currently.

Commissioner Cotham asked when they were buying land in advance if they bought land in flood plain that was not going to be developed.

Ms. Diorio for open space or passive recreation if anything but not to build on. She said they wouldn’t intentionally buy land in the flood plain.

Commissioner Cotham was concern that the want would not be developed, and the money would be tied up in that in the event they had another recession and still had to pay for land. She believed it to be more prudent to buy it when the need is there instead of in advance.

Mark Hahn, Assets and Facility Maintenance Director said if there was something that was identified as part of a Greenway Master Plan and land was developed, they may pursue it. He said that often times with the flood way the land would not be developable anyway, and by ordinance, the private sector could not develop on it, so it would kind of be safe to not go after it right away since it would be there in the future.

Commissioner Powell stated this was a top priority since they were approaching build out in Mecklenburg County and there was not much land left. She said it would be the smart thing to do to acquire the land that would need. She said they were seeing increases of chronic disease in high poverty areas, and people don’t have access to parks for exercise. She said it was so much bigger than just a park, that it was health and wellness and preventing chronic disease, public health, clean air and water, social equity, protecting our natural resources. She said there was so much that would go into a piece of land that we protect. She stated there were needs everywhere in the County.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Grants for Non-Profit Organizations

Commissioner Jerrell asked to consider restructuring the current funding framework that has a balance of being fiscally responsible and good stewards of tax funds so that the “boots on the ground” grassroots organizations could receive grants in the amounts of $20,000 to $25,000.

Response: Refer to the written response.

Commissioner Jerrell said they had so many grassroots organizations in the community which were doing a tremendous amount of work with limited funds and they had other organizations that go to the Board all of the time and ask for millions or hundreds of
thousands of dollars and anytime it is someone grassroots that can get the Board into communities which were typically under represented, although they make their best efforts, they could not help them for a lot of different reasons. He said there were financial constraints around that, and he understood the United Way piece but would like for them to have a real hands-on approach to supporting the groups that need a hand up. He stated they were not asking for a handout, just a hand up. Will be making a motion to fund organizations in the future

Chair Dunlap stated that he been meeting with a number of those groups for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities and what they had identified were barriers which kept them from being appropriately funded or that kept them from being able to do the worked they wanted to do. He stated that one of the barriers were an organization doesn’t have resources to do an audit. He said do you really want to do an audit on an organization that wants $15,000 when an audit may cost $5,000 or $6,000.

Ms. Diorio responded that the United Way was working with small, grass roots organizations within the community to help with capacity building, technology and other things which they needed in order to move them to the next level. She said they already had an infrastructure in place to work with the small organizations. Her recommendation was to create the money for the United Way and to let them run the organizations through their program as they already have an infrastructure in place to work with these small organizations. She stated they need to be careful of pre-identifying organizations as while there was an upside, there were also unintended consequences to that, and if they have criteria, they could lay that out for United Way for them to vet organizations and run them through their process and to make organizations compete for the funds.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he just wanted money to get there and that there was an ancillary benefit for them.

Commissioner Harden stated she liked the idea of the United Way approach.

Chair Dunlap said he did not think they would be opposed.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Dismantling Systemic & Institutional Structures Contributing to Inequity and Racism

Commissioner Jerrell would follow up with definitive “asks” for staff.” He said this fit into their framework of current priorities in reducing racial disparities. He believed all of their decisions should have a lense when it came to not contributing to the systemic structures that were causing and perpetuating poverty and current racism in society and that impact. He said while there was not a specific budgetary ask, he asked his colleagues as they make requests, they keep this as part of our focus.

Commissioner Powell felt sometimes when they have sub-contractors which come in at the lowest bid and were paying their employees the lowest, possible wage and over working them and not having enough employees to meet the requirements, that they were perpetuating it. She stated before they sign a sub-contractor agreement, they need to really know who they were dealing with and how they treat their employees.

Mr. Bryant stated that was also highlighted by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell’s topic of interest regarding livable wages.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Racial Disparities

Commissioner Harden asked for an update on their strategies to eliminate racial disparities.
Response: An update on the County’s strategy to address racial disparities would be provided at the March 10th Public Policy Workshop.

**Gentrification**

Commissioner Jerrell wanted to explore the feasibility of participation in the City of Charlotte’s Aging-in-Place program or designing a program of their own.

Response: Refer to written response.

**Property Tax Relief for Seniors**

Commissioner Harden asked how they could provide more tax relief for seniors. She said she believed they needed to start looking at alternatives to tax relief for seniors so they could stay in North Carolina, especially in Mecklenburg and Wake County, from the pressure on local communities as it related to providing services to support the growth and making sure our communities stay affordable for the seniors.

Response: Refer to the written response, which included a reference to a recent blog posted by the UNC School of Government regarding this topic.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**Advisory Boards**

Commissioner Powell wanted a framework designed that would enhance the engagement of the Board’s advisory committees. She said she thought it was really important to seek information from the advisory boards and when they went to a class at the UNC School of Government, they were talking about how they could do that better. She said the infrastructure was in place for a reason and that they really shouldn’t be making decisions without their input and community input. She said they needed to do a better job at listening to our advisory boards and that in the future, if decisions come to them, they should be asking what the Boards and Commissions say about it.

Response: Refer to the written response prepared by the Clerk which included a reference to a report that summarizes an Advisory Board engagement project completed by the City of Raleigh.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell wanted to update the rest of the Board that the ad hoc committee looking at the advisory boards and the process for applications to Boards were meeting Friday for the first time.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**Domestic Advisory Board**

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated that the Domestic Advisory Board had identified affordable housing as their priority. She would like for it to be factored as part of the recommended budget.

Response: Refer to the written response that highlights several initiatives that respond to this need.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.
Behavioral Health

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell requested a community-wide assessment to be completed which would identify the gaps in providing mental health services to the residents.

Response: Refer to the written response.

Ms. Diorio stated there would be a presentation to the Board February 18, 2020.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Child Fatality Prevention & Protection Team Prevention Plan

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked that the Manager consider funding UNC Charlotte’s plan that would prevent child facilities, such as teen suicide or deaths resulting from unsafe sleeping practices.

Response: This item would be factored during the budget cycle.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Family Justice Center

Commissioner Powell and Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell requested an update on the Family Justice Center.

Response: This matter was brought before the Board at the December 10th Public Policy Workshop. Refer to the written response for more details.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Gun Violence

Commissioners Harden and Rodriguez-McDowell wanted to fund efforts and strategies to reduce gun violence that were within the County’s scope.

Response: Refer to the written response.

Mr. Bryant stated there would be a presentation on this topic tomorrow morning.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Human Trafficking

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell wanted to increase efforts to eliminate human trafficking as they approached the Republican National Convention. She stated this was a big concern.

Response: Refer to the written response which lists several organizations in the area that combat human trafficking.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Magistrate

Commissioner Harden requested an update on adding a magistrate to the Northern part of the County. She asked what the County’s funding relationship with the Manager’s Office was, including facility maintenance.
Response: Refer to the written response.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Homicides
Commissioner Cotham asked what the County could do with reducing the homicide rate.
Mr. Bryant stated there would be a presentation on this topic tomorrow morning.

Volunteer Fire Department
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked for an overview of the Board’s responsibilities for fire protection services in the ETJ and how it was funded.
Response: This matter was brought before the Board at the January 14th Public Policy Workshop.
Chair Dunlap said because it was an election year, the staff could only provide so many workshops for commissioners. He said there was a question around this issue regarding the Volunteer Fire Department, and it was suggested that because he suggested it, that it be a county function as oppose being charged to either one of the commissioners in the district where the meeting would be held. He asked if they could allow staff to do the presentation and it not be a presentation to one of the districts.
Ms. Diorio responded that was fine.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Senior Services
Commissioner Leake requested to know how much was available in the housing fund for the renovation of senior homes and if it would be increased the next fiscal year.
Response: Refer to the written response which included a status update on the current senior home renovation project.
Commissioner Leake stated that she met with her seniors at the Health Committee meeting and many of them wrote down their requests. She said that would provide support for them but yet they needed to know how much they needed to have.
Ms. Diorio said it would be her expectation that they would add funds to the Critical Home Repair project and that they would take information they gathered from seniors and funnel them through the project.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Senior Nutrition Food Box Delivery
Commissioner Harden requested to expand the senior nutrition food box delivery program.
Response: Refer to the written response which summarizes a partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina.
Commissioner Harden said it was a strategic effort she was working on in her district in terms of the Pine Valley neighborhood. She said there were seniors who were not able
to access the program, and in this case, seniors have to go down to Second Harvest and pick up a 40-pound box of food and get it back to where they were. She said that isn’t working for many people. She said the boxes were there, and it was just getting them out to people that need them. She believed where they could stand in the gap was where they could facilitate that so more seniors could have access to the food, as they really did need it.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Food Deserts

Commissioners Powell, Leake, Jerrell asked what steps the County could take to increase health food options and what the County could do to eliminate food deserts.

Response: This matter would be brought before the Board during the retreat.

Commissioner Leake stated she was worried about the perception that she saw yesterday of a big long truck from Harris Teeter saying that they would deliver fresh fruits to different neighborhoods. She said that’s not what she was talking about. She was talking about the mini marts; that could enhance the process. That should not be the process. No one talked about it when they were putting the sites around in the City when they closed down many food markets on the westside. She said they talk about equity but have a body of businesspeople who deny the right to have those items available to them to live a healthy life. She said she was pushing it to not be a market on wheels but markets in the desert with fresh fruit, not canned goods.

Commissioner Scarborough wanted to ask some of the ministers of the churches also.

Chair Dunlap asked if they could get someone to respond to what role the county can play on facilitating a discussion with those market providers to see if there is an incentive that we can offer to have them locate in the food desert.

Ms. Diorio responded that there were a lot of people interested that have talked to all the major companies in the area who were in the business and so far there was no incentive that they are interested to locate mini markets or other things in food desserts, which was why they exist. We’ve done a lot of research about what other places were doing across the Country, and it was a lot of the things you would hear about tomorrow. One community in Florida opened their own supermarket; if that’s where the board wanted to go, that’s the conversation they would need to have. She said they needed to look at other ways to help those suffering from food insecurity.

Commissioner Leake said that should say a lot to us as it related to a segment of businesspeople.

Chair Dunlap said they would continue the discussion tomorrow.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Park & Recreation Fees

Commissioner Harden inquired about the impact of the fees that Park & Recreation would waive for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Response: Refer to the written response which highlights the Park & Recreation department’s scholarship program.

Commissioner Harden stated they had very low fees, but they would like a process for being able to put forward hardship cases, and if they could make sure they had a process for hardship cases, that would be great.
Chair Dunlap said part of one of the things that these people had asked for was a differentiation between groups that lease facilities and have organized teams where there was money generated versus groups that make themselves available to the public at no cost. What they were asking was that there should be a distinction between the fees that one group pays versus the other group.

Commissioner Leake stated she was talking about fees as an individual not in a group.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**Public Library Deserts**

Commissioners Harden and Jerrell inquired about the plan to respond to the growing need for library services is throughout the County.

Response: Refer to the written response which highlighted the Public Library’s short and long-term strategies for expanding access to library services.

Ms. Diorio said they were going to put money in the budget to develop the Master Plan in order for there to be a road map to determine where to put libraries.

Commissioner Leake asked if they would get an evaluation.

Ms. Diorio states yes, they get updates, and the library board makes an annual presentation.

Commissioner Jerrell said he noticed on the response that they highlighted Eastland and that they did not have anything there currently but that he was confused as to why that's on there when Hickory Grove was not highlighted. He said that you could not even get a seat at that library any given Saturday.

Chair Dunlap said the area Commissioner Jerrell was talking about was an area, that for a long period of time, did not have infrastructure, so you couldn’t develop, but now that Charlotte Water has put in water and sewer pipes, there were a lot of housing developments popping up in the location, and the current library that serves the area was packed to capacity. He asked what the plan was in moving forward to handle the increased capacity.

Lee Keesler, Library Chief Executive Officer said that the short answer was they were going to do a Facilities Master Plan in FY21, and that would answer questions like are you better expanding Hickory Grove or going to Eastland or some other solution in your particular district. He asked for them to give them the time to do that and stated they were certainly aware where growth is going on in the community.

Commissioner Powell stated she had two library deserts in her area, because the Prosperity Village people were loud about the desert. Libraries were very utilized.

“The Board Topics of Interest – Written Responses” are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**Climate Change**

Mr. Bryant said there was one more question about the environment by Commissioner Harden and that he committed to getting her that info. He stated they did not have that information in their binder yet.

Commissioner Harden said she was very concerned about their operations as a community and how the County operates is with the mindset of being the best stewards they could be, doing all that they could to mitigate climate change.
SECTION IV: BOARD TOPICS OF INTEREST

Small Business

The Chair was asked to recognize Assistant County Manager Dr. Leslie Johnson, Chief Financial Officer Sarah Cunningham, and Asset & Facility Management Director Sarah Cunningham. The Board received an update on the County’s initiatives and investments that support small businesses. Also, the presentation would highlight the County’s efforts to recruit MWSBEs for capital projects and an update on procurement procedures.

Leslie Johnson, Assistant County Manager presented the updates on the Small Business Programming and Minority, Women and Small Business Enterprises initiatives.

Ms. Johnson began highlighting the fact that small businesses, along with minority and women-owned enterprises, were the life blood of any vibrant local economy, accounting for more than 50% of the workforce, and it makes good sense for the County to assist small businesses to form, prosper and grow.

Mecklenburg County enjoyed a robust and growing economy that is one of the strongest in the nation, which aligned to your vision as Board of County Commissioners for the County to be a community of pride and choice for people not only to Live, Learn, and Recreate but also work.

The Board adopted these five Focus Areas:

- New & Existing Business Growth
- Small Business & Entrepreneurial Growth
- Strong Communities & Neighborhoods
- Workforce Development
- Tourism, Arts, and Culture

The Office of Economic Development played a key role helping to realize the vision. She introduced members of the team and reviewed team members and their key duties.

Ms. Johnson stated she would like to respond to a question posed by Commissioner Powell, which asked about the amount funding in the operation budget that supports small businesses.

Approximately $11.68 million was appropriated in FY2020 for the Office of Economic Development.

- Development Agreements $ 5.66 million
- Business Investment Grants $ 3.92 million
- Sporting Events $ 825k
- OED Operations, represents $ 968k
  (of which 82.7% is salary/benefits)
- Charlotte Regional Business Alliance $ 162k
- Film Commission $ 150k

In FY2017, the County contracted with Thomas P. Miller & Associates to evaluate the small business ecosystem and identify opportunities to bridge gaps and/or complement existing programs and services. Based on the findings, Mecklenburg County, as a community, did well with regards to the actual number of Minority-Owned and Small Businesses; however, the survival rates for these businesses were not as favorable. Additionally, it was noted that although there were several small business resources in the community, with over 35 organizations at that time, identified providing services ranging from business planning, licensing & permitting, financing, training, technical assistance, networking and contracting, the support was fragmented and included miscommunication.
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The collective input from existing and aspiring small business owners, service providers and best practice research resulted in the identification of four strategic opportunities for the County:

− Connect by helping business owners effectively navigate the “web” of business resources
− Establish a micro lending and credit coaching program
− Sustain by developing educational trainings and mentoring to advance businesses from early-stage development to long-term success
− Promote via public events and outreach, demonstrated support for small businesses and change the region’s business image

She said they had made progress on several recommendations and gave a highlight on each.

The Small Business Concierge Service launched in August 2017. The team helped potential and existing business owners identify the support providers that are most appropriate for their needs. Face to face consultation is available after normal business hours and on weekends throughout the County.

The Small Business Lending & Credit Coaching Program launched in December 2017 with the team reviewing business plans for loan readiness and helping owners target lending programs that best match their needs. The Small Business Revolving Loan Fund launched in October 2019. Loans were available for up to $75,000 to qualified businesses with non-conventional industry terms such as lower than normal credit scores; use of alternative credit scoring; flexibility of debt coverage ratios; and flexible terms including “interest only” payments for a specified period. As of December, over 1,000 individuals have been informed about the loan program via marketing and outreach by both OED staff and the third-party loan administrator, which was Carolina Small Business Development Fund. This had resulted in over 100 inquires, 2 loans approved, and 3 applications being reviewed. The Scale-Up Education Series, known as What’s Next, launched in August 2018, and it was provided in partnership with Central Piedmont Community College. This six-series program was designed to assist existing businesses reach their next stage of growth.

The Small Business Mentorship Program, Get Up and Grow, launched in November 2018, and it too was offered in partnership with CPCC. The program targets existing businesses seeking to move beyond $125 – 400k in annual sales. The focus is to align tactical skills with a strategic vision and develop a customized growth plan. She stated that both programs were well received. She reviewed the eligibility requirements for Get Up and Grow and stated it was free.

As previously noted, the consultants suggested that the County engage in public events and outreach to demonstrate support for small businesses and change the region’s business image. On an annual basis, the OED Team participates in more than 150 small business events as speakers, sponsors and/or exhibitors. They also had recently updated the County’s Economic Development website, making it more user friendly, and with the hiring of a Business Manager, the department will be able to begin tracking program achievement metrics and benchmarking. There was still opportunity to do more robust marketing of the department and its programs and services, as well as the promotion of small businesses in general, which could include, as recommended by the consultant, launching an annual small business plan competition. Typically, these competitions were spearheaded by private, non-profit organizations that have more flexibility than local governments to award cash prizes.

Commissioner Jerrell inquired if the County could design a Business Investment Grant program for small businesses similar to that are offered to large corporations.

Ms. Johnson responded that based on NC Statue and Case Law, an economic development grant using general fund dollars typically meets two conditions: the Grant must be in exchange for substantial job or tax base creation, and there must be interstate competition. The State allows the acquisition and development of real property and buildings into industrial parks or the resale of such properties and site preparation for industrial or commercial use. The statute also allows for the construction, extension or
ownership for infrastructure as well as to offer grants for rehabilitation of commercial or non-commercial historic structures.

In terms of what they could do, one option was to fully implement the remaining recommendations of 2017 Assessment. Another, not mutually exclusive, is to explore other options that may be permitted or authorized by state law. A traveling, one-stop, small-business, resource hub where multiple support providers were accessible on site or developing a facility for leasing small stall spaces like 7th Street Market or Black Lion. Other options include incubating and promoting neighborhood or downtown retail districts or even developing an online grant portal to aggregate potential private, federal and state grant opportunities for small businesses.

In November 2018, with the hiring of a new Program Manager, the department leveraged the opportunity to develop new tactics to advance these goals. What has started or is in the pipeline includes rolling out internal training sessions, regular meetings with departments to review MWSBE spend and utilization, updating internal forms for consistency, streamlining processes, and developing guides for vendors as well as posting and emailing quarterly Projects at a Glance notices, and for latter, the notice would include not only the general scope of work but highlight subcontracting opportunities. The team would also continue to host one-on-one and group information sharing sessions for businesses about getting certified and learning contractual opportunities with the County.

The County contracted with Griffin & Strong to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the organization’s MWSBE activities to include conducting a disparity study. The scope of work included reviewing the organization’s policies and procedures, soliciting feedback from business owners, analyzing available utilization and spend data, determining if there is basis for a race or gender conscious purchasing program and providing recommendations based best practices. While the final report was not scheduled to be delivered until June, the consultant team was sharing things as discovered, thereby providing the opportunity to develop strategies to begin remediating, such as currently not tracking subcontractor data.

Sarah Cunningham, Chief Financial Officer presented the updates on the Minority, Women and Small Business Enterprise Program Support. She said that their role and goals within the MWSBE program in particular were also covered in the County’s Equity Action Plan and Department’s Strategic Business Plan. She said aligned with the overall efforts of the County, the goals were to:

- Encourage utilization of MWSBE in all aspects of County purchasing
- Identify and address policy, procedure, and process barriers to MWSBE and non-profits
- Provide accurate and timely MWSBE utilization reporting, including subcontractor data

Ms. Cunningham reviewed the MWSBE progress for policy and procedures to date, stating that they were currently only tracking their primary contract spend on an automated basis. A review over the past year showed they had significant gaps in data and that they were working to address the gaps. She stated for FY2020, they had 279 certified, minority, small-business, women enterprise vendors who were active with the County. She reviewed the demographical statistics. She stated that in FY18, Mecklenburg County only had 188 MSBE vendors who were active and registered. She said upon closing FY19, they were at 304 vendors, with mostly half coming through their data link with NC Hub. She stated they expected to see the numbers go up as vendors renewed their certification.

She said they were able to see in FY19, just through the NC Hub link, $5.1 million in additional MWSBE spend that they had not seen before. She said so far in FY20, they had been able to identify over $10 million of additional spend. She said it was funding they were already doing but did not know it was MWSBE categorized. She reviewed an overview of what spending looked like. She said the data improvements allowed them to identify about 30% more MWSBE vendors, 94 more than they would have otherwise. She
said they increased their spend from $4 million to $30 million. A lot of that was just from the data enhancements they were able to make.

Mark Hahn, Asset and Facility Management Director presented the recruitment of Minority, Women and Small Business Enterprise Contractors and Capital Projects. He spoke about the County’s MWSBE participation goals, then he described achieved results over the last four fiscal years. He ended with a description of improvement opportunities to increase MWSBE participation.

MWSBE Participation Goals - Construction projects

- 21% - Total Subcontractor Participation Goal
- 10% - Minority Business Enterprises (MBE)
- 6% - Women Business Enterprises (WBE)
- 5% - Small Business Enterprises (SBE)

Good Faith Effort standard was on the part of the general contractors as opposed to mandatory requirement. The goals were last updated in 2004 after a disparity study.

He stated there was a distinct difference in MWSBE participation results between two construction procurement methods. He showed the results from FY16-FY20. He stated the total broke out into $24.1 million for minority-owned businesses at 21.5% of the total construction amount; $9.7 million for women-owned businesses at 8.7%; and $4.4 million for small businesses at 4%. They believed the construction manager at-risk method was good for MWSBE results, because the construction manager either hires MWSBE consultants or use dedicated, in-house resources for recruitment and outreach to MWSBE subcontractors. The second method was the more traditional, “design, bid, build” method, where the contractor was not selected until the end of the bidding phase and the contract was based on the low bid. He said that the amount going to MWSBE’s was just over $14 million at 16.9%, so the MWSBE total broke out to $4.91 million for minority-owned businesses at 5.9% participation, which was approximately 4% below the 10% goal. He said that women-owned businesses received $4.94 million at 6%; and small businesses received $4.18 million at 5%. With the total MWSBE participation for the “design, bid, build” method at 16.9% and total participation for the construction manager at-risk at 34.2%, you can see the “design, bid, build” projects present the most opportunity for improvement.

He said that one of the challenges in getting good participation was making the MWSBE subcontractors aware of the County’s construction project opportunities and connecting them with a general contractor for a bid in the construction projects. He reviewed current practice. He stated that over a year now, AFM had also been piloting the utilization of minority firms specifically for projects under $30,000 that did not require competitive bidding. He said the projects would provide opportunities for contractors to start a relationship with the County and help to grow their business. He said over the past two years that they had awarded 14 projects to five minority firms under the effort and they even had one contractor that became so successful they started seeing him showing up as a partner on construction manager at-risk projects.

Ms. Johnson, Ms. Cunningham, Ms. Cunningham, and Mr. Hanh answered Commissioner’s questions and responded to comments.
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perpetrators had prior felony convictions, and 41% had local felony charges. She said it was not just about the violence but what causes the violence and required a multi-disciplinary approach and multi-sectoral approach. She said they were looking at a public health community violence prevention plan.

Ms. Harris stated there were a few things for them to consider while putting together recommendations for the group: consider suppression all the way to prevention think about total circumstances; support and strengthen the community organizations, including community-based organizations. She said there was a lack of trust. She said there was no one thing that would address violence in the community, but a combination of things that need to happen. She spoke about a work group that was created and stated that part of the broad conversation was part of the recognition of lack of trust and need to work on strategically engaging and involving the community; the second was a need to build leadership and invest in neighborhoods, and the third was they had to be in it for the long haul to make a difference. She said that community engagement was an area of primary prevention.

Sonya Harper, Criminal Justice System Director presented the Community Interrupter Pilot Program. The purpose was to detect and interrupt potentially violent conflicts. Trained violence interrupters and outreach workers prevent shootings by identifying and mediating potentially lethal conflicts in the community and following up to ensure that the conflict does not reignite. An interrupter pilot would identify and help to treat the highest risk. Trained, culturally-appropriate outreach workers work with the highest risk to make them less likely to commit violence by meeting them where they are at, talking to them about the costs of using violence, and helping them to obtain the social services they need – such as job training and drug treatment. An interrupter pilot would help to mobilize the community to change. Workers engage leaders in the community as well as community residents, local business owners, faith leaders, service providers, and the high risk, conveying the message that the residents, groups, and the community do not support the use of violence.

Ms. Harris spoke briefly about the Sherriff's Jail Reentry Program. The goal of the re-entry program was to reduce recidivism and involvement in violent acts by strengthening the system of support; providing peer support specialists the availability of services in MCSO with access to addiction/mental health treatment and increased availability of services and supports upon release for emergency or safe transitional housing; medication; and phone.

Ms. Harper and Ms. Harris answered Commissioners’ comments and responded to questions.

RECESS
The meeting was recessed at 2:47 p.m.

RECONVENE
The meeting was reconvened at 3:03 p.m.

SECTION V: CRISIS & ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT

The Board received a presentation highlighting the County’s Crisis & Enterprise Risk Management Plan. The Chair was asked to recognize Assistant County Manager Mark Foster, NC State Professor & Director of the Enterprise Risk Management Initiative Mark Beasley, and I-Parametric Jeff Stephens.

Mark Foster, Assistant County Manager mentioned that the Republican National Convention was in the horizon and that over the last 12 months, the County leadership and cabinet had been engaged in two activities, crisis management and a reboot of the Enterprise Risk Management Program. He said the purpose of the Crisis Management
Training was to get a baseline understanding of what the concepts really meant and to understand what best practices were for government as well as businesses and how did the County really align to best practice, and finally, what was the role of County leadership and staff and how did the Board fit into the process. Mr. Foster said they were underway in buying an enterprise solution to communication with a software program called Everbridge, for in times of crisis or any need of communication, get to their 5,500 County employees.

Jeff Stephens, I-Parametrics presented the Crisis Management training. Mr. Stephens was the Vice President of Emergency Management. He said the Board had an important role in the Crisis Management Plan making sure they were working with the County Manager and making sure they were addressing the risks they were hearing, and the County employees were effectively managing everything. He spoke to the Board about the strategic plan with three main goals: improving organizational agility; increasing coordination and collaboration; and setting out standard processes.

Mark Beasley, North Carolina State University presented Enterprise Risk Management training. Mr. Beasley was the Enterprise Management Director. He went over the framework of enterprise risk and why companies were thinking about it. He stated it was really just trying to help the County to be more successful and to move the work being done into thinking about risk so the County would be better prepared to proactively anticipate risk. He said it was a process, led from the top and set the tone so the rest of the organization recognizes the significance and importance of what they were trying to do with a strategy.

Mark Foster presented the County’s Enterprise Risk Management Framework.

Mr. Stephens, Mr. Beasley, and Mr. Foster answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

RECESS

Day One of the Annual Retreat was recessed at 4:10 p.m.

SPECIAL MEETING

The purpose of the meeting is for County staff to provide information on outcomes from the 2019 federal legislative agenda and to receive general updates from legislative officials and regional congressional staff.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for an Annual Retreat Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 6:11 p.m. at 6000 Fairview Road, Charlotte with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Commissioner Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent: Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake

Also Present: Senator Mujtaba A. Mohammed
Representative Becky Carney
Representative Kelly Alexander
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Representative Nasif Majeed  
Senator Natasha Marcus  
Representative Christy Clark  
Senator Joyce Waddell  
Representative Brandon Lofton  
Representative Wesley Harris  
Representative Mary Gardner Belk  
Senator Rob Bryan  
Mr. Kay Tembo

GREETINGS FROM CHAIR

Chair George Dunlap thanked everyone for coming.

GREETINGS FROM COUNTY MANAGER

Dena Diorio, County Manager gave introductory remarks.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Starla Tanner provided the Board with a legislative update and informed the Board that Senators Tillis, Bishop, and Burr sent their hellos.

FEDERAL UPDATE

Kay Tembo, Senior District Liaison for Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, stated that last year they had a successful year, with several town halls and community events. He stated that out of all the legislation that was introduced last year, only 30 members managed to get a bill passed, and Congresswoman Adams was one of them with the Future Act. The Future Act would guarantee funding for HBCU’s, and she also introduced the College Affordability Act, and the whole purpose was to lower the cost of higher education and increase opportunities for everyone who wanted to go to college. The third aspect was holding institutions accountable. The labor portion was regarding to raising the minimum wage on the State level and trying to on a Federal level. The Raise the Wage act was voted on in the House of Representatives and is now sitting in the Senate. They also focused on the Equal Pay Act eliminating the pay gap between women and men. They continued fighting for worker’s rights with the unions and labor folks.

He said they had a discussion about what the priorities would be around hunger: hunger; housing; higher education; and affordable housing. He said they had to focus on specific programs, and the Congresswoman introduced the Closing the Meal Gap Act, and their job was to get as much support around it. Mr. Tembo said she was in support of opportunity zones but wanted to fix loopholes for opportunity zones to ensure the opportunity goes to the individuals who were supposed to get the opportunity in the first place. She introduced the Housing and Infrastructure Act and Homelessness Act, which would put billions of dollars into federal programs dealing with housing. She continued to support the Affordable Care Act, and she also introduced the CARE Act to provide resources to community-based health centers to strengthen their relationship with WIC Clinics. He said they were listening and looking forward to annual trips in Washington D.C., because that was their opportunity. He said a lot of the D.C. staff, their idea of Mecklenburg County was based on what they read, so his job was to make sure their level of priority became a national priority.

Mr. Tembo said that he had a meeting with Ms. Harper, Criminal Justice Director, and she expressed the need for funding to build a database that could support the different initiatives that they were doing currently as it related to disparities or eliminating some of the disparities that existed and improving communication between the departments. He said Congresswoman Adams was currently working on a bill that would create a pilot
programs through the Justice Department, and the pilot program would ask local municipalities to opt in to sharing their data and get compensated for that through grant funds. He said hopefully this would allow the County to have a stronger and larger infrastructure, especially when it came to data. He said that it was currently appropriation season and the office had a survey out for appropriations request. He said if there were any type of appropriation request the Board would like to see or have Congresswoman Adams sign on, now was the time. He said if there were any grants the Board identified and would like for them to go over, they would be happy to research it and do that.

Commissioner Harden thanked Representative Adams for the extra senior nutrition food boxes.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Representative Alexander said he was proud that team Mecklenburg worked very well with the General Assembly. He stated all doors were always open if they were in Raleigh for them to stop by.

Ms. Diorio gave closing remarks.

The special meeting was recessed at 7:31 p.m.

**RETREAT – DAY 2**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for an Annual Retreat Thursday, January 30, 2020 at 8:02 a.m. in the Harris Conference Center of Central Piedmont Community with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent: Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller

Absent Until Noted: Commissioners Vilma D. Leake and Ella B. Scarborough

**COUNTY MANAGER’S REMARKS**

Dena Diorio, County Manager provided introductory remarks for Day 2 of the Board Retreat.

**SECTION VI: EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION**

Paula Herman, Human Resource Director presented the total rewards, employee classification and compensation.

Total Rewards include:
- Classification and Compensation
- Benefits and Wellness
- Employee Recognition
- Career Development

Ms. Herman reviewed the Total Rewards Program Philosophy Statement:
We recognize that our employees are our most valuable asset. In order to be an employer of choice and to attract, retain and engage highly qualified employees to provide services to our stakeholders, Mecklenburg County is committed to providing a competitive total rewards program consisting of compensation; insurance, wellness and retirement programs; career development; work/life balance options and reward and recognition programs. Compensation ranges will be determined based on comparative studies of compensation in a combination of public, private, and nonprofit sector organizations of similar kind, size, and/or complexity to Mecklenburg County in the local, regional, state and/or national market. Comparative surveys of total reward offerings will be conducted at regular intervals to ensure that all elements of the total rewards program remain competitive and up-to-date. The total rewards program will be administered based on the consistent application of policy and procedure and in a fiscally responsible manner.

Ms. Herman listed the following reasons for why the County was redesigning the program:

- Identified by senior leadership as our #1 risk in the area of talent management
- Not been updated since 2006
- Not kept pace with market trends
- Impacts our ability to attract and retain employees
- Cumbersome to manage and not easily explained to employees
- Part of our strategic initiative of being an “Employer of Choice” and having efficient and accountable government

Ms. Herman reviewed the followed as project goals:

- Compete locally and nationally for talent
- Modernize our classification and compensation structures
- Modernize our plan administration
- Improve and add pay delivery options
- Improve recruitment and retention
- Make it easy to understand

Ms. Herman reviewed the followed as project measures:

- Reduced turnover, attrition and vacancy rates
- Reduced number of declined salary offers
- Improved quantity and quality of applicant pools
- Improved market position for salary and benefits when compared to peer organizations
- Communication and Training Survey Results

Ms. Herman reviewed the following implementation timeline:

- Stage 3, current stage, to Create Grade and Salary Structure; Crosswalk Employees to New Structure; and Provide Budget Recommendation
- Phase 4, Spring 2020, to Update Pay Policies and Procedures; Create New Job Descriptions; Conduct Adverse Impact; Analysis; and
- Implementation, July 2020 to December 2020, with communication and training

Ms. Herman answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

SECTION VIII: BUDGET PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Michael Bryant, Management and Budget Director gave the Board an update on budget public engagement activities which were underway for FY 2021.

Mr. Bryant answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.
SECTION IX: ARTS & SCIENCE FUNDING

*A short video was played.

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated when they spoke about arts last year, they had a series of considerations they talked through, with one being to stabilize the cultural sector. They wanted to ensure it aligned with board priorities and look at existing funding strategies, geographic equity and mitigate risks to the County. Those were the considerations talked about as they talked about whether to proceed with putting the quarter cent sales tax on the ballot. She mentioned the series of guiding principles, accountability and that the funds would be spent as intended, with minimal overhead and maximum dispersion. They spoke a lot about transparency and funding decisions should be based on sound processes with data-driven decisions and separation between programing and grant making. She said they talked a lot about strategic planning and that there should be a vision for arts and culture for the community. They spoke about leading with equity and that funding decisions should advance equity in the community and that all residence, particularly children, should have access to cultural access and that it should be transformational, taking arts and culture to the next level in the community.

Ms. Diorio said they spoke a lot about governance and settled upon a new governance structure for Arts and Science Council that would no longer be involved in fund raising, and there would be a lot of additional appointments to the Board. She said they decided this would be the least disruptive option and that it really leveraged existing infrastructure. She said it would also had a board with representation from the entire community and would be responsible for setting strategic priorities, establishing a funding request process, make final allocation decisions, and manage the public art program. She said finally, the envisioned ASC would serve all artists and art organizations throughout the County, large, medium, and small. She asked the Board if there was still broad-board support for the framework. She asked if they were supportive of the framework, and if so were they supportive of funding the framework, because that was a critical question, obviously. The third question was at what level would they be comfortable supporting the framework. She said she would need the Board’s direction for her to go back and work on various funding options to present in the coming weeks on how they would proceed with funding the framework. She said as she would start to develop the budget for FY21, she would need to get a good feel for where the Board was with arts funding.

Commissioner Harden said people love arts, parks, and education and that they want the community to be well-rounded, having other things than sports. She said they knew in this economy that more people attend cultural events and science and historical events than attend sports events. They knew this had a big impact on tourism and economic development. She stated that the ASC announced there would be up to 50% cuts in their grants in the coming year so small organizations were at risk for going away. She said she heard from people that while they liked arts and parks, they were not so keen on the regressive sales-tax structure. She believed that was what people rejected in the fall, not the underlining priorities it represented. She said they would like to see it integrated into the general budget. She asked the Board to join her in broadly supporting arts, culture, and science as a priority. She stated she agreed with the Chair that the funding level would have to be looked at, but they would receive a presentation from the Arts and Science Council February 11, 2020.

Commissioner Scarborough arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Commissioner Cotham felt it was important to increase funding for the arts but believed it was important to remember what happened in the election with the people rejecting it. She said she received advice that they had a better attitude about the Arts & Science Council, and they thought they should fund specific programs and have accountability to it. She did not want it to be anything close to what the tax was going to be, which was like $20 million a year.

Commissioner Harden answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.
Commissioner Jerrell stated one element that he would want to see was that the citizenry would not be doing the heavy lifting but that the arts community does the heavy lifting and carrying the bulk of the ask. He said that there would be a consideration on the Board’s part to come in and figure out what would be the impact on the priorities, such as health and human services and those items as it related to what they watched in the budget presentation as far as what they were told was priorities.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated that having public dollars was extremely important due to the equity it would bring, and she believed the corporate and business community should step up to the plate. She said it they could carry a larger percentage of the weight; the public would feel more comfortable with that. She said they need the City to stand up for it with the tourism tax dollars.

Commissioner Rodriquez-McDowell stated that having public dollars was extremely important due to the equity it would bring, and she believed the corporate and business community should step up to the plate. She said it they could carry a larger percentage of the weight; the public would feel more comfortable with that. She said they need the City to stand up for it with the tourism tax dollars.

Commissioner Leake arrived at 9:52 a.m.

Commissioner Powell said she did not have broad support for additional funding, and she had very limited support for additional funding, and it would be in the area of education. She said the voters in her district had spoken, and 63% of them voted against it. She said there were so many needs in the County that it was difficult to even think of how they could fund the needs they had, let alone adding more to the responsibility of government. She stated she loved the arts but that her district, District 1, voted no.

Commissioner Leake said she supported the Arts and Science Council to a point during the process for the County to make its decision, and her contention was she wanted to insure there was music and arts within the confines of the school system. She said she valued the people in her district and could not, at this point, say she wanted to provide by them the funds by which they could segregate her people where they could not attend based upon their economics.

Commissioner Scarborough stated the arts were just as important as English and all the other subjects and that if they did not do them, they were leaving someone out. She said she was disappointed for anyone to say the arts should not be number one.

Commissioner Harden stated, in response to Ms. Diorio, that she did still have support for the framework and believed in the funding publicly and she wanted to speak to the reason why public money was important. She said what equity meant to her was access, and that was what public money would do, bring access. She said they listened to the community’s concerns and they were also under new leadership. She wanted to support the leadership. She also supported the idea of funding programs; if that was the way they ended up going, she believed some of the programs were just foundationally really important.

Chair Dunlap asked if it was important for the children to have balance and said what about the kid who did not play sports, ask if they should have another outlet. He asked if it was possible that arts could be their outlet. He said if they did not invest public dollars, there was no way they could create equity across the board. He stated he would like to see a full recommendation.

Commissioner Powell asked for multiple options.

Chair Dunlap responded that she could do that.

RECESS
The meeting was recessed at 10:15 a.m.

RECONVENE
The meeting reconvened at 10:30 a.m.
SECTION VII: BOARD TOPICS OF INTEREST

Food Deserts

*A short video is shown.

Gibbie Harris, Health Director stated she wanted to talk to the Board about what food security looked like. It really looks at the household’s ability to access nutritious foods that contribute to their health overall. There are ranges of food secure and food insecurity and they range from being food secure, meaning no problems accessing food all the way to very low security, meaning at least one person in the household reduced and eating patterns are disrupted due to lack of ability to afford foods. Mecklenburg County was lower than the Nation and the State at 85.1%. She said to be low and very low food security we were higher than the Nation and North Carolina at 14.9%. She said it was not just one thing but that they knew it access was access and cost, because healthy foods were more costly. She said people needed to know how to eat healthy, and all of the community did not grow up learning that from their family. The other part was learning why it was important. She stated that 30% of the population was in half of a mile of a chain grocery store, and there were a lot of people who were not close. The USDA defined a food desert as a low-income census track where a substantial number or share of residence had low access to a supermarket or large grocery store. Ms. Diorio mentioned poor diets contributing to poor health and that low-income individuals were more likely to be exposed to advertising for unhealthy food products.

Ms. Harris spoke about current efforts in the County, with the community coming together to plant trees and bushes, served over 25,000 people in Mecklenburg County off of the sites. She said in addition they work with Out Teach Carolinas Region to provide fresh fruits and vegetables. NC Health Food Retail Designation was a process the corner stores go though. They work with them on signage, and sometimes getting the fridge and freezers they need for the food on site. She said they were not full grocery stores but that they did provide in some areas where they did not have grocery stores. She said they also work with the farmers markets in the area to ensure SNAP is available. Ms. Harris said for park and rec there were 18 locations with community gardens. She said social services was doing a number of different things, such as working with adult transportation, expanding routes to insure there were farmers markets trips, reduced rates for seniors, and they provided 1,530 meals which were being served daily to county residents through the senior nutrition program, and they were working with Second Harvest Food Bank. She said Second Harvest Food Bank also works with Loaves and Fishes for an on-site pantry which has fed close to 5,000 people.

Ms. Harris said the CRC did a number of things in the area of food security. She listed them. She said they work with One Charlotte Health Alliance and there was a collaboration between the two hospital systems and health department. She said they rolled out two new mobile units called mobile food pharmacies. She said they also had Friendship Gardens, which was a network of backyard gardens, and they provide about 750 meals a day. She explained the difference between WIC and SNAP. She spoke about a new feature where folks with SNAP could order food online. She said that future options would be to continue to promote SNAP and double bucks in the farmers markets.

Michael Boger, Economic Development Business Manager spoke about economic development strategies the County may use to encourage grocery retail into the food deserts.

Ralphine Caldwell, LISC gave an overview of what LISC is and what they do for the community.

Ms. Caldwell reviewed LISC approach to healthy food initiatives Key LISC Healthy Food Strategies:
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- Target both Demand-Side and Supply-Side issues contributing to health challenges associated with a lack of healthy food consumption
- Engage community in understanding and responding to community healthy food needs and solutions
- Bring together diverse sectors for collaboration
- Address whole-person health, all significant SDOH requiring attention to ensure the success of healthy food initiatives

Ms. Caldwell reviewed healthy food programming by reviewing building Healthy Food Demand through Education and Outreach:

- Innovative approaches to engaging communities and youth in healthy food education
  - Soccer Programming for hydration and balanced diet training
  - Grocery Tours for healthy food budgeting and nutrition labeling literacy
- Building a collective understanding by communities of food justice
  - School-based programming (classroom STEM, afterschool arts programming)
  - Community organizing

Ms. Caldwell reviewed healthy food supply by healthy food sales, provision, and distribution:

- Development of Farmer’s Markets and Youth Markets
- Urban Agriculture and Industrial Development for Food
- Production (Hydro-/Aquaponics)
- Community Gardening/Urban Farming
- Restaurant Menu Redesign
- Small Grocery/Deli/Bodega Support Programs
  - Fresh food storage and equipment
  - Fresh food stocking support and food safety training
- Community Bulk Purchasing
- Grocery Store Development

Lauren Pelletier, Lyft General Manager presented Lyft grocery access program.

Ms. Pelletier reviewed the background, challenge, and opportunity. Background: More than 2 million people in North Carolina, including 435,000 children under the age of 15, live in areas where residents are suffering with diet-related disease and can’t easily access healthy food. The challenge: access to healthy food is often limited by a lack of access to public transportation, particularly when residents don’t own cars. While ridesharing can be an efficient and convenient alternative, costs for the service can limit adoption. The opportunity: collaborate with NC Alliance for Health to identify direct service partners to pilot Lyft.

Ms. Pelletier reviewed the solution: we launched a Grocery Access Program Pilot in Charlotte. We’ve partnered with local nonprofits to provide Charlotteans in need with discounted Lyft rides to and from area grocers and food pantries. Eligible participants receive $2 rides to and from participating grocery providers. The three program goals were to Empower families with more choice in where they buy groceries and increase access to healthy food options. Reduce the time and financial burden caused by commuting to grocery stores. Compile key learnings from the pilot and identify sustainable funding sources to scale and reach more neighborhoods in Charlotte and beyond. She stated with the help of the North Carolina Alliance for Health, they convened partners from UNC Charlotte, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Food Policy Council, the City of Charlotte, Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina and Loaves & Fishes. Ultimately, partnering directly with Loaves & Fishes to co-launch and implement the pilot program.

Ms. Pelletier reviewed the timeline, stating that January 2020 the Pilot scheduled to end January 31st. February 2020 would be the evaluation of learnings & results.
Ms. Harris answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Leake said it had been a major problem for them since slavery as to getting the appropriate foods to the appropriate people. She said the national and local governments who did not do their job in taking care of those who need it the most disturbed her.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell reiterated that 14.9% of households in the community were living in food insecurity. She said it really needed to sink in and that they needed to educate the public about that. She did not believe the online grocery order for that segment may not be the most effective bridge, because that was where they do not get as much feedback for the online reach outs. She said it struck her as good to have but probably not supper effective.

Commissioner Jerrell said the question was, what would be their resolve around the issue? He asked at what point do they consider saying that they need to take whatever action they need to take on behalf of the people of Mecklenburg County?

Commissioner Cotham stated this was a very complex topic, and she believed this was the year they would really do something. She said she knew government could not do it alone but that she did not believe business could do it alone either.

Commissioner Powell said there has been a lot of work but that it had not been very successful in getting a grocery store within a walkable distance for people. She said she supported figuring this out now.

Commissioner Harden wanted to double down on Commissioner Powell's comments and said she supported it.

Chair Dunlap stated he would offer some suggestions in hopes they could move forward with action items. He said it was up to the grocery store executives to decide whether or not to locate in these communities. He stated that he wanted to believe the executives wanted to be good partners in the community just as other companies which have located in the community. He asked the County Manager to extend an invitation to have the executives of the grocery stores come to a meeting and for her to engage with them as to what the needs were in order for them to locate and to determine whether or not there are incentives which could be offered.

Commissioner Scarborough said they could not offer them anything like that. You cannot do that.

Chair Dunlap said we always accept no. He said they were looking for opportunities and that they did not know what opportunities were there. He said they would not know until the opportunities had been explored. He said the other thing they would ask was if there were legislative fixes to some of the barriers to locating grocery stores in the areas.

**RECESS**

The meeting was recessed at 11:49 a.m.

**RECONVENE**

The meeting reconvened at 12:13 p.m.

**SECTION X: ECONOMIC OUTLOOK**

Brandon Simmons, Economist gave the Board an economic update. He reviewed the national recognitions that Mecklenburg County had received. Mr. Simmons reviewed projected population growth. He stated that Mecklenburg County was the 40th largest
county in the Nation, the most populous in the State, and that its growth was largely dependent on migration. He stated from 2010 to 2018 there was 18.5% growth in population and that from 2018 to 2023 there would be a projected 11.1% growth in population going from 1,093,901 to 1,214,881. He stated that Mecklenburg County was home to a large concentration of Fortune 1000 companies and leads the state in the number of high-profile companies choosing to do business in North Carolina. The combined total of revenues produced by these companies in 2019 reached $246.1 Billion. Two new additions this year include Honeywell and Dentsply Sirona for a total of 13 Fortune 1000 HQ’s

Mr. Simmons said that Charlotte Douglas International Airport connects Charlotte to the rest of the world. The airport was currently undergoing a major expansion and renovation which was set to finish in 2025. Airports are major economic drivers. The report, North Carolina: The State of Aviation, showed CLT contributes $23 billion in annual economic output, $1.1 billion in state/local taxes, 132,330 jobs for N.C. residents and $5.7 billion in personal income.

Mr. Simmons reviewed the positive and negative factors to the economy in 2020.

Positive Factors:

- Low unemployment
- Increasing wages
- Low levels of inflation
- High consumer confidence / sentiment levels
- Tax Cuts and Job Act effects
- US China Trade agreement

Negative Factors:

- World’s economy growth slow
- Election volatility
- Potential for further US China trade negotiations to sour

Mr. Simmons said in November 2019, the unemployment rate was 3.2% in Mecklenburg County compared with 3.4% for North Carolina and 3.3% for the U.S. Median Household Income has grown 18.0% from 2013 to 2019 in Mecklenburg County. Gross Taxable Retail Sales in the County grew 52.9% since 2013.

Mr. Simmons said that of the largest 20 cities in the US, Charlotte places 12th on the list of rent. Charlotte's median two-bedroom rent was $1,154, with rents growing at 2.8% year-over-year. The average rent for the largest 20 cities was $1512. Rents in Charlotte were the 3rd fastest growing behind Austin, TX and Phoenix, AZ.

Commissioner Harden asked what was causing the growth rate for retail sales.

Mr. Simmons responded that a lot is population growth; wages went up, allowing people to spend more. He said in counting eCommerce and Amazon as part of the taxable retail sales helped.

Commissioner Harden asked if they had any reason to think next year’s rate would be any less.

Mr. Simmons said they were seeing a lot of strength in sales tax growth. Mr. Simmons stated he could send his analysis.

Commissioner Harden said he did not want to posit that that number likely may go down next year.

Ms. Simmons said they figured a healthy, sales-tax growth along with upbeat economic forecast.

Commissioner Harden requested the year-over-year growth rate.
Commissioner Cotham was interested in increase in foreign business. She said they get some kind of big benefit for doing this so they could get access a green card.

Mr. Simmons responded that he got that information from the partnership, and they should have more information.

Commissioner Cotham asked if there was any distinguishing between permits for affordable housing or if residential and apartments were all bundled together.

Ebenezer Gujjarlapudi responded that they could try to scrub the data but one building complex often gets one permit.

Commissioner Cotham – I had been told that permits for affordable housing were declining…

Commissioner Leake said this would help them focus on where the money was and would stay. She asked if they did any trading with Africa.

Mr. Simmons responded anyone that he listed would be less than 16 companies and all others were in an “other” category, which was where Africa would fall.

Commissioner Leake asked why ownership for property was decreasing for minorities.

Mr. Simmons responded that a lot of it could be attributed to gentrification at the County level.

Commissioner Leake asked about affordable rental housing.

Mr. Simmons responded that he would bring back that information.

Commissioner Leake asked why the average man’s salary is more than women.

Mr. Simmons said he image that would be the case, because that is what the national data says.

Commissioner Leake asked why they perceive that men would equate to hire salaries than women doing the same job.

Mr. Simmons responded that some studies had shown that within the same job that their salaries were the same. He said where you see a lot of the disparities was at men would often take more high-risk jobs that command higher pay.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said they were key players in ensuring people were making a living wage. She requested to see how much tax it represented for the tax base.

SECTION XI: FINANCIAL UPDATE

FY2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

Sarah Cunningham, Chief Financial Officer gave the Board a presentation highlighting the FY2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

Year of Impact in terms of financials:

Over last 10 years General Government:

- Revenues up 29%, at $1.7 billion in 2019
- Expenditures up over 23%, at $1.8 billion in 2019

2019 financial highlights included:

- Gross retail sales of $23.8B—reflecting 30% growth since 2015
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- $9M in additional Meck Pre-K funding to open 33 classrooms and serve over 600 students
- $3,155 County support per CMS student—an increase of 7% over 2018, and 20% since 2015
- $150M in bonds issued to support Park and Recreation and CMS capital projects

FY19 General Fund Revenue by Source:

- Revenues for the year totaled $1.29 billion, $56 million, or 4.5% above FY18
- Property tax revenues were up a total of 3.5% over the prior year, or $27 million
- Sales tax revenues increased $8.5 million/4.5%

FY19 General Fund Results: Revenues

- Actual revenues came in 3.5% over Final budget
- Property Tax collections were within 1% of Budget
- Sales Taxes turned out stronger than expected, at 3.9% over
- Budget Investment Income was the largest increase over budget, due to higher interest rates

FY19 General Fund Expenditures by Source:

- Expenditures were $1.2 billion for the year, $57.7 million or 5% higher than FY18
- CMS Operating expenditures of $464.8 million comprised 38.2% of spending

FY19 General Fund Results: Expenditures

- Overall Expenditures and transfers were about $1.3B, or 5.9% below Final Budget
- Spending for several Departments were below budget due to vacancies

FY19 Results: General Fund

- Overall stronger than expected performance, spending down $4.6M of fund balance

FY19 Debt Service Fund Results:

- Debt Service Fund revenues were $13.4M over budget Expenditures were $8.2M, or 4% below budget
- Transfers were $131.3M, $101.3M for PayGo increases and $30M for Deferred Maintenance
- Debt Service Fund Balance increased by $6.6M

FY19 Results: Combined Fund Balance:

- Combined Fund Balance $731.6M as of June 30
- $472.7M of Fund Balance at year end was restricted, or committed for specific purposes
  - Includes FY20 Fund Balance Appropriations
  - Debt Service
- $258.9M in the General Fund unassigned

County Investments as of 6/30/2019:
The County actively manages cashflow, and invests funds to earn interest and maintain liquidity. Daily investment balances: $1.2 - $1.4 billion

County debt as of 6/30/2019:

- County direct debt was $1.48B at the end of FY19
- Net bonded debt was 1.08% of Assessed value, well below the statutory maximum of 8%
- Strong debt management part of the fiscal stewardship behind the County’s AAA Credit Rating

FY2020 Financial Status

The Chair was asked to recognize Chief Financial Officer Sarah Cunningham and County Assessor Ken Joyner. The Board received a status update and financial forecast for FY2020, including an assessed valuation update. Mr. Joyner provided that the FY 2020 budget assessed values were $183,351,155,001 and the FY 2020 actuals were $185,520,270,751. He reviewed the FY21 Financial Forecast for the General Fund and stated they came in at 2.1% above the budget for FY20.

Sarah Cunningham gave an overview of the key revenue streams for the general fund for property tax, sales tax, and investment income. She went over general fund overall revenues and debt service fund overall revenues.

Commissioner Leake asked if this were better today than they were 10-years ago.

Ms. Cunningham responded yes.

Commissioner Leake asked to what degree.

Ms. Cunningham said on almost every degree, because if you were to look at what they were spending money on, 10-years ago, they were having to consider and make drastic cuts, because they had to make debt service even though the revenues were shrinking due to the financial crisis. So, when you put everything together, they were making some pretty tough choices.

Commissioner Leake stated that we could not spend what we did not have. She asked if they give that credit to the County Manager.

Ms. Cunningham said she would.

Commissioner Leake said that was a fact right.

Ms. Cunningham agreed and said if they looked at the actions that were taken, that was something done when Dena Diorio was in her position as Chief Financial Officer, to help put them in a stronger place to make smarter long-term investments but ensuring that they were holding to a sustainable fiscal path.

Commissioner Leake asked if they were financing the school system or court system the most.

Ms. Cunningham said the school system was what most of their operating and capital budget went for.

Commissioner Leake asked what percent of their money went to the school system.

Ms. Cunningham said over 42% including debt service for FY19.
Commissioner Leake said people were always saying the County should not forget teachers but that the State was responsible for supplying and supporting education.

Ms. Cunningham responded that the State did have responsibilities and that there were others passed to the County, including the capital budget.

Commissioner Leake said so the County was taking on what it did not have to.

Ms. Diorio said that was correct, that they fund far more than required to by statute.

Commissioner Leake asked how much they supported the court system.

Ms. Cunningham responded that the court system was a much smaller proportion and that she would come back with the number.

Commissioner Leake asked who was responsible for the court system.

Ms. Diorio responded the State.

Commissioner Leake said they need to ask the Legislators to do the right thing in Raleigh when it came to education.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked where the statutory limit should be.

Ms. Cunningham responded the statutory limit was set by the State of North Carolina a long time ago.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell wanted to know if they could speed up some of the things they wanted to invest in, because the amount of debt was so low.

Ms. Cunningham responded they still had bond authority and could issue 715 million more in bonds for financing CMS, but they did not want to issue the bonds before ready for construction.

Ms. Diorio said when they set up the capital plan for CMS, they do it on a cash-flow basis and they have spread the projects out over a number of years, because they were trying to manage the ratio that said debt service was a percent of operating expenses.

Chair Dunlap said the Board was interested in knowing how much money was unassigned.

Ms. Cunningham responded $259 million. She said one thing that may not capture was any actions they may be taking in FY20.

Chair Dunlap said the other thing that they needed to understand was that was where they take money to pay capital projects, so they did not have to borrow money.

Ms. Cunningham answered Commissioners' questions and responded to comments.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 1:49 p.m.

RECONVENE

The meeting reconvened at 2:05 p.m.
Section XII: Property Tax Rate Discussion

Adrian Cox, Budget Manager presented information to the Board in preparation for the property tax rate discussion. He stated that the objection was for the Manager to receive Board feedback regarding the property tax rate for the upcoming year. He went over trends in county dollar revenue growth and talked about how the money was used. He said the graph showed increases in the budget due to property tax; the property tax made up 81% of the County dollars. He said property taxes increase each year by two primary ways, either new construction, which was natural growth, or by increases to the rate.

Mr. Cox said in 2019 there was a three-quarter percent increase, which allowed for $9.6 million in county dollar revenue, and in the current year, the increase of 1.99 cents above the revenue neutral provided $36.2 million. He said new construction has increased county revenue by an average of $25.5 million since 2015. He said the preliminary estimate for the upcoming year is $30.6 million in property tax. He said that undesignated sales tax made up 15% of county dollars. He said that on average, sales tax has added $12.6 million in county dollars each year. He said the preliminary estimate for next year, for undesignated sales tax would be $15.6 million.

Mr. Cox stated that property tax and sales tax combined made up 96% of county dollars. He said the growth showed the sales tax, as well as the natural growth in property tax, and the increase due to changes in the rate in 2019 and 2020. He said increase in county dollars averaged $38 million each year when you exclude increases to the property tax rate. He said preliminary estimates for the two revenue sources total to $46.2 million.

Mr. Cox reviewed the changes in county dollar expenses in three categories: education, general county services, and Paygo. He said since 2016, 61.5% of all new county dollars were allocated to education, averaging $31.45 million per year. He said since 2015, 35.6% of all new county dollars were allocated to county services, and 2.8% went to debt service. He went over the major investments resulting in increases in rate in 2019 and 2020. He stated it was not a comprehensive list. He said in 2019 there was a three quarter cent increase allowed for the initiation of the pre-k program, and in 2020 the 1.99 cent over revenue neutral provided funds for such investments as increase to teacher salaries; staff to address mental health in schools; affordable housing initiatives; and 58 new positions for park and recreation.

Mr. Cox went over the calculation used to determine the property tax rate. Mr. Cox gave the Board a couple of scenarios for illustrative purposes.

Ms. Diorio stated they wanted to have a preliminary conversation about what changing the tax rate would look like.

Chair Dunlap said he did not have an appetite to increase the tax rate and he hoped they would look closely at what was funded and would have some redirect dollars to add to the $46 million.

Ms. Diorio said they would but that since she had been County Manager, they had redirected about $76 million and over time, the ability to redirect would become smaller.

Chair Dunlap said all of the numbers were preliminary and could change. He said he would rather they wait until we they got closer to budget adoption before they had a real serious conversation about what that meant.

Commissioner Powell stated she couldn’t imagine they would increase the tax rate.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he concurred; he was not inclined to consider a tax increase. He would rather reprioritize and make some tough choices.

Ms. Diorio responded that was part of the message, that they would have to manage within the number, which would preclude them from some of the things they may want to do.
Section XIII: FY2021 Budget Preparation

The Board received a briefing on the FY2021 operating budget calendar and public policy workshop agenda. Budget/Management Director Michael Bryant provided the Public Policy Workshop Proposed Agenda and Schedule.

Public Policy Workshop proposed agenda:

February 11 - Arts & Science Council (Board Topic of Interest)
   2030 CATS Transit System Plan
February 26 - Read Charlotte
March 5 - Republican National Convention Update (Regular Board Meeting)
March 11 - Equity & Inclusion Update (Board Topic of Interest)
March 17 - Budget Public Engagement
   Law Enforcement Service District (CMPD Update)
March 25 - Raise the Age
   FY2021 Proposed Fee Adjustments
   Department Strategic Business Plans
April 14 - Topics TBD
April 28 - Court Officials FY2021 Budget Request
   Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) FY2021 Budget Request
May 7 - Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools FY2021 Budget Request

FY21 Proposed Budget Operating Calendar:

May 1 - Recommended Budget Presentation of the Manager’s Recommended Budget
May 7 - Public Hearing The Board will receive resident’s comments on the Recommended Budget
May 12 - Recommended Budget Overview The Board will receive a detailed overview of the Manager’s Recommended Budget
May 26 - May 27 Straw Vote Session The Board’s straw vote session will occur on these dates
June 2 - Budget Adoption The Board.

CLOSING COMMENTS FOR THE CONFERENCE

The Board received closing remarks from the County Manager.

Chair Dunlap thanked everyone for the time and effort that went into the Annual Retreat.

Mr. Bryant thanked all those who helped with the retreat.

Dena Diorio, County Manager thanked the Board for all their input and stated they gave her some great direction.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
INFORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 5 PM - CH-14

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, February 04, 2020 at 5:14 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber Conference Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake

Absent: Commissioner Trevor M Fuller
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent Until Noted: Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-5925 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5926 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5927 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5930 by Commissioner Leake

STAFF BRIEFINGS - None

CLOSED SESSION

20-5922: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to Consult with Attorney.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:14 p.m. to go into closed session. The meeting returned to open session and immediately recessed at 5:23 p.m.

FORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - MEETING CHAMBER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions, the invocation, led by Chair Dunlap, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION - None

Commissioner Scarborough arrived at 6:11 p.m.
PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-5923: Public Appearance

The following person(s) appeared to speak during the Public Appearance portion of the meeting on the following topics:

- Shannon Emmanuel – February is American Heart Month/ Village HeartBEAT
- Reverend Jordan Boyd  Village HeartBEAT

Commissioner Leake thanked the Village HeartBEAT Inc. participants for attending the meeting. She applauded the group for winning $500,000 in 2019 from the national “Healthiest Cities, Healthiest Counties” competition, sponsored by the Aetna Foundation, the American Public Health Association and the National Association of Counties.

Commissioner Cotham thanked participants for attending the meeting and congratulated them for being the biggest group at the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day parade.

APPOINTMENTS

20-5921: Nominations/Appointments

Town of Mint Hill Board of Adjustment

One appointment for an extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) representative for a three-year term expiring December 31, 2022.

The Town of Mint Hill Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to recommend David Tirey for reappointment to the Board of Adjustment at their January 9, 2020 meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint David Tirey to the Town of Mint Hill Board of Adjustment.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:30 PM - None

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

MANAGER’S REPORT

20-5933  Billingsley Mixed-Income Housing

Jacqueline McNeil, Real Estate Manager, presented the Board with an update on Billingsley Mixed-Income Housing. She discussed plans for the financing, construction, and long-term property management of +/- 14 acres of County-owned property in the Grier Heights neighborhood that is being repurposed for mixed-income housing. The County has completed Phase I on a two-phase process.

Ms. McNeil said Phase I included the Request for Qualifications (RFQs); in Phase II, the County will accept Request for Proposals (RFPs). She discussed the project site, project research and project deliverables. She said a goal of the development was that it would be inclusive of a wide range of income levels with a focus on achieving long-term affordability. For-sale units would be required to be HouseCharlotte eligible and 75% of all units would be for households 120% AMI and below. She said there would be a 30-year affordability restriction on rental units and 15-year affordability requirement on resale of for-sale units.

Ms. McNeil said in December 2019, the County received four RFQs. From the four submissions, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership from Charlotte, North Carolina and Community Housing Partners from Richmond, Virginia have been invited to participate in the RFP process because of their development team and qualifications, relevant previous experience, conceptual development plans, conceptual property management plans, conceptual timelines and financial capability. She said staff would evaluate the RFPs for the redevelopment approach, relevant experience, the deal structure, financial soundness and the property management plan. She said the developer would be
selected in the Spring of 2020.

Commissioner Leake asked questions about the selection of Request for Proposal invitees, which was addressed. She also spoke on the importance of involving MWSBEs in the project.

Commissioner Jerrell said the project was a model for use of County owned land to address affordable housing needs. He said the County must guard against gentrification. He said it was important to be observant of the timeline to ensure costs remain as projected. He said he agreed with Commissioner Leake on the importance of MWSBE participation. He said this was an opportunity for home ownership that would help people build generational wealth. He said it is important that people be educated so they can take advantage of homeownership opportunities.

Ms. McNeil said the County has a requirement that the developer provide home readiness information to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Cotham asked why there were only two developers invited to submit RFPs, which was addressed.

The presentation was for information only, no action was taken on this item.

A copy of the report is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS' MONTHLY REPORTS - None

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS - None

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS - None

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously, to approve the following Consent items:

20-5924: Minutes

Approve closed session minutes of March 6, 2019 and minutes of the regular meeting held on January 22, 2020.

20-5932: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $4,510.99 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor; and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $995,545.78 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action was necessary to approve registered motor vehicle tax refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the statewide vehicle tax system and to approve tax refunds resulting from clerical errors, audits and other amendments, including revaluation appeals. There was an estimated accrued interest of $27,231.74 included in the $1,000,056.77 refunds.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

20-5925: Revaluation Reserve Fund

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the FY2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance and approve the FY2020 appropriation of $378,283 of fund balance held in the Revaluation Reserve Fund.
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(RVAL) for transfer and appropriation to the FY2020 General Fund (0001) County Assessor's Office Operating Budget.

Note: Funds have been approved for the Revaluation Reserve Fund to prepare for the next revaluation, now scheduled for 2023. This action provided for the expenditures by the Assessor in this fiscal year for enhancements for the appeal module and new sector maps to capture images of 325 and 279 sectors of imagery-neighborhoods. Funding will be requested as needed to continue preparation for the revaluation.

The proposed three-year budget is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**20-5926: Budget Amendment - Park and Recreation - Senior Health Insurance Information Program - Revenue Increase**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $2,195 to the General Grant Fund (G001) awarded from the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) within the Park and Recreation Department.

Note: Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation applied for grant funding in the amount of $12,000 from SHIIP. The actual amount awarded was $14,195. The grant would be used to continue existing Medicare Education and Counseling Services offered in three Park and Recreation Senior Centers, the Levine Senior Center, and four traditional recreation centers: Bette Rae Thomas, Mallard Creek, Southview and West Charlotte. This grant did not require matching funding.

**20-5927: Budget Amendment - Park and Recreation - Nancy Lieberman Charity Donation - Revenue Increase**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate a donation in the amount of $8,500 from Nancy Lieberman Charity to the General Grant Fund (G001) within the Park and Recreation Department.

Note: Nancy Lieberman Charities is a 501(c) 3 organization committed to promoting and developing healthy lifestyles and educational opportunities for young boys and girls from low-to-moderate income families. The organization made a $8,500 monetary donation to Park and Recreation to support the programming and supplies for basketball camps and clinics at Naomi Drenan Recreation Center.

**20-5930: Grant Application - North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services - Healthy Opportunities**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the submittal of a Healthy Opportunities grant for implementing the Healthy Opportunities pilot program up to $29,200,000 for a four-year period. The grant application is due February 14, 2020.

Note: The Mecklenburg County Health Department requested approval to apply for funding from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to secure funding to implement Healthy Opportunities pilot program. This was part of the NC Medicaid Transformation initiative. The Health Department would serve as the Lead Pilot Entity (LPE) for a region including Cabarrus, Gaston, Rowan, Stanly, and Union Counties. The Health Department would develop the regional Human Service Organization (HSO) network for non-medical services, monitor HSO performance, implement program improvement strategies, provide training and technical assistance, and ensure program integrity.

Funds would be used to build an innovative, whole-person centered, and well-coordinated system of care that addresses both medical and non-medical drivers of health. The pilot would aim to improve health outcomes for high-need Medicaid enrollees and improve integration of medical and non-medical services that address social determinants of health related to food, housing, transportation and interpersonal violence.
ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget Public Policy meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 2:34 p.m. in Conference Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent: Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Elaine Powell

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ARTS & SCIENCE COUNCIL

In preparation for the FY2021 budget cycle, members of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) identified the ASC as a topic of interest.

Mecklenburg County is a funding partner for the Arts and Science Council (ASC). The FY2020 Operating Budget includes $950,000 to fund the ASC’s Culture Blocks program which provides culture programming close to where residences live by utilizing parks and recreation centers, libraries, and community spaces. In addition, the FY2020 Operating Budget includes $350,000 to fund Studio 345, which is a free creative youth development program which empowers and inspires students to stay in school, graduate, and pursue goals beyond high school.

Jeep Bryant, President of the Arts & Science Council, presented an update on future funding needs and a plan of action since the failure of the ¼ cent sales tax referendum that would have generated dollars for arts and culture programs, parks and greenways, education programs and other services for Mecklenburg County residents. He said investment was necessary in areas of operating support, grants for artists, community programs, and education. He said it was important to invest in the cultural sector to provide workshops and training, promote arts and culture, and provide cultural planning.

He said it was important to invest in arts, science, and history programs to address issues of access, equity, racism, and structural inclusion. The ASC adopted a new Cultural Equity statement as its guiding principle in June 2019. This statement was a commitment to cultural equity in all investments, governance, and administrative policies and practices.

Mr. Bryant said between January and March 2020, the ASC was partnering with UNC-Charlotte’s Urban Institute to gather public input on arts and cultural needs, to host open houses and engage communities with less participation and investment, facilitate conversations with current and potential funding beneficiaries, and share the results with the community.

Mr. Bryant provided an overview of ASC grantmaking funding. He said in FY2020, the City of Charlotte provided 28.40% of ASC grantmaking funds, the private sector provided 33.66%, and the ASC provided a one-time endowment of 37.94%. He said in FY2009, the ASC provided $13,200,000 in community investments; in FY2020, due to declining funding, the ASC could only provide $7,000,000 towards community investments. He said the estimated amount the ASC could provide for FY2021 was $3,500,000.
Mr. Bryant said that the ASC partnered with Mecklenburg County for two programs, Culture Blocks and Studio 345. He provided a summary of program accomplishments to demonstrate how the investment is being used in the community. He said for FY2021, the ASC was requesting $1,500,000 in funding for Culture Blocks that would meet increased demand for programming in 10 geographic areas, create a panel process to allow community member to have greater input on funding decisions, and increase collaboration with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation and the Library. He said the ASC was requesting $500,000 for Studio 345 that would maintain current programming, continue summer programs, apprenticeship programs, and support direct employment of teaching artists. He said the ASC was requesting $1,000,000 in operating support grants that would strengthen focus on cultural equity by supporting grassroots arts, science, and history organizations with annual budgets under $1 million and provide a grant application and review process administered by financial and peer experts. He said the ASC would also request $450,000 for individual artists, $400,000 for school funding opportunities, and $400,000 in cultural vision grants. He provided several examples of how grant money has been spent in the community.

Mr. Bryant said in FY2020, when including Spirit Square Operations, Mecklenburg County contributed $2,050,000 in funding. He said for FY2021 the ASC was requesting $5,000,000 from the County. He said that the annual economic impact of investment in the arts amounted to $242 million in local economic impact and $21.6 million in local and state government revenue.

Commissioners discussed the presentation. Mr. Bryant responded to questions and comments from the Board of Commissioners. Commissioners requested Mr. Bryant provide a line item breakdown of ASC operating expenses.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

2030 CATS TRANSIT SYSTEM PLAN

In preparation for the FY2021 budget cycle, Commissioner Harden identified transit as a topic of interest.

In November 2006, the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) adopted the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan. This long-range plan consists of multiple rapid transit improvements in five corridors, a series of Center City improvements, and bus service and facility improvements throughout the region. The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) completed an integral part of the 2030 Plan with the opening of the LYNX Blue Line light rail service in 2007. In 2015, CATS opened CityLYNX Gold Line streetcar service. An extension of the Blue Line opened in March 2018, and Phase 2 of the CityLYNX is currently being constructed, with an expected service start date in 2020. In November 2016, the MTC approved and adopted a light rail alignment for Charlotte's Southeast corridor, the LYNX Silver Line. This line replaced the initially proposed 14-miles of bus rapid transit planned for the southeast corridor. With the newly adopted LYNX Silver Line alignment, CATS conducted analysis studies for the remaining transit corridors within the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan, including the LYNX Red Line/ North Corridor and LYNX West Corridor. On January 23, 2019, CATS presented its findings of both studies, as well as their impacts on Center City to the MTC during a presentation to update the 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan.

John Lewis, Executive Director of the Charlotte Area Transit System, provided an historical synopsis of transit and land use in the 1990’s. He said Mecklenburg County voters adopted the 2025 Transit/Land Use Plan in 1998. It provided a long-term growth management strategy, integrated rapid transit, expanded transit, and provided more transportation choices. However, population growth in Mecklenburg County exceeded early projections prompting the necessity for a new plan.

Mr. Lewis provided an update on the 2030 CATS Transit System Plan Status which included the LYNX Blue Line Light Rail, Sprinter Airport Enhanced Bus, CityLYNX Gold Line Phase 1, the construction of CityLYNX Gold Line Phase 2, and the development of the Charlotte Gateway Station. In addition, the LYNX Silver Line Light Rail Project and the Pineville/Ballantyne Rapid Transit Extension were recently approved additions. Finally, he said there would be studies forthcoming on the LYNX Red Line/ North Corridor...
BRT, Envision My Ride Bus Corridor, LYNX Silver Line Rail Trail, and the CATS/Centralina Council of Governments (C-COG) Regional Transit Plan.

Mr. Lewis said in 2019, the Charlotte City Council approved the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Ordinance. He said CATS, in partnership with the Charlotte Planning, Design, and Development Department, City of Gastonia, City of Belmont, Town of Matthews, Town of Stallings, and Town of Indian Trail received a $920,000 planning grant from the Federal Transit Administration for transit-oriented development planning. The grant would provide community education and engagement opportunities, TOD readiness and market study, station area planning, and implementation strategy. He said the 2030 plan would advance the system plan, it would provide additional transportation choices and access to economic opportunities, would create a framework for growth, and would increase regional economic competitiveness.

Commissioners discussed the presentation. Mr. Lewis responded to questions and comments from the Board of Commissioners.

The presentation and handout are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Dunlap announced that Dena Diorio, County Manager, won the Charlotte Business Journal's 2020 Most Admired CEO Award.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 4:51 p.m.
INFORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 5 PM - CH-14

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 5:16 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber Conference Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present:       Chairman George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda item(s) were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-5939 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5940 by Commissioners Leake and Rodriguez-McDowell
- 20-5941 by Commissioner Harden
- 20-5945 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5947 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5948 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5953 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5964 by Commissioner Leake

It was the consensus of the Board to move the proclamations from the Consent agenda to the Awards/ Recognition portion of the meeting.

STAFF BRIEFINGS - None

CLOSED SESSION

20-5960: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to Go into Closed Session to Consult with Attorney, Discuss Land Acquisition and To Prevent Disclosure of Information that is Confidential Matter.

RECESS

The Board went into Closed Session at 5:17 p.m. The meeting returned to Open Session and immediately recessed at 5:44 p.m. The Board then proceeded to the Meeting Chamber for the Formal Session.

FORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - MEETING CHAMBER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Formal Session on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at 6:02 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.
Chair Dunlap recognized Fire Chief Harley Cook was in the audience. Chief Cook served as a firefighter for 60 years.

20-5960: CLOSED SESSION - LAND ACQUISITION TRANSACTIONS

Chair Dunlap said there were three items presented during the closed session that required action in open session.

**Land Acquisition – Sugar Creek Greenway**

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of tax parcels 143-221-05 (+/- 7.2 acres) and 167-081-10 (+/- 6.2 acres) from Ross Land Company and Big B & G, LLC for a purchase price of $390,000 for Sugar Creek Greenway.

**Land Acquisition – Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project**

A motion was made by Commissioner Cotham, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of easements on a portion of tax parcel 025-221-08 from Northlake Buffalo, LLC, for a purchase price of $99,975. The County will acquire the following easements for greenway trail and stream enhancement projects on Long Creek: permanent greenway easement (+/- .254 acres), permanent access easement (+/- .479 acres), and temporary construction easement (+/- 0.108 acres).

**Land Acquisition – Auten Nature Preserve**

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of tax parcel 013-032-25 (+/- 6.802 acres) in the Town of Huntersville from Camel 64, LLC for expansion of Auten Nature Preserve for a purchase price of $310,000.

**AWARDS/RECOGNITION**

20-5928: North Carolina Department of Labor - Carolina Public Sector Star Award Recertification)

Cherie K. Berry, North Carolina Commissioner of Labor, presented Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation with the Carolina Public Sector Star Recertification Award.

20-5929: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) – Department Reaccreditation

Lee Jones, Park and Recreation Department Director, said Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation was recognized for achieving a 5-year reaccreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)

20-5947: Proclamation - Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated Centennial (Chair George Dunlap)

Commissioner Jerrell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Leake and carried unanimously to recognize the international and historically black Greek-lettered sorority that is Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated as they celebrate 100 years of service and adopt a Proclamation declaring January 16, 2020, as Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated Day.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
20-5948: Proclamation - League of Women Voters Day (Chair George Dunlap)

Commissioner Harden read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to adopt a proclamation declaring February 29, 2020 as League of Women Voters Day.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-5940: Joint Proclamation Declaring February 2020 Teen Dating Violence (TDV) Awareness and Prevention Month (Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell)

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adopt a joint proclamation designating February 2020 as Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-5961: Public Appearance

The following persons appeared to speak during the Public Appearance portion of the agenda on the following topics:

- Michael Wall – Saving Olde Providence Park Athletic Fields and Greenspace
- Clint Wimbish – CMS Funding and Preservation of Greenspace
- Don Monteith – Cooks Community Volunteer Fire Department (comments on file with Clerk)
- Jamir Johnson – Cooks Community Volunteer Fire Department
- Michael Mabron – Robinson Volunteer Fire Department (comments on file with Clerk)

Chair Dunlap announced there would be a meeting regarding volunteer firefighting on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center.

APPOINTMENTS

20-5919: Nominations/Appointments

Air Quality Commission

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term in the General Public category expiring August 31, 2022.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Kate Lewin to the Air Quality Commission as a General Public Representative.

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term in the Health Professional category expiring August 31, 2020.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to hold the position open until there was a candidate to fill the position.

Peter McGrath, Air Quality Commission Chairperson, spoke in favor of the appointment of Aaron Levy. He said Mr. Levy fulfilled the mandated public health category on the Commission. He said that it was a difficult slot to fill.
A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

Yes: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough

No: Commissioners Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

The appointment will be brought back to a future regular meeting for Board consideration.

Chair Dunlap said he had appointed an ad hoc committee to address the advisory board process. The next meeting was scheduled for February 24, 2020.

**Board of Equalization and Review**

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring March 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to reappoint Ken Hammond to the Board of Equalization and Review.

The Board considered two appointments for three-year terms expiring March 31, 2023. The following nominations were made:

- Cleve Daniels Commissioner(s) Harden and Powell
- Steve Glasgow Commissioner(s) Cotham
- Bailey Patrick Commissioner(s) Harden
- Chris Word Commissioner(s) Rodriguez-McDowell

Chair Dunlap appointed an ad hoc committee to conduct interviews. The committee members named were Commissioners Cotham, Harden, Leake, and Scarborough.

**Domestic Violence Advisory Board**

The Board considered one appointment to fill an unexpired term expiring April 30, 2021. The following nominations were made:

- Jessica Hare Commissioner(s) Dunlap and Jerrell
- Catherine Kennedy Commissioner(s) Rodriguez-McDowell

Commissioner Cotham requested Catherine Kennedy be removed from consideration; after speaking with her, Ms. Kennedy said her residence was in South Carolina.

The Clerk will research Ms. Kennedy’s eligibility for appointment before the next regular meeting.

This appointment will be brought back to the next regular meeting for Board consideration.

**Human Resources Advisory Committee**

The Board considered three unexpired terms expiring June 30, 2020, June 30, 2021, and June 30, 2022. The following nominations were made:

- Carol Ashby Commissioner(s) Powell
- Michael Bridges Commissioner(s) Cotham
- LaFonda General Commissioner(s) Harden
- Beth Solarick Commissioner(s) Jerrell

These appointments will be brought back to the next regular meeting for Board consideration.

**Information Services & Technology Committee**

The Board considered two appointments to fill unexpired terms expiring February 28, 2021.
The following nominations were made:

- Jermaine Scott    Commissioner(s) Leake
- Larry Scoggins    Commissioner(s) Powell
- Erin Summers      Commissioner(s) Harden
- Steve Wainstead  Commissioner(s) Jerrell
- Yongge Wang       Commissioner(s) Rodriguez-McDowell

These appointments will be brought back to the next regular meeting for Board consideration.

**Juvenile Crime Prevention Council**

The Board considered two appointments to fill unexpired terms expiring June 30, 2021. The following nominations were made:

- Tomika Moore      Commissioner(s) Jerrell
- Kimberly Sanders  Commissioner(s) Harden

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Tomika Moore and Kimberly Sanders to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

**Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee**

The Board considered five appointments for three-year terms expiring February 28, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to reappoint Kimberly Anderson, Rachel Brummert, Benita Mason, David Molinaro, and Regina Tisdale to the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee.

**Women's Advisory Board**

The Board considered two appointments to fill unexpired terms expiring April 30, 2021 and November 30, 2021. The following nominations were made:

- Piper Booth       Commissioner(s) Powell
- Shawana Burnette  Commissioner(s) Powell
- Jessica Hare      Commissioner(s) Rodriguez-McDowell
- Kathy Pate        Commissioner(s) Fuller

These appointments will be brought back to the next regular meeting for Board consideration.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:30 PM**

**20-5951: Public hearing for closing a portion of right-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller seconded by Commissioner Leake and carried unanimously to open the public hearing to hear comments with respect to the closing of a portion of right-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane.

Crystal Goode, LUESA, provided an overview of the agenda item.

The following persons appeared to speak at the public hearing:

- Catherine Rahon said that the residents had a lot of problems with ingress and egress into the subdivision while it is under construction and she wanted it addressed.
- Collin Brown, representing Mattamy Carolina Corporation, spoke in favor of the agenda item.
Commissioners asked the speakers questions for clarification.

Mr. Brown stated that the petitioner would meet with the residents to address their concerns.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to table the discussion until the next regular meeting.

Note: The current property owner, Mattamy Carolina Corporation, has petitioned to close a 1.51-acre portion of the public right-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane in the unincorporated area of Mecklenburg County. The portion of said right-of-way is located through the current and future development of the Ridgewater Subdivision Phase 4. As part of the development of Phase 4, the gravel roads will be abandoned and residents currently using these roads will have ingress and egress through the new paved roads of the approved subdivision. NCDOT informed the petitioner on March 22, 2019 that the portion of right-of-way petitioned to be closed are not State maintained.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-5943: Historic Landmarks Commission Annual Report

Jeff Parson, Chairperson of the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) made introductory remarks.

Jack Thomson, Executive Director Historic Landmarks Commission, presented the Board with the Historic Landmarks Commission Annual Report. The report addressed the following topics: the HLC’s role, a review of various designated historic landmarks, an overview of the design review process, an Excelsior Club landmark update, and an overview of preservation deed covenants. Mr. Thompson said in 2019, 92 design review applications were processed, of which two applications were denied.

Commissioners made comments and asked questions about the historic landmark preservation process.

A copy of the report is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

MANAGER’S REPORT

20-5963: Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners’ 2020 Federal Legislative Agenda

Note: The 2020 Federal Legislative Agenda was approved by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee on January 29, 2020; it was being recommended by the Committee for full Board consideration and approval. The Federal Legislative Agenda would also be shared with the Mecklenburg County Congressional Delegation during the National Association of County Officials March 2020 Winter Conference in Washington, D.C.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, introduced Starla Tanner, Legislative Liaison, and said the Board was being asked to take action on the proposed 2020 Federal Legislative agenda; the agenda would be shared at the NACo conference in March 2020.

Starla Tanner, Legislative Affairs Liaison, presented the Board with the 2020 Federal Legislative Agenda for discussion and adoption. The 2020 Federal Legislative Agenda is summarized below:

Health and Human Services

- Oppose new restrictions, or funding reductions for programs utilized to support self-sufficiency such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Social Services Block Grant, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program.
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- Promote passage of legislation reauthorizing the Older Americans Act (OAA), which supports services for seniors like long-term care, senior centers, nutrition, transportation, and caregiver support.
- Support funding for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF) for Public Health that flows from the federal level to states and local communities in a manner most effective to improve the public’s health.
- Support policies and funding that address opioid addiction, mental health and community violence issues.
- Support legislation related to gun violence prevention.
- Support integration of systems for effective benefit eligibility determination
- Protect Federal-State-Local Partnership for Medicaid and support increasing flexibility to support local systems of care.

Education and Community Development
- Seek federal support for universal child care initiatives such as Pre-K programs and Head Start.
- Support funding and policies that promote affordable housing opportunities and address homelessness.
- Support programs and funding related to HOME and Community Development Block Grants.

Infrastructure and Finance
- Support policies that allocate more funding for regional transit infrastructure, increased local decision-making authority and prioritized federal investments that increase economic development, mobility and safety.
- Support expansion of EPA funding for air quality and environment support programs.
- Support stable tax policies that benefit counties, such as the continued treatment of municipal bonds as tax exempt.

Public Safety and Criminal Justice
- Support federal funding and policies focused on illegal drug and alcohol abuse diversion.
- Support federal funding and policies that address juvenile crime prevention, domestic abuse prevention and mental health treatment.
- Support policies that ensure health treatments for pre-trial detainees.
- Support legislation prohibiting termination of federal health benefits of jail and prison detainees, including Medicaid and veterans’ benefits.
- Support efforts to reform existing bail structure by making greater use of non-financial pre-trial release options.

Commissioner Powell requested the addition of legislation that promoted watershed protection, stormwater management, and unique challenges faced by large urban areas.

Chair Dunlap responded that the Board could consider the addition for future priorities.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adopt the Board’s 2020 Federal Legislative Agenda.

The 2020 Federal priorities materials are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-5971: Overview of Partnership with Cardinal Innovations Healthcare

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said she had heard from some of the Board members about some questions regarding Cardinal and their relationship with the County. The County has had ongoing conversations with Cardinal about topics the County was trying to advance. Ms. Diorio said she wanted to come forward with an informational presentation to obtain feedback from Board members about the next logical steps to take. She introduced Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager and Consolidated Human Services Director.

Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager and Consolidated Human Services Director,
provided information regarding the partnership between Mecklenburg County and Cardinal Innovations Healthcare. He said Cardinal Innovations Healthcare was the Local Management Entity-Managed Care Organization (LME-MCO) for Mecklenburg County. As the County’s LME-MCO, Cardinal was responsible for managing, coordinating, facilitating and monitoring the provision of services for individuals with mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities and substance abuse issues.

Mr. Trotman reviewed the history of how LME/MCOs came to manage behavioral health services in Mecklenburg County, Cardinal’s funding streams and the number of individuals they serve, the experience of County departments that worked with Cardinal, and the experiences of some of the County’s key community partners. At the conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Trotman provided the Board with several recommendations to address service delivery; including, requesting Cardinal develop a formal improvement plan to better address the needs of our community; requesting that Cardinal take the lead on creating a shared system to track and monitor referrals and outcomes between the County, Cardinal and community service providers; identifying an external entity to assess the community’s behavioral health services capacity and provide recommendations for improvement; or, directing County staff to assess the capability and capacity of other MCOs in North Carolina. If determined that community’s needs would be better served, staff could explore whether it would be feasible to transition to another MCO.

Mr. Trotman noted that if the Board chose to disengage from Cardinal and align with another LME-MCO, the process defined in North Carolina Administrative Code stated a county must obtain the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services; written notice would have to be provided a minimum of nine months prior to the proposed effective date of disengagement. In addition, the County would also be required to publish the plan for disengagement and would have to accept public comments on the disengagement plan. The Secretary would have to issue a written decision to approve or deny the request for disengagement and realignment within 90 calendar days of receipt.

Chair Dunlap said he was working with the Manager to schedule representatives from Cardinal to address the Board.

Commissioners discussed the presentation.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS - None**

**STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS - None**

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS - None**

**CONSENT ITEMS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough seconded by Commissioner Fuller and carried unanimously to approve the following Consent items:

**20-5931: Revisions to the Mecklenburg County Air Pollution Control Ordinance (MCAPCO)**

Adopt revisions to the Mecklenburg County Air Pollution Control Ordinance.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Minute Book 48-A, Document #109.

**20-5935: Fleet Auction Revenue and Expenses**

(A) Recognize, receive and appropriate $83,899.40 from vehicle auction revenue to the Fleet Reserve Fund (9010) for future vehicle purchases; and (B) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $7,869.74 from vehicle auction revenue to the DSS Transportation Unit in the General Fund (0001).
20-5938: Grant Application - Carolinas CARE Partnership - Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA)

(A) Approve submission of a grant application to Carolinas CARE Partnership - Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA) for providing housing case management and short-term rent, mortgage and utility payments to prevent homelessness of qualified persons living with HIV/AIDS up to $36,000; and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate amount awarded.

20-5944: Amendment to Bylaws - Mecklenburg County Groundwater Advisory Committee

Approve an amendment to the Bylaws of the Groundwater Advisory Committee.

20-5946: Construction Contract - Toby and Mallard Creek Stream Rehabilitation and Water Quality Improvement Project

Authorize the County Manager to execute a construction contract with Blythe Development Company in the amount of $5,786,658.35.

20-5952: Appointment of Review Officers


The resolution is recorded in full in Minute Book 48-A, Document #110.

20-5954: Fire Station 10 Memorandum of Understanding Assignment

Authorize the County Manager to execute all documents necessary for Red Leg 6, LLC ("Red Leg") to assign its rights and obligations to Bishop Drive Associates, LLC ("Bishop Drive") pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") dated November 15, 2019 among the County, Red Leg, and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission ("HLC").

20-5955: Conservation Declaration - Stewart Creek

Authorize the County Manager to execute Conservation Declarations on County properties for the Stewart Creek Stream Restoration Project. The Tax Parcels include: 06905114, 06905113, 06905112, 06905111, 06905110, 06905109, 06905108, 06904143, 06902723, 06902722, 06902721, 06902720, 06902719, 06902718, 06902717, 06902716, 06902715, 06902714, 06902713, 06902712, 06902711, 06902728, 06902727, 06902710, 07114340, 07112205, 07107803, 07107804, 07103203, 07103691, 07104115, 06701401, 06701305, 06701405, 06701408.

20-5956: Land Acquisition - Stewart Creek Tributary II Stream Restoration and Greenway

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of a permanent greenway easement (±0.375 acres), temporary construction easement (±0.853 acres), and permanent storm drainage easement (±0.808 acres) on Tax Parcel 071-131-44 from Epic Realty Solutions for the future construction of the Stewart Creek Tributary II Greenway and Stream Enhancement project for a purchase price of $5,875 from the PAYG Land Acquisition Fund.
20-5957: Land and Easement Donation - Paw Creek Greenway

(A) Accept donation of tax parcels 05522281 (+/-.720 acres), 05522283 (+/- 1.527 acres), 05522337 (+/- 1.530 acres), and 05522338 (+/- 6.929 acres) from the Paw Creek Village Homeowners Association, Inc. for the construction of Paw Creek Greenway in the City of Charlotte, and (B) accept donation of a permanent greenway easements on tax parcels tax parcels 05522589, 05522493, 05522681, and 05522588 Paw Creek Village Homeowners Association, Inc. for Paw Creek Greenway.

20-5958: Land and Easement Donation - Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project

(A) Accept donation of Tax Parcel 025-221-18 (+/- 1.418 acres) from Northlake West Real Estate Investors, LLC for the construction of Long Creek Greenway in the City of Charlotte; (B) accept donation of a permanent access easement (+/- .081 acres) on Tax Parcel 025-221-17 from Northlake West Real Estate Investors, LLC for access and ongoing greenway and storm water maintenance; and (C) accept donation of a temporary construction easement on Tax Parcel 025-221-17 (+/- .090 acres) from Northlake West Real Estate Investors, LLC for the construction of Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project.

20-5959: Tax Refunds

Approve refunds in the amount of $50,385.83 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-5962: Minutes

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: December 10, 2019 Budget/Public Policy Meeting, December 17, 2019 Closed Session Meeting, January 14, 2020 Budget/Public Policy Meeting, January 22, 2020 Closed Session Meeting, and February 4, 2020 Regular Meeting.

20-5939: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase/Decrease)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) Amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to approve a decrease of $264,631 state revenue from Mecklenburg Partnership for Children of Mecklenburg County in the general fund (0001); and (B) amend the 2019-2020 Annual budget ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $113,750 in federal/state revenue from NC Department of Health and Human Services for Breast and Cervical Cancer (BCCCP) in the general fund (0001).

Note: (A) The Health Department receives funding from Smart Start of Mecklenburg County for funding for Healthy Families Mecklenburg to provide intensive interventions with at-risk first-time mothers to promote healthy parenting skills and early childhood development. The funding was reduced in FY20 based on a new state funding model which would not allow the program to be sustained. Therefore, the Health Department transitioned all current patients/families to other department programs, transitioned all current staff to other appropriate vacant positions, and terminated the grant, returning the remaining award to Smart Start in the amount of $264,631.

(B) The NC Department of Health and Human Services awards federal funds to the department to support public health programs. The department received notification that funding for Breast and Cervical Cancer has been increased in the amount of $113,750. The additional funding will be used to supplement the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program increasing the number of women who can be screened.
20-5941: Grant Application - Grants to Replace Aging Diesel Engines (GRADE) - LUESA

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) Approve submission of a grant application to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for Diesel Emission Reduction Act grant funding up to $500,000 for the County's Grants to Replace Aging Diesel Engines program; and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate amount awarded to the General Grant Fund (G001).

Note: Mecklenburg County Air Quality (MCAQ) is applying for $500,000 in Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) grant funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The DERA funding will be used to provide sub-grants to replace heavy-duty diesel vehicles and equipment in the Charlotte region as part of the County's Grants to Replace Aging Diesel Engines (GRADE) program. GRADE will be administered by current MCAQ staff, and all matching funds will be provided by equipment owners who participate in GRADE (no County funds will be required).

While local air quality has improved, the Charlotte region only narrowly meets that health-based standard for ground-level ozone. Ground-level ozone is formed through the photochemical reaction of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds. Reducing NOx emissions is the best strategy to reduce ground-level ozone concentrations in Southeastern states, like North Carolina.

Continuation of the GRADE program helps the Charlotte region maintain compliance with federal health-based standards for ground-level ozone and aligns with the Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) Strategic Business Plan. GRADE is specifically identified in LUESA's Strategic Business Plan as part of the strategy to "develop and implement incentive-based and voluntary programs to improve local air quality" (LUE3.1.A). MCAQ has successfully administered the GRADE program since 2007 and has brought over $8 Million in grant funding to the Charlotte region for equipment repower and replacement projects. As of June 30, 2019, GRADE projects have reduced over 900 tons of NOx in the Charlotte region.

20-5945: Grant Application - NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) Affirm submission of grant application to the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) for the restoration of Long Creek Phase III from I-485 to Oakdale Road up to an amount of $500,000; (B) authorize the County Manager to negotiate and enter into a grant contract with CWMTF; and (C) upon receipt of grant, recognize, receive and appropriate awarded amount from the CWMTF to Grant Fund G705.

Note: The County's Storm Water pay-as-you-go Capital Program was expanded in FY05 to restore degraded surface water quality conditions and to enhance aquatic habitat in our streams. Since 1997, the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) has provided more than $20,000,000 in funding for projects in Mecklenburg County. Past projects include land/easement acquisition, wetland construction, stream-bank and overbank re-vegetation, and stream restoration.

Staff seeks to continue to pursue CWMTF grant funding for the restoration of Long Creek Phase III from I-485 to Oakdale Road near Oak Hills Park (see attached map). The $500,000 grant will be used for design services and will be reimbursed to the County once construction is underway. Long Creek Phase I (I-77 to Rumney Court) was awarded a $400,000 CWMTF grant in 2017 and construction is expected to begin in conjunction with the greenway in early 2020. Phase II (Rumney Court to I-485) was awarded a $500,000 CWMTF grant in 2019 and is expected to be constructed along with greenway in 2021. Phase III will restore approximately 8300 feet of Long Creek to improve aquatic habitat and reduce in-stream erosion. Storm Water will coordinate closely with Park and Recreation on greenway alignment and grading for future trail.
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20-5953: Duke Energy Lighting Service Contract - Martin Luther King Jr. Park

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to approve a 3-year service contract with Duke Energy in the amount of $2,446.20 ($67.95 per month) for parking lot lighting at the entrance of Martin Luther King Jr. Park.

Note: Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation will contract with Duke Energy to add 5 wooden light poles with overhead lines to add security lighting to both entrances of the park along one side of the parking lot. Neighbors have requested lights to allow for better sight lines into the park for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department after dark.

20-5964: 2020 Board of County Commissioners’ Meeting Schedule Amendment

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to amend the 2020 Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners’ Meeting Schedule to Add a Joint Board Meeting with Gaston County, Wednesday, March 11, 2020, 12:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., CPCC Harris Campus, 3210 CPCC Harris Campus Drive; Change the date of the second Budget Public Hearing originally scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2020 to Wednesday, May 13, 2020, and indicate the time and location of the Budget Straw Votes, 8:00 a.m., Valerie C. Woodard Center, 3205 Freedom Drive.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
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BUDGET/PUBLIC POLICY

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget Public Policy meeting on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 2:38 p.m. in Conference Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

READ CHARLOTTE

Mecklenburg County is a lead funder and creator of Read Charlotte. Read Charlotte is a community initiative that unites families, educators and community partners to improve children’s literacy from birth to third grade with a goal of doubling reading proficiency from 39% to 80% by 2025.

In FY2018, the Board approved $300,000; $100,000 a year for three years to support the Read Charlotte Data Collaborative which will use common assessments to standardized program evaluation and professional development to create a data driven culture, drive performance improvement and enhance the effectiveness of providers participating in the collaborative. Also, in FY2016, the Board approved $500,000; $100,000 over a five-year span to support the initiative to double the percentage of 3rd grade reading students at grade level by 2025.

Commissioner Fuller arrived at 2:42 p.m.

Munro Richardson, Executive Director of Read Charlotte, introduced board members. He asked Commissioners if they had received invitations to the 3rd #Annual CommitTo80 Event.

Dr. Richardson said Read Charlotte was designed as a 10-year initiative to bring the community together to improve children’s literacy. He highlighted accomplishments in the first five years of the program and provide a strategic overview of the organization's future plans. He said Read Charlotte had three objectives: get more birth to kindergarten children ready to learn to read, get more kindergarten to third-grade children on track to reading proficiency, and prepare the system to scale impact. He said the organization is focused in five areas: support great teaching, encourage home literacy routines, provide high-quality, targeted tutoring, build home libraries, and stop summer reading loss.

Dr. Richardson said over the past five years the organization had focused on creating system changes through creating stronger community connections, focusing on effective programs and practices, and focusing on strong implementation and continuous improvement. He said for the first year and one-half, Read Charlotte staff spent over 1,000 hours researching what improves literacy, gave over 300 talks with the community to discuss what works to improve literacy, held workshops on creating system changes and engaged four working groups to develop plans.

Dr. Richardson said from July 2017 through December 2018, Read Charlotte partnered with Reach Out & Read, Atrium Health, and Novant Health to make over 122,000 well child visits, an increase of 30,000 in low-income communities. He said it was an important way to connect with young families. He said from September 2018 through January 2020 Read Charlotte implemented Helps 1:1 Tutoring Works to conduct targeted evidence-
based fluency tutoring for second and third graders, amounting to over 9,200 tutoring
sessions. Mr. Richardson said Read Charlotte had engaged the community in the effort
to increase literacy. He said the organization sent out over one million text messages
with tips and advice to different families multiple times a week. Read Charlotte partnered
with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library to train over 3,600 adults how to conduct active
reading. He said active reading was a proven way to build language, vocabulary and
comprehension by reading with the children. He said the organization created the Home
Reading Helper in 2018 to provide families with “go to” literacy resources. Since its
establishment, there have been over 115,000 visitors to the site where they can access
videos, activities, and reading guides that translate into over 100 language. Partnering
with the YMCA, Read Charlotte also created the Summer Literacy Infusion which avoided
the loss of literacy skills by 95% in 2017, by 74% in 2018, and by 85% in 2019.

Dr. Richardson said the organization wanted to help children that couldn’t benefit from or
Bright Beginnings, Head Start or NC Pre-K. He said Read Charlotte established Ready
to Read. He said the organization partnered with Child Care Resources on a three-year
project to provide child care centers with literacy coaches, student data, and an evidence-
based literacy curriculum to improve children’s emergent literacy skills. He said, as a
result, three-year old children improved rhyming, sound identification and picture naming
and four-year old children increased their sound identification. He said that Read
Charlotte was building more powerful partnerships in a very targeted and coordinated
way using the transformation network.

Dr. Richardson said the funding community was working together to support literacy
efforts. Read Charlotte obtained $6.8 million in strategic funding from 2015-2019 from
different sources. Mr. Richardson talked about the Data Collaborative, a partnership with
Charlotte Bilingual Preschool, Ada Jenkins Center, Above & Beyond Students, The
Learning Collaborative, the YMCA, Bethlehem Center of Charlotte, Thompson Child and
Family Focus, the YWCA, Lakewood Preschool, and Freedom School Partners. The
Collaborative saw a gap between research on data and literacy instruction and sustained
practice in regular routines. The Collaborative established an instructional library,
visualization tools for student data, and an online portal that provided a reading success
pathway, evidence-based practices (instruction practices used to best develop skills),
implementation drivers (allow organizations to implement best practices), and
improvement processes (processes that require data to learn and improve in an
organization).

Dr. Richardson said since July 2017, Read Charlotte has provided over 290 coaching
sessions, conducted group trainings, trained partners in common literacy assessments,
created five new tools and created customized end-of-year reports for each organization.
In addition, the organization has assessed over 3,700 students with pre- and post-tests,
conducted process improvement cycles, conducted classroom observations,
strengthened literacy practices and program implementation, and developed data-driven
continuous improvement routines.

Dr. Richardson said in 2019, there was no improvement in reading scores for third-grade
children in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS). He said those children did not get the
full impact of the Read Charlotte program since they started kindergarten in 2015. Since
then, there was no standard phonics program across CMS. Only since 2019 has CMS
introduced a standard literacy curriculum in the school district. He said system change
started more slowly than anticipated. Mr. Richardson said Read Charlotte’s top five
priorities were: the evaluation of Read Charlotte’s first five years, teacher support for pre-
kindergarten to third-grade literacy instruction, expanded birth to five-year old efforts and
kindergarten to three-year old family literacy nights, deepened and expanded fluency
tutoring, and expanded summer reading campaigns. He said that they still have a lot of
work to do to meet the goal of 80% by 2025.

Commissioners commented on the presentation. Mr. Richardson responded to questions
and comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Leake asked for the total amount that Mecklenburg County allotted
towards education.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said staff would get the Commissioners that information.
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The presentation and handouts are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

______________________________ ____________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk                                               George Dunlap, Chair
INFORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 5 PM - CH-14

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Wednesday, March 04, 2020 at 5:16 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber Conference Room of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
         Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
         Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
         Commissioner Susan Harden
         Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
         Commissioner Elaine Powell
         Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent Until Noted: Commissioner Mark Jerrell
         Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-5966 by Commissioners Leake and Jerrell
- 20-5967 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5970 by Commissioners Leake and Jerrell
- 20-5983 by Commissioners Leake and Jerrell
- 20-5995 by Commissioner Leake

STAFF BRIEFINGS - None

CLOSED SESSION

20-5977: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to Prevent Disclosure of Information that is Confidential Pursuant to NCGS 105-259 (GS 143-318-.11 (a) (1)), Land Acquisition, and Consult with Attorney.

Commissioners Jerrell and Rodriguez-McDowell arrived at 5:21 p.m. during the closed session.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:17 p.m. to go into closed session. The meeting returned to open session at 6:06 p.m.

Mark Foster, Assistant County Manager, announced his retirement. He will continue to work through June 30, 2020. Mr. Foster said that he would be happy to serve the County in any capacity at any time if needed.

The Informal Session recessed at 6:09 p.m. The Board then proceeded to the Meeting Chamber for the Formal Session.
FORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - MEETING CHAMBER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Formal Session on Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 6:16 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions, the invocation, led by Commissioner Harden, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

MANAGER’S REPORT

20-6019: NEW ITEM: Coronavirus Update

Dena Diorio, County Manager, introduced Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, to provide an update to the community.

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on the Novel coronavirus (COVID-19). She said the Public Health Department was following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance and was in collaboration with federal and state partners. She said there were no cases of the virus in Mecklenburg County. She said there was one confirmed case in North Carolina that had a direct link to Seattle. She said there was no confirmed community spread in North Carolina, but that could change. She said Public Health is the lead department with this event; the first level of response is prevention. She said the public can protect themselves by practicing good handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve, not with hands, avoiding touching your face, staying home when you are sick and getting the annual flu shot. She said the second level of response is with quarantine of those individuals that have been potentially infected for 14 days and isolation of those with confirmed cases of the virus. Ms. Harris said her department is working on policies and procedures for County employees, communicating with the public on a regular basis and have established a COVID-19 information line at 980-314-9400.

Commissioner Leake requested that Ms. Harris dialogue with the Board’s Health and Human Services Committee about future developments and requested that the presentation be made available for dissemination to the public.

Chair Dunlap recognized Boy Scout Troop 1 from the Episcopal Church of the Holy Comforter who were in the audience.

20-5977: CLOSED SESSION – LAND ACQUISITION TRANSACTIONS

Chair Dunlap said there were two items presented during the closed session that required action in open session.

Land Acquisition – North Mecklenburg Regional Recreation Center Right-of-Way

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of a portion of Tax Parcel 005-021-08 (+/- 0.0389 acres) from John Clark Howard and Betty Baker Howard, for right-of-way acquisition, in the Town of Cornelius for road improvements at the North Mecklenburg Regional Recreation Center site for a purchase price of $6,200.

Note: Acquisition of this property will allow the County to make road improvements as part of the North Mecklenburg Regional Recreation Center construction project and then dedicate the right-of-way to NCDOT for maintenance and repair.
Land Acquisition – Northeast Area Parkland Acquisition

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcel 047-131-57 and 047-131-99 totaling +/-22.824 acres in the jurisdiction of the City of Charlotte from Summit Avenue URP, LLC for a purchase price of $2,500,000.

Note: Acquisition of this property will provide land for a community park within an area that has been identified as lacking park amenities.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-5978: Public Appearance

There were no speakers that appeared before the Board.

APPOINTMENTS

20-5942: Appointments

Air Quality Commission

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term in the Health Professional category expiring August 31, 2022.

- Aaron Levy was removed due to not meeting attendance requirements in 2019. He submitted a letter requesting reinstatement.

Commissioners Powell and Leake spoke in favor of reinstating Mr. Levy.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to reappoint Aaron Levy to the Air Quality Commission.

Aaron Levy was reinstated to the Air Quality Commission.

Domestic Violence Advisory Board

A vote was taken on the following nominee for one appointment for an unexpired term expiring April 30, 2021:

- Jessica Hare

Note: Catherine Kennedy, who was nominated on February 18, 2020, was deemed ineligible to serve because she resided outside of Mecklenburg County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Jessica Hare to the Domestic Violence Advisory Board.

Jessica Hare was appointed to the Domestic Violence Advisory Board.

Human Resources Advisory Committee

A vote was taken on the following nominees for three appointments for unexpired terms expiring June 30, 2020, June 30, 2021 and June 30, 2022:

- Carol Ashby
- Michael Bridges
- LaFonda General
- Beth Stolarick
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The Human Resources Advisory Committee unanimously voted to recommend Beth Stolarick.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to appoint Beth Stolarick to the Human Resources Advisory Committee.

A vote was taken on the remaining nominees:

- Carol Ashby, 5 votes by Commissioners Harden, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
- Michael Bridges, 2 votes by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake
- LaFonda General, 7 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough.

Carol Ashby, LaFonda General, and Beth Stolarick were appointed to the Human Resources Advisory Committee.

Information Services and Technology Advisory Committee

A vote was taken on the following nominees for two appointments for unexpired terms expiring February 28, 2021:

- Jermaine Scott, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Harden, Leake, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Larry Scoggins, 4 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Harden, Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Erin Summers – no votes
- Steve Wainstead, 5 votes by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough
- Yongge Wang, 1 vote by Commissioner Powell

Jermaine Scott and Steve Wainstead were appointed to the Information Services and Technology Advisory Committee.

Women’s Advisory Board

A vote was taken on the following nominees for four appointments for unexpired terms expiring April 30, 2021, and one appointment for an unexpired term expiring and November 30, 2021:

- Piper Booth
- Shawana Burnette
- Jessica Hare
- Kathy Pate

* Note: Jessica Hare was appointed to the Domestic Violence Advisory Board earlier in the meeting, she was no longer eligible for consideration.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to appoint Piper Booth, Shawana Burnette, and Kathy Pate to the Women’s Advisory Board.

Piper Booth, Shawana Burnette, and Kathy Pate were appointed to the Women’s Advisory Board. The remaining vacancy will be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.
PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:30 PM

20-5993: Continued Public hearing for closing a portion of right-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane

Note: On February 18, 2020, the public hearing was opened; the Board of County Commissioners heard public comments and continued the public hearing until March 4, 2020.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, said he had spoken with the attorney representing Mattamy Homes; they had spoken with the residents of the community. There is a request to continue the public hearing until June 16, 2020 so they can work out an arrangement with the roads that may satisfy the Board.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Powell and carried unanimously to continue the public hearing to June 16, 2020.

The current property owner, Mattamy Carolina Corporation, has petitioned to close a 1.51-acre portion of the public right-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane in the unincorporated area of Mecklenburg County. The portion of said right-of-way is located through the current and future development of the Ridgewater Subdivision Phase 4. As part of the development of Phase 4, the gravel roads will be abandoned and residents currently using these roads will have ingress and egress through the new paved roads of the approved subdivision. NCDOT informed the petitioner on March 22, 2019 that the portion of right-of-way petitioned to be closed are not State maintained.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

MANAGER’S REPORT

20-5999: Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties Joint Resolution

Chair Dunlap said Gaston County adopted the resolution on February 25, 2020. He read the resolution in its entirety.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to adopt the Mecklenburg and Gaston Counties Joint Resolution Supporting a Collaborative Approach to State and Federal Legislative Advocacy.

Commissioners discussed the resolution and collaboration with Gaston County.

Starla Tanner, Legislative Affairs Liaison, said the meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 12:30 p.m. at the CPCC – Harris Campus.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A Document #111.

20-6017: Budget Amendment - Donation for MeckCounts 2020 Census (Manager’s Office)

Kim Babgy, Manager’s Office, provided of overview of Census 2020 efforts. She said her office had found it important to distinguish between MeckCounts and the US Census; the US Census Bureau conducts the census, while MeckCounts is a local campaign focused on ensuring all residents in Mecklenburg County are counted. She said the US Census Bureau would be mailing information about how to respond to the census beginning in mid-March. She underscored the significance of Census Day on April 1, 2020; any person living at your address on that day should be counted as part of your household.
Ms. Babgy said completing the census convenient, it would be available online for the first time this year and there would also be census sites in place for the entire month of April. She said MeckCounts has been communicating to residents that the census is required, convenient, safe, and important. She said the census was important because it gathers important data that can impact Mecklenburg County residents. For instance, the Charlotte Area Transit System used census data to assist in the redesign of the entire bus network which resulted in improved connections to employment areas and better service to underserved populations.

Ms. Babgy said MeckCounts was targeting historically underrepresented populations including young children, highly mobile persons, racial and ethnic minorities, non-English speakers, underserved persons, persons experiencing homelessness, undocumented immigrants, persons with low trust of government and the LGBTQ population. She reviewed projected low response rate areas of Mecklenburg County that would require more communication regarding the importance of participating in the census. She provided the Board with a summary of key elements of the marketing and communications campaign which was being led by the Complete Count Committee. The community communications blitz included “ambassadors” who helped with messaging the importance and the timing of the census; street teams that would distribute and place posters, yard signs, and fact sheets in key locations like barber shops, grocery stores, laundromats, community centers, parks and recreation rec centers, etc. She said MeckCounts held Census workshops in the fall with community-based organizations, the Health Department, Social Services, and others to identify barriers for reaching the historically underrepresented population and to build solutions for those barriers. She said there were stickers, posters, yard signs, banners and more that were being distributed throughout the County. She said there was a communication toolkit available at meckcounts2020.com.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said Mecklenburg County had partnered with Cox Media and census partners, Bank of America, Atrium Health, and the City of Charlotte in a custom targeted multi-media campaign focused on targeting historically underrepresented populations. The effort would use social media, livestreaming, and three television stations, WSOC-TV, Telemundo, and WAXN-TV, to bring awareness and promote the importance of the census.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to 1. amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate a $50,000 donation from Bank of America for MeckCounts Census 2020 marketing and outreach to the General Fund (0001); 2. amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate a $25,000 donation from Atrium Health for MeckCounts Census 2020 marketing and outreach to the General Fund (0001); and, 3. amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate a $25,000 donation from the City of Charlotte for MeckCounts Census 2020 marketing and outreach to the General Fund (0001).

Commissioners made comments on the presentation.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell requested a census map with an overlay of the districts.

Chair Dunlap reminded Commissioners that they could participate in an informational video.

Ms. Diorio said MeckCounts would be available to send representatives to talk to community groups.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS

20-5988: Department Management Monthly Reports

Monica Allen, Strategic Planning & Evaluation Director, provided the Board with the written monthly department management reports for February 2020.

A copy of the reports is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – None

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – None

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-5970: Social Work Appreciation Month Proclamation

Commissioner Leake read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring March 2020 as "Social Work Appreciation Month" in Mecklenburg County.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously, to approve the following Consent items:

20-5965: Construction Management @ Risk Contracting Methodology for County Projects

Authorize the use of the Construction Management @ Risk (CM @ Risk) contract methodology for the Detention Centers-Modernization Project as the best construction contracting delivery method for the project.

20-5973: Minutes


20-5976: ITEM REMOVED - Amendment to Rules - Mecklenburg County Residential Swimming Pool Rules

This item was removed from the agenda by staff prior to the meeting. It will be brought back to a future regular meeting.

20-5980: Additional NCDOT Grant Funding for McDowell Creek Greenway

Recognize, receive and appropriate additional NCDOT grant funding awarded by the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) to fund construction of McDowell Creek Greenway from Chilgrove Lane to Highway 73 in the amount of $1,792,000.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A Document #112.
20-5981: Additional NCDOT Grant Funding for Stewart Creek Greenway

Recognize, receive and appropriate additional NCDOT grant funding awarded by the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization (CRTPO) to fund construction of Stewart Creek Greenway from Rozzell's Ferry Rd. to State St. in the amount of $1,444,844.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A Document #113.

20-5982: Interlocal Agreement for the Stewart Creek Tributary Greenway and Lakewood Water Quality Improvement Project

Adopt a resolution approving an interlocal agreement between the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County for a reimbursement of up to $2,500,000 to the County for construction costs of the Lakewood Water Quality Improvement Project.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A Document #114.

20-5989: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $4,917.22 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor, and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $1,184,799.56 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

20-5966: JCPC Raise the Age Expansion Funds

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to approve additional funding allocation as recommended by the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

Note: The JCPC would allocate the remaining FY20 funds in the following manner: DASH Mentoring: Additional $31,650 for total funding amount of $239,044; SHIFT Restitution: Additional $26,310 for total funding amount of $346,254; Tresports: Additional $20,000 for total funding amount of $261,532; and, CMPD Youthful Diversion Program: Additional $41,377 for total funding amount of $132,944.

20-5967: Duke Energy Lighting Service Contract - Albemarle Road Recreation Center

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to approve a 3-year service contract with Duke Energy in the amount of $701.64 ($19.49 per month) for walkway lighting at Albemarle Road Recreation Center.

Note: Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation will contract with Duke Energy to add a wooden light pole to add security lighting for the walkway that leads to the neighborhood at the side entrance of Albemarle Road Recreation Center. Neighbors requested lights to allow for better sight lines into the park for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department after dark and for walking home from evening programs.

Commissioner Jerrell spoke in favor of the action.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.
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20-5983: Lease Agreement - Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office Field Operations Unit

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a fifteen (15) year lease with Lissom Properties LLC, Jeff Meier LLC, and Gulf Drive LLC for the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office Field Operations Unit.

20-5995: Decline Right of First Refusal - Amay James Elementary School

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to decline the County's statutory right of first refusal to a +/- 10.71 acre portion of Tax Parcel 145-224-11 (Amay James Elementary School building and surrounding grounds) that is owned by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education ("CMBE") to permit CMBE to enter into a lease with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte ("UNCC").

Note: North Carolina G.S. 115C-518(a) requires local school boards of education to give local boards of county commissioners the first opportunity to acquire any school-owned real estate that is proposed for disposal. The property has been reviewed by the Park and Recreation and Asset and Facility Management Departments and staff has determined that there is no County need for the facility and grounds during the term of the lease.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Leake commended Chair Dunlap for his 2020 State of the County speech.

With there being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

________________________________  ______________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk                               George Dunlap, Chair
CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget Public Policy meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 2:34 p.m. in Conference Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent until Noted: Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Fuller arrived at 2:37 p.m.

CARDINAL INNOVATIONS HEALTHCARE PRESENTATION

Cardinal Innovations Healthcare has served as Mecklenburg County's Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO), overseeing the funding, authorization and management of behavioral health services for County residents since April 2014. Cardinal's leadership provided an update to the Board of County Commissioners about the organization's partnership with Mecklenburg County in response to a presentation given to the Board of County Commissioners on February 18, 2020.

Trey Sutten, Chief Executive Officer of Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, provided an overview of the presentation. He said he would discuss shared goals; a proposed plan of action; an overview of cardinal innovations; caring for children; mobile crisis services; and next steps. He said Cardinal and the County shared four important priorities: health, wellness, safety, and permanency for those which we provide care. He said they wanted to align the continuum of services for children who are involved with social services and/or the justice system, to ensure immediate, appropriate placement with immediate, treatment resources; create shared understanding of the Medicaid and public safety net system, that serves county residents with behavioral health, substance use disorders, and intellectual/developmental disabilities; collaborate across multiple agencies and stakeholders to prioritize and address gaps in the care continuum.

He said the proposed plan of action included collaborating with DHHS as a third party to jointly develop a mutually agreeable plan of work to address issues; engage third party consultants; work with Cardinal and stakeholders; develop a child-welfare model; convene county commissioners from our 20 counties with Cardinal and DHHS leadership; discuss systemic challenges and potential solutions; establish a frequency and forum; provide updates to the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners; engage with crisis leadership to further discuss issues raised and work collaboratively to address concerns.

Mr. Sutten provided a map of North Carolina showing the 20 counties where Cardinal provides services; the total catchment population was 3 million, covered lives were 825,000. He said the impact in 2019 was $808 million in total care costs; 2,928,399 claims processed; $2.4 million daily payments to providers; 62,687 calls to our Access...
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Call Center; 97.8% of claims were approved; 139,678 authorization requests; 892 employees; and 895 fully contracted network providers.

Mr. Sutten provided an overview of Cardinal’s approach to spending. He said between 2018 and 2019 there was a $16 million care cost increase and a $10 million decrease in administrative costs. He said that Cardinal lost a combined $68 million in fiscal years 2018 and 2019. He said over that time Cardinal decreased administrative spending and other non-care costs by $10 million, while at the same time, Cardinal increased care costs by $16 million. He said that Cardinal Innovations had made significant investments in Mecklenburg County. He said Cardinal received $222.9 million in revenues from Medicaid, State, and federal dollars but spent $235.6 million in Mecklenburg County, which resulted in a loss of $12.7 million. He said that amount did not include $1.1 million spent on community organizations and other events, like conferences and trainings. He said this community was important to Cardinal.

Deitrick Williams, Chief Operation Officer, said he joined Cardinal 10 months earlier and wanted to join the new leadership of Cardinal to pursue the organization’s mission. He said managed care was complex work that required collaborative solutions, and he would address how it related specifically to children.

Mr. Williams said it was a multi-faceted system of payers and providers. He said Cardinal’s role as the LME/MCO for Mecklenburg County included management; oversight and funding of behavior health services; core services, including screening, assessment, referrals, emergency services, service coordination, consultation, prevention and education, and care coordination to help clients assess appropriate services. He said Cardinal’s responsibilities were bound by statute and contract included ensuring access to clinically appropriate treatment for individuals with behavioral health; substance use disorder; and intellectual/developmental disabilities; adherence to state service definitions for all services, recruiting, retaining, and monitoring qualified providers to render services, maintaining crisis response.

Mr. Williams said Mecklenburg County’s role included providing certain behavioral health services that fill-in the gaps of service for the community, examples include substance abuse services in the jails and shelters; treatment courts; case-management for individuals diagnosed with HIV; and domestic violence services. He said the County’s responsibilities included ensuring placement for youth in custody, deploying MOE funding to supplement, behavioral health/IDD needs, maintaining accurate and timely Medicaid eligibility records, and serving as the payor when ordered by the court to pay for juvenile services.

Mr. Williams said that children thrive in least restrictive environments. He said over the past 10 years, there was a 37% reduction in the U.S. in the number of children in custody living in congregate care. He said federal regulations required a child case plan include a safe placement in the least restrictive setting (e.g. family, relative, foster) and close the parent(s) home when reunification was the goal. He said the NC Department of Health and Human Services required that medical necessity be met for residential levels of care; State criteria requires the clinician to clarify why a less restrictive environment is not clinically appropriate. For many children, therapeutic, foster-care services and wraparound services can support positive outcomes. When residential treatment is clinically indicated, consensus supports that residential treatment should focus on short-term stays, and residential settings should be working with children and families on skills needed for successful transition to the community. That is not something Cardinal can control on its own. That is where providers and the community have a role. If we work together, apply these standards across the system, this is really where we have the opportunity to make significant improvements in the individuals that we serve.

Mr. Williams said institutional care produced poorer outcomes than family-based settings and was more expensive and posed roadblocks to the timely achievement of permanency. He said there were 437,000 children the U.S. foster care system, out of which 4.4% of these children are placed in group homes or institutions. There are 1,253 children in the Mecklenburg County foster care system, of which 15.4% of these children are in residential settings. He said this was not the fault of any entity; it was a result of
the system that was in place. He said DSS, providers, and managed care partners worked tirelessly, but all needed to collaborate on a single, common approach to managing and improving these outcomes. He said Cardinal staff met with County staff recently to find ways to work together; they have hired a consultant to help develop what we call a child welfare program.

Mr. Williams talked about children in DSS custody that were receiving treatment. He said 100% of the 70 children in need of emergency placement received treatment from providers within the network. He acknowledged there were possible delays in treatment and said there were opportunities within the network to increase opportunities. He said when he was hired, his first charge was to build a network. Cardinal has a network of over 900 providers spanning over 20 counties; the work had been started. He said there was more direct focus needed towards their therapeutic foster providers, foster homes, and residential providers. He said there were concerns about denials and that when the clinical recommendation came in, Cardinal made an alternative decision. There was an appeal process to address those issues; most denials were not appealed, and the one that was appealed caused Cardinal to reverse their position after receiving additional information. He said that there was more work to do, and one day was too long when it came to providing care to children; however, in a system that was complex and bifurcated, the way to decrease the timeliness to access is with all parties at the table discussing options and opportunities.

He said in North Carolina there were many gaps in services, and there was work to be done to improve those gaps and create services. Cardinal worked with county managers, stakeholders, DSS, and others to close treatment gaps. In the past few years, Cardinal had implemented the Enhanced Crisis Response pilot that provided intensive rapid support to individuals without current service providers; funded a 16-bed, crisis center in Mecklenburg County in partnership with Monarch; expanded the contract with New Hope Psychiatric Residential Treatment; and added eight services to the child and adolescent array since 2014, including family centered treatment, in-home therapy services, enhanced crisis response, hi-fidelity wraparound, B-3 transitional living, and MST for youth with problemized, sexual behavior.

Senitia Goodman, Assistant General Counsel, said when caring for justice-involved youth, partners in the juvenile justice system were convening to address long-term care needs. There were several pain points when it came to the perceived gaps in services. It was necessary to acknowledge that Medicaid could not do it all; for instance, stable housing was critical, and Medicaid could not pay for it unless there was a connection to a treatment service. There were barriers in the system that could not be resolved at the LME/MCO level. She said there were several key areas where the partnership could be improved including, timing of referral, assessment and engagement. Cardinal established a contract with Juvenile Justice Behavioral Health Partnership to ensure court involved youth receiving timely assessments, ideally within 48 hours, then providing service or a referral. Another area was ability to tailor services to youth; providing trauma-informed care and combining services. The third opportunity was to jointly develop programming aimed at prevention and early identification of treatment needs; opportunities to better partner with CMS to identify high-risk youth before there is contact with law enforcement. She stated that when treating adults, there was also a Medicaid barrier. Medicare did not provide medical care during custody. In recognition, Mecklenburg County and Cardinal contracted with Wellpath to provide services to residents with the Mecklenburg County Detention Center and assisted with service linkage to behavioral healthcare upon release into the community. When Medicaid was reinstated, Cardinal maintained a large provider network for outpatient care. She said when an adult is in custody, there was a SOP that required prioritizing of care. She said the law allowed 14 days to review and determine treatment upon notice. She said Cardinal developed a system in Mecklenburg County where individuals in custody were reviewed within 3 days. She said the third-service gap was funding for Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), the type of treatment that paired therapy with certain medications in order to assist individuals that have substance abuse disorders. Cardinal had received additional funding to devote to MAT and Cardinal facilitated a transitional care workgroup called the Mecklenburg County Substance Abuse Disorder Task Force on Opioids. The workgroup was comprised of a multi-disciplinary team that would support individuals transitioning from detention centers and hospitals.
She said this was not just a Cardinal problem; it was a community problem that required a community response.

Mr. Williams said Cardinal was mandated to provide crisis services. He said Cardinal is responsible for administering Mobile Crisis Services, and Our Access line was staffed by licensed clinicians and operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week year-round. Dispatch averaged over 5,000 calls per month. There are very, very specific and strict requirements to answer those phones, with abandonment-rate requirements with clinicians, and all of that is articulated in our contract with Department of Health and Human Services, and every month, we meet those measures. He said to ensure anyone in a crisis is seen as soon as possible, dispatchers determine if the individual is receiving an enhanced service with a first responder, contact MCM for that area to respond, request an estimated time of arrival, access clinician contact the member every 30 to 45 minutes to ensure safety and reassess, request a call to inform dispatch the staff has arrived. If no call within 90 minutes, Access staff attempts to contact the MCM or dispatch law enforcement to respond and ensure safety until MCM can arrive (wellness check), request a disposition once the member is assessed, and if the member remains in the community Access, follows up to ensure they were connected to services.

Mr. Sutton said the new leadership for Cardinal Innovations was driving accountability and transparency. The former leadership of Cardinal pre-paid for services in good faith; Cardinal has shifted to a fee-for-service model. He said to ensure the most members were receiving care, Cardinal had transitioned part of their payment model based on three environment factors: single-stream reduction, funding transparency, and a continuous, feedback loop. He said since 2015, statewide, the NC General Assembly had cut state funding by $502 million, including $131 million to Cardinal. He said it was vital that Cardinal reach as many people as possible and shift to a more transparent and higher-accountability, payment model. He said in order to be compliant with state policy and mitigate future cuts, Cardinal Innovations had to demonstrate that the dollars given for Medicaid spending and state-funded spending were being used for member care. He said the change in the reimbursement methodology did not decrease utilization of services; instead, it resulted in higher units of service being provided. Cardinal had not stopped payments and would continue to make payments for services rendered. He said they had to do a better job of being fiscally responsible and hold providers and managed care organizations accountable. He said there were opportunities to better communicate and collaborate.

Mr. Sutton discussed next steps. He reiterated that the proposed plan of action was to collaborate with DHHS, as a third party, to jointly develop a mutually-agreeable plan of work; to address issues; to engage third party consultant to work with Cardinal and stakeholders; to develop a child welfare model; to convene county commissioners from our 20 counties with Cardinal and DHHS leadership to discuss systemic challenges and potential solutions; to establish a frequency and forum to provide updates to the Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners; to engage with Crisis leadership to further discuss issues raised and work collaboratively to address concerns.

Commissioners asked questions and Ms. Goodman, Mr. Sutton, and Mr. Williams responded to comments and questions.

Commissioner Harden said the presentation did not include information on health outcomes. She asked if Cardinal collected feedback from providers and requested to see the feedback.

Commissioner Fuller said he was a member of this Board when the State revised the State statutes and Mecklenburg County could no longer provide behavioral health services. Five years later, there were the consequences to those actions. The North Carolina General Assembly was to blame for creating the current problem and Cardinal was asking Mecklenburg County to correct the problems.

Commissioner Leake requested a copy of the Cardinal budget with all line items. She also requested the zip codes of children that received a delay in service.
Commissioner Cotham said the Board was not happy about the disbanding of MeckLINK. She said that Medicaid expansion would help some of the problems.

Commissioner Powell said she believed in teamwork and did not believe in excuses.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she wanted to address the 127 children who experienced County-funded, emergency placement in FY2019.

Chair Dunlap said the Board should add the subject to the State legislative agenda. He said this was the beginning of a process. The County and Cardinal would continue to work together, but if they could not find a common ground, there would be a recommendation from staff on what direction Mecklenburg County should take.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

____________________________ ____________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk                                               George Dunlap, Chair
SPECIAL MEETING: JOINT MEETING WITH GASTON COUNTY

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of County Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in a special joint meeting with the Gaston County Board of Commissioners on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 12:49 p.m. in the Central Piedmont Community College Harris Conference Center with Chair Dunlap and Chair Philbeck presiding.

Mecklenburg County:
Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan B. Harden
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Absent: Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
AUN: Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Gaston County:
Present: Chair Tracy L. Philbeck
Commissioner Chad Brown
Commissioner Jack B. Brown
Commissioner Allen R. Fraley
Commissioner Bob Hovis
Commissioner Tom Keigher
Commissioner Ronnie Worley

OPENING STATEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRS

Chair Philbeck and Chair Dunlap made opening statements regarding the value of this first, joint meeting between the Mecklenburg County and Gaston County Boards of Commissioners and the opportunities to coordinate and collaborate.

Commissioners made introductions followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Scarborough arrived at 12:48 p.m.

UPDATE ON CORONA VIRUS

Dena Diorio, County Manager, gave an update on the coronavirus. She said the Governor issued a State of Emergency in North Carolina and that at the moment, Mecklenburg County did not have any cases of COVID-19. She said they knew that could change at any minute and that they were following the guidance of the State of North Carolina and the CDC. She said they were doing a lot of preparedness and today they would be activating their Emergency Operation Center in conjunction with Emergency Management. She said they had been holding daily calls with Atrium, Novant, CMS, MEDIC, Emergency Management and the City of Charlotte Manager to talk about messaging and to make sure that they were inline in terms of the messaging and information that we give to the public. She said they were reaching out to long-term care facilities, because they knew that the State had indicated new guidance that visitation should be limited, so that was something that they were looking at. She said they were also reaching out and working with their homeless providers to understand the implications of any of our homeless
neighbors who may be in need of medical care and they were also working with our child-care providers, understanding their preparedness and making sure they have what they need.

She said as for preparedness for the detention facilities, they were making sure their contracts were doing elevated cleaning and sanitizing in the detention center. She said there was a series of meetings between the hospitals, the health department and emergency management around process and communication, and they thought those were two very critical components, by making sure that processes were clean and tight, so if there would be a positive case, they would understand exactly what happened to that person. She said they have done a series of what-if scenarios to make sure they understood that and made sure that they communicate to the public in a very coordinated fashion.

She said they were looking at services that serve seniors, in the event they needed to discontinue any services and were looking at opportunities for alternative services for seniors, congregate feeding sites, senior nutrition sites, home-delivered meals in lieu of them going to our sites and online recreation opportunities.

She said there was a lot of discussion around the concept of social distancing; however, there were no cases in Mecklenburg County, and in the event that there was a case, they would make decisions then. She said they were not recommending that large events be canceled. She said she would keep them updated as the situation evolved.

Kim Eagle, Gaston County Manager, said there was a hotline that just started today. She said that was new for Gaston County. She said there were no confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Gaston County and she was on daily calls with Caromont, the primary hospital provider, the health department, social services, and other providers to particularly reach out to the aging population, so we are monitoring day-to-day as well.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR REGIONAL SUCCESS – JOINT RESOLUTION REGARDING COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

Chair Dunlap said that he and Chair Philbeck highlighted some of the things that they have agreed to work on collectively and the reason why that is so important to them is because they both are part of the State Associate, both have federal and statewide legislative agendas. He said they knew that there is strength in numbers and when they collaborate, they stand as one unit when they speak to the State and for the federal representatives, senators, and legislators. That is why it is so critically important for us to have this meeting today.

He said he just wanted to talk about reestablishing the committee that controls the waterways between the two counties; how important it was because that was where our drinking water comes from and we know that Gaston County is just as concerned about good, clean drinking water as we are, so we thought that could be something that we could agree on.

He said there has been discussion throughout the State about privatizing ABC. He said he was sure the citizens of Mecklenburg County appreciate all of the dollars that are generated from the ABC and how those dollars are invested through the community. We can talk about making sure it is still regulated through our various counties to help with our budgets and the other activities that benefit from the funds generated from that tax revenue.

Chair Philbeck said he wanted to highlight that before they ever met, they found some agreements; regardless of our size, being on this side of the river or that side of the river, that there was mutual interest and mutual need that both counties could work on. He said we both support legislation that grants counties greater flexibility; we both support legislation that provides funding to counties, and we both oppose legislation that removes authority from counties. He said we both oppose legislation that creates unfunded mandates directly or indirectly that shifts cost to counties, and we both support the stable, continued treatment of municipal bonds as tax exempt. He said we support the North Carolina General Assembly’s reinstatement of the Mountain Island Lake Commission to work on water-quality, shoreline issues, and boating safety. He said we have to agree on what that looks like, but I think that is the framework, and think important is that we both support the North Carolina General Assembly
legislation to study the Homestead Act threshold and need examining eligibility for seniors, government employees, and refunding funds to counties to hold counties harmless, and Chairman Dunlap already spoke of the ABC Commission. He said again, I think this is a huge start for us to be able to work together; I like that the Boards approved this before we even met, and I think that says a lot and sets the foundation of where we go from here.

TRANSPORTATION & CONNECTIVITY

Juan Garcia, Senior Transportation Planner, Gaston County, said this was an historic moment for both counties. He talked about growth trends, why transportation and connectivity mattered, and how to be involved.

Mr. Garcia said the Centralina Council of Government said this was “…one of the fastest growing regions in the country, there is recognition that long-term transportation planning efforts should be accelerated if we are to remain a leading competitive region nationally and globally.” There were about 117 people who move to the Charlotte metropolitan area every day; he said according to the Census Bureau, in 2018, there were about 2.6 million people living in the Charlotte region, it would not be long before the population increased to three million residents.

Why Transportation and Connectivity Matters

Economic Development

Mr. Garcia stated well-connected transportation systems enable citizens to get to their jobs and helps businesses to move their goods of course. Now, close to half of the working population in Mecklenburg County, about 52% and 45% in Gaston County, commute to work every, single day and spend approximately 26 minutes commuting each way. That is out of peak hours; it is probably more than that between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m.

Public and Environmental Health

Mr. Garcia said in addition to the improved public and environmental health, not only do these systems connect citizens to healthcare services, to the stores and education opportunities, they can reinforce safety and encourage more active lifestyles and improve their quality.

Connectivity for Residents and Businesses

Mr. Garcia said transportation systems connect citizens to the jobs, education, healthcare, the stores, and all of their daily activities. Connectivity between Gaston and Mecklenburg Counties is essential, particularly in the western section and the east part of Gaston as new development patterns actually are showing up right now.

Regional Level Collaboration

Mr. Garcia said regional collaboration was very important to the Centralina Council of Governments; there are multiple other different organizations and agencies involved, including municipal and county planning departments, the Charlotte Area Transportation System, Gastonia Transit, Mecklenburg County Transit System, MTS, Gaston Access, and the Charlotte Douglas International Airport. He stated regional collaboration is being driven not only by the boundary crossing population growth that we have had but also the expectations by the federal government and its transportation agencies.

Mr. Garcia discussed some of the projects they were currently working on. The widening of I-85, funded by NCDOT, would go from six lanes to eight lanes and last for approximately 10 miles. The LYNX Silver Line was proposed to be 26 miles from Mathews to Belmont and is in pre-project development. Catawba Crossings Project was the proposed third, parallel crossing connecting Gaston to Mecklenburg County. The Catawba River Bridge grand opening was in 1928, and the current bridge was built in 1933. It would go from four lanes to six lanes and is funded by NCDOT. The construction would take place in FY2022. The High-Speed Rail is approximately 280 miles between Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, and the Federal Railroad Administration is the lead federal agency on this project. Based on public input and
results of tier 1 analysis, the FRA would recommend a preferred alternative between those three.

CONNECT Beyond: A Regional Mobility Initiative

Mr. Garcia mentioned how Commissioners could get involved, stating technology, as well as organization and geographical boundaries and develop implementation tools that also included improved mobility and access, effective and regional coordinated transitive investments and transit operations to meet the need of the growing population in the region. Mr. Garcia suggested getting involved with the MPOs and RPOs; we have about five different MPOs and RPOs in our region.

Chair Philbeck made note that the Charlotte Douglas Regional Airport can be reached coming from Gaston County more quickly than coming from mostly any part of Charlotte, which is a huge economic selling point. Belmont had been experiencing huge growth and at the same time the infrastructure, when it comes to roads, is not what it needs to be. He said you may not know this, but we have the PNN line in Gaston County. It was a short line, but that line runs all the way to Charlotte. The State put in millions of dollars to update that line, and I think that if we work together on that line, we could easily see trolleys and some transportation back and forth. He said it is really ready to go and a lot of people did not know about it.

Commissioner Harden said the Metropolitan Transit Commission represented the seven towns. She said our regular participation in the regional transportation organization and Metropolitan Transit Commission and dealing with these issues was really important. She said she hoped the counties continued to work together, because these were big goals, and they had to be one voice as they moved forward.

Commissioner Brown mentioned that they would have to stay in touch with NCDOT and have constant dialogue going on, so it would not get pushed aside for later projects, which had happened before.

Commissioner Leake asked if transportation was a part of Mecklenburg County’s responsibilities or a city service?

Commissioner Harden said the City of Charlotte had oversite of the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), but it had to be a county consideration because ensuring residents had access to human services was really important, and secondly, the cities are going to come to the counties for funding. She said it was important that we have our voices at that table.

Commissioner Leake asked about taxation to provide transportation from Gaston County to Mecklenburg County. She said the airport was connected to her district on Wilkinson Boulevard and she had questions about funding sources and amounts and what was being asked of Mecklenburg County. She said county responsibilities dealt specifically with human services.

Chair Dunlap said our advocacy, more than anything, was vitally important and they had to understand and appreciate how important it was for the counties to collect for economic development for transportation and other things. He said the point was if we are going to control the carbon footprint and reduce that, we have to figure out other ways to do that other than automobiles.

Commissioner Powell said not everyone could afford a car and insurance, so it was important for the counties to have connectivity for residents to increase quality of life and overall livability and making it economically feasible for people to get around. She said from her life experience, it had a direct impact on public health through air quality, and it was their responsibility to ensure they were paying attention to this. Together we could advocate for this and the funding matters at every level. The City is responsible for a lot, but public health and air quality was in our area.

Chair Philbeck mentioned roads, connectivity, infrastructure, even though the counties do not raise tax money to do those things, they were extremely important to human services.

Commissioner Fuller said they could not reach their goals without a regional approach, and to make that work, they had to have the infrastructure that allows counties to connect with each
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other. He stated, no, it was not a direct county responsibility; in North Carolina, counties were not responsible for roads, but it certainly affects the work that we do, and we have to have transportation options that are not roads.

Commissioner Hovis said when we talk about transportation in our counties, we do have a vested interest. He stated they had to get emergency vehicles to homes and to individuals. We had roads that were done before we had a subdivision ordinance. They had county roads that were public right of ways that were not paved or even made to state standards to be paved, and emergency vehicles could not use those roads to respond to an emergency; those were the number one calls and conversations that he heard. It would take $17 million dollars just to bring those roads to the State minimum of just getting them to gravel. He said York County had a project, Pennies for Progress, and Pole Branch Road, went from Gaston County to York County. He said there was all this investment in infrastructure, bridges being built, and it was not coming from South Carolina. It was coming from residents of York County. It passed by two percent, and in less than 18 months, the citizens asked for it to be back on the ballot. He said they were amazed of the effectiveness of those local funds developed in York County, remained in York County, and accelerated meeting their road needs. He suggested that was a model for our region, and he wanted to make changes in the General Assembly to be able to allow counties to supplant those funds. Those were the kinds of actions that the two counties could work together to change in Raleigh and set a model for the state for addressing some of our statewide needs.

Commissioner Brown said this came up several years ago with the Gaston County Commissioners, and it did not get out of committee.

SHARED WATERS

Starla Tanner, Legislative Liaison, gave a presentation on Shared Water. She covered four topics: Mountain Island Lake; Mountain Island Lake Marine Commission; Current Lake Oversight; and Consideration. She said Mountain Island Lake was created in 1924 by Duke Energy and was located between Lake Normal and Lake Wylie. It was the smallest of the three man-made lakes in the area, and it was part of the Catawba River Chain of 11 lakes. Its surface area was 3,281 acres, and it extended 69 miles of land, 50 in Mecklenburg County, 10 miles in Lincoln County, and nine miles in Gaston County. She stated its original, primary purpose was to generate energy. It provided drinking water for Charlotte; Cornelius; Davidson; Huntersville; Matthews; Mint Hill; Pineville; Gastonia; Mount Holly; Dallas; Ranlo; McAdenville; Cramerton; Lowell; and Stanley, and 103 million gallons of water were pumped from the lake on a daily basis. She said it served as a regional destination, as well the Duke Energy Hydro Station; Latta Park Nature Preserve; Mountain Island Lake Educational State Forest; boat docking areas; and fishing platforms.

Ms. Tanner said that in 1997, the Mountain Island Lake Marine Commission was created by the NC General Assembly and required participation by Gaston, Mecklenburg, and Lincoln Counties, with the following Statement of Purpose: to preserve and protect water quality; preserve and protect property; preserve and protect wildlife; and to protect and promote public safety. In 2014, the Commission dissolved, with the withdrawal of one of the Counties.

She reviewed the current Mountain Island Lake oversight. Duke Energy FERC license holder and management of land and water use. The North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission regulated boards, hunting, and fishing. They maintained recreation areas and No Wake Zones. The North Carolina Forest Service managed Mountain Island Education State Forest and supported public-private partnerships, and the Counties had authority over non-structural stormwater control measures.

Ms. Tanner informed the Boards that in 2017, the Riverbend Preserve Project LLC purchased roughly 850 acres of land in Gaston County between NC 16 and CSX off Killian Road. It was anticipated that the project would include an industrial business park, neighborhood-oriented retail and restaurant use, and residential communities. She said this project was still very much in progress and would include rezoning and infrastructure agreements with Gaston and Lincoln Counties.
She also mentioned that there was an opportunity to reestablish the Marine Commission. The bill, which was still pending, did not require participation of all counties, but rather counties who have adopted a resolution with key stakeholders.

Chair Dunlap said he was on the Marine Commission at the time of its dissolution, and part of the concern was that they did not agree on how to regulate Mountain Island Lake. He said one thing we had some say about was where the buoys were located. Chair Dunlap expressed support for exploring how they could reestablish the Commission.

Commissioner Leake asked which County dropped out of the Commission and why.

Chair Philbeck said that from Gaston County’s point of view at the time, they felt from a lot of the Commissioners who were on the Board, that one of the issues was that the Commission was overregulating and had an appearance of a body that was not elected, on the lake, to the point that the citizens who lived on the lake were complaining. They actually had several police departments that control Mountain Island Lake that were complaining about some of the regulations, because number one, some of them could not even be enforced. He said from Gaston County’s perspective, some regulation was overzealous, where you had a group of individuals who loved the lake but took it too far. He said we had Commissioners who were complaining, and the Gaston County Police Department, who do a lot of patrolling, were saying that they had a problem there. The Board, County Manager, and Attorney decided that since they couldn’t work together, they would dissolve. He stated that he did not live in the past. He said the last thing he wanted to do was pass that responsibility off to this committee, and this committee was making decisions that the elected officials get blamed for, that never really come to the Board for a vote. He said it would be helpful to create legislation, create an advisory board, and let them come before the Commissions and say, here are the issues and the problems, and let us vote on that. He said if we are going to take the heat, good and bad, we should do that, and I am not going to take the heat for something that I do not get to vote on.

Chair Philbeck said he could work with Commissioner Powell on the matter. He said giving the Commissioners the authority to regulate the lake and make the decisions and collaborate together.

Commissioner Powell agreed with Mr. Philbeck’s recommendation.

Commissioner Scarborough remarked that she was glad the Boards could come together to talk about the lake in a positive manner.

Chair Philbeck suggested that he and Commissioner Powell and both Gaston and Mecklenburg County Attorneys come up with some language. After which, the two counties would have their respective Boards review the language; if they could agree, they could speak with Representative Torbett, who is in Belmont and covers that area. It would be powerful to offer this together as two different counties, with this Representative, and as Republicans and Democrats.

Commissioner Powell agreed to the meeting.

Commissioner Worley suggested that if Chair Philbeck and Commissioner Powell were going to meet, they should invite Lincoln County to be at the table, since they were part of the original commission.

Chair Philbeck said he thinks he would offer that, and if they decide not to, we would move forward; if they decide to, we would work with them.

Chair Dunlap said I think that at the time the Commission was dissolved, they were still willing to participate, so thank you Mr. Worley.

Commissioner Jerrell said he was hoping that Mr. Philbeck would appoint someone as an intergovernmental liaison, so the two counties could continue the dialogue and determine the issues that needed to be brought to both Boards, so they could continue to have this consistent communication moving forward.
Chair Philbeck said Gaston County Board does not have a lot of committees; we make decisions as a Board, but I do see the need for that. What I had planned on doing is getting with the Commissioners and appointing an intergovernmental committee that can actually work and that way you would have a counterpart.

Commissioner Powell said that the Mountain Island Lake Riverbend Preserve Project was something that she thinks the counties would need to work together on to protect water quality in Mountain Island Lake. She stressed if it was not done right, it would present a huge threat to water quality. She said we have done everything that we can to protect two of the main arteries into Mountain Island Lake, and we have really worked hard on our side to protect Gar Creek. She said I hope that we can work together to protect Johnson creek.

Chair Philbeck said he would like to direct the Gaston County Manager to work with staff, your counterpart, and Mecklenburg County to take the discussions and input to draft a framework that we can begin to construct so we have action steps. Perhaps once the Managers work together and share the action steps, the Boards could come back at a later time. He said he was sure there were other issues the Boards could work together on.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Dunlap and Chair Philbeck thanked staff and everyone for agreeing to participate in the discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:14 p.m.
INFORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 5 PM – CONFERENCE ROOM 267

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 5:12 p.m. in the Conference Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Present via Telephone: Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to allow Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to participate in the meeting remotely and to vote on all matters before the Board at the meeting.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-5895 by Commissioner Powell
- 20-5986 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5990 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-5991 by Commissioners Leake and Rodriguez-McDowell
- 20-5996 by Commissioners Leake, Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell
- 20-5998 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6004 by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell
- 20-6005 by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell
- 20-6006 by Commissioner Jerrell
- 20-6009 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6013 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6023 by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell

It was the consensus of the Board to move the proclamations from the Consent agenda to the Awards/ Recognition portion of the meeting.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

20-5984: Mecklenburg County Facilities Upgrades

Mark Hahn, Director of Assets and Facilities Services, provided an overview of proposed security upgrades to various Mecklenburg County facilities. He provided an update on the County’s security program and examples of proposed screening solutions. Mr. Hahn said the Phase I capital cost was $2,792,000; the remaining phases capital cost would be approximately $4,850,000, for an approximate total of $7,642,000 in capital costs. He said the FY2021 operational cost was $1,630,000; the remaining phases would be approximately $4,808,000, for an approximate total of $6,438,000 in operational costs.

Mr. Hahn said an architectural/engineering firm was being selected to design facility upgrades, including security features at numerous Mecklenburg County facilities over a multi-year implementation. He said this was a sole source purchase; under G.S. 143-129(e)(6) formal bidding requirements did not apply when "performance or price competition for a product is not
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available." Accordingly, sole sourcing for this procurement was necessary, because there is only one supply source.

Mr. Hahn said the County would lease the Evolv Express – Frictionless Smart Firearm and Bomb Detection System. The technology would provide real-time detection for guns and other weapons; the technology had the fastest throughput, screening for over 3,600 people per hour; the system was frictionless, no stopping or emptying pockets or removing bags was necessary. The system would provide target searches, allowing real-time views of where the potential threat was on a person’s body, and the technology would be smarter over time with Evolv Cortex Al Software Platform.

He said the lease was for a 48-month term; the cost per unit was $1,900 per month ($22,800 per year), plus $1,250 for installation per unit. The four-year lease total for eight express units, with an installation fee of $739,600.

Mr. Hahn responded to comments and questions from Commissioners.

A motion was made Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Harden to (A) approve FY2020 Authorization for Facility Upgrades to Government Facilities Capital Project Ordinance in the amount of $2,792,000 (Fund PAYGO) for a multi-year project to install facility upgrades, including security features, at various Mecklenburg County facilities; (B) authorize the County Manager to negotiate fees and execute a contract with Newcomb & Boyd, LLP for Architectural and Engineering Services for the Mecklenburg County Facilities Upgrades project. In the event negotiations with Newcomb & Boyd, LLP are unsuccessful, approve negotiations with the alternate firm; (C) Approve the sole source procurement of the Evolv Express detection system as authorized by G.S. 143-129(e)(6); and, (D) Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute any and all necessary documents to lease Evolv Technology for the acquisition of Evolv Express detection system units for upgrades to various Mecklenburg County facilities.

The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Jerrell and Powell

A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document 118.

CLOSED SESSION

20-6014: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to Discuss Land Acquisition.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:50 p.m. to go into closed session in Room 267. The meeting returned to open session and immediately recessed at 6:07 p.m.
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FORMAL SESSION

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM – CONFERENCE ROOM 267

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, reconvened in Formal Session on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 6:20 p.m. in Conference Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions, the invocation, led by Commissioner Harden, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Chair Dunlap said he wanted to start the meeting by saying thank you; a debt of gratitude is owed to the County Manager and staff for all of the work that they have done.

MANAGER’S REPORT

20-6027: Arts & Science Council Update

This item was removed from the agenda.

20-6028: Budget Public Engagement Update

This item was removed from the agenda.

20-6041: HELPCHARMECK.ORG Contribution

Dena Diorio, County Manager, introduced Laura Clark, President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Central Carolinas; Mark Marsicano, Foundation for the Carolinas; and Heath Campbell, Metrolina Regional President of Truist Financial Corporation, who spoke in favor of the contribution. The donation would provide support to individuals by providing funding to non-profit providers meeting residents basic needs for shelter, food, or utilities due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Commissioner Harden said she wanted to amend the action to increase the contribution from $1 million to $1.3 million in order to provide sufficient support to the towns in Mecklenburg County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to appropriate $1,300,000 from General Fund (0001) balance for contribution to the HELPCHARMECK.ORG Fund for COVID-19 Support.

20-6029: Coronavirus Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Department Director and Emergency Management Director, provided an update on the County’s COVID-19 response. She said to date there were 11 cases; the numbered almost tripled since the weekend. She said more testing was being conducted, and she expected the number of infections to increase. She said that testing had been a concern. It was limited in the community but was improving significantly. She said the hospitals were in good shape; she reminded the public to call ahead before going to urgent care or the emergency room. It was necessary to protect our first responders. She said the Emergency Operations Center had been open over a week, and the County had many different partners and was working with the State. She said that the County was closing gyms, health clubs and theaters; she said no decisions had been made regarding childcare centers.

Commissioners made comments and asked Ms. Harris questions about the response. There were comments regarding increasing testing, volunteering, university resources, reducing barriers to unemployment, Health Department staffing, disseminating information to the community, the protection of the jailed population and detention officers, providing portable toilets and washing stations in the Uptown area for the homeless population, and the County’s reserve fund.

Dena Diorio, County Manager said to address the COVID-19 response, our leadership had worked diligently to implement alternative staffing models to support County needs and reduce exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Staff had revised County telework policies to expand the number of employees that can work from home. The goal was to have as many employees as possible that could work from home do so. She also proposed an emergency leave policy that would provide employees the ability to take time from work and not use their current leave time. Finally, the County eliminated certain face-to-face public transactions if there were safer alternative methods. She requested the BOCC approve the three action items.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to (A) adopt a resolution amending Mecklenburg County Human Resources Policy and Procedures - Section I: Board Policy to include Emergency Leave; (B) approve the accelerated purchase of 850 laptops, docking stations and peripherals in the amount of $1,547,148.36 to allow necessary County telework for employees and call centers in response to COVID-19 continuity of operations ("COOP") needs. This equipment was to be included in the FY2021 Technology Reserve as part of its normal, evergreen replacement strategy and will be redeployed following the COOP response. Appropriate up to $172,300 from the General Fund (Fund 0001) for contractor support for deployment costs associated with these purchases. The General Fund (Fund 0001) will be used for these purposes; and, (C) authorize the Temporary Suspension of In-Person Tax Payments during the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document 117.

CLOSED SESSION ITEM - LAND ACQUISITIONS

20-6014: Closed Session – Land Acquisition – Southwest Community Resource Center

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of the following Tax Parcels (with a purchase price totaling $2,570,000) for construction of the Southwest Community Resource Center: 169-151-01 through 169-151-17, 169-151-32, 169-155-15 through 169-155-32, and 169-155-37 owned by John F. and Carol S. Wiegmann for a purchase price of $1,685,245.91; 169-155-35 owned by Mary Funderburk Langford for a purchase price of $372,626.59; 169-155-36 owned by Rhonda Witmore as Administrator CTA of the Estate of Claudia M. Griffin for a purchase price of $279,001.82; and 169-151-31 owned by Charles C. Dibiaezue for a purchase price of $233,125.68.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6006: Proclamation – American Red Cross (Commissioner Mark Jerrell)

Commissioner Jerrell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to recognize the American Red Cross and adopt a proclamation declaring March 2020 as American Red Cross Month.

The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

NO: Commissioners Leake and Scarborough

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6012: Joint Proclamation – Child Abuse Prevention Month

This item was removed from the agenda.
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20-6013: Joint Proclamation - Brain Injury Awareness Month

Commissioner Powell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring March 2020 as Brain Injury Awareness Month in Mecklenburg County.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6015: Public Appearance

There were no speakers that appeared before the Board.

APPOINTMENTS

20-5992: Nominations/Appointments

This item was removed from the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

20-6000: Business Investment Program Grant - Saertex multiCom LP

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director, said he would dispense with the presentation in the interest of time.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to open public hearing to receive comments on a proposed Business Investment Program grant to Saertex multiCom LP.

No speakers appeared to address the Board regarding this business investment grant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to close the public hearing and adopt a resolution approving a Business Investment Program grant to Saertex multiCom LP for a not to exceed amount of up to $339,218 and authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute the contract.

The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Harden

Note: Saertex multiCom, which has had a presence in Mecklenburg County since 2013 and currently employs 33, has announced its intent to consolidate its two operational processes into one facility in Huntersville, NC. Saertex multiCom’s proposed expansion project meets all the following grant guidelines for a five-year Business Investment Grant, specifically: A taxable investment of $24,750,000 to be completed in the next three years; Creation of 45 new jobs with an average wage of $35,200 (which is equal to 118% of the average for the Standard Occupational Codes for the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill M.S.A.); There was competition for this project from Indiana. The general terms and condition of this grant include: A portion of the grant must be repaid if the company moves this investment from Huntersville within three years of the end of the grant term; Actual grant payments are based on the value of the investment as appraised by the Mecklenburg County Tax Office; All property taxes due from the company must be paid before a grant payment is made.
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The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document 115.

**20-6001: Business Investment Program Grant – Stratifyd**

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director, said he would dispense with the presentation in the interest of time.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to open the public hearing to receive comments on a proposed Business Investment Program grant to Stratifyd, Inc.

No speakers appeared to address the Board regarding this business investment grant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to adopt a resolution approving a Business Investment Program grant to Stratifyd, Inc. for a not to exceed amount of $88,209 and authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute the contract.

Mr. Zeiler responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**YES:** Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

**NO:** Commissioner Powell

*Note: Stratifyd, Inc. is a Charlotte based Augmented Intelligence (AI) company that provides real time analytics on customer feedback and is experiencing significant revenue and customer growth and is seeking to expand its offerings into employee experience analytics. Stratifyd, Inc. has identified a lease space in Charlotte that would be suitable for its long-term growth needs. The proposed expansion project meets all the following grant guidelines for a five-year Business Investment Grant, specifically: A taxable investment of $3,250,000; Creation of 200 new jobs with an average wage of $90,000 (which is equal to 176% of the average for the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill M.S.A.); There is competition for this project from Quebec and Michigan. The general terms and condition of this grant include: A portion of the grant must be repaid if the company moves this investment from Charlotte within 5 years of the end of the grant term; Actual grant payments are based on the value of the investment as appraised by the Mecklenburg County Tax Office; All property taxes due from the company must be paid before a grant payment is made. A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board. Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document 116.***

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – None**

**20-6018: Public Arts Commission Annual Report**

This item was removed from the agenda.

**DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS**

**20-6021: Department Management Monthly Reports**

Monica Allen, Strategic Planning & Evaluation Director, provided the Board with the written monthly department management reports for March 2020.
A copy of the report is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6022: March Feature Department/Agency Presentation: Information Technology Services

This item was removed from the agenda.

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – None

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6020: Audit Review Committee FY2019 Audit Results (Commissioner Harden)

Commissioner Harden, Audit Review Committee Chairperson, said she was happy to present the results of the County's Audit for Fiscal Year 2019, completed by our external auditors, Cherry Bekaert, LLP. The County received a clean audit from the independent auditor, with the highest opinions: unmodified opinion of the Financial Statements; unmodified opinion of Internal Control over Financial Reporting; and, unmodified opinion of Federal and State Single Audit. This means that the Financial statements were determined to be a fair and accurate representation of the County's transactions, and there were no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies identified within the Financial Statements, Internal Controls or the State and Federal programs tested for the County.

The external auditor’s procedures and testing were based on Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS) and Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS). There were no significant policy changes, or changes in accounting estimates for FY2019 resulting from the audit. Audit procedures included examining the County's financial statements, testing County’s internal controls, and evaluating compliance and administration of our Federal and State programs.

For the financial element, the auditor examined the County financial statements, which were provided to the Board in December 2019 in the form of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).

For the internal control element, the independent auditor tested our governance and compliance, information technology controls and reviewing key controls which exist within the daily processing of our accounting transactions.

For the Single Audit, or the Federal and State programs element, the auditor evaluated and tested selected Federal and State funded program compliance, processes and transactions. Programs are selected by size. For Fiscal Year 2019, these programs were Medicaid, Social Services Block Grant, SNAP, TANF, Public Lottery Fund and Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

Within these selected State and Federal programs, the auditors identified only four non-compliance findings; none of which were material or significant deficiencies.

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously, to approve the following Consent items:

20-6002: Budget Amendment – Park and Recreation – Summer Camps

Amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $36,240 in fee revenue and associated expenses to the General Fund (0001) within the Park and Recreation Department for additional summer camp opportunities at David B. Waymer Recreation Center, Tom Sykes Recreation Center and Winget Recreation Centers.
20-6003: Capital Reserve Expenditure Request – Charles T. Meyers and Dr. Charles L Sifford Golf Courses

Appropriate $55,000 from the Public Golf Courses Consolidated Capital Reserve Fund (9002) to replace a water line at Charles T. Meyers Golf Course and add drainage pipe at Dr. Charles L. Sifford Golf Course for the life of the projects.

20-6007: Storm Water Program – FY19 Hazard Mitigation Floodplain Acquisition

(A) Accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate and Lease Agreement from Tracy Newsome, owner of property located at 1121 Mockingbird Lane, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 171-082-21), for $360,000 and (B) authorize the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police and Fire Departments to use the structure for training exercises.

Note: These acquisitions are being done through the County’s Hazard Mitigation Program. The goal of this Program is to minimize the risk of potential loss of life and property damage from flooding while enhancing the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain (creating open space, expanding greenways, constructing wetlands, etc.).

20-6008: Budget Amendment – LUESA Auction Revenue

Amend the 2019 - 2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $10,852.25 to the General Fund (0001) and $6,526.20 to the Storm Water Special Revenue Fund (7005) within the Land Use and Environmental Agency budget from January 2020 vehicle auction proceeds.

20-6010: Tax Refunds

Approve refunds in the amount of $2,150,987.42 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor. Refunds will be paid from County funds.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve tax refunds resulting from clerical errors, audits and other amendments, including revaluation appeals. There is an estimated accrued interest of $90,004.00 included in the $2,150,987.42 refunds.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6011: Construction Contract – Long Creek Greenway, I-77 to Treyburn Ave. Project

Award a construction contract to Eagle Wood, Inc. in the amount of $8,323,643.45 for the construction of the Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration.

Note: This contract is for the construction of the Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration from I-77 to Treyburn Ave., which is located within Mecklenburg County, near the intersection of W.T Harris, I-77, and I-485. This project will add +/- 2.2 miles of new greenway trail to the County’s greenway acceleration initiative, including ten (10) public access connections and three (3) prefabricated bridges. Stream Restoration work will include +/- 1.4 miles of stream improvements, including realignment of existing centerline, installation of in-stream structures, and revegetation of restoration area. The anticipated construction period will be approximately 18 months.

20-6016: Minutes

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: February 18, 2020 Closed Session Minutes, February 25, 2020 Budget/Public Policy Minutes, and March 4, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT
20-5895: No-Build and Walkway Easement - Wilmore Centennial Park at Southend

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a Memorandum of Understanding and all other documents necessary between the County and the Square South End, LLC ("the Square") for the grant of a permanent "no build" easement on Tax Parcels 123-062-16, 123-062-12, and 123-062-09 (6,811 square feet) and a permanent walkway easement on Tax Parcel 123-062-23 (384 square feet) at Wilmore Centennial Park at Southend for a purchase price of $287,000 in park enhancements.

The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

20-5968: 2020 Courtroom Upfit - Sole Source Request

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to authorize the sole source purchase of courtroom millwork from Beaubois Group and the specification and purchase of other materials and equipment (listed in Background below) to match existing courtrooms for the upfit of shelled Courtroom 6110 at the Mecklenburg County Courthouse as authorized by G.S. 143-129 (e)(6)(iii).

20-5990: Budget Amendment - Community Support Services - Revenue Increase (CSS)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to (A) rescind action taken on December 17, 2019 (Agenda Item #19-5847) which recognized, received and appropriated up to $130,914 to the General Fund (G001) from the City of Charlotte as part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) FY18 Continuum of Care (CoC) Planning Grant; and instead, and (B) recognize, receive and appropriate up to $135,914 to the General Grants Fund (G001) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) FY18 Continuum of Care (CoC) Planning Grant.

20-5991: Grant Awards - HUD Continuum of Care 2019

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) rescind action taken on August 7, 2019 (Agenda Item#19-5572) which recognized, received and appropriated grant for $2,346,745 for the year 7/1/20-6/30/21 to provide Shelter Plus Care (SPC) targeted rental subsidies to homeless persons with disabilities (SPC Consolidated Renewal); and instead, (B) recognize, receive and appropriate funds awarded to Shelter Plus Care in the amount of $2,505,361 for the year 7/1/20-6/30/21 in the General Grant Fund (G001) to provide targeted rental subsidies to chronically homeless persons with disabilities (SPC Consolidated Renewal) for the duration of the grant, and (C) affirm acceptance of grant award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for up to $475,215 for the year 7/1/2020 - 6/30/2021 to provide rapid rehousing to domestic violence victims (Domestic Violence Bonus Project) and recognize, receive and appropriate the amount awarded in the General Grant Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

20-5996: Community Support Services Department Position

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize one position in Community Support Services, Homeless Services Division: 1 Senior Social Worker (annual market rate) $56,682.

Note: Domestic violence and homelessness frequently intersect. Across the nation, studies show that as many as 57% of all homeless women identify domestic violence as the immediate cause of their homelessness. During the Point in Time Count conducted in Mecklenburg County in 2019 to obtain a census of the local homeless population, 7% of those surveyed said they were experiencing homelessness because they were fleeing domestic violence.

The number of domestic violence survivors seeking emergency shelter and housing in the
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Mecklenburg County area consistently exceeds the community’s shelter and affordable housing supply. Between July 2018 and June 2019, Safe Alliance’s 80-bed Domestic Violence Shelter provided a total of 43,800 shelter beds on 37,296 total nights. Safe Alliance referred out 42 survivors during this time due to lack of space. Survivors of domestic violence may turn to homeless service programs in search of a safe, temporary place to stay after fleeing an abusive relationship. Others may turn to homeless service programs because they lack the economic resources to secure or maintain their own housing after leaving an abusive relationship.

Mecklenburg County Community Support Services (CSS) is seeking to support the needs of domestic violence survivors by providing access to safe, affordable rapid rehousing for individuals and families fleeing domestic violence as part of the Housing for Good program. Through supportive services, case management, and short-term financial assistance for domestic violence survivors via rental and utility subsidies, CSS will support survivors’ successful transition from abusive households and homelessness to safe, stable, permanent housing that survivors can sustain on their own following a limited period of financial assistance. The creation of a full time Senior Social Worker position within CSS will address the identified need by assisting survivors with safety planning and connecting to supportive services. The program anticipates assisting up to 15 families. The position will be funded from the Rental Subsidy Program Fund.

20-5998: Grant Application - Delta Dental Foundation

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm acceptance of grant award from Delta Dental Foundation in the amount of $5,000 to provide free toothbrushes and floss to the Public Health Pediatric Dental Program and (B) recognize, receive and appropriate the amount awarded to the General Fund (0001) in the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance within the Public Health Department.

Note: The Mecklenburg County Health Department was awarded $5,000 from the Delta Dental Foundation for the Public Health Pediatric Dental Program. Grant funds will be used to support providing free toothbrushes and floss to children in Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools participating in the Dental Health education program.

20-6004: Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Recycling Processing

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Republic Services for a multi-year contract for processing and sales of recycled materials.

Note: County staff received Requests for Proposals (RFP) in late 2019 from interested parties to operate the MRF and to sell recyclables for the County. The Waste Management Advisory Board (WMAB) was represented on the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) by Mr. Jeremy O’Brien who attended all RFP related meetings. Mecklenburg County also retained the outside firm of Geosyntec to review the background financials of all firms.

Three firms submitted proposals: Sims Municipal Recycling (Brooklyn, NY), Republic Services (Phoenix, AZ), and Balcones Recycling (Austin, TX). In-person interviews were conducted with each firm traveling to Mecklenburg County and meeting with the SAC. The SAC unanimously chose Republic Services to provide recycling processing services, marketing of recyclables and equipment upgrades to the MRF. Republic has historical operating experience at the facility and has other MRF facilities in Greensboro and Conover NC that can support the Mecklenburg County facility when outages occur.

20-6005: Budget Amendment-FY 2020 Solid Waste Enterprise Fund

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2019 - 2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue and expenses of $3,550,000 in the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund (7001) within the Land Use and Environmental Agency from available fees collected at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and Foxhole Landfill and (B) approve the FY2020 transfer of $200,000 from the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund (7001) for appropriation to the Solid Waste Management Capital Reserve Fund (8901) for the Solid Waste Capital Equipment Program within the Land Use and Environmental Agency.
Note: Solid Waste is requesting to recognize additional revenues of $3,550,000 and expenses of $3,550,000, which will include the transfer of $200,000 into the Solid Waste Management Facilities Capital Reserve Fund. This reserve fund was established to provide monies to fund solid waste management improvements and maintenance and for the acquisition of necessary equipment for use in conjunction therewith. The Solid Waste Management Facilities Capital Reserve Fund is periodically replenished from the Solid Waste Operating Fund per the Solid Waste Management Facilities Capital Reserve Fund Ordinance.

**20-6009: Grant Applications - Mecklenburg Partnership for Children**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to approve the submittal of two grant applications up to $528,313 to Mecklenburg Partnership for Children to support programs promoting child health and safety.

Note: The Mecklenburg County Health Department is requesting approval to apply for funding from Mecklenburg Partnership for Children for one year (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021). The Health Department has been a grant recipient of Mecklenburg Partnership for Children (Smart Start) funding since 1995. Grant funds will be used to support the following programs: 1. Renewal of Childcare Health Consultants, in the amount of $382,313, to provide site assessment, consultation and training for childcare providers, ensuring that the environment is safe, healthy and meets standards and 2. Expand the evidence-based Triple P program Positive Early Childhood Education initiative (PECE) 0-5 population in childcare settings in the amount of $146,000.

**20-6012: Joint Proclamation - Child Abuse Prevention Month**

This item was removed from the agenda.

**20-6023: Grant Application - FY20 Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services Early Childhood, Early Intervention Initiative**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to approve submission of a grant application to Smart Start for up to $500,000 for Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services Early Childhood, Prevention & Early Intervention Initiative.

Note: Since 2017, Mecklenburg County has experienced a significant uptick in the number of referrals for suspected cases of child maltreatment. Last calendar year, there were approximately 18,000 referrals to Child Protective Services (CPS) from which 11,000 investigations ensued. Per the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan, Mecklenburg County Data Report indicates that when children were taken into custody in Mecklenburg County, reunification, guardianship or custody for children took quantifiably longer in comparison to the state average. Specifically, children aged 0-3 remained in care on average of 60 days longer and children aged 4-5 were in care 156 days longer than the state average due to mitigating factors. Moreover, the child welfare literature confirms that the longer a child is in care, the less successful reunification will be, and the more likely that child will return to child welfare custody at some point in the future. The mere act of assuming custody of a child is a potentially traumatic event, possibly leading to long-term emotional and behavioral implications.

Given this data and in anticipation of the rollout of the Family First Prevention Services Act (reform designed to safely keep families together and minimize removal of children from their families), the Department will be applying for grant funding from Smart Start to support the rollout of a robust array of evidence-based services and early interventions in the local community. Early interventions will range from evidence-informed parent education to introduction of intensive, empirically validated treatment modalities. Targeting the 0-5 population, proposed programming and services will fulfill two of the grant’s priorities: 1. Ensuring children are healthy and developmentally ready for kindergarten success, and 2. Ensuring families of young children provide supportive home environments and live in safe and supportive communities.
ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

_________________________  ______________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk                                      George Dunlap, Chair
SPECIAL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER – 1:30 P.M. - CONFERENCE ROOM 267

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Special Meeting on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 1:44 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present:            Chair George Dunlap  
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller  
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake  
Commissioner Elaine Powell  
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough  

Absent Until Noted: Commissioner Susan Harden, Mark Jerrell, and Susan Rodriguez-McDowell  

Absent:  Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham  

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Chair Dunlap announced that the meeting would be recessed until 2:30 p.m.

RECESS  

The Board of County Commissioners did not join the conference call with Governor Roy Cooper and his COVID-19 Response Team. No action was taken.

RECONVENE  

The Special Meeting recessed at 1:46 p.m. and reconvened at 2:30 p.m. in 267.  

Commissioners Harden, Jerrell, and Rodriguez-McDowell were present and introduced themselves. Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell participated in the meeting via conference call.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said as testing capacity increased, the number of positive tests had also increased, as well as cases in almost every zip code in the County which indicated community spread. She said they knew 80% of the cases were from below age 59. She said 25% of the cases in North Carolina were from Mecklenburg County. She said they could see the number of cases doubling every four days in North Carolina. She said a Stay at Home Proclamation had been executed and that they had consulted extensively with both Gene Woods, Atrium CEO and Carla, Novant Health CEO. She said they both gave full support and recommended that they moved forward with the proclamation. She said the proclamation would take affect 8:00 a.m. Thursday March 26, 202 and run through Midnight, April 16, 2020. She said the situation in the County would continue to be evaluated and that the proclamation could be extended, amended, or rescinded. She went over the things that you will still be able to do with the proclamation in place. She said the City, County, and six towns independently would determine what their essential government functions were and that they would make the decisions there in Mecklenburg County. She mentioned what was generally included as an essential business and that it would be on the website.

Gibbie Harris, Health Director, said as of noon the previous day, they had 108 cases, and as of noon present day, they had 142 and that their numbers continued to expand and grow in the community. She mentioned that 40% of the cases were between the ages of 20 and 39. She said the female to male split has been fairly even as well as the race and ethnicity split was about the same as the demographics in the County. She stated that
roughly one in five reported cases had been hospitalized due to COVID-19, which was an increase from the one in eight that was reported two days before.

Commissioner Leake asked for the demographic percentages for Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Harris responded 53% for females and 47% for males and 40% white, 37% black, 7% Hispanic, and around 4% for Asian.

Commissioner Harder asked if the virus was transmitted through sex or IV drug use. Ms. Harris responded no to both.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if there was still a disproportional representation in 28205 and 28277.

Ms. Harris responded that she believed it was 28277. She said she would provide them with a map before they left.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what her perspective was on what the data was telling them to do and if there were any specialized things that they had to do in those zip codes, since it was so disproportionate and asked what the message should be.

Ms. Harris responded that it should be the same for everyone at that point and that she thought the messages had to be across the board because people move in and out of those zip codes all day long and were not necessarily staying in one zip code. She said everyone should assume those around them could potentially be infected and what they need to do to protect their self and others as well as social distance as much as they could. They were asking people to stay home as much as they could, as having fewer interactions would make someone less likely to spread or catch the virus. She also said everyone would need to wash their hands, cover their cough, and clean surfaces regularly.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if there was a threat of individuals outside Mecklenburg County putting stress on the systems.

Ms. Harris responded that they had already been seeing that to some extent and that it was expected because of the resources that Mecklenburg County had.

Commissioner Jerrell asked how Mecklenburg County was addressing that.

Chief Robert Graham, Emergency Management Deputy Director, said in Mecklenburg County, Emergency Management in all counties is a county function. He said they were out front in terms of having had all the towns and the County together. He said the hospital capacity was part of the process in the EOC and that they were looking specifically at that and were working with the CEOs of the hospitals. Commissioner Jerrell asked how they would gauge the level of risk regarding the stress on the system based on the surrounding companies.

Chief Graham said that present time, there were 1.2 million people in the County, which created a problem. He said if North Carolina could not handle it, they would request emergency management assistance compact resources from other counties or states in the United States. He said because it was a national emergency and statewide emergency, Mecklenburg County had to rely on the resources in Mecklenburg County. He said that did not mean they would not get any outside assistants and that their outside assistance would be very limed during the emergency.

Ms. Harris added that both of the hospital systems were doing modeling at present time to look at what their capacity was and that they had eliminated most elective services and were cleaning out beds to build capacity. She said they had also been looking at modeling for what they could expect over the next weeks to figure out what they would need. She said through the EOC, they were taking a look at lower acuity sites where people may not be able to be, rather not having to be directly in a hospital. She said they were looking
and trying to determine how to make sure they have the needed resources to meet the community's need.

Ms. Diorio said part of the Stay at Home order was designed to help make sure they had capacity in the hospitals should they begin to see the medical surge that other communities had seen, which is part of the larger strategy.

Chair Dunlap said he had many calls and that there were a lot of people who said they should not issue a shelter in place order, whereas, on the other side there were people saying not enough was being done and that they were not ready to die. He acknowledged that there was anxiety on both sides of the issue. He said there were people who felt as though their business or job was essential versus those who thought they should continue to operate and that he did not want to leave without some ambiguity. He said the signed proclamation basically said restricting movement and that people would question that. He said that they had used a lot of terminology and that he wanted to be clear to people, because everyone would interpret things differently. He said it basically said restricting movement of all individuals living within Mecklenburg County, and says specifically what those restrictions were. He asked if that was the same as the Shelter in Place order.

Chief Graham responded that the Shelter in Place for Mecklenburg County was also a part of the plans that dealt with McGwire Fire Station, and the Shelter in Place orders, were specifically during a nuclear incident to have people stay inside of any building that they were in and to seek shelter immediately. He said that was why they had decided to do a Stay at Home order versus a Shelter in Place order, because they did not want any misinterpretation between the two. He said for Mecklenburg County, the order was typically after a few hours until they could handle the emergency.

Chair Dunlap said he heard from the hospitals that based on the modeling described, they believed given the rate of infection of the disease, that the hospitals would be overran within a matter of a few weeks. He said they made clear to people before that they should take the order seriously. He asked what they could do if people were not following the restrictions.

Fire Chief Reginald Johnson said he believed in the document that there was an enforcement section towards the bottom that actually identified as far as what the violation was.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, stated that under North Carolina law, whatever statement of emergency had been issued, 166 allowed the governing entity to place restrictions, and anyone who did not comply conceivably could be convicted of a Class 2 misdemeanor if the prosecutor elects to prosecute for the violation. He stated that should someone want to report a violation, they should always call the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department.

Chair Dunlap asked who citizens should call to find out whether or not a business is essential.

Chief Johnson said they should be calling the number that was provided to answer the questions about the Stay at Home order.

Ms. Diorio said they are sticking to the federal guidance and that not everyone would be happy with that but that they feel it was the right thing to do.

Chief Johnson said there were 16 sectors that had been identified and listed in the order.

Chair Dunlap asked clarifying questions.

Commissioner Fuller asked what gave the Board of County Commissioners, Mayor of Charlotte, and mayor of the towns authority to adopt a proclamation of this kind.
Mr. Wade responded that North Carolina General Statute 166A-19 stated the North Carolina Emergency Management Act allowed the governing body to issue a declaration of emergency and empower them to restrict movement and prohibit various things. He said there was a delineation of the authority of the local entity to protect the citizens. He said there were a number of reasons for why it may be entered but that it delineates what the governing bodies could do.

The Board asked questions and received answers.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the proclamation would have the effect of law.

Mr. Wade said that was correct.

Commissioner Fuller said he heard from the White House and other places that things would get worse before it got better and that if they waited any longer to do it, he believed it would have been too late. He mentioned Mecklenburg County was the largest populated county in the State and had to lead the way. He asked what authority they had with people who did not live in Mecklenburg County who came into Mecklenburg County to congregate.

Mr. Wade responded that under the law, if you were to go into a jurisdiction, you would be required to follow the law of that jurisdiction, so they would be bound by the laws here.

Commissioner Fuller asked various questions about who could and could not work.

Mr. Wade said they were bound by the declaration unless they were exempt or excluded.

Commissioner Fuller requested resources for citizens who were concerned about being asked to go into work.

Ms. Diorio suggested the hotline and mentioned a list of questions and answers that would be posted online.

Commissioner Jerrell said he was discouraged a little bit about the fact they would not have much federal help. He mentioned there was a lot of anxiety in the community. He said this was serious, and if they had to take actions that perhaps in other times they would resist as Americans, they would have to remember the first thing is to protect life.

Commissioner Leake asked if there were enough supplies for the hospitals to care for the people.

Chief Graham said a number of orders had been put into the State Emergency Operations Center, and they had fulfilled a number of them. She said her understanding was that they had a large shipment the other day with another on the way. He said there were two priorities currently with the State of North Carolina, with one being the medical first responders, specifically the fire department and MEDI C, and the second is the acute caregivers in the hospitals.

Commissioner Leake asked about the respirator and mask availability and if it would come out of their money.

Ms. Harris said they had been ordering one after another and that it does not necessarily come out of their money. She said some of it would come out of theirs, some out of the State, and some out of the deferral government.

Commissioner Leake asked what the role of the Commissioners were versus the role of the health department personnel and the Manager.

Ms. Diorio said Chief Graham talked about the policy calls and that both Gene Woods and Carl Armato were on the call as well. She said she spoke to both of them daily and that they had been very helpful in getting us to the place where they decided it was an important step to take. She said in terms of collaboration, she said all the information she was getting from them and asking them to share information with their networks and
constituencies, that two-way information had been very helpful and would hopefully continue.

Commissioner Leake said sometimes they step out of bounds and speak, and they were not sharing what they should say, other than referring to you or Chair Dunlap. She asked in terms of mass gathering, what was the percentage numbers now? She said they needed to specify that ever more so, because there were places of worship that continued to do what they ask that would impact saving the contact of people within that process.

Ms. Diorio said it was 10 or less.

Commissioner Leake mentioned that people will want to have a funeral, which would be more than 10 people and asked what would happen for that violation.

Ms. Harris said that funeral services were included and that the document would educate the community; giving a chance for them to get the word out and make it clear how serious they thought the situation was. She said they had to deal with the fact that people would continue to die in the community and that the funeral service had to do what it had to do. He said what was clear in the document was that they were talking about everyone, included essential services, focusing on the 10 or less and doing as much social distancing if they had to bring people together. She said even essential services should be looking at sending their people home to work if they can and doing social distancing if they were bringing staff and customers into the building. She said that was mentioned throughout the document.

Chair Dunlap said if someone had a funeral with a large congregation, they could not control who came in and did not come into to the funeral, so they could end up with 200 or 300 people there. He said if that happened, no one would be after you for a violation, but you would expect them to have social distances of at least six-foot apart.

Ms. Harris said exactly.

Commissioner Leake said that was why it was important to get that information into the community so that they would hear them talking about it today would help them make those decisions based on where they visit and are in the community as it relates to the gatherings they talk about. She said they had a job to do. She said she wanted to know exactly who was in charge so that they would not get into trouble by the health boards.

Mr. Wade said in Mecklenburg County, the Board of Health, back in 2008 was consolidated along with the Department of Social Services and Board of Social Services, and they have a consolidated Community Services Agency that document then vested the authority of what we had been through board’s action to the Board of Commissioners. He said the Board assumed those duties then consolidated those duties and passed them off to the County Manager. He said it should then in effect have one-point person, and the County Manager at the time vested the authority with the Public Health Director, then the DSS Director so one person speaking on the behalf of the government entity, rather than the Board of Health or Social Services. He said that is what would be existing today.

Commissioner Leak said that was clear and the only thing that will be circulating in the community, so they would stop getting those emails telling them what they were not doing and were doing. He said that was clear attitude for them as of their role as members of the County Commissioner that they had given the authority to manage it. She asked if that was correct.

Mr. Wade responded that the Board was doing exactly what the Board of Health would have done; like today they gave information, gave direction. He said the Board of Commissioners were not involved; he said you just technically do not have a Board of Health.

Commissioner Leake asked with Ms. Diorio and the group doing this, not with County Commissioners.
Mr. Wade responded that was correct, but the Chair did approve it.

Commissioner Leake said he spoke for them but not as a body.

Mr. Wade agreed. Commissioner Leake asked if they had to vote on the document.

Mr. Wade replied no.

Commissioner Leake said she wanted to make it clear so that later no one can say they did this illegally, because they did not participate from that perspective.

Commissioner Powell repeated that there was a difference between shelter in place and stay in place. She said she had called the School of Government to learn more for quite some time and that everything Mr. Wade was sharing was what they said in the teleconference call. She said she wanted the community to know that they had have broad authority in this, but not unlimited, and that it was reasonably tailored based in fact, clear, understandable, and uniform, and those were requirements. She asked clarifying questions and received answers from Ms. Diorio.

Ms. Diorio let the community know that they did receive recommendations from the CEOs of the health care systems.

Ms. Harris said that they were in full support of it and were concerned about the trajectory of this and believed as they put things in place, it could level things out a little bit and extend the ability to continue to manage this.

Ms. Diorio said she did receive a letter from Atrium and Novant Health and that in essence it said a Stay at Home Order was necessary to expedite Mecklenburg County returning to good health and prosperity and that there was a letter to follow which could certainly be made available to the public.

Commissioner Powell said she thought it was important for people to know how many people and groups were consulted with prior to making this recommendation and that she was not sure if the public was aware. She said she wanted the community to know that health care professionals had been involved and were part of the request and plea for them to do something. She asked those who would criticize them to stop to think about what it was like if they had ever seen anyone who just had a mere asthma attack, because if they had ever seen anyone struggle to breath, just for a mild asthma attack or you had a family member with pulmonary fibrosis or lung cancer or anything, think about that, because the people who were impacted by it would have difficulty breathing and she could not think of a worse kind of suffering than to have difficulty breathing. She said it was an unprecedented challenge to protect public health, prevent the spread, human suffering, and death.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she got a call about her husband’s COVID-19 test coming back positive and that they were being told to stay in quarantine 14 days from the day of the test, which would be another week. She said he was actually doing great and that he was feeling good, as well as everyone in the family, as they did not have any symptoms. She said it was a mild case for him and that he probably contracted it while flying internationally. She asked clarifying questions about the Stay at Home Order and received answers from Ms. Harris and Mr. Graham.

Commissioner Jerrell said he thought the community needed a lot of clarification. He said regarding enforcement and unintended consequences around enforcement, they had a significant homeless population who congregate and a real concern with people who were being evicted from hotels, and he felt they needed clarification around that.

Ms. Diorio said homeless individuals were an exemption under the proclamation and reminded him of the three hotels that had been leased, one of which was to provide additional opportunities for social distancing at the shelters.
Commissioner Jerrell said he thought it would be important to get that information back to the community as soon as possible. He asked clarifying questions and received answers from Ms. Diorio. He asked about the volunteer efforts, specifically the grab-and-go.

Ms. Harris said there were a lot of volunteer efforts and that a lot of it was being organized through the EOC and that there was a group there helping with that. She said the grab-and-go is fine, as long as people were not staying in the location to eat. She said despite the homeless population being excluded from the order, they still did not want them congregating in large groups, so law enforcement would still look to breakup large groups of folks who would be congregating.

Mr. Graham responded that CMPD had been with them through it, as well as the Sherriff’s Office, and the Chief Deputy had been in the Emergency Operation Center about every single day, and Chief Estes and Chief Putney were fully aware. He said the order did not mean that people would not be able to go out to get groceries or go to the drug store but that they wanted them to get what they need and return home at your earliest possible convenience. He said it will be handled on a case-by-case basis. He said there were people out having big soccer games at the parks, and that was not good. He said that kind of interaction needed to be stopped to get the virus out of here so we could all get back to normal.

Commissioner Harden asked if Mecklenburg County was the most tested County in the State.

Ms. Harris said they were probably the most tested in the State and that they were being judicious in their testing, making there the people who needed it most would have it available. She said if they were just testing everyone or just testing those who want to be tested, they do not even know if they were testing the right people, and it would not give them the full picture. She said they were looking at coming up with a system that would give them a better picture of what is actually happening in the community.

Commissioner Harden asked about the length of time that it was taking people to their tests results back.

Ms. Harris said there were two different ways that tests were being completed and that one of the hospital systems were doing in house testing, which usually turned around in a day to a day and a half. She said the other hospital system and most of the other folks that were doing testing send their tests through LabCorp, because that was the other option that was available to them. She said she assumed LabCorp had been backed up. She said last she heard there were at least 3,000 pending tests in the County.

Ms. Harden asked what was going on with nursing homes.

Ms. Harris said they sent out guidance for nursing homes a week and a half or so, to recommend that they specifically limit visitation, and specific guidance was given on that. She said they were working with one nursing home currently that was causing concern, as there was an individual who had been tested and there was some patience in the nursing home with respiratory issues. She said she knew it was a vulnerable population and that they were doing everything to protect the population and work in that system within the County.

Commissioner Harden wanted to remind everyone of the price and sacrifice that people in nursing homes were enduring right now, because it was very lonely.

Ms. Harris said the way she looked at the document was that people could take it one of two ways; she said they could consider their selves a victim and feel bad about it, or they could look at how they could become part of the solution in the community. She said that was what she would like to encourage everyone in the community to do. She said she knew what they could do to protect yourself but also to look for creative ways to reach out to people who could not go out to the grocery store or get out to take a walk. She said everyone also needed to look at how they did selfcare and that it was not just covering a
cough and washing hands, but it was also making sure everyone does what they need to
do to take care of their self mentally and emotionally. She said this was a big deal for the
community and did not think that anyone in the room or anyone involved had taken it
lightly but that they felt it was the necessary step to take.

Commissioner Leake asked clarifying questions and received answers from Ms. Harris.
Commissioner Fuller asked clarifying questions and received answers from Ms. Diorio.
Chair Dunlap said the only question you need to ask yourself is, was it considered an
essential business or not, and if it was not, you cannot go to work.
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked what the order's end date was.
Ms. Diorio responded April 16, 2020 at midnight.
Chair Dunlap said none of them were taking the decision lightly and that they wanted to
do whatever they could to ensure the safety of the entire community.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Leak, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and
carried unanimously to go into Closed Session to Consult with Attorney.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 4:10 p.m. to go into closed session in Room 267.

RECONVENE

The meeting returned to open session at 4:37 p.m. in Room 267.

Chair Dunlap asked for a presentation on recommendations for electronic meetings.

Mr. Wade presented the Board with Rules of Procedure for Electronic Meetings. He said
he prepared a resolution that drew from the Board’s Remote Participation Policy, which
was what the Board was engaged in now, but that he broadened it due to the
recommendation from the CDC and the government and others around COVID-19, that
if possible, they find a way to have remote meetings and not just remote participation. He
said the document talked about how they may structure a remote meeting. He mentioned
the question of when it would apply, what the authorization would be, how it would be
defined, the notice provisions that would be required by statute and how they satisfy the
quorum requirements of needing at least five members for the Board to conduct business.
He said it was challenging if everyone was not there. He said clearly the statute would
anticipate a policy in place that the body has that governs what a remote meeting looks
like, just as they have a remote participation policy.

Chair Dunlap said one of the requirements were that there must be public access and
that one of the questions raised was how they could do this allowing the public to
participate. He spoke about options with online, video-conferencing platforms, such as
Zoom and Facebook.

Ms. Diorio said they would have to have people be able to publicly participate and that
besides that they did not have a lot of interaction with people who would come unless
there was a public hearing or something on the agenda where people were coming to
speak about a specific item. She said they would not be in a situation where there would
always be engagement with the public. She mentioned the option of WebEx and said that
the issue was with public engagement and how they would be able to plug in, because you want to be able to make sure that people would come for a specific item were coming for that specific item. She said if you were to open it up to Facebook, someone would have to monitor the questions. She said they need to figure out how to control that and that was the piece they were still trying to work through.

Chair Dunlap said there were people on the Board who still like to receive documents and would need to be set up in such a way that they would have access to the technology the way everyone else would.

Ms. Diorio said that was something they would have to work through as well. She said they could do WebEx on any laptop but that they had a way to test that to ensure they had it loaded, tested, and to ensure they know how to use it.

Chair Dunlap said he wanted to be clear that this was only during the emergency declaration and not beyond that. He said how they operationalize it would be contingent upon a positive vote of the resolution, which they could do today, which then says they would do it and they would bring back to us how they would do it and how they would make sure every Commissioner had access and how they would access the system. He said he also wanted brought back how the public would have access to them during the meeting.

Ms. Diorio said that information would be sent out via email.

Commissioner Leake asked about seniors when it comes to access and being available for the general public.

Ms. Diorio said they would make sure seniors would still be able to watch it on television and the website.

Commissioner Jerrell said speaking of access, the technology will most likely allow for people to actually dial in and listen, which would make it even more accessible to the public, because even if they did not want to use a computer or any device.

Commissioner Leake asked if she would see them.

Commissioner Jerrell responded this is if they did not want to dial in. He said they would have control of everyone on the screen and could put everyone in a greenroom or mute everyone out.

Commissioner Leake asked again if they would be able to see the public appearance speakers.

Commissioner Jerrell responded yes. He said his point was that the technology would allow for greater access.

Ms. Diorio went over some of the logistical pieces that would need to be figured out in order to hold meetings remotely. She said the access piece would not be that hard.

Commissioner Fuller asked when they say they have the power to establish the conditions and rules under which the public could have access in the meeting, meaning it would not be unlimited that anyone showing up could talk.

Ms. Diorio said it would make more sense for Emily to put it on the first page of the agenda, because if they decided they wanted to change their rules, then they would have to go back to change the resolution. She said that would allow more flexibility.

Emily Kunze, Clerk to the Board, said the rules around public appearance said the Board reserved the right to alter the rules on a case-by-case basis as necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of business. She said they would have flexibility at each meeting.
Commissioner Harden said there were technologists all over the world working on this and that she guarantees within three weeks, they would have a system much better than what they had at present time. She said governments and technology platforms were working on this diligently.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adopt a resolution approving a remote meeting policy.

Chair Dunlap said the Board had determined that during times of emergency declaration it was also possible that some or all commissioners may be unable to personally attend an official meeting, defined as a regular, special, or emergency meeting, and that the public bodies, under North Carolina General Statute 143-318, may provide for a remote meeting by use of telephonic conference or other electronic means under defined conditions, now therefore be it resolved, that the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners do hereby approve the attached rules and procedures, and those rules and procedures are the things that we had been discussing.

Commissioner Fuller said he wanted to be clear that this was not just for this state of emergency but for any state of emergency in the future as well.

Chair Dunlap said that was correct.

Commissioner Powell asked what if five could make it but four wanted to participate but could not physically make it.

Mr. Wade said it would allow for that but that they would still have to be able to access information for the public if it was a regular meeting.

Commissioner Powell asked if their votes would count.

Mr. Wade said sure, there would be a process, such as: identify yourself and vote must be verbally stated for record.

Chair Dunlap said the bottom line was that if there were five people there, it would not be a remote meeting but instead remote participation.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

Ms. Diorio said she received confirmation that the Board still wanted to go ahead with the April 7, 2020 meeting. She said because it was their first time holding a remote meeting, they would be very lasered focus on what they put on the agenda and that they would try to not bring forward a big agenda but that it would mostly be around issues like these.

The presentation and handouts are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:59 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
FORMAL SESSION

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County’s Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Formal Session on Tuesday, April 07, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to add the Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Program – 2019 Annual Action Plan Amendment (FY 2019-20) and approval to agenda item 20-6078: Mecklenburg County Microbusiness Stabilization Fund.

Chair Dunlap began the introduction of the Commissioners, followed with the invocation led by Commissioner Jerrell and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to add Commissioner Reports to the agenda.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-6024 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6043 by Commissioners Leake
- 20-6047 by Commissioners Leake
- 20-6049 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6056 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6058 by Commissioners Leake
- 20-6060 by Commissioners Leake
- 20-6080 by Commissioner Leake

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6056: Joint Proclamation – Child Abuse Prevention Month

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to recognize April 2020 as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Note: Child Abuse Prevention Month was an annual campaign that had been in place for the last eight years organized by Mecklenburg Child Abuse Prevention Team (CAPT). The purpose was to create awareness and to educate the community about child abuse prevention strategies.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6033: Public Appearance

The following speakers addressed the Board of Commissioners:

1. Paresh Patel - Charlotte Business Alliance - Small Business Owners
2. Uday Vedre - Charlotte Business Alliance - Small Business Owners

APPOINTMENTS – None

PUBLIC HEARINGS – None

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

MANAGER’S REPORT

20-6054: COVID-19 Response Update

Dena Diorio, County Manager, thanked Carl Armato, CEO of Novant Health; Sidney Fletcher, Senior Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer of Novant Health; and Eugene Woods, CEO of Atrium Health, and Doctor James Hunter, Medical Director of Atrium Health, for being available to answer any of the Commissioners’ questions.

Ms. Diorio said during the most challenging public health crisis of our lifetime, it was more important than ever to celebrate our public health professionals and the impact that they have had in our community. She said they were celebrating the 25th year of the national public health week, and she would like to take the opportunity to recognize public health workers and that more than ever, their hard work and degree of dedication to the community was appreciated. She said thank you for working on the front lines of the virus and having individuals stay safe and healthy and for continuing to share information on COVID-19 to flatten the curve. She said please know that they were working every day to make sure that they had the tools and resources they needed to continue to serve the residents of the County with continued team work and that they would get through this and they come out better and stronger on the other side.

Ms. Diorio said they were working closely with CMPD and the Towns’ police departments to aggressively enforce the order, and they would continue to get request from various businesses requesting clarity on the order to determine if they could operate. She said the County Attorney has been evaluating those requests and providing clarity. She said she negotiated revised, business processes with auto dealerships and realtors, who allowed them the ability to do business on a limited basis. She said the State Department of Revenue had issued letters to businesses in the community, providing exemptions from the order. She said she contacted the Governor’s Office and asked that letters not be issued to businesses in Mecklenburg County, since Mecklenburg County’s order was more restrictive than the Governor’s. She said that Mecklenburg County would be expanding enforcement activity in parks and greenways and closing park gates to reduce the number of destination visitors to the larger parks and greenways. Ms. Diorio said Mecklenburg County’s Stay-at-Home Order would expire on April 16, 2020, and they would be working on revising the order to align with the Governor’s order, which would expire on April 29, 2020. All other aspects of the order should remain the same.

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, said that as of 4:30 p.m. April 7, 2020, Mecklenburg County had 805 laboratory-confirmed cases, with a total of eight deaths. Those ranged in age from 60 to 93, and all had underlying health conditions. She mentioned that everyone had a lot of questions about testing in the community, and they would continue to test those who were most at risk, especially where testing would make us respond differently, and those situations would
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typically include individuals who would be ill enough to be hospitalized, as well as healthcare workers and first responders. She said they would continue to ask those with mild symptoms to stay home and consider the fact that they had COVID-19 and to self-isolate for the timeframe that they needed to, until their symptoms were gone, for at least three days. She said they were also asking them to consider those that they may have exposed in work and to alert those individuals, since they would do not be doing any contact tracing with those cases. She wanted to remind people that there were many individuals in the community who were infected with COVID-19, who had not been tested, because they were asymptomatic or did not meet the current CDC recommendations for testing.

Ms. Harris went over data leading up to April 4, 2020, which stated at that point Mecklenburg County had 650 laboratory-reported cases. She said about three in four reported cases were adults between the ages of 20 and 59; 11 cases were in youth under 20 years old. Younger adults made up most cases for all racial ethnic groups, except non-Hispanic black. She said she knew this had concerned a lot of individuals in the community, and what had been seen was about one-third of the cases in non-Hispanic blacks were in individuals over the age of 60, and only a quarter were in the youngest age. She said it was a complete reverse of what was being seen in other populations, and that more of the deaths were disproportionately found in African American communities; they were among the elderly with underlying health conditions. She said at that time, it was not believed that the racial-ethnic differences observed in the data were related to the spread of COVID-19 or differences in the susceptibility of certain groups to be infected by COVID-19. She said it was thought that those differences were more likely related to current testing criteria, which was focused on symptomatic patients, and those with underlying, racial ethnic disparities and rates of chronic conditions that increase the severity of illness with COVID-19. Ms. Harris said about one in five reported cases were hospitalized due to their COVID-19 infection; however, the hospitalization rates among older adults, those over the age of 60, were significantly higher and were one in two of those individuals that were hospitalized.

Ms. Harris said we had designed a COVID-19 awareness and social distancing campaign after review if the data to make sure that we were providing information specifically to those who were potentially more impacted by this infection and those who had the potential of spreading it more readily; this included the younger adults and non-Hispanic blacks, 60 years and older. She really encouraged everyone in the community to be a part of the solution by staying at home.

Eugene Woods, CEO of Atrium Health said he wanted to start by recognizing Dena’s and Gibbie’s leadership and how they partnered with the health systems from the beginning. He said they have been in daily communication, because we realized that was the only way to combat the virus that no one has ever dealt with before, by having come together in a unified manner. Mr. Woods said thank you. He said he knew he could speak on behalf of both Carl and himself on that and that he and Carl had been committed to working together from the very beginning to leverage their collective capabilities, to protect patients in the community, which had been their singular focus. He said when we initially saw how quickly the virus was spreading, doubling every couple of days, Novant and Atrium worked together to be the first in the State to cancel elective procedures voluntarily, a significant financial consequence to each system, but we knew that we needed to move quickly to create more internal capacity and bed space.

Mr. Woods, said we were recognizing National Public Health Week, but we had also wanted to add that to the first responders and healthcare workers. He said it had taken a very special person to work in the healthcare field, and it was a calling, and that we were extraordinarily proud of their teammates who were answering the call at those times.

Carl Armato, CEO of Novant Health, said he wanted to highlight some data that was being looked at and there is a website that shows the COVID-19 social distancing scoreboard, and when you looked across the United States, the scoreboard showed a C for the decrease in average mobility and the decrease in nonessential visits. He said Mecklenburg County’s grade was one of the highest in North Carolina and had a -B. He said he believed that was because of the swift action that County Commissioners took. He said that he and Gene and their teams had been working hard to make sure that number one; they were there to protect every resident of Mecklenburg County and to protect their team members by trying to make sure they had as much personal protective equipment to protect them all. He said secondly, he and Gene looked at their facility capabilities, and together would come up with 600 additional beds and we could divide up in their campuses and keep, because they had the staff, and it would all be within walking distance.
for their team members. Mr. Armato said that another thing he wanted commissioners to know was that they would actively manage care for all of the team members, and the County had been very helpful with daycare and housing for team members that were concerned that they may had been exposed. He said thank you for helping us with all of that. He said when he sat in rooms across the Country, he was very optimistic in where we were in Mecklenburg County. He said with the teamwork that he and Gene put together with the two organizations, we were going to standup and be ready for the surge and help pull the community out, so we could get back to talking care of all people. Mr. Armato said we are aware of the health disparities and were out there now with the Community Care to get into the zip codes that needed testing.

Commissioner Fuller said he heard mentioned that there would be an increased enforcement of the Stay-at-Home Order, and he asked for some granularity about what that would mean for people who were out and about, driving on the streets of the community, congregating in Walmart and grocery stores and crowding the parks.

Ms. Diorio gave parks as an example and said that they were getting a lot of feedback about the crowding in the parks and greenways, so they thought the actions that they were taking would help reduce the number of people and that they would be using law enforcement to help facilitate this. She said that the other thing they we are talking about is whether or not they should be requiring stores to limit the number of people that were in there at a time.

Commissioner Fuller said he did not like having to answer questions about things that he had no part in the creation of and that he would like to see more collaboration with elected leaders about those issues, because when I received calls about them, he did not want to serve as a lawyer for the Board to explain what the order means.

Commissioner Harden thanked the CEOs from Novant and Atrium for being there. She asked if they could get the new curves with the revised projections. The response was sure.

Commissioner Harden asked if it was correct that between the two systems combined, the surge for Mecklenburg County without the field hospital was 6,000 beds.

Mr. Armato responded that was correct, 6,184, and if you add the 600, it was 6,784.

Commissioner Harden asked what the surge was for Novant.

Mr. Armato responded that Novant would probably have 1,600 of those beds, and Atrium 3,500.

Commissioner Harden asked how many staff would be needed for a 600-bed field hospital.

Mr. Armato responded that it was estimate of 700.

Commissioner Harden asked how much the field hospital would cost. The response was that it really depended on what the final location was and that a precise number would not be able to be given at that moment. She asked if that information could be shared with the public and commissioners when finalized. The response was that they would be sharing that information through the meetings that they would have with Dena and Gibbie when they landed on a final plan. She asked Dena if we had any reason to think that we would not be reimbursed for the field hospital.

Ms. Diorio responded that they did not have any reason to think that they would not be reimbursed for the field hospital.

Commissioner Harden asked if there was any reason to think that in the long run, the County would have to finance any of the expenses.

Ms. Diorio responded no, that was not anticipated but that it could not be guaranteed.

Commissioner Harden said she agreed with Commissioner Fuller that it was important that County Commissioners were involved, to the extent possible, in the policy making of the Stay-at-Home Order.

Commissioner Jerrell thanked the CEOs of Novant and Atrium for the presentation. He
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mentioned the State’s COVID-19 dashboard and how it broke down the data by age, ethnicity, gender, and so forth and believed it was very useful. He asked if Mecklenburg County could mimic that and had the data in a similar format breaking it out by race and gender with cumulative numbers instead of just percentages.

Ms. Harris responded that they could take a look and look at the possibility of putting something like that up but that they were always careful about numbers, wanting to balance the need for the community to understand and know what was going on, with the protection of individual rights.

Commissioner Jerrell mentioned that Gibbie said there were 805 confirmed cases, but that number did not show the true burden due to those who were asymptomatic. He asked what she thought the actual number was.

Ms. Harris responded that due to the way that testing was being done in the County and the way it continued to move, they did not had good surveillance data to help with that but that the CDC at one point thought potentially 25% of the community, where there was community spread, could be infected.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if they had done any modeling to understand as they were looking at their residents who had contracted and tested positive. He asked if they knew if there were certain industries that were being impacted and if there were certain trends that were being seen among residents who were contracting it. He asked if it was socioeconomic.

Ms. Harris responded that with the available staff that were attempting to continue to do contact and notify individuals of potential, staff had their hands full. She said we tried to monitor data that had been gathered through their investigations, and the County is looking at that, but currently she did not have access to it. She said first responders and healthcare workers who were working in this day-in and day-out were where we are seeing higher numbers, but we are not seeing any clustering of cases in terms of different businesses or types of businesses.

Commissioner Jerrell asked how the change in projects would affect the Stay-at-Home Order and what Dena’s thoughts were around that and when the decision would be made around if the Stay-at-Home Order would be extended.

Ms. Diorio responded that the 600-surge number was really based on the Stay-at-Home Order staying in place for some period of time, so we do not know when we would have to have that conversation, but we would certainly be aligning with what the governor was thinking. She said we were hearing that he may want to extend his order.

Commissioner Leake thanked the hospital personnel who came in to talk with the Board. Ms. Leake said when she heard that today was the deadliest day in the history of this country for New York and New Jersey, it grieved me to know that seniors were put upon to carried the burden of that load, when it came to living and having good health, having food and not living in a food desert, for those people who had already been penalized because of economics and all of those issues grieved her.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked the guest for having been with them and thanked her alma mater, UNC-Charlotte Chancellor Dubois, because they were willing to create a field hospital, and she said she could imagine all the work that went into them having planned that. She asked if the surge going down to 600 beds decision was more on modelling or on lack of federal reimbursement.

Mr. Armato responded we have been updating the model hourly with data and started to look at the experience in Mecklenburg County and when we entered new data, the social distancing factor went up significantly. He said we actually need a lot fewer beds overall and had expanded capacity of both systems. He said for example, Novant had started with 976 beds in market, and now Novant has over 1,600.

Mr. Woods added that it was the forecasting, staying at home. He said they started off with 2,200 beds in the area, and up to north of 4,500. He said we have significantly increased our capacity. He said part of the thinking of the original number was realizing that we would have to draw from a broader area since patients came from all over.
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said I have a real problem with taxpayers paying into the system, so I really want to understand how much we are being asked to contribute as far as the supplies, equipment, and PPE. She said I understand that those were needs and would never want to not supply and had those supplies, but I was just questioning where those funds were coming from. She asked if patients were going to be billed and also reimbursed by the government. She said I wanted to make sure that Mecklenburg County taxpayers would not be paying for things, as the well-funded, medical delivery system could pay on its own. She said I hope we can understand where her question were coming from, that the medical system, the way it was currently, was a for-profit business, so if it is a timing issue on funds and the County was being asked to bring funds to the table, then that was one way to understand it. She asked if there would be a vote on it tonight.

Ms. Diorio responded no, and at that point the County had not been asked to fund anything, but once there was a better sense of how the process would work, the Emergency Management team, at the local level, would be responsible for helping to source the equipment and supplies that would be needed, and the hospitals had a mechanism to get reimbursed themselves for whatever expenditures they make.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said I thought the letter from April 2, 2020 was asking for funding from the County.

Dena’s responded there has been no commitment on the behalf of the County, and she certainly had not committed any financial support.

Mr. Woods added that in working with other health systems across North Carolina, collectively the health systems were having to stepping up into a public health perspective and collectively the healthcare systems in the State would be north of $3 billion. He said the healthcare systems stepped up significantly to support the community, having worked in partnership but we would also want the Commissioner to appreciate that, even stepping up 50% additional capacity in 30 days. He said we were at a multi-million dollar hit in terms of their ability to continue to purchase supplies and things of that nature. He said we are working actively to figure out how to get personal protective equipment, ventilators, and personnel and that even though we have the space, we are working every, single day to get that, and they would need continued support. He said they were asking from the State and from FEMA. He said I just wanted to make the point that the healthcare systems are stepping up and that healthcare workers were putting their lives in jeopardy every, single day. He said we are also helping to augment in those times, because they were being called into action really to supplement the public health needs in the community.

Mr. Armato said what they really were looking for, and got from Dena and Gibbie, was the help in navigating through emergency management and dealing with some of the State issues of trying to set up a field hospital, so they were very helpful in that. He said that was really where a lot of the support was needed, and they were giving.

Commissioner Powell asked about increasing the ability to test in Mecklenburg county. She said it was being said for people with symptoms to come in, but if they could be proactive with high poverty, homeless, people living in cars, and people who were hypersensitive. She asked if they had the ability to increase testing.

Mr. Armato said they were able to go from 55% with pending laboratory tests down to a roughly four percent pending. He said we had also been able to have had a couple of in-house testing capabilities, so I thought pretty soon as we grabbed and acquired more test kits in the capability that we should be able to do more testing and target the zip codes that she was referencing and the high-risk population that needed to be focused on.

Dr. James Hunter, Medical Director of Atrium Health, said we have been following current guidelines and asking to be more expansive than that, and there still continued to be a shortage of reagents, swabs, and some of the things that were needed to run the tests. He said that was one of the things preventing them from being more expansive than what the CDC was asking.

Commissioner Powell asked if we needed UNC-Charlotte eventually, was that something that they were keeping open? She said they said they were looking for other alternative sites and thought it was important for the community to know, because we have been getting phone calls from people asking if they could come down from New York and other areas where they were
scared that they were not going to get care, so the people were fleeing and think that Charlotte would be a good place to come. She said she thought that they would end up serving more than 11 counties worth of people who may need help. She asked if someone could speak to increased capacity and being ready for that.

Mr. Woods said we have been looking to lift up the 600 beds, but we would not stop, and we knew people were hurting at that moment and were completely committed to reaching into the most vulnerable communities.

Chair Dunlap thanked healthcare providers. He asked how do you know a person who had the virus and took it home, would not be re-infected if they went home to a person who was also infected?

Dr. Fletcher said we follow CDC guidance around that, so there is very specific guidance that looked at infectivity across the world and U.S. and with that guidance. He said it would be seven days or 72 hours after symptoms were gone, which would be longer. He said with the current state of the virus, it has not mutated to a different virus, and they should not be able to be infected by someone else who was at home with the same strain of the virus.

Chair Dunlap asked to hear him talk about what helped determine who should come in and be tested. He said he knew, for example that risks, such as diabetes, heart disease, and things like those people who were more likely to come in and be tested than other groups. He asked if he could talk about how it would be determined of who actually comes in versus those who you believe might have had the virus and were just simply asked to stay-at-home and be quarantined.

Dr. Hunter responded that Mr. Dunlap has actually tied it together perfectly well. The people who would get tested were those with certain symptoms and some of those co-morbid conditions that were more prevalent in certain populations

Chair Dunlap said he felt concerned when Commissioners get involved in making decisions about who was essential and who was not. He said he would be cautious against being political in that process.

Commissioner Fuller said he agreed about what Chair Dunlap said about political influence and that there were amendments that were made based on two particular industries that were not made for others and feels they need to be careful. He said that the second thing he wanted to raise was that there were a lot of essential employees of businesses who said they were being asked to come into work and not receiving, they believed, the sufficient protection or their employer had asked them to work under conditions that they believe were risky for them. He asked what they were doing about that situation for employees who were compelled to go to work, because they were in essential business but felt they had been exposed at a greater number because of their employers not enforcing social distancing, not giving protective gear and that kind of thing.

Ms. Diorio said we did ask people to submit complaints like that through CMPD, and we got quite enough of those, and there was guidance that employers were supposed to be following if they were an essential business and protection they were supposed to be providing their employees, and if that was not happening, we certainly would follow up on that, but what we have found was a lot of the complaints in that nature were more about people not really understanding what the CDC guidance was. She said they do not necessarily need that, and they thought they need that, but that the guidance said something different.

Commissioner Harden asked how many Mecklenburg County employees had tested positive for COVID-19.

Ms. Harris responded they were not reporting how many County employees got tested or reported positive.

Commissioner Harden asked if Gibbie did not think that they need to know as commissioners, how many county employees had tested positive.

Ms. Harris responded no, I did not, and I am not sure what that benefits and asked Ms. Harden if she would like to share what it benefits.
Commissioner Harden responded that she wanted to make sure that as an employer, we have been following the CDC guidance on masks and gloves for example. She said in addition to hearing grievances from other employers, we often hear grievances from Mecklenburg County employees. She rephrased her question to ask, are we, as employers, following the CDC guidance on masks and gloves, whenever our employees go out in public?

Ms. Gibbie responded absolutely.

Ms. Diorio responded that the procurement team has, on a daily basis, been sourcing the protective equipment to make sure they were in compliance with the CDC guidance.

Commissioner Jerrell said he was going to continue to lift up the concerns that had been raised in the African American community, particularly about the impact that has been seen in the community, because it is known historically that black people have been underserved, in a lot of areas, including healthcare. He said he thought it was reasonable for people to have a mistrust and concern about what they were seeing. He said I also want to make sure we have been forward thinking and understood that as we are going through this, we have to make sure we put the structural components and mechanisms in place that ensure people would not fall farther behind. Mr. Jerrell gave thanks to the community.

Commissioner Leake expressed her concern with the City sanitation workers needing gloves and masks.

Ms. Diorio responded that she would have a conversation with the City Manager.

Commissioner Leake said the Veteran’s Hospital is almost empty at night and asked if there would be any way to use those beds.

Ms. Diorio said they would pass that to their Emergency Management. The Army Corps of Engineers are the entity that evaluates those facilities and would tell them whether or not they would be acceptable for a mass care site.

Commissioner Scarborough said she appreciated the conversation, because she thought it meant a lot to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said I hope the frontline workers were getting hazard pay. She said it is times like these that we have to be very vigilant and careful about the taxpayer’s money, because it was an emergency. She said I trust that we will be mindful of resources.

Commissioner Powell said she would like the doctors to speak on mindset, since the people she has spoken to are having anxiety. She asked what people could do if they were not feeling well.

Dr. Hunter responded that he thinks that she was right, that the virus affected the body, and it affected others with fear and anxiety, the family members and community, and they would see that in a lot of ways. He said everyday people were infected with fear and anxiety. He said he thought it was the confidence that they, as Commissioners, brought and that they as two, very competent, healthcare systems and the communication that we were collaborating, should build confidence in the community to decrease some of that fear and anxiety. He said the mindset was important to community health. He thought they would certainly be prepared for what happened both during and after the illness that was in the community.

Chair Dunlap said we would have some hotels for those who were homeless and who might have experienced the virus, so they would be sheltered in place. He said tonight, he hopes they supported small businesses and hoped they would pass some support for micro businesses. He said it would be a good time to remind everyone that if they had a business that they thought should be essential and were not or a business that thinks they were not essential and they were, there was a hotline they can call to take up those concerns. He said lastly, I talked to Commissioner Powell earlier about being more restrictive, and I hope the comment about what happens with the physical and mental health says is that what they need to do is look for compliance for things that they already have in place, because the more restrictive it becomes, the more it effects peoples psyche, and so if we could get compliance with the Stay-at-Home Order and social distancing and washing hands, I think it would in a much better place.
Ms. Diorio gave thanks to Mr. Armato, Mr. Woods, and Dr. Fletcher, and Dr. Hunter for taking the time to join the meeting and for everything they had done for the community.

20-6077: COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director, provided a presentation with the following information regarding the proposed COVID-19 Small Business Loan Fund.

COVID-19 IMPACTS

Mecklenburg County was home to 28,798 small businesses consisting of 50 employees or less, which were being significantly impacted by:

- Forced temporary closures
- Loss of revenue / customers
- NC Initial unemployment claims in North Carolina, between March 16 and March 28 totaled 285,000 compared to average of 3,500 per week in 2019.
- OED was experiencing a dramatic increase in the number of calls for assistance from small business owners.
- It was clear that the challenges facing the small business community were immediate, widespread and threaten the ability of many to continue operations.

FEDERAL RESPONSE

Small Business Administration - Economic Injury Disaster Loan

- Up to $2,000,000
- Up to 10 additional forms may be required after initial application submission
- Can take up to 3 to 4 months to receive funding
- Completed and filed tax forms and schedules required
- Interest rate varies depending on existing relationship with SBA
- Loan amount determined only after insurance reimbursement amounts confirmed
- Temporary bridge loan of $10,000 available but counts against the overall loan amount

PHILANTHROPIC RESPONSE

Golden Leaf Foundation - NC COVID 19 Rapid Recovery Loan

- Launched March 24, reached $15,000,000 capacity by March 29
- Up to $50,000 based on the business’s current revenue
- Loan capped at two months of current revenue
- Six months of no interest and no payments, followed by 48 months of principal and interest payments at 5.5% interest
- Interest would begin to accrue on any unpaid balance at the beginning of the seventh month
- There were no prepayment penalties.
- Defaulted loans were subject to collections.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY RESPONSE

COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan

- Rapid deployment of capital to meet immediate needs of small businesses
  1) Simplified application
  2) Funds in 10 calendar days of completed application submission
- Could be used for:
  1) Lease or real estate loans
  2) Operating capital
  3) Payroll
  4) Immediate payables
  5) Utilities
ELIGIBLE BORROWERS

- Business and/or principal located in Mecklenburg County
- Existing business with a minimum of 2 years in profitable operation or growth trajectory, documented by 2018 tax returns and 2019 profit & loss statement
- Business with up to 50 (full-time equivalent) employees
- Demonstrate that financial obligations and operating expenses could have been met absent the economic impact of the COVID-19
- Startups and companies less than 2 years old not eligible for this program can seek funding through the County’s Small Business Loan Fund

PROGRAM FUNDING

- $5 million from FY2020 Fund Balance for lending
- Would provide at least 142 loans if all at program maximum
- $500,000 from FY2020 reallocated funds to reimburse third party lender for administrative and marketing costs
- $500,000 from FY2020 reallocated funds to reimburse third-party lender ongoing technical assistance and support to loan recipients

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Third Party Administrator - Carolina Small Business Development Fund

- Current loan administrator for Mecklenburg County Small Business Loan Fund
- Ability to quickly mobilize with contract similar to existing contract
- Previous experience in emergency funding programs with Golden Leaf Foundation
- Applications and underwriting systems available for immediate implementation
- 10 days from completed application to funding in hand for qualified borrowers

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to (A) adopt a resolution authorizing the County Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Carolina Small Business Development Fund to administer a COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund; (B) adopt a resolution to establish the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund; (C) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to appropriate $5,000,000 of General Fund (0001) balance for transfer and appropriation to the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund (CSBF); and (D) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to transfer up to $1,000,000 from the General Fund (0001) to the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund (CSBF) from available funds in the Economic Development Office’s budget.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to a vote on a subsequent substitute motion.

Commissioner Cotham expressed her concerns about the hurdles that a small business may face in trying to receive one of the loans. She asked if a company was lucky enough to get some of the money, would they get the education for how to use it? She said she believed that the third party was wasteful spending.

Commissioner Fuller said we think they needed to do something for the small businesses and that he got emails from people who were really worried about being very vulnerable, particularly small businesses.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, said we are very much hamstrung by the State and could not give grants. He said as far as having the loan administrator, we have proposed using Carolina Small Business Development Fund, and they have deep roots within the community. He said they were an existing small business, and they might be familiar with the reports that they send to the County Manager/Board of County Commissioners, and they have started bumping funds from that. He said yes, there is a million dollar ask for the services for North Carolina Small Business Development Fund, but we need to understand what that $500,000 was for. He said that $500,000 was specifically for some of the support and training going to the borrowers, as was asked about. He said the comment was made how do we know once these businesses borrow the money that they would continue operating? $500,000 of that million would go to support them. He said as far as the cost for a third party administrator, it was $3,000 per loan if the loan fund was maxed out, and that would be paying them to complete the loans and
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everything from loan origination, loan application, loan underwriting, through ten years of loan servicing and bill collecting. He said I do not think we would have the capacity to find other community organizations that could receive loan applications, apply consistent underwriting standards and then service the loan for the next 10 years.

Commissioner Harden said the small business community was devastated. She said she would vote for this, and she was completely impressed with the supports that Carolina Small Business Development Fund had to support diverse types of audiences in business. She said she appreciated the concern about the third-party vendor.

Commissioner Jerrell asked who sets the underwriting guidelines and asked if it was them.

Mr. Zeiler said yes, we have been working collaboratively with the staff at Carolina Small Business Development Fund.

Commissioner Jerrell said ultimately, the Board is responsible for those underwriting guidelines, correct?

Mr. Zeiler said yes, they will administer the guidelines that we ask them to.

Commissioner Jerrell said small businesses have received absolutely nothing. He said we have got to get money pumped into these small businesses and have to do it the right way as well. He said I would like for them to look at what the collateral requirement were as far as the UCC filing. He said I do not understand why they needed that, and it seems a little out of bounds. He said the other requirement is alternative means of documentation.

Mr. Zeiler said I will begin having a conversation tomorrow morning about what they could do on some of those underwriting standards. He said I would want to make sure that folks understood they were planning a comprehensive marketing of this program.

Commissioner Jerrell said he may need to make a substitute motion if they could not come to an agreement on the underwriting guidelines. He asked will what we are doing right preclude them from adding more money to the program.

Mr. Zeiler said it will not preclude them from adding more funding.

Commissioner Jerrell asked at what frequency they would receive reporting on funding.

Mr. Zeiler responded it would be anticipated to be monthly, as well as quarterly reports on the performance of the fund. He said they could certainly work with Carolina Small Business Development Fund to get a little bit earlier reporting on that.

Commissioner Jerrell said I believe it needs to be at a greater frequency to start off.

Mr. Zeiler said I have three text conversations going on, and the feeling I have from Carolina Small Business was that they could do some alternative documentation like they were requesting. He said they would need to sit down tomorrow and understand what that would be besides P&Ls.

Commissioner Leake asked what would make it different than it has been in the past, where the big guys came in and used up the funds and be able to get the funds because of their uniqueness in knowing what to do and how to do it?

Mr. Zeiler responded it is a joint effort with Fred and TEMO and himself and numerous discussions with CDFI’s, lenders, and small businesses throughout the community as they called requesting assistance for funding.

Commissioner Leake asked how many businesses were black businesses?

Mr. Zeiler responded that I am not sure that is being counted.

Commissioner Powell asked why the minimum of a $10,000 loan was chosen.
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Mr. Zeiler said the minimum loan was really around trying to understand what other opportunities were out there. He said they were really trying to get folks who could benefit from it who have not been served by other products in the market. He said later Tim would talk about people who may not need $10,000.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said I feel concerned about the price per loan, and it seemed to be an exorbitant amount. She asked the percentage of interest that would go to the loan.

Mr. Zeiler said 2.5% interest of the loan would come back to the County, along with the principle from the lend. He said a half percent would stay with Carolina Small Business, as part of their processing long-term as they hold these loans over the next 10 years.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said I want to make sure that an immigrant business would be able to access the funds.

Mr. Zeiler responded there is no reason that an immigrant business would not be able to access these funds.

Commissioner Scarborough said I am concerned that they were not inclusive of people who really needed to be included in the conversation and also, they need to ensure they are not just picking out people because they were friends or know them. She said they need to find small businesses who really need to be able to do this stuff.

Chair Dunlap mentioned that there was another process that would be proposed that was tailored to microbusinesses and that there was a totally separate loan proposal package for them. He said while they may be concerned about the cost of the loans themselves, Mecklenburg county cannot directly lend for a business owner, and we do not have any choice but to use a third-party lender. He said he does not want people to be able to get a loan here and a loan there. He said double dipping does not work for me.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell and seconded by Commissioner Harden to (A) adopt a resolution authorizing the County Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Carolina Small Business Development Fund to administer a COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund, with the following provisions: (1) remove UCC filing on business assets and establish underwriting guidelines to provide for alternative documentation in lieu of P&L statements and other requirements, (2) reduce the minimum loan amount to $5,000, (3) loans will not be granted to a resident of Mecklenburg County for a business located outside of Mecklenburg County, and (4) provide assurances that loans granted will be equitable in nature, and (B) adopt a resolution to establish the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund (C) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to appropriate $5,000,000 of General Fund (0001) balance for transfer and appropriation to the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund (CSBF) (D) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to transfer up to $1,000,000 from the General Fund (0001) to the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund (CSBF) from available funds in the Economic Development Office’s budget.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioner Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Cotham

Note: A small business loan fund to provide temporary, emergency operating capital to small businesses facing adverse economic impacts from the COVID-19 including layoffs, bankruptcy or closure. Small businesses were especially vulnerable to sudden and volatile economic changes for a variety of reasons including lack of long-term cash reserves, transient workforces and lack of access to sustainable credit lines. Federal economic relief programs from the Small Business Administration had lead times of up to four months while statewide philanthropic efforts had been quickly depleted. A local effort would provide rapid capital deployment as a stop gap until other programs could be accessed by small businesses with 50 or fewer employees located in Mecklenburg County that had: (1) Two successive years of profitable operation as evidenced
in tax filings and other documents, (2) No current judgements, (3) No current delinquencies of more than 90 days and/or more than $1,000, excluding medical delinquencies; (4) No bankruptcy in last three years; and, (5) Evidence of recent and sudden business impact (i.e. a report showing daily receipts from a restaurant). Start-ups and small businesses that were not profitable prior to the COVID-19 pandemic - as evidenced by tax filings - were not eligible for program participation.

The program would be administered by Carolina Small Business Development Fund (CSBDF), which had extensive emergency funding experience and would allow borrowers to secure funding within ten calendar days of completed application submittal. Simplified application documentation places low burdens on businesses while facing the challenges of COVID-19.

Eligibility requirements: the business must be located in Mecklenburg County, existing business with a minimum of 2 years in profitable operation or growth trajectory, business with up to 50 full-time equivalent employees, demonstrate that financial obligations and operating expenses could have been met absent the economic impact of the coronavirus, and in lieu of operating expenses, and business must demonstrate 25% or more drop in revenue as a result of the coronavirus. Permitted Use of Funds: working capital, lease, or real and personal property financing fixed payments, and payroll shortages. Prohibited Use of Funds: payoff of existing debt. Guidelines: loan amount – minimum of $5,000 up to a maximum of $35,000, term up to 10 years, interest rate 3%, repayment – 12 months of interest only payments followed by 9 years of principal and interest payments, no collateral, personal guarantee – required of anyone with 20% or more ownership in business, no application fee; no loan fee; no documentation fee.

The loan fund would be seeded with $5,000,000, the entirety of which will be made available to borrowers.

The third-party lender would be reimbursed $500,000 for administrative and marketing costs associated with implementation of the loan program and $500,000 in periodic payments for ongoing technical support of borrowers. The third-party lender would also retain 0.5% in interest paid on outstanding balances for ongoing administrative costs.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Resolution recorded in full in Minutes/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document #120.


Timothy Tibbs, Senior Assistant to the County Manager, discussed the Microbusiness Stabilization Fund. He said the fund would provide emergency relief for micro businesses, which are businesses that employed between one and five employees. He highlighted that if approved, the program would provide loans up to $10,000 to qualifying businesses, on a first come, first served basis, and the fund would also be available within ten days of receipt of application, until exhausted. Loans may be used to cover day-to-day operating expenses, such as payroll costs, including benefits, interest on mortgages, rent and utilities. No Collateral or personal guarantees were required, and businesses would not be charged fees. He said the County’s CDBG program area consists of towns that had joined in the program, and that was all of the Towns with the exception of Mint Hill and incorporated areas.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Leake to (A) receive information concerning the use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to create Microbusiness Stabilization Fund, and (B) authorize the County Manager to amend the FY2019-2020 CDBG Action Plan per HUD guidelines to allocate funds to the Microbusiness Stabilization Fund.

Mr. Tibbs responded to questions and comments from the Commissioners.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

Note: To mitigate the economic impacts caused by COVID-19 for Mecklenburg County’s most vulnerable businesses, the County proposed to commit $500,000 of readily available, federal CDBG funds to create the Microbusiness Stabilization Fund. This would allow for the creation of
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the Mecklenburg County Microbusiness Stabilization Fund to support businesses within the Towns and unincorporated areas of the County. On, March 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Public Law 116-136, was signed by President Trump to respond to the growing effects of the historic COVID-19 public health crisis. The CARES Act made available $5 billion in Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds. Of this initial round of funding, Mecklenburg County had received approximately $467,000 to be used to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Additional CDBG program funding of $150,000 had been identified to bring the total amount available to Microbusinesses to $1 Million dollars. This authorization would provide the approval needed to amend the FY2019-2020 Annual Action plan to reflect additional funding to be used this program year.

The Microbusiness Stabilization Fund provides loans in amounts up to $10,000 to qualifying businesses. This program was for any microbusiness with no more than five (5) employees impacted by coronavirus/COVID-19. The Microbusiness Stabilization Fund application would be available on Monday, April 13, 2020 with funds available on a first come, first serve basis until funds had been exhausted. If approved, disbursements would be available within 10 days of receipt of application. The program would be managed through Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG), which currently administers the County’s CDBG program. Loan Details: Funds may be used to cover the day-to-day operating expenses of the business, such as payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent, utilities or losses due to destabilizing events. No collateral or personal guarantees were required, and businesses would not be charged any fees. The loan would be fully forgivable if the funds were used for payroll costs, interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities. The loan had a maturity of 3 years at 0%. Business would complete an application requiring the following information: The business owner or 51% of employees must have had a low or moderate income (<80% of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) Area Median Income.) The business must have had five employees or less. The business must have had experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19, by certifying that revenue had declined by 25% or more as a result of COVID-19. Documentation to help verify the economic hardship suffered as a result of the COVID-19, including tax returns, financial statements, gross receipts and other financial data. The business must be located within Mecklenburg County (excluding Charlotte and Mint Hill).

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6079: Financial Status and Revised Forecast

Sarah Cunningham, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the financial status and forecast in light of the impacts of COVID-19. She said the economic impact of COVID-19 is fluid and unlike anything we have seen in recent decades, and the situation was rapidly evolving. She said Wall Street Journal reported eight out of 10 counties nationwide have some sort of lockdown. She said over a quarter of the economy was measured from daily output declines from the beginning of March. She said accordingly, we would be expected to show a decline in the economy this year and expected it would be a year to recover. Ms. Cunningham said actions to flatten the curve of new COVID-19 cases were effective, and we would anticipate that the negative impact from revenue would have lasted through the first half of the fiscal year 2021. She said unlike the great recession, which was a demand-side shock, this is a supply-side shock; closing businesses negatively impacted consumers. She said the Stay-at-Home Order protected health but has economic consequences for retail sales and all industries to a varying degree. Lastly, she said food restaurants reported that stores’ sales were down 50%; airlines were reporting that the impact on air travel could be doubled that of 9/11. She said jobless claims for the last two weeks in March nationwide were about 10 million; two-thirds of that or 6.6 million were the last week of March. She said many small businesses were likely to fail, and federal stimulus and other support programs like the Small Business Emergency Stabilization Fund would help; however, some small businesses may not fully recover from COVID-19 losses. Ms. Cunningham said the County is entering the crisis with a strong position, in addition to health fund balance, the County has a strong debt profile, with about 1.5 billion outstanding, compared to over 2.2 billion outstanding at the great recession. She said the debts and validations had been lower, giving greater flexibility. She said the County started the year with 258 million in reserve, which provided the option to continue critical programs and services and avoid steep
cuts from the great recession. She said the County has strong performance through the end of February and tracked at or better than previous forecasts from COVID-19.

Ms. Cunningham said property tax has performing well from year to date with natural growth, a buffer amid the COVID-19 impact, and the County has already collected over 98% of the property tax levy at the end of March, with COVID-19, expecting a dip in the assessed value to registered motor vehicles. She said with fewer new car purchases and depreciation on existing value of motor vehicles, they anticipate that the largest impact in property tax would be from lower collections of delinquent taxes and receivable for smaller taxpayers, who have less ability to pay. Ms. Cunningham said strong tax collections, year-over-year to date, keeping in mind that the three-month lag in sales tax collections, would give another couple of months of receipts before we feel the COVID-19 impact. She said with anticipated impacts, travel, tourism, events, restaurants, and services, she would expect sales taxes would be hit hard in the last quarter of the fiscal year 2020, and with revenues about 23% below the same time last year. She said the negative sales tax impact would continue through the first part of fiscal year 2021 before returning to normal, according to the current projections. She said another aspect of COVID-19 would be the costs of the actions the County had been taking to protect public health investments to continue operations and more County services to a virtual environment and extra cleaning and supplies, lodging, food and laundry. Ms. Cunningham said all together, we estimated we spent almost $5 million, and if you added to the $5 million from the Small Business Emergency Stabilization Fund, $10 million in COVID-19-related spending so far.

Ms. Cunningham said for the forecast, we wanted to look at a range of scenarios, given the uncertain environment, worst-case and best-case scenario as well. She said for property tax, we have looked at the property-tax impacts on prior year taxes and interest and registered motor vehicle value. She said we have estimated in the best case a $284 million loss in value over. She said when we looked to the worst-case scenario, we would expect a greater negative impact on motor vehicle assessed value, up to $325 million, and the best case, we expect that to lower over the same time period, motor vehicle values go up to $43 million. She said the best case expects a hard hit in fiscal year 2020 with six months of impact and a slow recovery, and the worst case would be the negative impact stretches over nine months, best case being a shorter negative impact. She said looking at investment income, the scenario on the base case was that for fiscal year 2021, we would earn an average of 35 basis points on reinvested fund, and worst case would be 15 basis point return. She said the best case assumed the market returned quickly, and we would have 75 basis point returns.

Ms. Cunningham said base case reflected property tax of $899 million and had shown some growth over the fiscal year 2020 adopted budget. She said for sales, they projected about $194 million, $13 million below their fiscal year 2020 adopted budget or about a 6.25% loss. She said for reference, the worst-case scenario estimated the 10% loss, fiscal year 2020 adopted budget. She said investment income would be expected to hold steady for fiscal year 2020 in all three scenarios and $19.1 million. She said it was above our fiscal year 2020 adopted budget due to the set actions early in the fiscal year that had helped increase our interest rate returns. She said other revenues reflected a $5.4 million decline because of room occupancy and vehicle decline in 2020. She said the County revenues were estimated $2.5 million over budget from the fiscal year 2020 adopted budget, with the property tax and income gain, overcoming the sales tax losses due to COVID-19. She said looking at the fiscal year 2020 on the expenditure side, they would expect about $1.4 billion, 98% of the operating cost, and that would include the approximate $10 million of COVID-19 related expenses we showed earlier. Ms. Cunningham said they anticipated some additional expenses as well, and due to COVID-19, including special assignment, extended-duty pay and tracking due to COVID-19.

Ms. Cunningham said they expected a $2.4 million loss on sales taxes, relative to the adopted budget, FY2020. She said they did not forecast any COVID-19 related impact for the FY2020 Debt Service Fund expenditures. She said when we looked at the COVID-19 impact for FY2020, they had expected $38.4 million of general fund balance; the debt service fund was expected to increase about $11.8 million, leading to a net use of about $26.6 million of combined fund balance due to COVID-19. She said now that reflected the revenue impact and the expenses shown earlier. She said it is important to note not all of the fund balance was available for use, and as noted earlier, at the start of the fiscal year, there had been 259 million in unassigned
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Ms. Cunningham said COVID-19 impacts were forecasted to be felt into 2021, and property tax revenues would be expected to have grown albeit slower growth than previously anticipated in FY2021. She said we have also projected a slower collection rate with property taxes, in addition to the registered motor vehicle impact.

Ms. Cunningham said sales taxes would be expected to be about $7.5 million below the fiscal year 2020 adopted budget for FY2021; this reflected a small growth over our FY2020 COVID-19 base case but roughly flat where most of the growth had happened ahead of the FY2021 as we entered the recovery phase, and that would be expected to fall 54% in the base case with a basis-point return, would be expected to be about $150 million, 1% over the FY adopted budget. She said looking at the debt service fund side, we expect revenues to be relatively flat compared to FY2020; overall, they expected about $10.3 million in growth in County funds for FY2021, keeping in mind the County funds was what they had available to be invested in for current services and any new investment. She said the County would try to maximize recovery from FEMA and other resources and to track all COVID-19 related costs and staffing; FEMA funding would be considered as a last resource. She said they would need to purse all options available, but the economic impacts of COVID-19 were not known. Ms. Cunningham said the actual impacts could fall outside of the scenario they had forecasted, worse than the worst case or better than the best case. She said they would monitor and provide updates.

Commissioner Fuller asked if she could comment how the Charlotte Observer criticized the County for not using what they had said was about $359 million in reserves to help lessen the impact of COVID-19.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said we would need those reserves to maintain current service levels for FY2022, and she thinks it was premature in that article to make the statement that the County had not used the reserves. She said they had not needed to use the reserves, because COVID-19 just happened, but when they had put the budget together for 2021, they would be using reserves for operating expenses, which would normally be what we would not do, but we would make sure to do that to keep all of our employees employed and maintain current service levels.

Commissioner Harden said we had a minimum, general fund policy of 28% of our general fund; we had a fund balance policy that allocates as a bar, 28% of our general fund revenues, correct?

Ms. Cunningham responded yes, basically the prior general fund revenues we wanted to maintain a combined fund balance of 28% combined; our policy also allowed us to dig into those reserves, provided that we requested for emergency situations if needed to cover.

Commissioner Harden said in a report that you had to the Audit Committee in March of 2020, you said for this year that the 28% general fund revenue was $362 million and that would had been our 28%. She asked if that sounded right.

Ms. Cunningham responded yes, that was the $362 million that was the 28% of the general fund revenue that we applied for that passed going into the FY2020; we could not do that in a direct comparison. She said you would have to go back and take out, having looked at the combined fund balance, the amount that you would had stripped by State statute, $145 million, just if we took the numbers from last year. She said also we would have to pull back those that we had already committed by the Board of County Commissioners for specific purposes; that was $120 million. She said it was not and apples-to-apples comparison.

Commissioner Harden said Ms. Cunningham said the appropriated commitments were $120 million; but on the slide it showed $81 million. She asked if the County had backed off its commitment?

Ms. Cunningham replied no, it was just from two different points in time.

Commissioner Harden asked if Ms. Cunningham would consider what we were going through to be a rainy day.

Ms. Cunningham replied yes.

Commissioner Harden said I thought my constituents also considered it a rainy day, so I am glad to hear you say that. Ms. Harden said the Manager said that we would need to dig into those
reserves to move forward. She said she also thought they did not know yet what the community would ask them to do or how deep the situation would be before them. She asked if they had significant funding over the reserve and allocated fund balance.

Ms. Cunningham responded that they were starting from a healthy position but also had to keep in mind as they would go into FY2021 that having only 1% estimated growth rate means they would have to dip into that reserve just to be able to keep up current services.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said regarding the expenses for COVID-19 so far, could you help understand what the lodging was?

Ms. Cunningham responded those were hotels for the homeless, also including security, food, and laundry costs associated with providing that assistance.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how long that would last.

Ms. Cunningham responded it included the 90-day period of the costs and some elements would be more operating, and the invoices would still be coming.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked when looking at health and human services, why did the number go down with COVID-19 for health and human services?

Ms. Cunningham responded that for the FY2020 adopted budget, expenditure of everything that was appropriated when we looked to the revised for COVID-19, that counted for things like vacancies, slower spends on priorities that had not yet been achieved and typically something a little bit less than 100% going through. She said to your point, this was one of the areas we are closely monitoring for the other potential COVID-19 costs that we expect from the special assignment pay.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said that made it sound like it would go up.

Ms. Cunningham responded that it was being monitored, and were expenses that were lower, because we had not filled the positions, and there may have been contracts that were not executed yet. She said accounting for all of that, that was why they were projecting something slightly lower than the $271.3 million from the adopted budget.

Ms. Rodriguez-McDowell asked if they should have been bracing their selves for a shock to their system.

Ms. Cunningham responded that even just having looked at this, they were the worst numbers, and if she looked at what it took to sustain current services, it would had needed a growth rate in revenues for revenues greater than 1% to have had continued on the priorities and current services at the same levels that we did in the FY2020 budget. She said it would be a very lean budget, and that to County Manager’s point, they would need to dip into our reserves to keep our current reserve into FY2021. She said to her point of could it be worse, that she thinks that was one of the big unknowns that they wanted to stay on top of. She said when they had looked at the various reports, they had been working with our economist and other local governments in the big 10, asking everyone, and she had believed the forecast was in line with a good number of the analyses in what they had been looking at, in terms of it having been a very hard hit for the fourth quarter, a couple more quarters of hardship and then a slow recovery curve. She said there could be other events that would make that a faster recovery, and there could be things that would make it more difficult and longer declining revenue. She said she wanted to stay on top of it and continue to bring you all updates.

Chair Dunlap said I want to remind them that they would be seeing those numbers change over the next couple of months, because what they have really looked at was a combination of a lot of things. He said we have the unencumbered funds, and those were the funds that we have already committed to, that may have not been paid for.

*Note: COVID-19 had brought significant economic impacts across the Country. Those impacts would affect County revenues and overall budget decisions.*

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Harden that the Board continue to meet weekly to receive updates and information regarding the COVID-19 response.

Commissioner Harden made a friendly amendment that the Board receive the COVID-19 updates during the Budget/ Public Policy meetings.

Emily Kunze, Clerk to the Board, reminded the Board that there was already a meeting scheduled for the following week and the Board’s meeting schedule had not been changed.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell withdrew her motion.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said I want to raise the homeless situation, as I have been receiving lot of calls; she said I want to acknowledge that we have been working on it behind the scenes. She said I want there to be a Spanish-language option on any reporting or information lines. She said I want to know when awareness campaigns would begin. She said I want to reiterate to the community that as commissioners, we all understand how much pain people had gone through. She said just because some people thought what they wanted to do was more important than other people, it should not give a person the license to subject others to greater risk.

Commissioner Powell asked Ms. Diorio which gates would be closed for which parks and asked if Ms. Diorio would provide a list of park closings for the public to see.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, responded that every gate would be closed, and they really wanted to try to do their best to disburse the crowd. She said absolutely we will add a list of parks closing for the public to see.

Commissioner Powell asked for handwashing and shower stations for the homeless.

Ms. Diorio responded we would check into that, and one thing we did was put Port-A-Johns and hand-washing stations uptown and a lot of closed places that the homeless have used for those purposes. She said as she had indicated previously, the City would use their emergency services grant to provide hotel space for families and individuals who were medically fragile, and those hotels would be made available to them until the end of December, as well as the County providing hotel space to provide social distancing.

Commissioner Jerrell said thank you to Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell for lifting this conversation up and allowing this type of discussion to take place. He said I think sometimes there is a propensity for people to believe that when people go outside of what tradition has called for it is a shot against staff or a certain individual. Mr. Jerrell said I do not believe that it was by any stretch of the imagination, and I thought everyone on the call had the utmost respect for staff and the County Manager for the work that has been done. He said I was a little concerned for the Latino population when I looked at statistics locally and statewide; I thought there had to be a tremendous amount of engagement in that particular community. He said I would love for that to be addressed. He said it may add value if we would leverage some of the community leaders to stand behind and show that they would be behind you 100%.

Ms. Diorio said I will talk to Ms. Harris about the Latino population, as she is no longer on the conference call.
Commissioner Fuller thanked everyone for having space for forum and explained that he believed it was important that elected leaders had an opportunity for forum and did not believe it took away from their responsibility to the public and found that the meeting was the most logical way for that to happen.

Commissioner Harden said she heard from constituents who had difficulties with the system that when they tried to file an unemployment claim. She said the other thing I want to bring up is that apparently while we had a high level of people filing for unemployment, that did not mean their application had been accepted. She said my understanding was that North Carolina had low rates of eligibility. She said I want to know how many have applied and how many had been denied and where the loopholes were. She said I thought we needed to pay attention to that, because if people were unable to access unemployment claims, pretty quickly the Board would see real problems emerge.

Ms. Diorio said unemployment was maintained at a state level; she said she would see how much data they would be able to pull down from the State and report back on it, as she was not sure how much visibility they had.

Chair Dunlap said I heard some really good ideas and thought it was a good idea for them to have the ability to express their concerns. He said he wanted to bring one thing to the Board’s attention, and that is the super spreaders in the community. He said those are the groups and organizations who were spreading the virus in large numbers. He said I shared with the County Manager about a call he had received from a congregation member who believed his pastor may have and spread the virus, so that was shared with the Manager in order for her to make sure the appropriate enforcement would take place.

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously, to approve the following Consent items:

20-6040: Budget Amendment - DSS: FY20 Non-Smart Start Child Care and Smart Start Child Care

(A) Amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in revenue and expenses of $2,363 from State childcare allocations in the General Fund (0001) within the Department of Social Services and (B) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to approve a decrease in revenue and expenses of $42,977 from Federal childcare allocations in the General Fund (0001) within the Department of Social Services.

20-6044: Set a Public Hearing for Closing a Portion of Right-of-Way for Neck Road

(A) Set a public hearing for May 19, 2020 to hear all interested citizens who appear with respect to the closing of a portion of public right-of-way for Neck Road and (B) adopt a resolution declaring its intent to close a portion of Neck Road right-of-way.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document #121.

20-6048: Storm Water Program - FY20 Hazard Mitigation McDowell Farms

(A) Accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Jonathan Billak, owner of property located at 6711 Mounting Rock Road, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 167-223-07), for $200,000, (B) authorize the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police and Fire Departments to use the structure for training exercises, and (C) adopt a Resolution Approving Transfer of Reusable Building Materials to Habitat for Humanity of Charlotte, Inc. to allow for salvage of materials prior to demolition.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document #122.

Note: Since late 1999, Mecklenburg County had used storm water fee revenue to acquire flood
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Prone property. Buyouts reduce the risk to life and property during floods, while also enhancing the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain.

Storm Water Services selected the referenced parcel based on prioritization and recommendations in the Flood Risk Assessment and Risk Reduction Plan adopted by the Board on May 1, 2012.

20-6050: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $6,105.48 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $3,263,620.57 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action was necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6057: Set Public Hearing - Surface Water Pollution Control Ordinance Revision

(A) Set a public hearing for Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. to receive public comment on proposed revisions to the Mecklenburg County Surface Water Pollution Control Ordinance and (B) direct the Clerk to the Board to publish notice of public hearing.

20-6066: Budget Amendment - Manager’s Office - Donation for Meck Counts 2020 Census

Amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate a donation of $10,000 from Novant Health to General Fund (0001) within the Manager's Office for Meck Counts Census 2020 marketing and outreach.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

20-6024: Revaluation Reserve Fund

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance and approve the FY2020 appropriation of $126,500 of fund balance held in the Revaluation Reserve Fund (RVAL) for transfer and appropriation to the FY2020 General Fund (0001) County Assessor’s Office Operating Budget.

Note: Funds had been approved for the Revaluation Reserve Fund to prepare for the next revaluation, now scheduled for 2023. A proposed three-year budget is on file with the Clerk to the Board. This action provides for the expenditures by the Assessor in this fiscal year for enhancements for the appeal module and new sector maps to capture images of 325 and 279 sectors of imagery-neighborhoods. Funding would be requested as needed to continue preparation for the revaluation.

20-6043: Grant Award - Department of Homeland Security - Storm Water Services

Commissioner Leake said this has been a major issue with Ms. Hill, who has lived in the LaSalle Street area and community off of Beatties Ford Road. She said this was a major problem for the community behind West Charlotte High School, and the Homeland Security Science and Technical Director would be getting money to make sure they would be able to complete and do the process of helping to alleviate some of the flooding problems in that area and other areas.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) recognize, receive and appropriate $73,705.87 in additional grant funds from the Department of Homeland Security to Storm Water Grant Fund (G705) for the life/duration of the grant and (B) receive up to 20 flood sensors & components from IntelliSense.

Note: In FY18, Charlotte Mecklenburg Storm Water Services (CMSWS) submitted a proposal to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate for a 3-year project to enhance Flood Risk Assessment and Risk Reduction (RARR) tools and improve the Flood Information and Notification system (FINS). The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners had approved submission and receipt of the grant on August 2, 2017 (BA 17-4147) in the amount of $900,000. DHS had agreed to fund the final year of the grant (Option Year 2) which brings the total award to $973,705.87. This action would recognize, receive and appropriate the additional funding to allow Storm Water Services to complete the project by April 2021.

To date as part of this grant from DHS, Mecklenburg County had received 175 low-cost flood sensors to temporarily or permanently use for flood monitoring and public safety. The development vendor, IntelliSense had provided additional sensors and replacement equipment to Mecklenburg County at the approval of DHS. The sensors would supplement the existing Flood Information & Notification System (FINS) network of 55 stream gages and over 100 low-cost sensors that were currently deployed in local creeks. The flood sensors would become the property of Mecklenburg County.

20-6047: Grant Application - American Heart Association

Commissioner Leake said she pulled this item, because this was part of what was going on in the community for those who had other issues besides the virus upon them. She said I have major concerns about being asked to support a corner store process rather than having brought in a grocery store or a mini market. She asked the Manager how far they were with a mini market.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, responded not as far as they would had liked to have been unfortunately. She said they had been working on that, but unfortunately, the crisis has taken away all of their time from working on anything else.

Ms. Leake said this has been on the agenda for a long time, yet we have been talking about living health and not becoming impaired because we did not have the access to major foods within our community. She said I do not know how I will vote to support it but not a corner grocery store, but I will continue to try to bring in the mini market.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to affirm the submission of the grant application to American Heart Association for promoting community health in the amount of $10,000.

Note: The Mecklenburg County Health Department had applied for new funding opportunity from the American Heart Association. Grant funds will be used to support: 1. Expansion of the “Healthy Corner Store” initiative to four (4) additional stores in neighborhoods with limited access to healthy foods and 2. Purchase of supplies, (sporting goods, street art supplies, signage, and safety equipment) for a pilot “Meck Play Streets” program that would allow neighborhoods to create safe places to exercise, play and had fun on a recurring basis.

20-6049: Budget Amendment - Park and Recreation - Hornets Foundation Donation - Revenue Increase

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive, and appropriate a donation in the amount of $10,000 from the Charlotte Hornets Foundation to the General Grant Fund (G001) within the Park and Recreation Department.

Note: The Charlotte Hornets Foundation installed 18 neighborhood libraries across Charlotte in an effort to promote literacy and increase accessibility to literature. The libraries had been installed on Park and Recreation properties throughout the region. Each of the libraries would be completely stocked with books of varying age levels and difficulty to appeal to community members of all reading abilities and interests. The Hornets foundation would also be providing
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Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation with a $10,000 check to assist with upkeep of the libraries. In approximately 6 months, the Hornets foundation would return to the libraries with all new books.

20-6058: Grant Application - North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
Bicycle Helmet Initiative

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm the acceptance of the grant award from NCDOT for 100 helmets and (B) recognize and receive a donation of the awarded helmets valued at $770.

Based on experience and projected event growth, this grant would allow us the opportunity to meet the demand and provide 100 bicycle helmets (the award’s full allotment) during the August 2020 National Night Out event. The award of this grant had been fully supported by our partners with Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, City of Charlotte Department of Transportation and the Vision Zero Charlotte Taskforce.

North Carolina G.S. 115C-518(a) required local school boards of education to give local boards of county commissioners the first opportunity to acquire any school-owned real estate that was proposed for disposal. The property had been reviewed by the Park and Recreation and Asset and Facility Management Departments and staff had determined that there was no County need for the facility and grounds during the term of the lease.

20-6060: Equipment Donation - Dell SecureWorks iSensor

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the donation of Dell SecureWorks iSensor to Mecklenburg County Information Technology Services (ITS) from North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NC DIT), authorize County Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between North Carolina Department of Information Technology Chief Information Officer and Mecklenburg County which outlines the governing policies and procedures between NCDIT and ITS in managing the Dell SecureWorks iSensor product and service.

Note: Dell SecureWorks iSensor was a cyber security monitoring tool. To enable the NC DIT to aggregate and assess security threats across the state, NC DIT was purchasing Dell SecureWorks iSensor on behalf of all North Carolina counties to integrate security operating systems.

The MOU was a management agreement that defined roles and responsibilities, governing policies and procedures under which the NC DIT and Mecklenburg County ITS may accomplish the following: share information through data exchange by using network monitoring and other information sharing platforms, establish a shared risk architecture, build relationships for “whole of state” approach to cyber risk reduction, share resources, including materials, people, infrastructure, and knowledge to move NC DIT and County cyber projects forward, and other activities that might benefit the County, NC DIT and the State

20-6080: Grant application: National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the submittal to apply for The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) for supporting projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers up to $500,000 for four-year period in the General Grant Fund (G001). The grant application was due May 18, 2020, and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the amount awarded to the General Grant Fund (G001).

Note: The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), formerly known as the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant program, supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), by providing incentives at the point of purchase. Mecklenburg County Public Health in collaboration with our partners seek to apply for the GusNIP Projects (FIP) funding level. FIP projects were mid-sized developing incentive programs at the local or State level. The proposed project was an incentives program for fruits and
vegetable purchases at large and small-scale grocery stores with established SNAP/EBT and WIC programs in priority locations. The program also includes support for the current farmers market SNAP "Double up Bucks" program by increasing matching incentives for fresh locally sourced fruits and vegetables. This grant requires a 100% in-kind match.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:04 p.m.

________________________________           ______________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk                                      George Dunlap, Chair
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BUDGET/ PUBLIC POLICY MEETING

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER – 2:30 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at 2:35 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present:         Chair George Dunlap
                 Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
                 Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
                 Commissioner Susan Harden
                 Commissioner Mark Jerrell
                 Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
                 Commissioner Elaine Powell
                 Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent Until Noted: Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, offered condolences on the behalf of the family of Sharekia Johnson, who was a valuable member of the County Manager’s Office and a joy to work with; her smile could light up any room. Ms. Diorio said she was sweet, kind, generous, and hard-working. She said their thoughts and prayers were with her family during the difficult time and that they were preparing a proclamation that would be sent to her family.

Commissioner Scarborough arrived at 3:05 p.m.

20-6081: COVID-19 Response Update

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said they were thankful to the hospital partners for expanding COVID-19 testing on the east and west sides of the County. She said the Atrium Health mobile unit would be testing. She reviewed the testing locations and times and stated it would be on the website.

She said that with regard to the field hospital, they were still analyzing how much capacity they could create within their walls and be able to staff and supply. She said that State Emergency Management continued to place orders for ventilators, PPE, and other supplies. She said if the field hospital was used, that it would be used for non-acute patience, no ICU beds, and it would be constructed at the Charlotte Convention Center. She said the field hospital would be a direct bill to FEMA and all other costs would be between the hospital systems which would seek federal and state reimbursement and that there would be no local dollars appropriated for this purpose. She encouraged healthcare workers who were interested, to register on the State’s TERMS.ncem.org website and that more than 2,000 across the State had registered.

She reminded everyone that the County Stay at Home Proclamation would end on April 16, 2020. After consultation with the policy team, they recommended an extension of the proclamation to April 29, 2020 to align with the governor’s order. She said the amended proclamation would include a provision to align with any future extension that the governor may make. She said if the governor did not extend, they would look at their data at the end of the month to determine if an additional extension is needed.
Ms. Diorio spoke about closing parks to vehicular traffic due to the need to enforce social distancing and that law enforcement would be stretched thin. She mentioned the Park Rangers were not trained in law enforcement. Ms. Diorio gave an update on the Business Stabilization Program and reminded the Board that in the last meeting, they proceeded with two Business Stabilization Funds in responses to COVID-19 in the community. She said there were 60 applications on the first day. She said the Micro Business Stabilization Loan Fund, which targets business located in the County’s Community Block Grant area with one to five employees. She said the loan amounts were up to $10,000 and that out of 60 applications that were received, only 13 were located in the CDBG area with requests totaling approximately 105,000 of the $1 million allocated. She said the remaining 47 applicants were in the City of Charlotte and Mint Hill. She said they believed that some applicants misunderstood the geography of the CDBG Program, and the City of Charlotte and Mint Hill were not part of the program. She said they continued to spread the word and that the close of business there were 139 applications received in the Small Business Stabilization Loan Fund, which targeted businesses with up to 50 employees and loan amounts ranging from $5,000 to $35,000. She said 69 of those were applications under preliminary review with approximately $1.8 million of the $5 million appropriated and that 13 applications had been approved and accounted for approximately $400,000.

Gibbie Harris, Health Director stated that the County had 992 positive cases of COVID-19 with 16 deaths. She said that about three in four reported cases were adults ages 20 to 59 years old, and two reported cases were among children less than a year old. She said that about one in five reported cases were hospitalized due to their COVID-19 infection and that while everyone was at risk for severe COVID-19 complications, cases showed that those who were older adults (≥ 60 years) were four times more likely to be hospitalized compared to younger individuals. Ms. Harris said that more than half of reported cases have met CDC criteria to be released from isolation and twelve deaths due to COVID-19 occurred among reported cases. She said that all deaths were among older adults (≥ 60 years) with underlying chronic illnesses. Almost all were hospitalized, two-thirds were male, and half were non-Hispanic Black. She went over the distribution of covid-19 cases reported by zip code of patient’s residence.

Ms. Harris reviewed how the projections were created. She said that the modeling that they would see was based on an entire region. She explained that their core modeling relied on methods that were developed by a team of researchers at the University of Pennsylvania and that the CDC had also used this approach in some of its projections. She said that local data on current and projected COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations and use of ventilators due to COVID-19 were combined from Mecklenburg County Public Health, Atrium Health, and Novant Health to update the projections daily.

Ms. Harris went over what the projections told us; she stated with community spread and increased testing, there were more cases of COVID-19 being reported in the community and that there had not yet been a dramatic acceleration in cases, indicating they were making some progress toward “flattening the curve.” She stated everyone must continue social and physical distancing, including increasing it. She said with current models forecasted that even with the current Mecklenburg County Stay at Home Order and increased social distancing, they would start to overwhelm our healthcare system in early to mid-May, meaning they would not have enough beds, staffing, supplies, and life-saving ventilators to care for everyone in our community and region. She believed the peak would be May 27, 2020s.

She stated projections reflected expected hospital resource demand for the entire region, including neighboring counties in the primary service areas of both health systems. She went over projected daily demand for hospital beds, ventilators, and intensive care unit bets. Ms. Harris discussed the increased opportunities for testing, and reviewed locations and dates of operation at Atrium Health Mobile Unit Sites and Novant Health Mobile Unit Sites. She said they continue to test those most at risk and having symptoms. She said they were looking at their messaging for key populations, including the African American community, especially those over 60 years of age and those with underlying health conditions. She stated that the largest number affected were 20 to 59-year-old. She said they were also looking to message to their largest number of effected, which was their 20 to 59-year-old, then the community at large, specifically around the Stay at Home Order.
Ms. Harris said that County staff finalized an outreach toolkit to be disseminated through community partners, including those connected to our Village Heartbeat and other community-based initiatives. She stated that the outreach toolkit consisted of a printable flyer; updated FAQs; social media infographics; social media posts; local hashtags; and draft email communication.

Ms. Harris said everyone, including pastors, community leaders, influencers, and the media, should share these key messages with those in their networks and that the toolkit would be posted on the county’s COVID-19 webpage https://www.mecknc.gov/news/Pages/Update-on-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx. She stated that an upcoming, virtual townhall would provide an opportunity for them to review the toolkit and answer any questions those in the community may have. She said the team would also be available for additional media engagements, including one-on-one interviews, to further share these important messages.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what other risks they should be promoted in addition to social distancing.

Ms. Harris responded that social distancing was really the main one and that they were encouraging people to wash their hands, cover their cough, and not touch their face. She said the guidance on masks was variable.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if they would put out specific guidance around what they were recommending as it related to the masks and said it was not clear at that point.

Ms. Harris responded that they had developed that and were about to push it out by tomorrow. Commissioner Jerrell asked if mental health resources would be included into the tool kit.

Ms. Harris responded that they would continue to add to the toolkit as time went on, including resources on mental health issues.

Commissioner Jerrell asked at what frequency data would go out to the community.

Ms. Harris responded that they were currently putting it out every Monday and Friday but were looking at the possibility of developing a dashboard to be updated daily.

Commissioner Cotham asked if the copy of the letter to the Department of Revenue would be made available for review.

Ms. Diorio said she would send it out.

Commissioner Cotham asked if they would have any free masks available.

Ms. Harris said that they still had a shortage and were not in a position to be able to provide significant masks to the public.

Commissioner Fuller asked if they had thought about extending the order to the date that schools return to session, which was May 15, 2020.

Ms. Diorio said they did but that consensus between the County, the City, and the six towns would be needed.

Commissioner Fuller asked about the data modeling.

Ms. Harris stated they had looked at three different models from working with the hospital systems, which showed the very best, worst, and middle of the line, possible projections. She said that Washington gave the best outlook but that after working with the County and hospital’s data folks, the decision was made to go for a more middle-of-the-road projection.

Commissioner Jerrell said based on the projections that were just given, were they looking at June or before then for the peak.
Ms. Harris said that what they were looking at now was the possibility of their peak extended into early June or late May. She said that with a peak, there would still be the other side of the slope. She said it would not end quickly. She said it would have to be a gradual process.

Commissioner Leake asked why they had not been in touch with CW Williams as it related to testing.

Ms. Harris said they had been in conversation with them for several months and were doing testing but that it was limited, partly due to lack of access to protective equipment and access to testing results.

Commissioner Leake asked why it took so long for the County and Health Department to come up with testing in west Charlotte.

Ms. Diorio responded that the County and Public Health Department was not doing testing and were relying on the hospital partners to do the testing. She said they were working with them to get the plan together and admitted it was not quick enough and could have done better with it.

Commissioner Leake asked how much equipment and supplies were needed.

Ms. Diorio responded that the situation was different than any other situation where they needed supplies, because the entire country was affected by it. She said they were looking for supplies and equipment as everyone else in the County was as well.

Commissioner Leake requested that future information be given out in layman's terms.

Ms. Harris agreed.

Commissioner Leake asked if they were still dealing with Cardinal Innovations.

Ms. Harris responded yes.

Commissioner Leake said she did not think they still were, because it was put on the table for discussion.

Ms. Harris said Cardinal Innovation was their only option currently.

Ms. Diorio said that in order to change managed care organizations, the process would take over a year and that it was put on the table to explore whether or not they should make a change but that they were still with Cardinal as the managed care organization providing behavioral health services to the community.

Commissioner Leake stated she had a concern with Cardinal Innovations and their credibility to her people.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if all testing locations provided free testing.

Ms. Diorio said she thought it depended on individual status; those insured would be ran through their insurance company but that she had heard from a lot of insurance companies that they were waiving it and not charging the fee, those there was no way to validate that system wide. She said she believed that people were probably not being charged any copay or charges for the service due to the vast majority of health insurers were waiving it. She said if someone was uninsured that it was her understanding that the fees were also waived.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the no local dollars to the field hospital included the PPE, supplies, and staff for the part that included the County’s funding.

Ms. Diorio said they had never intended to use local dollars for PPE, supplies, or staffing. She said it was her expectation that the hospital systems would take on the full cost of the field hospital.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked questions and Ms. Diorio provided answers.
Commissioner Harden asked if it was correct that we were short on 188 ICU beds.

Ms. Harris said that was correct.

Commissioner Harden asked what role the State had in getting them the special equipment.

Ms. Harris said in most disaster situations that they would make requests of the State to help meet their needs, and they would do what they needed to do either within the State or through the federal government to get what they needed. She said the difference they were running into was that it was a national situation, and everyone was looking for the same support.

Commissioner Harden asked if there were any other Counties with a larger outbreak than Mecklenburg County’s.

Ms. Harris said not that she was aware of but that there were other counties with a greater rate of positives based on their population.

Commissioner Harden asked additional follow up questions, and Ms. Harris provided answers.

Commissioner Powell asked if it was care for all patients when it came to the amount of beds.

Ms. Harris responded yes.

Commissioner Powell said they needed to speak with Representatives at the federal level to see if they could get PPE for essential workers. She spoke about mental health and said they needed to think about it every step of the way and while it was life saving to flatten the curve, it was really taking a toll on people. She said she hoped that hope was offered in the messaging.

Ms. Harris said they would work to make sure they were getting access to resources and would put together a resource page.

Chair Dunlap asked that the Committee, which comes to them with recommendations, would come back next time they meet, with a recommendation as it related to masks. He said that he heard anyone in the community could be tested now.

Ms. Harris said no, they were not at a place in the community where they had the resources for anyone who wants a test to be able to get it due to availability and PPE.

Chair Dunlap said he just wanted to make sure everyone understood that they would still have to call in advance to be tested and that there was still protocol on whether or not they would be tested. He said they would be lifting their stay at home order before the virus peaked and asked what the dangers were from doing that.

Ms. Harris said they could have looked at a spike. She said considering where they were in the process, they would go back to the red line from the PowerPoint presentation and that their numbers would spike, and hospitals would have a hard time dealing with the number of cases they would see.

Chair Dunlap said he would like to see a plan, saying that they were not there yet but that given what they had learned from the month they had, there were some things that they could relax on. He said the mental component was wearing on a lot of people but that they could not risk that over the lives that may be saved. He said he was still getting a lot of calls about the hospital situation and asked what the likelihood was that the beds would still be needed if they were about to reduce the restrictions of the stay at home order.

Ms. Diorio said they completely agreed and that the modeling from the hospitals was very clear that the projections were predicated on the stay at home order not being lifted prematurely. She said she believed they were keenly aware that if they started to relax restrictions or take away the stay at home order, that the numbers would spike. She said the best case scenario would be that the would be that they build 600 beds and do not need a single one but that it was really
hard to predict if they would need the beds or not need the beds and that they did not want to be in a position where they do not build them and have a spike and them not be available.

Commissioner Jerrell said he was getting a lot of communication from people who wanted to help and that there was no follow up or response to it.

Ms. Harris said that everything she received from the Commissioners or community who had materials for sale or services for sale, that she was getting those to the right places and that they were being vetted. She said that from the volunteer perspective, Char-Meck Responds is the best way at this time to get information if you want to be a part of support and things you want to do. She said the other option for clinicians who would like to help and be part of the clinical part was the TERMS website that the Manager mentioned.

Commissioner Cotham asked follow-up questions and received an answer from Ms. Diorio.

Commissioner Fuller asked if they could get demographic information with respect to the Micro Business Stabilization Loans and Small Business COVID-19 Loan Program to see who is applying and who was getting them.

Ms. Diorio said sure.

Commissioner Fuller addressed the rate of African Americans with COVID-19, stating he was alarmed that the number was going up, stating that last time it was around 42% and now it was up to 50% of the County’s reported cases. He wanted to know why they were seeing this.

Ms. Harris said she would give part of the answer and was not sure if it was the whole answer or not. She said at this point, it was not believed that the virus was predisposed to any particular age, sex, race, or ethnicity. She said what they did know, specifically in the community, that in the African American community, there were higher rates of chronic diseases, more negative impacts from social determinant issues, less likely to have insurance and therefore less likely to have good access to healthcare and tend to live in communities that were more dense. She said as they were focusing on those individuals who were most at risk and showing symptoms, they were likely to see more people in the African American community because the fact they were more susceptible due to their chronic diseases and have been showing symptoms and been getting tested. She said that may not be the full answer but that as they move forward, she believed they would be able to understand it more fully.

Commissioner Leake said they knew what they problems were and had yet to respond or correct those problems. She said that was a partial response and that healthcare was major.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Harden to ask the County Manager to communicate with the key executives of three major food suppliers, Publix, Harris Teeter, and Food Lion and report back as soon as possible.

Commissioner Leake said all across the country, African Americans were suffering due to ill living conditions and that they knew what the problems were but were not answering it. She said Mecklenburg County was number one in the process, as the poorest people stay the poorest people. She said 50% across the Country so they were the leaders. She said they needed to respond to that and were calling on the community to do the right thing, those who have jobs and money, to make sure they did not stay in the same position forever, because that was a part of the problem

Chair Dunlap said it was not necessary because they already did that at the Retreat and the Manager was already working on the same issue and just had not provided an update yet.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if there was anything different about the motion than what was already being done and was the Manager already doing what was being requested.

Chair Dunlap said she was.

Commissioner Leake said that the report she received was that nothing was in place and that it was behind now what the issue of the virus was upfront.
Ms. Diorio said at the retreat, she was given directions to meet with leadership at the local food retailers. She said she had reached out and had a meeting with Harris Teeter, and she reached out to Publix with no response. She said she still needed to reach out to Food Lion and Compare Foods but again that the virus did get in the way.

Commissioner Leake said her concern was that two consent items dealt with corner stores and you do not put corner stores in the white community, and that people of her color should be valued like everyone else.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried by the following vote:

**YES:** Commissioners Fuller, Jerrell, Harden, Leake, Powell, and Scarborough

**NO:** Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, and Rodriguez-McDowell

Commissioners discussed extending the stay at home order in Mecklenburg County until April 29, 2020 to align with the Governor’s order.

Ms. Diorio said that per Commissioner Leake’s request, she would research the County Commissioner’s role with the towns if they came up with the recommendation of June rather than April.

### 20-6089: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Fuller said they needed to do something about the high rate of African Americans with COVID-19 in the County, and he realized it was a problem faced by people across the County but to him it was not enough to just recognize there was a problem and that they needed to do something about. He said he had not heard any effective planning about what they would do about it. He said people were really good at pointing out problems, but they needed to get the solution. He said he needed them to come up with some solutions that were actually effective.

He said the second thing was to be mindful that there were differences among in the County about what they should be doing. He said he thought they needed to be careful that they did not loose people and were clear about why they were taking certain actions. He said he realized they had a policy team but that they had to answer to the people individually and that he had to answer for what the County did, and he wanted to be able to do that.

He said with respect to the field hospital, they had sent at least three different messaged publicly about it and he was concerned about that, because it was like they changed their minds three times. He believed it was better to work out what was needed to be done before announcing because they were now a long way from being at UNC Charlotte to now being at potentially the Convention Center.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell spoke on the homeless population asking for specific answers to the MeckMin request as far as the four asks in the request they sent to all elected officials. She said number one was to stop breaking up encampments; two was about the port-a-johns and the handwashing stations, number three was the expansion of the hotel rooms, and number four was the stay on evictions to stay in place and refer to Legal Aid. She asked for a definitive statement about what they were doing and which of those proposals or asks were they willing to definitively say yes to. She wanted to know if someone was talking about this and if someone at the EOC was considering putting out a statement about it. She requested a map of locations for where the hand washing stations and port-a-johns.

Ms. Diorio said they were in and around uptown, because they put them in places where people normally operate. She said there were six locations that were normally frequented by the homeless residents.
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said they were saying that downtown was not enough; they need Northlake and other areas where there are encampments that are known about. She said it was spreading it out for more than just downtown and that was kind of part of the problem.

Ms. Harris said they were working with the individuals who provide homeless services in the County. She said they were talking with them and getting their input about where else they need to be put and that it was coming.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said they needed to make more progress on that, because people were really concerned about the spread of the virus among that vulnerable group of folks who have compromised health already and just how it could really spread like wildfire through them. She said it felt as though they were not seeing the action they were looking for.

Commissioner Harden said one thing that she was concerned about was how many people applied for unemployment and how many were denied, because now with the peak being extended and we know that a quarter of the renters did not make their rent payments in Mecklenburg County this past month on April. She said she believed that they had to anticipate that number increasing for May and June. She asked if they knew how many people had been denied on their unemployment applications in Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Diorio said the Economic Development team was trying to obtain the information she was asking for.

Commissioner Jerrell asked for an update from the City around their Small Business Program as far as lending. He said it was his understanding that their CDBG lending was only in certain corridors, which may leave out some businesses because the County could not cover the City of Charlotte and Mint Hill. He also wanted to know if the County was having continued conversation with the City to ensure the gaps were filled.

Ms. Diorio said he was correct; they only had a million dollars of money to spend and were doing it in certain corridors in the City of Charlotte, so there was a gap when you look at the CDBG money.

Commissioner Jerrell asked about transportation for the homeless as it related to getting to medical facilities for testing.

Ms. Harris said they had been working around getting them to testing for those who were symptomatic when they went to shelters. She said they were working with the Sheriff with that. She said transportation for the homeless in the past, especially if they were in shelters or receiving services from one of the providers, had been that they had a system where they provided that service but that they had just not been comfortable doing that with individuals who may or may not be COVID-19 positive.

Commissioner Jerrell said there was a gap that needed to be addressed.

Ms. Harris said she was not aware of any situation where they did not get someone transported who was screened at one of the shelters, found to be symptomatic and not transported for a test then transported to the hotel where their test results came.

Commissioner Harris encouraged that when people were reaching out to them to try to sell or donate items, if it was not something that was needed, to close the follow up loop by telling them thank you but that we would pass.

Commissioner Powell wanted to be a voice for the people calling her complaining about their loss of freedom, as someone said: “because the knuckle heads who were not being compliant.” She said they had not heard a lot about the order being enforced and she thought it may be time for enforcement for people to understand how serious this way.

Ms. Diorio said CMPD and the Towns where enforcing it every single day and that was something they talked about in their 10:00 a.m. calls; they get an update from Chief Estes from CMPD about all of the enforcement actions they were taking and he was coordinating with all
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the Town police departments as well as the Sherriff to ensure they were consistently enforcing across the entire county.

Commissioner Powell said she hoped the homeless receive more hygiene throughout the County beyond the uptown area.

Chair Dunlap said he wanted to receive a response that would tell them to what degree they had met those requests, because one thing they did not know was whether or not the funds they appropriated had been spent. He said if they had been spent and all of the needs had not been spent, he would expect her to come back to the Board with the request for additional funds so that we could carry out the things that they wanted to carry about. He said he thought it was also fair, since they had all those offers for things they may or may not need, to tell people what they do need. He said one of the things that he would like to request was for those people who had the ability to make masks, to make them available specifically for the homeless population. He said most of them were not wearing masks.

Ms. Diorio clarified an earlier statement that she had made. She said the Convention Center was one of some sites that the Army Corp of Engineers were evaluating and that the final say had not yet been determined but the preferred site was the convention center.

20-6084: Meck Counts 2020 Census Update

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to defer this agenda item to a future meeting.

20-6086: FY2021 Proposed Fee Adjustment

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to defer this agenda item to a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

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Emily A. Kunze, Clerk     George Dunlap, Chair
Due to both Mecklenburg County and the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency due to COVID-19, the meeting was conducted remotely using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Formal Session on Tuesday, April 22, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent Until Noted: Commissioner Susan Harden

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, with invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Commissioner Jarrell.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-6063 by Commissioner Jerrell
- 20-6064 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6072 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6073 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6076 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6090 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6092 by Commissioner Leake

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6091: Proclamation Honoring the Heroes and Victims Of the UNC-Charlotte Mass Shooting (Chair Dunlap)

Chair Dunlap read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring April 30, 2020 as the one-year anniversary of “A Day of Remembrance” in Mecklenburg County.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6070: Public Appearance

The following persons appeared to speak during the Public Appearance portion of the agenda:

Fawnda Hill – Stay at Home Order
Adam Huminsky – Stay at Home Order

APPOINTMENTS – None

PUBLIC HEARINGS – 6:30 PM – None

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

MANAGER’S REPORT

Dena Diorio, County Manager, announced that Michael Bryant will assume the position of Assistant County Manager to fill Mark Foster’s position, as he will be retiring at the end of June. Mark served as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget since 2014. He has been with the County since 2003 and has over 20 years of experience in City, County, and State government.

20-6085: COVID-19 Response Update

Dena Diorio, County Manager, announced to the Board that she is establishing a Business Leaders’ Roundtable to assist Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, the Public Health Team, and herself, in preparing for a soft start in reopening the economy.

The Board received an update from Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, on the data of how many tests were given and how many positive cases Mecklenburg County has. Ms. Harris discussed the work that is now being done in the long-term care facilities located in Mecklenburg County and reminded the Board of the COVID-19 messaging tool kit that was rolled out Friday, especially for the African American community.

Commissioner Harden arrived at 6:36 p.m.

Raynard Washington, Deputy Health Director, reviewed current COVID-19 data and projections.

Mr. Washington responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

20-6098: Legislative Update: COVID-19 Federal Relief Update

The Board received an update from Starla Tanner, Legislative Affairs Liaison, on legislation passed by Congress for COVID-19 Federal Relief.

Starla reviewed the three following bills that have been enacted:

Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2020

- Provided $8.3 billion emergency funding for federal agencies and provisions to support state and local efforts.
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- $2.2 billion to support preparedness and response efforts including $1 billion for state and local health preparedness
- $3 billion in funding for research and support for Community Health Centers
- $3.1 billion to support the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund under DHHS

Families First Coronavirus Response Act

- Free Coronavirus testing
- Food Assistance— over $1 billion in additional funding
- Medicaid FMAP Rates —increased by 6.2%
- Unemployment Aid —$1 billion for emergency grants to states
- Paid Sick and Medical Leave—expansion of FMLA and creation of Emergency Paid Sick Leave

Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act)

- $150B for Coronavirus Relief Fund—direct allocation for areas with over 500K residents
- Direct relief for American workers, families and businesses
- $500B for Dept. of Treasury Economic Stabilization Fund
- $100B to address medical surge capacity for hospitals
- $4.3B to support federal, state and local public health agencies
- $45B for FEMA Disaster Relief Fund
- $25B for transit systems for operational support
- $6.5B for CDBG and economic development administration
- $7B for affordable housing and homelessness assistance
- $850M to support needs of local police departments and jails

Ms. Tanner said a fourth bill would be voted on later in the week.

Ms. Tanner responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.*

20-6106: COVID-19 And Homelessness Update

The Board received an update from Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager, on data as it pertains to homelessness and services prior to COVID-19.

Mr. Trotman reviewed the County’s sheltering efforts; hotel-eviction prevention; partnerships with local hospitals; transportation plan for COVID-19 testing; increase of available hygiene facilities; and their ongoing efforts to engage various advocacy groups and respond to concerns regarding the unsheltered populations.

Note: Mecklenburg County engaged its partners in the homeless services sector to begin identifying and addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic. The presentation provided an update on the work that has been done so far such as renting hotels, assisting with eviction prevention, and providing hygiene facilities for people residing in homeless encampments. The presentation shared the next steps that are being considered to enhance the response.

Mr. Trotman responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.*

20-6086: FY-2021 Proposed Fee Adjustments

The Board received an update from Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, on the FY2021 Proposed Fee Adjustments for the Health Department and Ebenezer Gujjarlapudi, Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) Director on the LUESA FY2021 Fee Proposal.
Health Department Fees

Dwelling Lead Investigations Fee

Ms. Harris stated to the Board that there would be several fee-adjustment requests. Among these are dwelling lead investigations, which will be done by the County’s Environmental Health Department. This is the fee that is charged to Medicaid. The requested fee is the amount that Medicaid will pay for the effort and that they do not send a bill to the when they do these investigations. This will put Mecklenburg County in line with both Wake and Durham County, who have increased their fees.

Ms. Harris explained that when a child has tested positive for lead, they go into the home and the other environments where the child spends time, to evaluate where the lead may be coming from. The request is to increase the fee to $1,200 per specific investigation.

Commercial Pools Plan Review Fee

Ms. Harris said there would be an adjustment for the commercial pools plan review fee and that they are asking for a $100 increase in this fee, bringing the fee from $250 to $350, because there is an increase in complexity and the amount of time that is required to do these plan reviews for new pools. Ms. Harris stated the new fee is in line with what others in the State are doing.

TB Risk Assessment Attestation

Ms. Harris announced that the TB risk assessment attestation fee is a new fee for the County. This past year there was an inability to access the serum that is needed to test people for TB. The CDC made changes to who needed to be tested. CDC recommends that anyone at low risk not be tested but instead move to a screening questionnaire and then an attestation letter. The attestation letter is used when the screening was negative. While the County now has more serum available, the CDC is still recommending that anyone who is at low risk not be tested. There are many employers who require employees to be tested for TB and are accepting the attestation letter. The County is looking to charge a $20 fee for that, as it does take staff time to do the screening and attestation letter.

Drugs Provided through County Pharmacies

Ms. Harris made notice of two medications, one being an emergency contraceptive through Family Planning and the other is the Miconazole, a vaginal, anti-fungal cream for yeast infections, which is provided at their STD clinics. She stated that the County gets those through 340B, allowing them to receive a reduced rate for the two medications and that they need to have the fee documented to be able to access these drugs through 340B. The documented fee for Miconazole 2% is $6.00, and the fee for emergency contraceptive is $18.82.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) Fees

Storm Water Fee

Ebenezer Gujjarpudi, LUESA Director, reminded the Board that Storm Water and Solid waste are completely fee funded and that the fee for Storm Water is from part two of a two-year phase-in. It has been reviewed and approved by the Storm Water Advisory Committee and was based on 100% cost recovery. This is not a fee charged to the residents but paid for by the developers who submit the plans to LUESA. It recovers the costs for the services LUESA provides based on an analysis done on the cost to provide these services.
Solid Waste Fee

Mr. Gujjarlapudi said a fee was being requested to fund three Solid Waste positions, a Project Manager; Environmental Supervisor; and a Maintenance and Operation Specialist, all of which will be fully funded. We need these positions for new infrastructure projects that are coming this year. These have been reviewed and approved by the Waste Management Advisory Board.

Mr. Gujjarlapudi said FY2021 would be a capital-intensive budget year. He said the liner construction of approximately 17 acres at Foxhole would occur in FY2021 and traffic enhancements at the North Mecklenburg Full-Service Center would continue in FY2021, which would include a new exit road. In addition, the department would acquire 10 acres of land in the Steele Creek area for the future development of the Full-Service Drop Center, that is projected to open in FY2022-2023. He said Solid Waste was partnering with the Park and Recreation Department for the acquisition of 27 acres of property in the Huntersville area which would be included as future parks. In addition, LUESA would establish a new contract with the operating company at the MRF and the County would upgrade sorting and processing equipment and would lease five acres of the Durable Woods site for Hickory Grove.

Mr. Gujjarlapudi said LUESA was proposing several fee adjustments including an increase in the Residential Availability Fee to cover costs associated with processing and sale of recycling. LUESA also proposed an increase in tip fees to cover contractual increases at the Speedway Landfill and proposed increases to foxhole landfill tip fees. He said the waste tire fund needed a subsidy of $300,000 due to a shortfall of State revenue for processing tires.

Ms. Harris and Mr. Gujjarlapudi responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

Commissioner Cotham requested Mr. Gujjarlapudi and his team discuss the stormwater fees with the developers and associations. She asked that he consider giving a one-year reprieve on the fee increase and push it out another year, especially developers that are building affordable housing.

*The LUESA presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.*

**DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE**

**STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE**

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS - NONE**

**CONSENT ITEMS**

Motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to approve the following consent agenda items:

**20-6068: Storm Water Program-Hazard Mitigation Catawba River Floodplain Acquisition**

(A) Accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Kirk & Michele Beilman, owners of property located at 917 Riverside Drive, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 031-151-04), for $217,916.85 and (B) accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Kirk & Michele Beilman, owners of property located at 917 Riverside Drive, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 031-151-04), for $217,916.85.

*Note: Since late 1999, Mecklenburg County has used storm water fee revenue to acquire flood prone property. Buyouts reduce the risk to life and property during floods, while also*
enhancing the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain. Mecklenburg County uses acquired land as open space, for expanding greenways, for constructing wetlands, etc. At the July 2, 2019 BOCC meeting, the Board allocated $3.5M from the Storm Water Capital Reserve for voluntary buyouts and retroFIT grants to mitigate structures that sustained flood damage on June 9 & 10, 2019. This property was selected for possible acquisition using criteria listed in the adopted resolution. The requested action will consist of acquiring the property and demolishing the existing home. The purchase price is based upon a fair market value appraisal of pre-flood conditions minus documented flood damages from the June 2019 event. The owners have voluntarily offered to sell.

20-6071: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $8,421.48 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $7,663.00 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6074: Land and Easement Donation - Stewart Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project

Accept donation of greenway, temporary construction, and storm drainage easements on Tax Parcels 071-131-43 and 071-131-46 from the Trustees of Temple Chapel Baptist Church.

20-6087: Lease Amendment - Retail Tenant Lease at Government District Parking Deck

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a second lease amendment with John and Hresanthe Georgopoulos, owners of Little Village Grill, located at 901 East Fourth Street, Suite A (Tax Parcel 125-043-04), to establish a rent deferment plan.

Note: John and Hresanthe Georgopoulos, owners of Little Village Grill (the “Owners”), have seen a sharp decline in food sales as a result of COVID-19 and the Stay at Home Order. In order to continue to serve their customers and keep their restaurant staffed, the Owners requested three (3) months (April, May, June 2020) of base rent ($2,428.33/month) be deferred and repaid during the last 24 months of the initial lease term, split into equal monthly payments. This request is in line with current Mecklenburg County Asset and Facility Management guidelines for rent deferment at County facilities.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

20-6063: Park Name Change - The Davis Flohr Memorial Park (Clemson Avenue Park)

Motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to change the name of Clemson Avenue Park from "The Davis Flohr Memorial Park" to "Davis Flohr Neighborhood Park."

20-6064: Public Auction for Disposal of Surplus Equipment

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adopt a resolution authorizing sale of surplus personal property by public auction on May 9, 2020.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document # 123.
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20-6072: Temporary Construction Easement - Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to accept donation of a temporary construction easement on Tax Parcel 025-221-16 (+/- .014 acres) from Northlake West Real Estate Investors, LLC for construction of Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project.

20-6073: Land Donation - West Tyvola Road Property

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to accept donation of Tax Parcel 167-051-31 (+/- 2.8 acres) in the City of Charlotte from the Ross Land Company and Big B & G, LLC (“Ross and Big B & G”) for future County related purposes.

20-6076: Easement Donation - Paw Creek

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to accept donation of a permanent greenway easement on a portion of Tax Parcel 055-226-82 (+/- 0.3369 acres), owned by Paw Creek Village Homeowners Association, Inc., for the Paw Creek Greenway.

20-6090: Grant Application - Criminal Justice Housing & Client Engagement COVID-19 Response Plan (Criminal Justice Services)

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Harden and carried unanimously to (A) Affirm submission of a grant application to Cardinal Innovations Healthcare for COVID-19 Relief Fund up to $19,975 for allowing the justice involved individuals who are homeless to access services, communicate with case managers and obtain the support they need during the pandemic and (B) If awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Criminal Justice Services for the duration of the grant.

Note: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the various programs within Criminal Justice Services that provide direct services worked together to compile a list of clients that fall within the most vulnerable group listed above. At the time of this grant submission, there were over 130 active CJS clients on this list. Along with the difficulties associated with meeting the multiple needs of these identified individuals, the environment secondary to the COVID-19 pandemic has created other serious challenges including the inability to meet directly with clients in the community or schedule appointments at providers’ offices and the lack of direct or walk-in appointments with medical/mental health providers, with both of these challenges exacerbated by our clients’ lack of access to a telephone. Additionally, the severely limited availability of homeless shelter beds, sanitation, and regular nutrition creates a potential medical crisis for many of these clients given their risk factors for COVID-19 infection including, advanced age, pre-existing medical conditions, history of tobacco/substance use, poor hygiene, etc. (B) In order to meet the needs of these clients during the pandemic, Criminal Justice Services proposes using grant money from Cardinal Innovations COVID-19 Relief Fund to implement a three-pronged approach to addressing the physical, mental and social wellbeing of our most vulnerable clients at this time.

20-6092: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase)

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue of $560,503 from NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DPH) in the General Fund (0001).

Note: To support governmental public health emergency response to COVID-19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention activated a Cooperative Agreement for
Emergency Response: Public Health Crisis Response. The Division of Public Health has allocated these funds to all local health departments. The funding is earmarked for surveillance, epidemiology, laboratory capacity, infection control, mitigation, communications, and other preparedness and response activities.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

20-6088: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Cotham said she was impressed with the community and people being concerned about others. She said she was proud of businesses and how they have tried to make customers feel safe. She feels the community has risen up, and she is proud to say she is from Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Fuller congratulated Michael Bryant on his new position as Assistant County Manager. He said the coronavirus had revealed the existing disparities in our system. These disparities were not created by COVID-19, just revealed by them. It showed how we have failed as a country to put together a healthcare system that is responsible for the needs of everyone and that it is time that they do something about it. He said it is something that they can start working on at a local level. He added a heartfelt thanks to the employees of Mecklenburg County who have come together in an unprecedented way to meet the pandemic with the best foot forward.

Commissioner Harden said she and Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell met with the Senior Ombudsmen for the community, Cindy Englert; Hillary Kaylor, the Ombudsmen for Mecklenburg County nursing homes; and Lindsay Tice, who deals with the adult care facilities, and it was a really powerful conversation. She said volunteers were not allowed to conduct their visits of the nursing home locations, they were worried. There was a concern about inconsistency in a lack of testing for asymptomatic residents in the nursing homes and long-term care facilities. She said access to PPE in the facilities was very inconsistent, and it could change each shift. Finally, there was a critical shortage of CNAs and nursing aids; many of them were working for multiple clients. There was concern about how there were CNAs and nursing aids who may work a shift in an adult care facility and also go to people’s homes and help individuals.

Commissioner Jerrell congratulated Michael Bryant and welcomed Dr. Washington. He wanted staff to know how much he appreciated them and their efforts, and he thanked the community, as there are so many people out there who are selflessly sacrificing on the behalf of our most vulnerable. He updated the Board on the COVID-19 Response Fund. It was administrated by United Way of Central Carolinas. The whole goal was to fund organizations that have the capacity and proven ability to really make a dent in this response. The thing he is most proud of is that they have been able to identify grassroot organizations as well. The fund has raised $16.5 million dollars, with $6.5 million being awarded thus far. There were two rounds of grant awards; in the first round, grants were awarded to some traditional organizations like Social Serve, second Harvest Food Bank, Men’s Shelter and Loaves and Fishes. In the second round, we looked at diversity in terms of geography, need, organization, size, the population served, the partnerships, innovation and capacity. We awarded grants in the area of education, employment, emergency financial assistance, food security, health and mental health, and shelter and housing.

Commissioner Leake congratulated Michael Bryant on his promotion. She also discussed the problems with poverty, including food deserts and said she was glad the Manager would work on inviting representatives of large grocery chains to talk to the Board. She said she was concerned about communities that had been neglected in receiving food assistance. She said the Board should talk with the CMS Superintendent to ensure CMS was addressing their students’ food insecurities. She said that she was thinking about the senior population in Mecklenburg County during the stay at home emergency.

Commissioner Powell said the U.S. Tennis Association came out with protocols. She said some in the real-estate industry were not following stay-at-home guidelines and that it
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could be reported to the hotline. She said she was advocating for the safe return of small businesses. She asked Ms. Harris if a nursing home patient, specifically in Huntersville Oaks, tested positive with COVID-19, would they be removed from the nursing home to a central location? Ms. Harris responded that Huntersville Oaks was owned by Atrium, and Atrium has chosen to cohort all of the COVID-19 positive individuals they have in their other facilities, at Huntersville Oaks. They have cleared out one of the wings at the facility. They feel they can provide better care and isolation there. Commissioner Powell asked if at other facilities, would a positive COVID-19 patient just stay in an isolation room? Ms. Harris answered yes, they would.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell wanted to echo Commissioner Fuller’s point about recognizing the systemic gaps and how the current crisis has revealed those gaps. She mentioned the proclamation about the Mass Shooting at UNC-Charlotte, recognizing that the Chancellor and staff who cared for students through those dark times made a difference in those students lives.

County Commissioners Scarborough gave thanks to all of her colleagues for all they are doing surrounding COVID-19.

Chair Dunlap thanked his colleagues for being thoughtful, deliberate, and demonstrating that they really care about all segments of the community. He congratulated Michael Bryant, and thanked Mark Foster for his work with Mecklenburg County. He briefly spoke about COVID-19 and advocated for wearing a mask. He gave thanks to staff.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 p.m.

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Emily A. Kunze, Clerk George Dunlap, Chair
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BUDGET PUBLIC/POLICY MEETING

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER – 2:30 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 2:30 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present:
Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, with invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

20-6108: Central Piedmont Community College FY2021 Budget

Dr. Kandi W. Deitemeyer, Central Piedmont Community College, presented the FY2021 funding request from the community college to the Board of County Commissioners. She said they were having a wonderful year the incredible work of faculty and staff this past year. She said that pre-Covid-19, they were having a remarkable year for the college and still were but strategically around her strategic initiatives with a focus on students and their success and ensuring they were continuing to develop the talent ready for a regional workforce. She said they believed post COVID-19, the distance will be needed even more by our community, and we remade steadfast to be that partner for our community and vision as well.

Dr. Deitemeyer reviewed the demographics of students that attend CPCC. She pointed out the number of graduates who were participated there in 2022 to receive a degree and diploma and just 250 who would have received high school credentials. She said they talk about their partnership with CMS and that it was one of their largest partnerships, so she wanted to give an update. She said their middle college high school at the Cato Campus was just one of the three Charlotte area high schools that ranked in the nation’s top 500 by U.S. news and world report. She said they were not only proud of the middle college faculty and staff but also the faculty and staff who work on the campus from Central piedmont.

Dr. Deitemeyer said the middle colleges at Cato, Levine, Harper and Merancas had just over 830 students in grades 11 through 13. She said that was about $20,000 tuition free college credits saved there in the past academic, which came to about $1.5 million in savings for CMS families. She said that there were about 3,700 students from high school who were participating in career and college promise. She said given the numbers that were served, CPCC had the most career and college promised students of any other North Carolina community college. She said they feel pretty great about that in terms of the service that they were doing in the community and that those particular students had earned just over $23,000 tuition free college credits this year, which comes to about $1.7 million in savings. She said it was a little over $3 million of tuition savings for Mecklenburg County families.
Dr. Deitemeyer mentioned UNC Charlotte was their largest transfer partner and builder of the talent pipeline for the community. She mentioned that CPCC opened a storefront in October 2019 in Junior Achievement’s Central Carolina’s Junior Achievement’s Finance Park, which was a program spearheaded by Junior Achievement USA to teach young people how to follow a monthly budget, critical thinking, how much it costs to live, and how to solve problems. She said there was a part-time employee who worked with students on different career aspects and opportunities to educate some pathways that they offered and talk to them about how to apply for college, as well as how to fill out for financial aid. She said that CPCC was the first community college in the Country to participate in this national program and that they believed given the sound, financial principles and thinking through life on the front end was really a good thing for those making a choice.

Dr. Deitemeyer reviewed the program 49erNext, that CPCC had with UNC Charlotte. She said the program was announced October 3rd, with a soft launch in August as a new co-admission program so students could seamlessly transfer to UNC Charlotte with greater intentionality. She said the student would be co-admitted to the program, and to fully integrate a student’s experience, they could take advantage of what was happening at CPCC as well as some aspects of life at UNC Charlotte. She said that as long as they finished the two-year degree and graduated with a 2.0 GPA, they would be guaranteed admission into a number of programs at the university. She said that currently the college was marketing to CMS and others about the program. She said they had received a million-dollar gift to provide scholarships. She said that came from Peggy and Bob Culbertson to support students as they try to navigate from Central Piedmont into UNC Charlotte. She said that the Year Up Project was another national project housed at CPCC with partners being the John M Belk Endowment, as well as Bank of America. She said it was launched in August of 2019 and that it was a year-long program, in which a student would go to the college to take courses their second semester, and they would be out in the field of work honing in their professional skills. She said that by the time a student ended the program, in four months they would be making at least about $40,000.

Dr. Deitemeyer told the story of Muriel and Aumani Magliore, a mother and son; she stating the young man went to the college because the son did not know what he wanted to do when he graduated from high school. She said they went for a tour of CPCC and as they were there, although she had a degree and certifications, she asked her son how he would feel if she went back to college with him, and he told her he thought it would be pretty great. Dr. Deitemeyer said she was just glad to have had that great story between mother and son.

Dr. Deitemeyer said that pre-COVID-19 they were just shy of raising $30 million already with two and a half more years to reach their goal of $40 million and that she anticipated they would be able to do that. She said that all of the dollars would go to support students, program, and faculty. She went over how they were meeting some of the student needs for COVID-19. She said the students had not been on campus since March 6, 2020 and that the college had remained open even though they were working in a remote learning environment and teleworking environment. She said they postponed graduation ceremonies, and it would no longer be at Bojangles in May. She said they would do smaller ceremonies to celebrate the students as long as they felt confident that they would be able to do that in late July. Precautions taken by CPCC in response to COVID-19: moved all necessary student services to online and virtual delivery; suspended programs that require in-person instruction; students had not been on campus since March; distributed 215 laptops and 167 hotspots as loaners to students in need; launched the Central Piedmont Cares initiative for students and employees postponed May graduation ceremony to July 29-31. prepared to offer summer sessions fully online, and Central Piedmont Foundation was raising money for student Emergency Fund $100,000 challenge gift. She said they would start the summer session online with hopes that in the second summer session they could begin to open things up and test out some protocols. She said that they hired Marsh Risk Consultant to come in, and they did a physical assessment of each campus, doing formal and informal interviews with students, faculty, staff, and other constituents. She said they reviewed documents comprised of employee onboarding materials, emergency action plans, business continuity plans, facility drawings/diagrams, and 2,013 security-incident case files from 2017, 2018, and 2019,
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and in total, the Marsh team made 41 recommendations. These identify opportunities for improvement in facility physical security, organization and staffing, policies and procedures, equipment, and training. She said one first action based on recommendations was establishing an AVP of Emergency Management position.

Mike Whiteman, Vice-President of Finance and Administrative Services, Central Piedmont Community College, reviewed CPCC’s proposed requested budget and stated that there were four main categories; the first three dealt with maintenance and operation of the college’s infrastructure, and the fourth helped them to hire and retain high quality faculty and staff and students deserve. He said that the largest plot of money was in facility maintenance. He said that in FY21, they were anticipating a zero ask for capital purchases; an ask of $28.65 million for facility maintenance; facility support cost of $2.71 million, a proposed request for wage and benefit allocation of $9, 255, 000, which would total $39,691,317.

Mr. Whiteman said the salary and benefits line would build in a two percent for staff, which would also include investing in an Associate Vice President of Safety and Security, based on the recommendation from the security evaluation analysis. He said that in looking at both rows four and nine, you would see decreases in both lines and that they were largely from using the deferred maintenance money in helping to update the infrastructure, energy efficiencies, and things of that nature. He said good savings were being seen from both of those lines. He said he would also point out line seven, which was the largest area of request and the increase there was largely due to a contractual increase that they paid to their third-party facility maintenance provider. He said they had an increase in building square footage and also consumer price index increase that was a result of that contract. He said that the last piece was row 13, in which they did build in a two percent raise for faculty and staff and this was only the supplement portion; however, the number was relatively small to do some turnover. He said from year to year, the percentage of allocations to each bucket remained the same for the proposed, county allocations. Mr. Whiteman showed the overall operation budget for CPCC; there were three, main buckets of funding, with the first being the County funding, which was meant to be used for infrastructure and maintenance operations. She said the next three lines was one bucket but split into three sub-buckets, which were the institutional funds. He said that student financial aid and grants, the largest piece there was the Pell money that they receive roughly to the tune of $27 million which would go into CPCC then get pushed right back up to the State of North Carolina. He said for auxiliary services, those would be items such as the bookstore, WTDI, and security operations. He said student fees and continuing education were student fees that would be charged, such as campus access parking and security fees, lab fees, and technology fees. He stated it was important to note that the auxiliary services and student feeds and continuing education fees must be used for the purposes for which they were charged, and they were not able to be diverted to salaries or other items that they were not meant to be for; they did not want to charge the students for a certain item then use the money for a different item. He said the largest piece of the budget was the State allocation; roughly $99.9 million that must be used for instruction and instructional support costs. He said it could not be used for maintenance of the infrastructure and buildings.

Mr. Whiteman said in terms of deferred maintenance projects, the projects range from safety code improvements, energy efficiency projects, roof repair and replacements, and infrastructure and facility updates, and those last three combined were really helping them save in utilities and energy costs in their operations. He said there were 51 deferred maintenance projects planned, with 32 having been completed, 17 in progress, and two which were not yet started, and two of those were from the 2020 funding that they received. He went over the proposed projects for FY21, stating the numbers were in round number estimates and once approved, bids would be solicited with numbers find tuned. He said the projects related to security, replacing roofs, and equipment efficiencies. Mr. Whiteman discussed how deferred maintenance efforts had transitioned into sustainability efforts.

Mr. Whiteman said that in terms of energy, over the last 12 years, the college had increased its building footprint by 37 percent. At the same time, it had decreased total energy consumption (electricity and natural gas) by 14 percent; decreased energy
consumption per square foot by 37 percent; decreased total energy expenses by 5.4 percent. He said in terms of recycling, the Culinary Arts program and Harris Conference Center continue to compost approximately 20 tons of food waste each year; central Piedmont recycles approximately 150 tons of paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and metal per year. He said in terms of water, the college’s water consumption per square foot had decreased by 11 percent over the last 12 years, the college saved 1.9 million gallons of water in 2019 compared to 2018.

Mr. Whiteman went over the results of an economic impact study conducted for Central Piedmont indicate the college contributes $1.2 billion annually to the Mecklenburg County economy, an amount equal to one percent of the county’s gross regional product. He said the $1.2 billion economic impact included: $155.4 million in operations spending; $36.5 million in construction spending; $42.1 million in student spending; and a $919.5 million impact made by college alumni who live and work in Mecklenburg County. He said for every dollar a student invested in their Central Piedmont education, they received $3.20 in future earnings for an annual rate of return of 15.5 percent. For every dollar of public money invested in the college, taxpayers received $1.70 for an average rate of return of 4.5 percent.

Mr. Whiteman reviewed said the CMS-Central Piedmont middle college high schools based at four Central Piedmont campuses continued to perform well and gain attention from across the state; the middle colleges at Cato, Levine, Harper, and Merancas campus had 830 students in grades 11 through 13, and those students had earned 20,241 tuition-free college credits during the 2019–2020 academic year.

Central Piedmont also offered more than 50 career and technical pathways and four transfer tracks as a part of the N.C. Career & College Promise program for high school juniors and seniors, and in all, 3,706 high school students had participated in the program in the 2019–2020 academic year, giving Central Piedmont the most Career & College Promise students of any college in North Carolina. He said those students had earned 23,083 tuition-free college credits thus far during the academic year.

Commissioner Leake said they gave them everything that CPCC asked for last year and asked if there were an increase in needs.

Mr. Whiteman said the main driver in the increase was their contractual obligation to the third-party facilities maintenance service supply of $1.4 million.

Commissioner Harden said in her mind it seemed like a relatively modest increase in requests. She requested CPCC’s requests for the past five years.

Mr. Whiteman agreed to provide that.

Commissioner Cotham said she hoped sometime in the future that he could alert the Board to the needs of some of the students who were not only food insufficient but also housing or living on the streets or in unstable housing, so they could better understand what the challenges were there.

Commissioner Fuller requested to know where CPCC’s fat would be for if the County had to stay steady or had to cut.

Commissioner Powell asked what day it prepared and submitted.

Dr. Deitemeyer said she believed they submitted it a week ago, Thursday prior to when the County staff asked CPCC to get it to them.

Ms. Powell said she thought it would be good to be prepared for knowing where the most strategic place to cut as they were in an emergency situation.

Chair Dunlap asked Dr. Deitemeyer to share information about the upcoming board vacancy, because he was excited about the person she was recommending.
Dr. Deitemeyer said they had asked the Commissioners to consider Mr. Jim Dunn of Atrium Health and went into that thinking about it before COVID-19, because they had anticipated and understood that healthcare was truly the number one workforce opportunity for the community. She said now being in the midst of COVID-19 and not understanding what it would look like coming out, having someone on the Board who could work in full partnership about what the needs of the largest industry, made a lot of good sense. She said her and Mr. Dunn had gotten to know each other, and she believed his expertise and advantage and leverage of what Atrium does in the community really was the conversation they had internally then with the Board leadership of who would be a good fit. She said she hoped as they thought about the appointment that it made as much sense to them and that they would affirm that seat for them.

20-6109: Mecklenburg County Court Officials FY2021 Budget Request

Charleston Carter, Trial Court Administrator, presented the court official's budget request to the Board of County Commissioners. The court officials budget request includes funding for the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and the Clerk of Courts.

Mr. Carter went over the mission of Mecklenburg County. He stated the mission in the 26 the Judicial District was to provide accessible justice to the citizens and the community, which was the fundamental organizing principle of the Court and its justice partners in Mecklenburg County. He said they were committed to working collaboratively with the community to prevent and solve problems in order to enhance the quality of life for all individuals.

Mr. Carter said their support helped them to provide an updated strategic plan that had propelled and streamlined information, including a future upgraded case management, courtroom technology and technical associate. He thanked the Board for their funding, as it had allowed them to extend the hours at the Self-Serve Center, who had just celebrated 20 years of service, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He said at the Self-Serve Center, individuals could now represent their selves in various ways by receiving forms, educational resources, and the guidance to, in some case, avoid unnecessary litigation. He said the Self-Serve Center would not get people advice but would give hope and security for those who may otherwise have been without a voice in their own defense.

Mr. Carter said last year when the budget was presented, the Debt-Relief Program was spoken about, which helps drivers whose drivers licenses was revoked for non-payment of traffic ticket.

Mr. Carter displayed a short video.

Mr. Carter said of the 11,456 cases, divided as it related to the $15,000 equated to $1.31; you had changed someone’s life forever, because you invested that $1.31 in them, because you believed in giving back to the community. He said to continue with some of the funding that Mecklenburg County had afforded them, they had digital signs up to see what courtroom the need to be in; evidence presentation system, for attorneys or pro se litigants to present their evidence of a; a jury replacement with computers and microphones, so someone can hear a person speaking in the courtroom. He said all of these things were beneficial to the citizens of Mecklenburg County.

Mr. Carter mentioned the Mecklenburg County’ average daily jail population had decreased slightly again from a daily rate of 998 in 2018, to 983 in 2019. He said although it had decreased on a small portion, it was still showing that they were doing something right in the court system. He said the National Center for State Courts had benchmarks that they always tried to make sure the Courts were measured by. He said as it related to measuring the court’s clearance rate, the National Center indicated that if you were above 90%, you were doing a great job in your court system. He said in 2019, they were at 98% and that the ultimate goal was always to go over 100%, which would mean they were decreasing their backlogged case.
Mr. Carter said as they had often heard about how much debt as it related to funding for the court, it was actually less than two percent, and they had to take the two percent of what they were giving for the court system and that was the reason why it was so important that they had partners like the County to see the need for the courts and to address those needs to always enhance their operations in the court system.

Mr. Carter said as it related to revenue contribution collected, it was about $249 million; approximately 45% of the Court’s budget was covered by fees and essentially, only one penny out of every tax dollar was spent to support our court system. He said when talking about supplemental funding from Mecklenburg County, 19% of funding received from Mecklenburg County under contract with the Administrative Office of the Courts; that 19% equated to about $6 million in assisting them across the board with court operation. Mr. Carter mentioned the Self-Serve Center again, stating it was the only Self-Serve Center in the State of North Carolina, which served as a model. He said that last year, the Self-Service Center helped approximately 16,000 individuals.

Mr. Carter said that as it related to the County requests, for personnel, they were having trouble hiring and retaining at the salaries that they could currently offer. He said they were trying to get some flexibility as it related to hiring individuals to work for the agency. He said if they had a salary cap based on the person’s education or experience, they would have had some sort of flexibility of what they could hire an individual at and hopefully retain that individual so they would not go elsewhere in a short time frame. He said as it related to the AOC contract for the District Attorney’s Office, they put $120,000 in seeking two positions, and the reason why it was so important was that those positions centered around domestic violence and they would work with victims in the court room as well as with the new Marcy Law, which would increase victim’s contact that a District Attorney would need assistance with and to have two individuals, they would be able to accommodate that new law or enhanced law. He said the request for the Trial Court Administrator’s Office, last year he mentioned that with the Self-Serve Center they had to go to the State to make a request in terms of various grants that may be offered. He said there was a position in the Self-Serve Center called the Domestic Violence Coordinator position. He said with that position, for six years, they had received the grant and that typically it would take about three years and they would say you had to find sustainability, but they continued to apply a fourth, fifth, and sixth year. He said they were informed last year that they would no longer provide money to sustain that particular position. He said he was grateful that in January the County picked up that position for them but that they would need to make another request from January to June, because they were starting a new budget cycle. He said the request for the Larry King Clubhouse was $5,000 for merit raises and insurance increases. He said for some of the enhanced performance that they had microfilm for the Special Proceedings, like mental health records, area in the Clerk’s Office.

Mr. Carter said the second request was the digital sign-in kiosk, also requested by the Clerk’s Office. He explained that when someone went to the third flood to, for example, file a civil matter with the Clerk’s Office, there would be a long line, and a person may be in line for 10 to 15 minutes just to get to a window to find out that he/she was in the wrong line. He said that if there were a kiosk outside of the Clerk’s Office on the same floor, they would know which line to get into and which window to go to so they could make sure their needs were addressed. He said with the FileSolv project, last year the Public Defender’s Office requested storage files be scanned, and they received the money for those files, but those files in particular went back to 2017 and now they need 2018 and 2019 files scanned; the reason why you saw the $309,772 was because it was for two years. He said also in the Public Defender’s Office, they were requesting a projector, which would cost approximately $9,406. He said that other needs were requested as followed: a jury management system, for the entire jury process, $84,100; a digital signage license $9,000; digital docket displays, for seven courtrooms, $56,630; evidence presentation for courtroom 4310 $32,869 furniture replacement $43,495; video conferencing in Courtroom 5370 $13,520; controller for 4th floor displays $5,796; and video conferencing in Courtroom 6130 $13,520.

Mr. Carter spoke on the spirit of collaboration, with education & 26th Judicial District Collaboration by touching on the following programs: Race Matters for Juvenile Justice,
a collaborative leadership group that would work within our community to reduce disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color through institutional organizing, education, and workforce development. Civics 101 course led by current and former government officials in a face to face for people wanting to learn more about how local government works; Court College Educational program for adults about all aspects of justice system; Court Camp Educational program for children ages 14 to 18 interested in learning more about the law and the North Carolina Judicial Branch.

Commissioner Leake said where they needed to put money was with the court system to make it better so that people wouldn’t have had the experience of going through a system that was already against them in the first place.

Commissioner Fuller said in regard to the traffic fines, he was grateful there they had that level of thoughtfulness towards the residents, as he was a huge believer of second changes.

Commissioner Harden said she continued to be frustrated about the level of State support for the courts. She said none of the requests seemed out of line but that it was another example of how unfunded the offices were.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell followed up on Commissioner Harden’s frustration of how the State was failing them.

Commissioner Cotham echoed her colleagues’ comments. She said that Mecklenburg County spent more than $400 million that the State should spend, that they could not spend on CPCC or CMS or other things. She said the State knows Mecklenburg County will do it because they want better for the community. She said they needed to continue to harp on it.

Commissioner Fuller said he was glad to hear his colleague’s comments on the state of affairs on the funding of their court system. He said the problem he had was not only the funding level but also the restrictions that were put on the counties when they want to do things, they would have to do permission of the ALC in order to do these things. He mentioned not seeing a funding request for maintaining cleanliness of the courthouse and felt they needed to do that. He said let’s get back to electronic filing.

20-6118: COVID-19 Response Update

Dena Diorio, County Manager reminded the Board that the Stay at Home proclamation was extended April 16, 2020 to April 29, 2020 and added a provision in it that said they would extend automatically if the Governor extended but that they would keep the same restrictions in place that they had, and that was the agreement that was reached between the County, City, and six towns. She said the group came to an agreement that they felt at present time, based on the data they had, that they wanted to rescind their current proclamation and align to what the Governor’s order had in it. She said that meant a few things and that several things would be allowed to operate now in the County under the Governor’s order that they did not permit under their order. She said once the Governor issued his order, the Department of Revenue would issue a number of letters allowing exceptions to the Governor’s order or deeming them essential.

Ms. Diorio gave a brief update on the loan programs, stating that for the Small Business Loan Stabilization Fund there had been $1.5 million of loans which had been approved and that there were some that had been denied due to not meeting requirements and that there were several still being considered. She said at that point in time, they were oversubscribed, and they had applications totaling about $7.9 million in applications. He said once the application process was done and all the applications were processed, they could go back to the Board and decide whether or not they wanted to add the money to that fund. She said to the Micro Loan Fund, a million-dollar fund, they had approved up to $90,000 in loans which were geographically dispersed throughout the County.
She said that she had been in conversation with NASCAR and Joe Gibbs Racing and Cabarrus and Iredell County counterparts for them to be in alignment as it related to NASCAR. She said Joe Gibbs Racing was the only NASCAR team in Mecklenburg County and she was waiting for Cabarrus County to make a decision on whether or not they would permit their race teams to go back into their shops and the feedback she received from Cabarrus County was that they were waiting for the Governor to make a decision about the Coke-a-Cola 600, and he felt the race would be able to go on if the health situation was maintained without fans. She said based upon that, they would allow Joe Gibbs Racing to go back into their shop to be able to get ready for that race.

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, said based on the questions received at the last meeting, in present time, they had 1,528 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Mecklenburg County and about half of those were received from isolation, meaning they were no longer infectious based on what they knew at that point in time. She said they met the criteria that the CDC had put out and there had been 45 deaths to date. She noted one thing from the data put out that there were several new charts, indicators that the State was using to track whether they were doing what they needed to with social distancing moving forward as they opened things up and what they were seeing in the data, while having looked at 14-day trends, and what they were seeing with a seven-day average was a stable trend over the last 14 days. She said the second one was the daily percent positive of laboratory COVID-19, again having looked at a seven-day average they saw about a nine percent positivity rate in present time, with a stable trend with that as well. She said lastly, they looked at hospitalization of COVID-19 patients and with the seven-day average through the 26th of April they saw a slight decrease in the hospitalizations and would keep a close eye on it as it could quickly change. She said they saw stability in those three indicators, but that stability did not indicate an increase or decrease, in other words they were not moving in the downward protective the Governor had spoken to that they wanted to see as they moved forward.

Ms. Harris said the additional graft they had in the data was the social distancing index. She said they were now looking at the University of Maryland COVID-19 impact analysis platform, which was what was being used nationally. She said what that had shown them was a sustained increase in available mobility tracking since the order went into place. She said the order did have an impact in social mobility in the community and they would continue to watch that as they would move forward.

Ms. Harris spoke on the emergency department data they had been tracking and trends that they saw. She said they looked to the emergency room data collected at the State level but that what they had seen from January 2020 to April 18, 2020 was that the ED visits due to motor vehicle crashes had dropped dramatically. She said in terms of ED visits for suicide attempts or self-harm, they saw a slight decrease over the last month. She said visits due to mental health and substance abuse, including overdoses and violence were stable and, in some places, a slight downward trend was seen. She said the ED visits for stroke were also down pretty significantly and she was not sure what the reason was. She said the thought was that some people were fearful of going to the ED with an acute illness, so they were just not showing up in the hospital. She said the Vital Statistic Team was looking for death trends that may had been seen over the past couple of months to try to understand that particular trend. She said the other thing they noticed was calls to poison control center for cleaning materials and disinfectants with a spike leading up to the introduction of the Stay at Home order and that they had continued compared to last year in terms of being more elevated.

Ms. Harris lastly spoke to long term care facilities as they had received changed guidance from the State on Sunday evening that they would begin to release the names of the long term care facilities in the State that had outbreaks as well as the number of individuals infected in the facilities or who tested positive in those facilities as well as the number of deaths. She said they had already released the names and they went ahead and released the data based on state guidance. She said they had 11 facilities and added an additional since yesterday, which was Asbury Health and Rehab Center, which currently had two case. She said the other thing that he would mention was that FEMA at the federal level had committed to providing seven-day supplies of PPE to all Medicaid and Medicaid approved long term care facilities. She said they would start that the first week of May
and continue it through mid-June and would reassess at that point. She said starting next week, they would get a seven-day supply of PPE, which would be reassessed and replenished until the mid of June. She said in the meantime, they worked through the EOC to provide the PPE that the facilities had need of in present time.

Chair Dunlap said they wanted to know what date the order would be rescinded and if they could produce one document which said everything that could be done under the order, since there were so many orders and updates to the order.

Ms. Diorio said the order would be rescinded tomorrow, April 29, 2020. She said in terms of putting together a comprehensive document together, they might run a risk that something would be left out, so they would let the Governor’s order stand and should there be questions about what people could or could not do, they would try to answer them but may have to get information from the Governor’s Office about the intent of the order.

Chair Dunlap said it would have been very helpful to have had even if they had to call the Governor’s Office.

Commissioner Leake said domestic violence was a major issue, and she said she hoped some better means were being set up for physical and verbal domestic violence. She said the other things were that masks and gloves would be provided through Dr. Jerome Williams with Novant. She requested gender and race data in terms of who was in the hospital and had the virus in Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Harris responded that available information was in the report that came out yesterday. She said at present time, 55% were in females; 45% in males; 30% white; 45% black; 18% Hispanic; and not quite three percent Asian.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if the order would require a new proclamation or if the Governor’s order would just supplement and move it into place.

Ms. Diorio responded that another order would need to be done.

Commissioner Jerrell asked for an update on testing.

Ms. Harris responded that they were averaging around 600 to 700 tests, in the county, a day that they were aware of. She said the only ones who were reported testing to the County were Novant and Atrium. She said they had conversations about additional testing they may need to do on the County. She said the other change continued to be test accessibility and to maintain an appropriate amount of PPE in the County but that it seemed to be approving. She said the State gave them guidance around testing but that it was what they had been doing, which was the practice on the high-risk populations and healthcare providers and first responders but that they were having conversations about potential for expanding that over the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Jerrell said as some restrictions were lost and the economy became opened, he believed it was imperative that they moved expeditiously around the test piece, because that would be the lynch pin that could blow everything up.

Ms. Harris responded that it was directly related to access to testing supplies and that they did have some additional capacity and were trying to be judicious about how they used it. She said that more testing would need to be available as they entered back into the workforce.

Commissioner Harden asked about the status of the field hospital.

Ms. Diorio responded that the hospitals had withdrew their request for the field hospital and had not submitted another one. She said they were able to create additional surge capacity within their four walls and were not even into their surge capacity yet.
Commissioner Harden asked when they would receive numbers of the unemployed in the community.

Ms. Diorio said as soon as the State was able to provide them.

Commissioner Harden what she could do to get those numbers.

Ms. Diorio said she could try to get a request from the Unemployment Commission, and she could ask Starla and Peter to follow up, but as indicated earlier, they were focused on the claims.

Commissioner Harden said she was glad FEMA was providing long term care in nursing facilities a seven-day supply. She said they would do that for a month but that the commitment felt wholly inadequate and she was hearing a lot of stories from nursing aids and people who were working the community elderly who did not begin to have the adequate protective equipment to even begin, much less the seniors having the masks they need to wear. She said not only do the people who work in the facilities need them but also the people who lived in the facilities need them.

Ms. Harris said she would be happy to push recommendations but that the State was supposed to be providing it and evidently had not been able to, which was why FEMA stepped in.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked in terms of the Small Business Loan Program if they were still accepting applications if people wanted to apply.

Ms. Diorio responded yes.

Commissioner Harden was pleased with the decision of matching the Governor’s order. She believed that if there was some loosening of restrictions that it was important to get the message out about PPE, in order to ensure everyone had access to them. She asked if gloves were also something they should be focused on or if it was just masks.

Ms. Diorio said masks were number one, as well as social distancing. She said gloves were not necessary so long as you were using hand sanitizer.

Ms. Diorio stated she received update on the unemployment information which indicated that they would not be able to get information until May 22, 2020 for March.

Commissioner Cotham asked what the status was on the porta johns for the homeless. She asked if they were still located as the map showed and if they were being switched out.

Ms. Diorio responded that they had pulled back the ones that were out there, as they needed to be replaced. She said it was her understanding that they had at least porta johns going to at least 12 different sites in the County and they would be cleaned twice a day, which was an improvement over what they had before. She said she did know that around Hal Marshal would be one of the sites. She said there would be handwashing stations with the porta johns. She said they worked with homeless service providers to help them locate the best places to put them.

Commissioner Fuller asked clarifying questions and received answers from Attorney Wade and Manager Diorio. Mr. Fuller said the actions of rescinding the County’s Stay at Home proclamation served to undermine the County’s public health role and the statutes undermined the public health role and public health authority and that they had responsibility for public health throughout the County, even in those municipalities, yet they did not have authority with respect to public health even in those municipalities. He said he thought that was wrong and thought people who had been pushing the effort to undermine the actions to respond to COVID-19 should be ashamed of their selves for pushing to reopen in a reckless and political way. He said he believed it should be addressed with the General Assembly, because they did not need to be there again, and
it should not be the subject of a consensus. He said it was the County which had the public health authority and that they should had the truth authority that went with it.

Commissioner Scarborough said they should be able to stick to their guns; when they said something, they should keep with it instead of going back and forth.

Commissioner Powell said she was hoping that if they went with the Governor’s order that they would at least require masks. She said she would just keep pushing for masks for everyone as much as she could. She said she knew there was a supply problem but thought they really needed to have everyone wearing a mask when unable to social distance. She asked why they took so much guidance from the State when they had such a crisis there. She said she believed they needed a higher standard of care with the populations who were at risk. She asked if they were allowed to do that at a local level. Ms. Diorio said they had limitations as of what they could do at the local level and they did not license or any direct management over them other than from the public health perspective. She assured Commissioner Powell that they were doing everything they could to work with those facilities to insure they had what they need and were using the best practice. She said they were working with MEDIC and the Environmental Health staff who had assessed the facilities and were checking in on them to make sure they were being compliant with the work they needed to do. She said they would continue to have conversations with the State requesting their guidance and involvement in making sure residents were receiving what they should but that was one of the constraints they had.

Chair Dunlap

Commissioner Powell said it was an obstacle for them and they wanted to help with it and would. She said she hoped her colleagues would as well.

Chair Dunlap asked now that counties could borrow money at zero percent interest if it would make sense to borrow money given, they had outstanding loans with interest and the fact CMS was still trying to purchase land they were responsible for?

Ms. Diorio said the Finance Team was always looked for opportunities for whether or not they could refinance any of their existing debt but that she could have them go back to do an analysis to see if there were any potential savings that could be achieved by doing a refinance of the existing debt.

20-6119: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Leake asked if they needed to stay at home now.

Ms. Diorio said yes, at least until May 8, 2020.

Commissioner Jerrell wanted to continue to lift up the most vulnerable who were in professions of service which were at high risk.

Commissioner Harden said they did not even have a good rain gauge in terms of that their unemployment looked like in the community. She said it was hard to know how to plan when they did not have accurate data to measure the job situation in the community. She said the Long-Term Care and Nursing Home Task Force reminded her of the situation around pre-k; while pre-k was not in their lane, they made an absolutely commitment to understanding what was involved with pre-k and being a leader in that space. She said she wanted to say she did not want to regulate nor oversee the regulatory pieces of the nursing care or long-term care facilities, but at the same they knew those places were the epicenter of poor health outcomes for the community. She said in speaking to the community, they had a scorecard for the Governor in terms of what it would take to reopen the community. She said it seemed if they wanted to reopen and try to target certain numbers and declines and outbreak, they would need to improve the health outcomes of seniors in the community. She said they should be laser focused on that, because if they could cut those outcomes and improve those outcomes for those folks, that would be 50% of the cases. She said the Governor’s phase at every level said nursing homes and long-term care facilities would be locked down. She said that was no
life for seniors and owe it to the seniors to find out what were better ways of living for them as they lived through COVID-19.

Commissioner Rodríguez-McDowell said if half of the cases were in nursing homes and long-term care, that they should had poured resources and not caring whose responsibility it was if that was what it took to get reopened. She agreed with what Commissioner Powell said about requiring masks. She said if the County and City was not responsible for public health, she had a problem with the process of how they decided to rescind. She said she was pleased they were on the same order but not pleased with the way they got there necessarily.

Commissioner Cotham said she was glad the towns stayed with them as long as they did and were grateful for that. She thought there was a lot of confusion as to why there were two different plans and thought going with the Governor’s plan would reduce the confusion, and the result were that the people would follow the order better than they had since there would be only one order.

Commissioner Fuller said he asked questions about the orders because he perceived risks that once they were past this situation, the fact there was confusion was a threat to the public health authority, not just in that particular situation but anything that came down the line. He believed if things were just allowed to happen, that would set a precedent to what would come next, because what they would say next in another situation was that you would bring back what you allowed in this situation. He said he thought what was discovered was that there was a hole in the law that was a threat to the County’s public health authority. He said it should be not be different in a non-emergency situation than an emergency citation. He said he took this very seriously. He said he wanted to keep moving forward in letting the data and experience guide them and to not let politics in, which was what occurred. He said he thought that was a danger to public health.

Commissioner Powell said she believed all of the town mayors in north Mecklenburg loved their community and did not want to see any suffering, so while they did not want confusion, they wanted a slow, phased reopening. She believed that if they saw and indication of an increase in incidents that due to the respect the Emergency Management Team had shown to each mayor, that they could all go forward together unified in a way they needed to. She said it had to be data driven. She mentioned her frustrations around being unable to see the unemployment report until May.

Chair Dunlap said while they could not mandate people to wear mask, more and more people were listening to their conversation and understood how important a mask was to get rid of the virus. He thanked the community for following the order and asked that they continued to do so.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.
Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2020

SPECIAL MEETING

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER – 1:00 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 1:04 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, with invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

FEDERAL UPDATES

Amber Harris, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, said they were paying particular attention to what the federal government was doing since their actions would inform them on what the General Assembly would do, in terms of offering aid to counties due to COVID-19. She stated that she appreciated Congresswoman Adam’s attention to the issues and her time in the afternoon. She said the calls and briefings had been really instructive to them.

Alma Adams, U.S. House of Representatives, 12th Congressional District, thanked the Board for the assistance that they gave to Congress, especially during COVID-19, which has changed life as they knew it. She said since the beginning of the crisis, they had lost 289 North Carolinians to COVID-19 and over half a million North Carolinians who lost their job. She said in Mecklenburg County alone, they had seen 43 people lose their life from COVID-19 and that they were experiencing a true national emergency. She said the economy was in free fall, hospitals were stretched to capacity, and the supply chains from food to medical equipment were experiencing unprecedented shocks. She said the people of the County demand and deserve help from their elected officials and that she was delighted to have been involved in helping through the process. She said she fought to be their best advocate on the federal level and since the crisis presented them with the decision to shut down the economy, Congress had passed three comprehensive packages and a fourth interim package just last week to help soften the worst blows of the crisis. She said they had appropriated over three-trillion dollars to assist small businesses, working Americans, and to help the overburdened health system respond to the crisis. She said that included $659 billion for the SBA’s Payroll Protection Program, which they knew as the PPP, designed to help small businesses keep their employees on payroll. She said $260 billion was for expanded unemployment insurance and $30 billion in emergency education funding, including $396 million for the K-12 schools in the State. She said $75 billion was for PPE for the hospitals and front-line workers and almost $30 billion was for the only strategy that would bring them out of the crisis, which was testing. She said they had not finished the work, because she knew the fiscal pain that the States and localities were feeling as well as weathered their way through the crisis.

Congresswoman Adams said the State faced a multi-billion revenue shortfall in the next fiscal year, meaning less money for the schools and public health services and programs
that would help children and families put food on the table. She said they may had heard that the Senate-majority leader said the best option for the States and localities [inaudible] is to let them go bankrupt. She said he must not know how jurisdictions like Mecklenburg County are coordinating the response to this crisis. It was our County and State governments that are tracking new cases of COVID-19, putting into place guidelines that allow us to safely reopen. She wanted the Board to know that the next relief bill from Congress would include funding for the States and localities.

Congresswoman Adams gave her word that the word of all members of the House Democratic caucus support that as well, because in an emergency as unprecedented as that one, they would rely on them to ensure they had everything they needed to be as responsive as necessary. She said the least they could do was be up for the challenge. She let the Board know her office would always be a resource for them in the fight and that she had sought to be as transparent and responsive to all of the residents of Mecklenburg County as the crisis unfolded. She said they had two virtual townhalls and she had made her website an open resource for anyone seeking information on COVID-19 and how to access federal relief and she was taking any and all recommendations on how to best craft Congresses next relief package to help the community rebuild and be stronger than ever before. She said this would be the second package to help citizens and the most important lesson they had all learned from the pandemic was that they were in it together and there was no way to meet the challenge without working together and being responsive to each other. She said she was working to be that kind of representative for them and wanted to hear candidly from them on how the office could be as good of a resource to them as they were to the 1.1 million people who live in Mecklenburg County.

Congresswoman Adams responded to comments and questions from Commissioners.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
COUNTY MANAGER’S FY2021 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER – 11 AM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely in Formal Session on Friday, May 1, 2020 at 11:05 a.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

CHAIR’S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Chair Dunlap said we are gathered today to receive the County Manager’s Recommended FY2021 Budget Presentation. The Board will not engage in dialogue regarding the County Manager’s recommended budget at this meeting. The Board will have an opportunity for dialogue regarding the County Manager’s recommended budget at the Board’s May 12th Budget/Public Policy meeting beginning at 9 a.m. This meeting will also be held remotely. Chair Dunlap said the Board will begin budget deliberations on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. at the Valerie Woodard Center located at 3205 Freedom Drive, Charlotte, NC. Prior to those deliberations, the Board will hold a budget public hearing to receive comments on the County Manager’s Recommended Budget on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held remotely. More detailed information is available at MeckNC.gov/BudgetHearing. The Board is scheduled to adopt the FY2021 budget at the Tuesday, June 2, 2020 during our regular meeting. At this time, I will call on the County Manager, Dena Diorio to present the recommended FY2021 budget.

MANAGER’S INTRODUCTION

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said it is an honor and privilege to serve as your County Manager and present my Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year 2021. She said her remarks would serve as an executive summary and highlight the most important investments and initiatives included in her Recommended Budget. She said following her remarks, Michael Bryant, Management and Budget Director, would present a more complete overview.

Before she began to list her funding recommendations for fiscal year 2021, she wanted to take a moment to explain some of the factors that played a significant role in the shaping of her recommendations.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Ms. Diorio said late last year, an invisible enemy surfaced in Wuhan, China, becoming one of the biggest health threats in our country’s history. She stated the novel coronavirus,
also known as COVID-19, attacked the respiratory systems of hundreds of thousands of people around the world. She said since its inception, the virus had swept and continued to sweep through the nation, travelling from state to state harming individuals, families, societies and healthcare systems, but the impact of this invisible enemy reached far beyond the physical. She said the virus had not only ravaged the immune systems of people who had become infected, but it had also pillaged their way of life by forcing us to change the way we go about conducting basic daily tasks.

She stated that on March 11, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization, and days later, the first presumptive positive case of COVID-19 was identified in Mecklenburg County. She said that since that time, Mecklenburg County had become one of many jurisdictions around the world to implement strategies to mitigate the virus’ impact, with hopes of saving lives and making resources at area hospitals readily available. She made notice that Mecklenburg County was the first county in North Carolina to implement a Stay at Home Proclamation, restricting non-essential activities, to help slow the spread of the virus and that their efforts worked.

She said that soon after the Stay at Home Proclamation went into effect in Mecklenburg County, they had flattened the curve, and at present day, there were 1,641 confirmed cases and 50 deaths. She said they had 12 long-term care facilities in outbreak status, and that the curve projection continued to flatten, and the projection of the peak extend out into June, but while the strategies to extinguish the virus’ contagious flames in Mecklenburg County were working, the effects of the virus raged on impacting our local economy and the economies of communities around the world.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Ms. Diorio said while the Stay at Home Proclamation remained a critical component in managing the virus within the community, that the order led to a reduction of two major streams of revenue that the County so heavily relied upon, and that was sales tax and interest on investments. She said revenue generated by local sales, interest on investments, and property taxes were vital to sustain the work they do in Mecklenburg County, and it was through those streams of revenue, as well as other fees and charges that would enable the County to provide services to our community. She stated the County was anticipating a sharp decline in the economy during the 4th quarter of fiscal year 2020 as a result of retail stores, restaurants, and other businesses closing as a result of the Stay at Home Proclamation. She stated the temporary closing of local businesses, reduction in hotel occupancies or the temporary halt of sitting down for a meal at a local restaurant or bar had an impact on the dollars that would have circulated through the community, and the local economy might suffer even further due to the loss of employment that so many county residents sustained in the days since the pandemic began.

PLANNING FOR TODAY AND BEYOND

Ms. Diorio said the national and local economists agreed that this health crisis would evolve to a financial crisis and that as a result, several governments across this Country and State would be required to reduce or eliminate critical services. She said fortunately, that was not the case for Mecklenburg County. She stated the Great Recession of 2008 taught them valuable lessons, as they were forced to make over $146.6M in reductions to services. She stated that they eliminated 781 positions, which included 579 laid off employees and that they put a halt on our capital projects; the actions they were forced to take during the Great Recession derailed the County’s progress. She said it was not until this current fiscal year that per capita funding for Park & Recreation was restored to pre-recession levels and that they could not repeat the funding decisions that set the progress of this County back. She stated that as CFO, she was tasked with leading the effort that would ensure that the County would be able to respond much better when the next recession occurred and that the time was now to apply their lessons learned; Mecklenburg County government was resilient, and because of the Board of County Commissioner’s commitment to the fiscal discipline strategy, they were in a strong
position to manage what lied ahead. She said the County’s Fund Balance Policy had a provision that allowed for this one-time funding source to support recurring expenses during a financial crisis, and the strong reserves had given the County the foundation it needed to weather the impact of revenue losses during this crisis, while allowing them to fund critical programs and services for the residents and avoid impacting our workforce.

She said the County began fiscal year 2020 with $259 million in reserves, which created a strong fund balance and healthy debt profile, and of this amount, approximately $102 million was available to offset the anticipated loss in revenue in FY2021 and beyond. She said the uncertainty of our current economy served as a reminder of the importance of fiscal discipline, and their commitment to this strategy allowed for the necessary funding to create a budget that would allow the three, main goals to be fulfilled.

**BUDGET GOALS**

The FY2021 recommended budget achieved three goals:

1. It funded the County’s core, critical services, and programs that provided support to our residents who need it the most.

2. It maintained a fund balance that will be available to mitigate the impact of the impending revenue shortfall as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. It funded services and initiatives that aligned with the Board of County Commissioners top priorities.

**RECOMMENDED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021**

Ms. Diorio said her Fiscal Year 2021 recommended operating budget totals $1.9 billion dollars, an increase of $5.6 million or 0.3% over Fiscal Year 2020. The recommended budget maintained the current tax rate at 61.69 cents.

**REVENUE**

Ms. Diorio said at the Annual Board Retreat in January, the projected growth revenue for FY2021 was $46 million; however, given the economic impact of COVID 19, the revised revenue growth was expected to be $19 million; Sales Tax was expected to be $7.5 million (4%) lower than the FY2020 budget, and interest on investments was expected to decline by $6.2 million (52% lower) in the upcoming year. She said the recommended budget included a total of $52 million in fund balance and of that amount, $33 million would address one-time expenses, and $19 million would be appropriated to offset the anticipated decline in revenue in FY2021.

She stated while they determined the amount of Fund Balance to be used to offset the revenue shortfall, it was imperative to maintain fiscal discipline, and their policy stipulates that they would replenish fund balance within two years “if” they fell below 28% of revenue. She said the amount of Fund Balance in her recommended budget resulted in having $50 million available above the 28% threshold, and it was important that they had sufficient fund balance available should it take longer for revenues to return to normal levels. She also stated they must be mindful that the $19 million in fund balance would eventually have to be replaced with recurring revenue to support those ongoing expenses. She said the $19 million they spend today would impact our growth revenue in future fiscal years.

She said the budget included repurposing $14 million or 3-quarters of one cent of the property tax rate from the debt service fund to the general fund and that revision would still allow sufficient funding to service our current debt and provide funding for future debt. She said over the last five years, the County had invested $30 million annually to address deferred maintenance; the Recommended Budget provided $25 million, allowing $5
million to be invested in County Services. She stated those adjustments, in addition to the growth revenue, would provide $52 million in revenue for the General Fund.

**COUNTY SERVICES**

**PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Ms. Diorio said if there were ever a defining event that reiterated the importance of the County’s Public Health Department, it would be COVID-19; the pandemic illustrated the department’s primary goal of promoting and protecting the public’s health. She stated that during the crisis, the County’s Public Health Department served as the nucleus for our emergency response to the pandemic, and the Public Health Department quickly evolved into who the departments, residents, and the media turned to for guidance, information, data and coordination of the services and resources needed to meet the current demands of COVID-19 patients.

She thanked Gibbie Harris for her hard work and leadership throughout the course of the pandemic, as well as Public Health staff for their continued commitment and dedication to the community.

She said Public Health also heard the responsibility of finding innovative ways to promote healthy habits within the community, and it was through the creation and promotion of programs and services that allowed residents opportunities to improve their health, to reduce the risk of developing chronic health conditions, and possibly assist in closing the gap where health disparities exist. She said to support the department’s effort, she recommended a total investment of $86.3 million for Fiscal Year 2021, and the funding would give the department the support it needed to provide quality services to County residents.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $104,000 for the Children’s Developmental Services Agency to maintain service levels following a 13% increase in enrollment. The agency provided early intervention and support for children from birth to age three who have developmental delays.
- $80,000 in funding for interpreter services to accommodate the needs of the non-English speaking families.
- $150,000 dollars for advanced Tuberculosis testing, as the evidence-based screening method was considered a best practice for Tuberculosis screening tests and would replace the Tuberculin Skin Test.
- $43,000 for the Tuberculosis Clinic due to a decline in state funding and an increase in active tuberculosis cases and investigations; the funds would be used to purchase supplies and maintain service levels.
- $160,000 for the increased costs associated with LabCorp’s annual contract.
- $60,000 to increase Prep funding.
- $66,000 for one full-time school health nurse to stay within the policy of one public health nurse per school.

She said the additional investment would bring total funding for the program to $250,000 for FY2021.

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Ms. Diorio said while the pandemic is a world-wide crisis, there are many within the community who are faced with individual crises and struggles each day. She said the Department of Social Services continued to work to support the families and individuals in their time of need, and those needs may increase due to the pandemic. She said to sustain the level of services the department provided, and respond to increases in demand, she recommended that $165.5 million be appropriated for Fiscal Year 2021.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:
• $258,000 to meet the increase funding for Foster Care placements
• $86,000 to expand Senior Nutrition Meal Services to support increases to both homebound and congregate meal programs
• $206,000 to add 70 Wards to private guardianship
• $350,000 to fund the County’s portion of the Raise the Age Funding Grant Match, which would provide therapeutic services to juveniles that had come in contact with the criminal justice system
• 86,000 for Youth and Family Services employee retention strategies
• $250,000 for an efficiency analysis of the Economic Services Division
• $151,000 would be appropriated to fund the first phase of the new Family Justice Center, and the funding would cover operating expenses for the center to better serve victims of domestic violence

ASSET AND FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Ms. Diorio said the budget continued the efforts to keep employees and customers safe when doing business with the County, and for Fiscal Year 2021.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

• $1.6 million for security staffing as part of our weapons screening initiative at major facilities
• $413,000 for enhanced security at park locations
• $881,000 to fund increases in the County’s facility maintenance contracts

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Ms. Diorio said the County’s Information Technology team was an integral component of developing the “virtual county government” in response to COVID-19. She thanked Keith Gregg and his team for their efforts in deploying equipment, training employees to work at home, and to do so safely and securely.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

• $1.7 million in additional funding for hardware and software upgrades and enhancements

COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Ms. Diorio said in effort to prepare for the 2023 revaluation for the County Assessor’s Office, they must also look ahead to the future.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

• $1.1 million for technology security enhancements needed for the North Carolina Property Tax System and AssessPro Software
• $1.3 million to fund the Revaluation Reserve

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER PRIORITIES

REDUCING RACIAL DISPARITIES

Ms. Diorio said the Board identified five priority areas to address critical needs in Mecklenburg County; in Fiscal Year 2020, the County invested $65.1 million to support Early Childhood Education, Mental Health, Parks and Greenways, Affordable Housing and Reducing Racial Disparities.

She stated that according to hospital data released by the Centers for Disease Control from the first month of the U.S. Pandemic, one in three patients who became sick enough to require hospitalization for the virus was African American. She said the COVID-19
pandemic was exceptionally devastating because of the number of lives that have been lost to the virus, but what was been equally devastating was what the data reveals about the disproportionality in the demographics of those impacted by the virus. She said Mecklenburg County was committed to doing its part in helping to reduce racial disparities within the community, by providing support to programs and initiatives that help to close gaps where they exist, whether it was education, economic opportunity or in education and health care. She recommended new investments of $2.5 million for the Board priority Reducing Racial Disparities for FY 2021.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $1.3 million in funding for the United Way’s “Unite Charlotte” initiative
- $25,000 each for 25 Tier 1 grants, and the recipients would participate in Duke University’s Certificate in Nonprofit Management training program
- $40,000 each for 10 Tier 2 grants, and the recipients would participate in executive leadership training.
- $77,000 for one full-time Project Compliance Coordinator for the Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprises Program
- $150,000 to fund a Community Service Grant to the Young Black Leadership Alliance
- $50,000 for Prospera North Carolina

She stated Unite Charlotte provided grant funding for grassroots organizations and programs geared towards improving economic mobility through initiatives that address racial equity, poverty, civil rights, and access and inclusion.

She said the Project Compliance Coordinator would be responsible for tracking data and analysis of construction projects to ensure equity and access for minority contractors.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was also recommended:

- $775,000 to address Food Insecurity in the County

The funding would cover costs for the following:

- $125,000 to support the initial phase of the Three Sisters Food Market Co-Op
- $600,000 reserved for the development of additional initiatives to address the issue of food deserts within the community
- $50,000 funded the Loaves & Fishes agency to provide groceries to family experiencing short term crisis through a network of food pantries

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ms. Diorio said in order to effectively address the underlying issues around disparities within our society, you must look at education; research showed that education was the gateway for future success, but not everyone had been afforded that opportunity.

She stated since FY19, Mecklenburg County had created a pathway through MECK Pre-K to allow 4-year-olds access to a quality pre-k education, and more than 1,200 children have been enrolled in the program since it began, and they wanted to increase the number of children served for FY2021.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $21.3 million for MECK Pre-K for FY2021

She said that was an increase of $5.5 million over FY2020, and the investment would allow the County to add 20 classrooms, allowing for an additional 365 students to be served during the upcoming school year. She said the increase would allow for an enrollment capacity of 1,602.
MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Diorio said just as it was important to provide opportunities to care for the physical and educational wellbeing of the community, they must also continue to provide programs and services to address the mental health needs in our community. She said the Board priority of Mental Health Support allows the County to keep that goal in focus.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $1.3 million for additional services in our Detention Centers to increase efficiencies and reduce wait times for those in need of help by providing an Assistant Nursing Director, Licensed Practical Nurse, a Mental Health Clinician, a Physician, a Psychiatrist, a Psychiatric Registered Nurse and a Recreational Therapist
- $3.4 million to fund an additional 15 social workers, 15 counselors, 5 psychiatrists, and 2 behavioral health specialists.
- $945,000 for Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Exceptional Children Staffing and Special Education Support, which would fund 5 Teachers, 5 Teacher Assts, 4 Itinerant Pre-K Teachers and 2 Occupational Therapists.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Diorio said in Fiscal Year 2020, the County embarked on a journey to create more affordable housing options within the community; the County invested $15.2 million dollars in various programs and initiatives to begin the process of helping residents obtain and maintain housing they could afford. She said one of the programs the County invested in, was Habitat for Humanity’s Critical Home Repair, as the program addressed major safety concerns in homes by making necessary repairs to keep homes in good condition.

In FY2020, the County invested $1 million for Critical Home Repair Projects, and to date, 39 projects had been completed, and the County anticipated another 31 homes in need of repair during FY21.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $1 million to help fund the program for a second year
- $3 million to expand the rental subsidy programs

PARKS & GREENWAYS

Ms. Diorio said the County’s Parks and Greenways continued to be an essential component in the livelihood of residents, and the County’s parks and greenways had been a tremendous resource during the pandemic, as many relied on these areas as an outlet for exercise.

- $2.8 million to support 59 part-time and limited, part-time positions to support operations at the new Eastway Regional Recreation Center expected to open later this year and for two 15 passenger wheelchair accessible buses for the center, and computers for the computer lab

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $100,000 to allow for 2 maintenance and operation, full-time positions at American Legion Memorial Stadium
- $4.8 million in operating costs and maintenance for new and existing Park and Recreation facilities
- $37,000 for additional programming and related expenses for Steven’s Nature Creek and the McDowell Nature Center
EMPLOYEE INVESTMENTS

Ms. Diorio said the current public health crisis had impacted almost every aspect of their lives, including the way they work. Mecklenburg County was still responsible for providing the best possible service to residents.

She thanked County employees for their support and hard work during the pandemic and said the workforce continued to provide all critical county services and made the transition to a virtual government a seamless one. She stated the talent and dedication that existed in the County was like none other. She stated she was grateful and proud to be the leader of such a talented, dedicated, and passionate workforce. She stated that one thing that the employees could be sure of was that the County valued their hard work and commitment and recognizes their effort.

She said last year the kicked off a comprehensive review of our classification and compensation system and the review was initiated as they realized that the County employees lagged the competitors as their pay structure had not been adjusted in over a decade and that presented significant challenges with recruitment and retention.

Ms. Diorio said in Fiscal Year 2020, the Board of County Commissioners approved the first step in helping to elevate employee salaries closer to the salaries of our competitors in the market by approving a 5.5% percent salary increase for all County employees; however, the estimated revenue loss due to COVID 19, would require a delay in the 2nd step in right sizing salaries, which was the implementation of the results from the review of our classification and compensation system. She said although they had to delay the implementation of the revised classification and compensation system, it was imperative that they continue to recognize all of the employees for their hard work and that many of the employees were on the frontlines, risking their own health on a daily basis, as they combat COVID 19.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $9.2 million for a 3% across the board increase for all employees
- $682,000 to include a 3% merit increase for MEDIC employees
- $4 million for required pension contributions
- $1.3 million for increased costs associated with medical and dental insurance

SHERIFF’S OFFICE

Ms. Diorio said in addition to the mental health services highlighted above, she was recommending investments for the Sheriff’s Office for Fiscal Year 2021.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $683,000 for Arrest Processing and field operations and the Strategic Response Unit during the Republican National Convention
- $218,000 to replace a total of 345 bullet proof vests, which should be replaced every 5 years
- $54,000 to purchase three patrol narcotic detention canines
- $100,000 to provide the supplies needed for Juvenile Programs and Housing

She said the funding for the Arrest Processing and field operations and the Strategic Response Unit would support staffing costs, program supplies, equipment maintenance and repairs and metal detector rentals.

She stated Juvenile facilities now required to provide more clothing and supplies for juvenile offenders due to new requirements as a result of the Raise the Age legislation.
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $523.5 million, a 4% increase over FY2020
- $19.4 million to support Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools operating expenses

The funding would cover costs for the following:

- Health insurance and retirement rate increase
- Funding to accommodate charter school and enrollment growth for 1,807 new students
- Maintenance and operating costs for 1 new school, Student Support Staffing/social and emotional learning support
- Exceptional children staffing and special education support

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was also recommended:

- $5 million for building services preventative maintenance staffing
- $1.3 million in one-time funding for CMS’s Enterprise Resource Planning Systems
- $1.2 million increase, which was a 3% increase over FY2020, for Central Piedmont Community College

The funding would cover costs for the following:

- Salaries for maintenance staff
- Costs of maintenance and repairs of buildings and grounds
- Insurance fees for campus buildings, vehicles
- Workers compensation for institutional employees paid from local funds and other necessary insurance coverages.

LIBRARIES AND ARTS & CULTURE

Ms. Diorio said opportunities to learn and grow are often found in places outside of a classroom setting. One place learning occurs is our public libraries. The County recognizes the role our partners play in furthering the educational development of our community.

For Fiscal Year 2021, the following was recommended:

- $350,000 in funding to support a Request for Proposal to develop a libraries Facilities Master Plan to ensure that the community has access to a library in their area
- $900,000 in additional funding to support three grant programs for the Arts and Science Council
- $200,000 for the ASC Culture Vision Grant Program
- $10,000 (up to) in grants for arts programs
- $200,000 for the ASC's Individual Artist Grant Program to support the development of up and coming artists
- $500,000 for Operating Support Grants Program that would be used to support emerging, grassroots arts, science and history organizations with annual budgets under $1 million
- $1 million to support the capital campaign for the Town of Cornelius’ Cain Center for the Arts, which was currently under development

CLOSING

Ms. Diorio said in closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my staff who worked so hard on this Recommended Budget. This includes the members of my Executive Team, Management and Budget Director Michael Bryant and the Office of
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Management and Budget staff, Director of Strategic Planning & Evaluation Monica Allen and the Strategic Planning & Evaluation staff, Sarah Cunningham and the Department of Financial Services, Danny Diehl and the Public Information staff, and my entire Cabinet. I also want to thank the residents of Mecklenburg County AND the Board of County Commissioners for your continued support. Now, I will turn the podium over to Michael Bryant.

RECOMMENDED BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2021 PRESENTATION

Michael Bryant, Office of Management and Budget Director, provided a more complete overview of the FY2021 recommended budget. He went over broad factors, that shaped the development of the recommended budget, which were the summary of revenue and expenses; recommended funding for non-profits; investments in public schools and community college; literacy; and next steps. The Manager factored in eight guiding principles as she developed the recommended budget: maintain the commitment to the fiscal discipline strategy that Mecklenburg County was known for; minimize the anticipated fiscal impact that COVID-19 would have on Mecklenburg County’s operating budget; leverage financial flexibility; reserve fund balance so that it would be available to offset the anticipated revenue shortfall for FY2020 and beyond; avoid the unattended consequences of funding decisions from the great recession that derailed the County’s progress; make strategic funding decisions; and continue to invest in the Board priorities based on available funding; and maintain the AAA bond rating.

Mr. Bryant provided a summary of the revenue estimates for FY2021. He said that the property tax base was projected to increase by 3.3%, a $6 billion increase in FY2021. He said the Manager was recommending no change to the property tax rate of 61.69 cents. He said the value of a penny will increase slightly from $18.2 million to $18.8 million, an increase of 3%. FY2021 factors the impact that COVID-19 would have on the current fiscal year and FY2021. He said the original FY2021 sales tax estimate was $223.6 million and was revised to $205 million, which was $7.5 million or 3.6% less in the FY2020 adopted budget.

Mr. Bryant provided a more detailed look on how the Manager leveraged her flexibility in developing her recommended budget while remaining committed to the fiscal discipline strategy. He said the moderate $19 million in growth available to invest in next fiscal year, the Manager began to explore opportunities to increase the revenue available to build the budget. She factored appropriating fund balance to offset the anticipated loss in revenue for the next fiscal year. She said there was a provision in the fund balance policy that permits the Manager to use fund balance to support reoccurring expenses. He said if the minimum of total General Fund Balance and Debt Service Fund combined to the General Fund revenues will be 28%. If the General Fund Balance fell below the minimum 28% of total General Fund revenues, the funds would need to be replenished over the next two fiscal years. He said the Unassigned Fund Balance would be maintained at a level sufficient to provide the resources to meet operating cost needs and allow for unforeseen needs of an emergency nature to permit orderly adjustments to changes resulting from termination or significant reductions in revenue sources. He noted that every fund balance dollar spent on a reoccurring expense would eventually need to be replaced with ongoing revenue; otherwise, the budget will have a structural deficit.

He said there were three categories for making up the general fund balance: restricted, which was required by State Statute Includes amounts not readily available to spend such as receivables, deferred revenues and encumbrances; unassigned: portion that has not been restricted, committed or assigned to specific purposes or other funds; committed, amounts approved by the Board to be used for a specific purpose; restricted, required by State Statute Included amounts not readily available to spend such as receivables, deferred revenues and encumbrances. He said the County’s fund balance, including the debt service fund estimated for year in June 30, 2020 combined fund balance was $705 million, with $468 million for the general fund and $237 million for the debt service fund. He said projected was $224 million in rainy day funds, with unassigned General Fund Balance down $35 million from FY19 $259 million, and 28% GF Revenues as Reserve per policy is broader measure, cash on hand $382 million; estimated that the County has
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approximately $50 million of the rainy-day fund before triggering payback requirement. The Manager leveraged flexibility in the debt service fund by adjusting the amount of property tax set aside to pay for debt and that based on a thorough analysis, the adjustment would not have a negative impact on future debt. He said the Manager recommended decreasing the amount of property tax that was transferred from the general fund to the debt service fund by ¾ of a penny, which provided an additional $14 million being available to invest in County services. He said that prior to the Manager making that adjustment to the debt service fund, they projected an increase in County revenue of the debt service fund in the amount of $7.9 million based on the FY21 value of a penny; however, after the Manager’s adjustment to the amount transferred, they had a net reduction of $6.1 million. He said in the expense section, after factoring the adjustment, the Manager was still recommending setting aside $60.5 million for future debt service and $25 million for the deferred maintenance plan.

Mr. Bryant said that each year the Manager and Cabinet set forth a diligent effort to identify savings that could be repurposed to offset the need for additional funds. He said that the Manager continued to search for savings and funds that could be repurposed; this approach identified $21.8 million that was repurposed for the FY21 recommended budget, which consisted of $14 million of the debt service fund; $9 million from deferred maintenance and $2.8 million from County departments. He said that the department savings would have no negative impact on services. He said that since being appointed County Manager, she identified over $95 million in savings and funds to support expenses that would require additional funding; those savings were the equivalent of five cents of the FY21 value of a penny. He said the amount of revenue available increased from $19 million to $52 million after transferring ¾ of a cent from the debt service fund and $19 million in fund balance. He said that the estimates resulted in the total general fund County revenue increasing by $52.3 million, 4.6%, and a net total revenue increase of $5.6 million or less than 1% in the total recommended budget for FY21, because the reductions and fund balances of one-time expenses and reductions for the debt service fund.

He said that the general fund budget could be viewed in three broad categories: County services; PayGo; and educational services; both County services and educational services almost split the growth revenue in equal shares by dollar amount and both categories increased by nearly 5%. The education Services category included CMS, CPCC, and Early Childhood Education.

He went over a summary of the appropriation of fund balance, with a total of $33 million supports in one-time expenses. The breakdown was as follows:
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• Enterprise Reserves - $17,300,000 – Funding for technology, fleet and capital maintenance
• CMS Maintenance & ERP - $6,300,000 – Facility maintenance and Phase II of ERP upgrades
• Affordable Housing - $4,000,000 – Rental subsidy ($3M) and critical home repair ($1M)
• 2023 Property Revaluation - $2,385,275 – Funding for 2023 ($1.3M) revaluation and technology investments
• Cornelius P.A Center - $1,000,000 – Contribution to the capital campaign for the Cain Center for the Arts
• Food Deserts Planning Funds - $600,000 – Planning funds for food desert initiatives (restricted contingency)
• Public Library Master Plan - $350,000 – Planning funds to address library deserts
• Sheriff’s Office - $271,487 - Bullet proof vest replacements and three canines
• Park & Recreation - $271,056 – Two vans and computer lab PCs for Eastway and operating funds for McAlpine Creek
• Information Services & Technology - $250,000 – Cybersecurity investments and RNC consulting
• Court Officials - 150,000 – Public Defender Office paper files conversion
• Finance - $122,182 - Procurement services training and temporary staff

Mr. Bryant reviewed the five County Commissioner budget priority areas of reducing Racial Disparities; funding MECK Pre-K; affordable housing; mental health support; and parks and greenways. He said there was a total of $23,313,731 in new investments; including $2.5 million to reduce racial disparities, $5.5 million for Meck Pre-K, an additional $4 million to support affordable housing, $6.2 million for mental health support and $5.2 million for parks and greenways. He said there was a total investment of $164,842,043 to support the Board’s priorities.

Mr. Bryant reviewed the Manager’s recommended investment in county employees. She allocated $9,180,809 for 3% across the board pay raises; $3,990,686 to fund the increase for local government employee retirement costs, $1,297,324 for medical and dental insurance, $707,826 annualized funding for new positions that were approved in FY2020, $444,000 for law enforcement separation, and $681,733 medic wage adjustments. The total investment is $16,302,378.

Mr. Bryant reviewed the new investments totaling $9,631,000 recommended by the Manager. New investments included the following:

• Enterprise Security - $2,043,00 - Funding for enhanced security at parks, libraries, and government facilities
• Information Technology - $1,700,000 - Funding for hardware & software upgrades and cybersecurity enhancements
• Utilities - $1,100,000 - Utility costs for new & existing facilities
• Facility Maintenance - $950,000 - Funding for maintenance contractual increases & new or expanded space
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- Arts & Science Council - $900,000 - Funding to support three grant programs: (Art Programs; Individual Artist Grants; and, Grassroot Programs)
- Sheriff’s Office - $800,000 - Contract increases for facility maintenance, laundry and food services
- Medic - $560,000 - Capital funding for ambulance replacement
- Raise the Age - $350,000 - A grant match to expand residential services at the Thompson Child & Family Focus Center
- Foster Care - $258,000 - Funding to increase foster care placement
- DSS Economic Services - $250,000 - Funding for an efficiency analysis of the Economic Services Division in the Department of Social Services
- Assessor’s Office - $240,000 - County funding associated with purchasing technology to support the 2023 revaluation
- Family Justice Center - $150,000 - Funding to support phase one of the Family Justice Center
- Public Health - $125,000 - Funding increase ($60K) for the Prep program and (1) school health nurse
- Criminal Justice Services - $119,000 - County funds for a Family Court Victim Services Coordinator that was supported by a grant. One Case Manager to assist those with a criminal history access benefits; and, bus passes for re-entry services clients
- Senior Nutrition - $86,000 - Funding to provide an additional 7,500 meals for homebound and congregate meal programs

He reviewed the Manager’s Recommendation for community service grants by going over the community services grants process. He stated that sunset provision was applied if agency received funding for three consecutive years; community service grant’s process orientation was held on October 29, 2019, and the funding methodology focuses on buying results and funding new providers. He said grant applications were reviewed by County department representatives, and nonprofit services must fill a gap in the department’s strategic business plans. He said the three nonprofits subject to the Sunset provision next fiscal year were Wings for Kids; Lake Norman Community Health Clinic; and the Veteran’s Bridge Home. He said that the Manager was recommending that the Lake Norman Community Health Clinic and the Veteran’s Bridge Home become vendors with the County. He listed that the five new agencies were: Loaves and Fishes; Mental Health America of Central Carolinas; Prospera North Carolina; Time Out Youth Center; and the Young Black Leadership Alliance.

Mr. Bryant reviewed the Manager’s recommendation for funding education and literacy for FY21. He said that the Board of Education requested a total of $37 million for next fiscal year. Mr. Bryant went over how the Manager developed recommended funding for CMS. He noted that in FY2020, the Board approved the Manager’s recommendation to provide $7.4 million to fund the local impact of a pay increase for school administrators, non-certified staff, and certified staff. This increase was not included in the State budget. The total education and literacy investments were $786,350,854, a summary is listed below:

- CMS Operating - $518,515,366
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- CMS Capital Replacement - $4,960,000
- CMS Debt Service $102,742,141
- CPCC Operating - $39,091,669
- CPCC Debt Service - $19,659,032
- Public Library - $38,153,410
- Public School’s Health Nurses - $17,652,184
- Meck PreK - $21,264,552
- Child Care Subsidy Program - $20,700,000
- ASC Funding - $2,200,000
- Education Support Services – Non-Profits - $1,312,500
- Read Charlotte - $100,000

Mr. Bryant reviewed the FY21 Manager’s Recommended Budget highlights. He said there would be no repeat of any funding decisions from the Great Recession that derailed the County’s progress, no reduction or elimination of services provided to County residents, no elimination of vacant or filled positions, no delay or freeze on any planned capital projects (facility construction); no increase in the property tax rate; the recommended budget includes a total of $52 million in Fund Balance, including $19 million to offset the anticipated revenue shortfall; $50 million in Fund Balance is still available if the revenue shortfall is greater than projected; $21.8M in efficiency savings and repurposed funds to support major investments; and funding recommendations that maintain fiscal discipline and will not threaten our AAA Bond rating, and investments in the Board’s budget priorities, areas of interests, and the results from the community budget public engagement initiative, and 55% of the County budget would fund education and literacy. He said the great recession had taught them that being sustainable was not enough to ensure the financial health of the organization and that if you did not learn from your history, you would be doomed to repeat it.

Mr. Bryant said the public hearing for the Manager’s Recommended Budget would be held on May 13, 2020 and that on June 2, 2020 the Board would be asked to consider the approval of the FY2021 budget adoption.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk
George Dunlap, Chair
FORMAL SESSION

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely in Formal Session on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, with invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Commissioner Leake.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-6083 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6095 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6096 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6103 by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6107 by Commissioner Leake and Rodriguez-McDowell
- 20-6110 by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell and Leake

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6094: Proclamation - Older Americans Month

Commissioner Leake read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring May 2020 as "Older Americans Month" in Mecklenburg County.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6111: Proclamation - Building Safety Month

Commissioner Powell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation designating May 2020 as "Building Safety Month" in Mecklenburg County.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
PUBLIC APPEARANCE - NONE

20-6112: Public Appearance

There were no speakers who appeared before the Board of Commissioners.

APPOINTMENTS – NONE

PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE

MANAGER'S REPORT

Dena Diorio, County Manager, announced Adrian Cox as the Acting Budget Director and Lyden Williams as Acting Budget Manager, congratulating them both in their new positions.

20-6113: COVID-19 Response Update

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said Governor Cooper announced and signed an executive order that has North Carolina going into Phase 1 on May 8, 2020 starting at 5:00 p.m. The order modifies the current stay-at-home order, but it does not lift it. The expectation is that people will stay home but that people can go out for additional activities.

Gibbie Harris, County Health Director, updated the Board with the following COVID-19 data: as of this afternoon, we have a total of 1,791 laboratory cases in Mecklenburg county, with a total of 58 deaths. We still have 12 long-term care facilities in outbreak status. She stated most of the data has not changed significantly. She said one thing I will point out is that we have looked at our data of those who have died as of May 3, 2020; we had 52 deaths, and 26 were connected to long-term care facilities. She said the age range is mostly in greater than 60; that is 94% of the deaths. She said the male/female split is fairly even, and 63.5% of the deaths have been among whites, 38.8% among blacks, and 1.9% among Hispanics, and 3.8% among Asians.

She said the other part of the data is the trends that the State is watching as they make determinations about opening into Phase 1. She said what we are hoping for with our trends is to see stabilization in our numbers, so the first is the number of cases reported to Mecklenburg County by date, and this was as of May 1, 2020. We are looking at a seven-day moving average as a way of leveling out these things, because as you can see from the graph, our data pops up and down a lot when cases are reported, but you will see that we have a fairly stable progression with the number of cases reported. She said if you look at the percent-positive cases reported, that also have stabilized for us, and the third set of data is the daily hospitalization census, which has shown a slight decrease.

She said in terms of social distancing, we have seen a flattening and almost a slight decrease in the social distancing, and this is based on mobility data that is available to us nationally. There has not been a huge decrease, but I think as we see more things opening up, we are going to see the social distancing index continue to trend downwards a little bit, and we will need to pay attention to that as well.

She said lastly with the data, we put out a new curve graph for you, and it is what we expected to see as we continue to social distance and as our Stay-at-Home Order has been in place, what we have seen is a significant flattening of our curve, which has
allowed our data to stabilize the way we are talking about. What that then means is it is pushing the peak our significantly to July 14, 2020, and we will have to continue to watch that data as well.

She said we are doing very proactive outreach with the long-term care facilities in the community that are not currently in outbreak status; that proactive outreach includes looking at their staffing pass their protective equipment capacity and their testing capacity and assisting them in any ways needed to make sure they are able to meet the needs they have there; we are also reviewing their protocols and practices and strengthening those as needed. She said lastly, we are working on a testing plan as we move into phase one. She said we have a draft plan in place that we are discussing with our community partners around this, and we are using state guidance as well as looking at resources that are available and guidance from CDC and other national entities as well.

20-6127: Special Revenue Fund - COVID-19 Relief

Dena Diorio, County Manager said she wanted to point out that they were very lucky that we got our funding directly from the federal government. We were one of the three counties in the State of North Carolina that got our funding directly from the federal government.

Sarah Cunningham, Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of a new special revenue fund for COVID-19 relief. She said in the Corona Virus Aid and Economic Security Act or Cares Act the federal government established the relief fund, and the relief fund provides assistance to state and local governments with populations of 500,000 or more. The relief fund payments can only be used to cover costs that were (1) necessary expenditures that occur to due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19; (2) not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020, the date the Cares Act was enacted; or (3) were incurred between March 1, 2020 to December 30, 2020. She said the County received $39.2 million under this program, and we are requesting action tonight to establish a special account for these funds and to appropriate these funds for the County’s continued COVID-19 response.

Commissioner Powell gave thanks for the people who pushed for the County to get the money directly. She asked if the fund includes any mental health funding for what people are going through.

Ms. Cunningham said yes, it could be used for mental health funding as long as it meets the three requirements that were established in the act. She said there were other streams that were appropriated that may also provide some support for mental health funding.

Commissioner Powell made a request for a list of more comprehensive data comparing what has been seen from the past two years to now for suicides, drug overdoses, child abuse, and domestic abuse. She said she thinks that we will need dollars to cover that, and we need to be responsive. She said she believes this data will help us know what our needs are going to be.

Commissioner Leake asked if the funds were just for this part Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Diorio said the $39 million is for the County only; we are not planning to share the funds with the Towns. The City of Charlotte got $154 million for the Care Act, plus another $136 million or so for the airport, but the $39 million that we are asking to appropriate here is just for Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Leake asked would those townships be in Mecklenburg County?

Ms. Diorio said they are, but the funds are for the County only. It includes expenses that have been undertaken by the County for the County.

Commissioner Leake asked if Cornelius and Huntersville were included.
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Ms. Diorio said if we spend County money or this money in Cornelius, or any other towns, yes, it is included.

Commissioner Leake asked do we get an itemized list of what is being held accountable to pay for as they vote to make that decision?

Ms. Diorio said yes, earlier today we provided an accounting of what we have spent so far that we think can charge off to this $39 million, and we will continue to provide updates around them as we move forward.

Commissioner Jerrell asked for answers on how to solve being short for ventilators and beds around the time for our projected peak.

Ms. Harris said this does show based on our current hospital bed capacity and ventilators and ICU bed capacity that at our peak we would be above capacity with ICU beds and ventilators; what this does not take into account is the surge capacity that the hospitals have built out and have not implemented yet. That is one of the reasons it is important to watch the data; if we see the hospitals increase utilization, we need to kick into that surge capacity process to make it possible to reach the demand. There are more metrics we look at on a daily basis to see where the hospitals are. She said the hospitals have been pretty open with a lot of capacity; at this point, we feel we are at pretty good shape with this.

Commissioner Jerrell said as we increase testing, I know trajectory of cases will rise, which is expected. He asked what are the primary indicators that you will look at that will cause alarm or provide confidence that this is normal because of the tested.

Ms. Harris said there are two indicators to keep a close eye on. One is the percentage of positives of the total testing done, so as we do increase testing, yes we expect to see increased positives of people who are asymptomatic or with minor symptoms, but if we look at that number as a percentage of total tests done, we shouldn’t see a spice there. The other indicator is the number of hospital bed utilization. Those are the two right now that I think are most important and we are keeping an eye on.

Commissioner Harden asked if Meck Pre-K would be open.

Ms. Diorio said no, the reason we do that is because Meck Pre-K followed the CMS school calendar.

Commissioner Harden asked Ms. Harris how this would work for parents who have school age children to homeschool and have to go to work. What guidance are we giving to parents?

Ms. Harris said we are seeing more childcare centers opening up, and many of them will likely provide some services for school age children, and we are looking at summer camps opening up as well in summer. I do not know that we have a solid answer for that at this point; we are looking at it.

Ms. Diorio said teleworking is still encouraged, which is why we tell our employees to stay at home as long as they possibly can for the reasons that you just mentioned, and we hope other employers will continue letting their employees telecommute.

Commissioner Harden said have we thought about guidance we are going to give sitters? I have a feeling parents are doing a big juggle right now; I imagine people are going to be trying to find sitters. Do we have guidance about how to do safe childcare on the fly right now?

Ms. Harris said we have guidance around childcare but not childcare on the fly; we will make that guidance available, and the CDC and state has put out guidance around childcare.
Commissioner Harden said I think people are going to try to find college students, neighbors, or anyone, because our typical childcare networks aren’t really all going and because we have school-aged children who are supposed to be in school, working remotely. She said I think this is a really challenge for working families, so I just lay that out there as a real concern that I have, and I also have concerns for whatever piecemeal situation people put together that they have the best guidance in terms of wearing masks and what should they be doing and that they have that guidance as well.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if there was another portion besides the audio portion on the Business Leaders Roundtable.

Ms. Diorio said it is a WebEx meeting, and on the WebEx meeting we could see each other. She said the only thing that we are streaming is the audio portion.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the funding that we are receiving for our small business loan fund that we have, our $5 million, that is not going to be reimbursed through the federal funds, right?

Ms. Cunningham responded we think we could use the funds for that, but we are not certain when we would have to repay those funds and to extend; we have the repayment of the underlying loan, and we want to make sure that we have a full understanding of what we can and cannot do before saying we would pay for Corona Virus relief or maintain what we are doing right now in the fund balance, but that is something we are teeing up to treasure for clarity of.

Commissioner Harden said I wanted to make sure if we do come back for more, where those funds are coming from. Do you have any answers on how many in Mecklenburg County are teleworking versus filing unemployment?

Ms. Diorio said we still do not have that information, and we certainly do not know how many people are teleworking. She said we do not think that is a data point that anyone is really reporting.

Commissioner Harden said we are just not going to know how many of our paycheck-to-paycheck families are without work at this time.

Ms. Diorio said no, I think unemployment said they would have something for us in mid-May in terms of them being able to put data out for unemployment.

Commissioner Harden asked Gibbie if we are going to make masks a requirement or recommendation.

Ms. Harris said we have made a recommendation for individuals going into the community to wear a mask, especially if they have difficulty social distancing.

Commissioner Cotham asked what would the phase one testing plan involve and what types of businesses would be served by that?

Ms. Diorio said it is a draft, and we do not have a finalized plan but look to within the next day or two. She said what we are doing right now is looking at other priority grouping that can be opened up if they are asymptomatic or have minor symptoms and those sorts of things.

Commissioner Cotham said she hoped we did not make masks a requirement; she said she has heard from so many in the community with anxiety, depression, or who have been victims of domestic violence who just cannot wear a mask.

Commissioner Fuller said he had a feeling we are still being reactionary, which was understanding in an emergency situation, and at some point, we are going to have to come out of it and plan for coming out and getting back to whatever the new normal is, and I do not have a sense we have a plan. He asked if the County has had a plan.
Ms. Diorio said we are following the Governor’s plan.

Commissioner Fuller asked what the expenses are going to be between the $11 million and the $39.2 million.

Ms. Cunningham responded that it would include not just the expenses to date but any expenses we are incurring as we continue the COVID-19 response.

Commissioner Jerrell said in terms of how we spend that money, would you agree with me that those are policy decisions?

Ms. Diorio said we think they are, and we are trying to think creatively.

Chair Dunlap said he had the same concerns relative to the $39.2 million and want to know what kind of budgetary impact that would have. He wanted to know what kind of budgetary impact that would have if we have spent $11 million.

Ms. Diorio responded we believe the money we expended so far for the homeless are eligible to be used for this $39.2 million, and there are opportunities for us to extend that if we think that is the right thing we need to do.

Chair Dunlap asked if the hospitals were going to receive a separate set of funds, or do we have to make reimbursements or expenditures for the hospital?

Ms. Diorio responded they get their own funds from the federal government and may have already actually.

Chair Dunlap asked if we determine that we will use most of that $39.2 million, hopefully we do not have to send it back, that will also impact our budget and allow for us to have additional funds. Have you been looking at using some of those funds to deal with the disparities in the African American Community and dealing with food deserts?

Ms. Diorio responded that is one of the things we started to talk about in the last couple of days is how can we use those funds to bridge those gaps and make a difference in those communities from a food desert perspective.

Commissioner Powell asked what Ms. Cunningham meant about having to pay the government back.

Ms. Cunningham said we want to make sure that we are spending all the fund and that we use them so that we wouldn’t have to return any, and we already received some money from the federal government, $39.2 million. So, we want to make sure that it is something we can get up, get running and is eligible and have spent money by December 30, 2020.

Commissioner Leake asked who is on the planning committee to come up with our plan?

Ms. Diorio responded we are doing it internally with staff and trying to figure out what we can do to find ways; it is just staff talking about what we may be able to do.

Commissioner Leake asked are we looking at the motion that was made about food deserts that was brought up at one of the meetings?

Ms. Diorio said yes, I have completed my task with having conversations with those three retailers and I am in the process of writing up all of my notes, and I will be prepared to talk about that as we move through the budget process.

Commissioner Leake said so are you saying you will not be able to bring them before us?

Ms. Diorio said yes, I will when we have our meeting Tuesday.
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Commissioner Jerrell said as it relates to food deserts and the impact on the African American community, one other group I want to put on the radar and raise up will be the working families and those families that have been impacted throughout the community particularly with unemployment benefits not really being extended. He said I hope we put some thought around additional support for those working families that have been severely impacted.

Ms. Diorio said we can certainly look and see what opportunities we have to respond to that.

Commissioner Harden wanted to double down on Mr. Jerrell’s remarks about the Commissioners being allowed to provide strategic input on how those funds should be spent and wants the community voice to be put into those recommendations. She asked what could be a process where you engage commissioners on what those priority spending items could be?

Ms. Diorio said we would formulate some recommendations and bring them to the Board for consideration.

Commissioner Harden suggested it may be expedient to go through a process where you collect information from the community and the commissioners.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she wanted to triple down on Commissioner Jerrell’s comments about working families. She said she wanted to double down on Commissioner Harden’s comments on Commissioner involvement. She wanted to give support to Commissioner Powell’s ideas on the mental health funding going forward. She asked Gibbie if public places would be doing temperature checks.

Ms. Harris said there are really not any conversations about temperature checks in public settings.

Commissioner Cotham asked do we have any exact data on the surge capacity at the hospitals? Also, are there any discussions still about a field hospital possibility being needed?

Ms. Diorio said the number is pretty significant for both hospital systems, and because of that number, the discussion of a field hospital has been put on a back burner right now.

Commissioner Jerrell asked regarding the Cares Act money, do we know what we are getting for that and what we can use those funds for?

Ms. Cunningham responded that some of the pieces are going to require, as the go through the State department, and we can come back and give us a little more.

Commissioner Jerrell asked is there a general sense of what we are expecting?

Ms. Diorio said because we are one of the three Counties who received money from the federal government, we should not expect much of anything from the State.

Commissioner Jerrell said very well said.

Chair Dunlap asked how Ms. Diorio wanted Commissioners to communication to her their concerns relating to how the funds should be spent.

Ms. Diorio said we are happy to get email recommendations from the Board about what they would like to see us take a look at, then we will have to go back and look at the guidance from treasury to see whether or not it would be eligible, and we can take those recommendations from the Board and incorporate them with our recommendations or things that might work, and we can bring them back to the Board for consideration.

Chair Dunlap said the other thing that I heard, even though it wasn’t necessarily said like this, is that we expect staff to look at all available funds to do everything that we would
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like to see happen, even if it means things that we are planning or would like to do and haven’t done yet, that we move them up if it is possible so they can be spent under the deadline. He said it might allow us to do some things that we were planning to do later on, under those funds so we can look at that as well.

Ms. Diorio said absolutely.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the COVID-19 Special Revenue Fund (CO19) Ordinance and (B) recognize, receive and appropriate up to $39,199,343.60 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the COVID-19 Special Revenue Fund (CO19) for the duration of the program.

Note: Funding was made available to states and certain local governments under section 601(a) of the Social Security Act as added by section 501 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The CARES Act established the Coronavirus Relief Fund to be used for expenditures incurred for actions taken to respond to the public health emergency. This funding can be used for expenditures not accounted for in the most recently approved budget, as of March 27, 2020. Qualifying expenditures must be incurred during the period beginning March 1, 2020 and ending December 31, 2020. The COVID-19 Special Revenue Fund will be established to account for these funds.

Examples of eligible expenses include: Public health expenses such as communication and enforcement of public health orders, acquisition and distribution of supplies and quarantining of individuals; Payroll expenses for public safety, public health, health care, human services and similar employees whose services are substantially dedicated to mitigating or responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency; Expenses associated with the provision of economic support including grants to small businesses to reimburse for costs of business

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document # 124.

20-6053: Budget Public Engagement Update

Michael Bryant, Office of Management and Budget Director, announced the Budget Public Engagement Initiative had been awarded the Government Finance Officers Association Award of Excellence, which is an award that is given only to a few organizations annually that have achieved remarkable success in innovative programs that exemplified outstanding management for the communities they serve. He said the purpose is to brief you on the results of the public engagement initiative.

Mr. Bryant introduced Meagan Palmer, Consultant, to provide a presentation and update on the County's budget public engagement initiative.

Meagan Palmer, Consultant, reviewed the various workshops that had been held. She said for advisory board feedback, six advisory boards have provided written budget priorities for FY2021, with 14 invited to do so, and advisory boards will advise their relevant departments budget requests. The boards are made up of private citizens with interest in how these programs are funded and services provided. She went over the community budget workshops purposes: educating participants on the County’s budget & process; allowing residents to ask questions of county officials regarding budget services provide facilitated prioritization exercises; help residents determine their priorities; and assist county officials with understanding the needs and desires of the community through face-to-face interaction. Ms. Palmer went over the community budget workshop locations, as well as the engagement evaluation results which showed a 100% satisfaction for the event. Ms. Palmer’s data showed the workshops participation rates were 60% female and 40% male, with education, affordable housing, and health & human services being the top three service-based, budget priorities. The workshop participants identified other priorities and went over discussion themes. Ms. Palmer said participants recognized and appreciated how the priorities are interconnected and that services
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should be delivered accordingly and that workshops vastly improved representation in demographics.

Mr. Bryant and Ms. Palmer responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Commissioner Powell asked what was needed to request input from the advisory boards now that we are in a global pandemic to see if they modified any of their ideas?

Mr. Bryant responded the Manager has already released her budget; if she decides to move forward in soliciting the information, that is something we would be present in the information relative to how they modified.

Ms. Diorio said I am fine with another request to see if we get any additional information.

Commissioner Powell gave thanks to everyone for everything they have done.

Commissioner Leake asked what the racial disparities were and how they intended to embrace that proves and changing it.

Mr. Bryant responded once we provided the clarity how we are doing internally as an organization looking at policies and procedures and now as you know the Manager has invested in her budget, she is investing in areas such as food deserts and also the grassroot organizations. He said we clarified from the Board’s priorities what the intention behinds it is and gave them real examples back then what we were doing relative to looking at the internal policies and procedures, and we did raise awareness from the Board retreat, as you discussed food deserts as well as funding grassroot organizations.

Commissioner Leake said my concern, looking at the budget is to who is going to do what as it relates to the process; who is going to help change it? What are our plans to change it? She said she was wondering what is in place to change the process.

Ms. Diorio said they would talk more about that when they get to the budget conversation.

Commissioner Jerrell said that community engagement is so important, and he appreciated the level of engagement that was displayed. He asked did we get any sense of why the engagement in the African-American community was so much different than on the online portion and then part two of that question is do we know if the participants who showed up to the live event did the deal where we have a percentage of the ones who did the online engagement, or was it just a clear separation?

Mr. Bryant said once he saw that the representation regarding minorities was trending low, our public information team put together a strategy where we had targeted certain area codes with radio advertising, and that was proven to be very protective, in addition to social media and the interviews that the Manager and I completed the local new station as well as the radio also. He said he thinks that contributed to some of the turnout based on the responses.

Commissioner Jerrell said as we move forward continuing this process, we have some of the best practices that we could to even ramp our participation on the online survey; would that be fair?

Mr. Bryant said I agree.

Commissioner Harden asked how much we allocated in the FY2019/2020 budget for affordable housing?

Mr. Bryant said $11 million in new investments was recommended, and for FY21 an additional $4 million, with 3 million to go to rental subsidies and $1 million to go to critical home repair.

Commissioner Harden asked if that was actually a drop in the funding level for affordable housing.
Mr. Bryant responded if you are looking at the amount in FY20 compared to FY21, yes, you also recall that part of the decision to preserve some of the fund balance as well.

Commissioner Harden said right, but you would agree that if it wasn’t the first it was the second priority that the community focused on.

Mr. Bryant responded that is correct based on what we heard from those workshops.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she wanted to understand why only 6 of 14 advisory boards responded to the budget inquiry. She said it was important to engage with advisory boards and asked that staff find out what was not working from their perspective on our procedures for getting their input.

Commissioner Cotham asked what the expectation was for the meetings and if it seemed like it proved to be valuable to be able to grow in numbers.

Mr. Bryant said we were prepared for 25-30 participants for each workshop; the average number ranges from 11 to 22 depending on the workshop, which resulted in 79 to 82 participants

Ms. Cotham suggested the Commissioners may be helpful in driving attendance.

Commissioner Fuller said it was a learning moment for us that we need to be clearer about what we mean by reducing racial disparities and specifically what will change as a result of this being our stated goal. He suggested to not sugar coat the issue by calling it reducing inequities. He said we need to engage much more on the issue with the community to the extent we can put together some structures to increase this kind of engagement.

Chair Dunlap said he wanted to make a second attempt to let them know they really I wanted to hear what they have to say. The other thing he wanted to remind the Board was that everything they are concerned about is not a necessary budgetary impact. He asked should we be safeguarding some of those funds that we are receiving the difference between the $39 million and the $11 million, because if we do go and spend it all now and something happens in the fall before December, where are we budgetarily?

Ms. Diorio said we will follow up with you.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to approve the following Consent items:

20-6093: Storm Water Program - FY20 Hazard Mitigation McDowell Farms

(A) Accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Mark Woode and Marina Lysak, owners of property located at 6519 Mounting Rock Road, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 167-221-21), for $220,000; (B) accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Zackery & Sandra Reid, owners of property located at 6611 Mounting Rock Road, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 167-
(A) Affirm application by the County Manager for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant funding of up to $3,054,000 to be used for floodplain and stream restoration on Kings Branch; (B) affirm application by the County Manager for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant funding of up to $8,633,240 to be used for voluntary acquisitions of flood-prone homes in the McDowell Farms neighborhood; (C) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate grant funds in the Storm Water Grants Fund (G705) through completion of the project; and, (D) authorize the County Manager to execute contracts with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management.

20-6100: Greenway Easements - Cross Charlotte Trail, 7th to 10th Street Connector

(A) Accept a Permanent Greenway Easement (+/- 37 square feet) and a Temporary Construction Easement (+/- 183 Square Feet) on Tax Parcel 080-153-02 from Henry's Holdings LLC for Cross Charlotte Trail, 7th to 10th Street Connector and (B) accept a Permanent Greenway Easement (+/- 1,421 Square Feet) and a Temporary Construction Easement (+/- 392 Square Feet) on Tax Parcel 080-152-03 from Crown Castle South LLC for Cross Charlotte Trail, 7th to 10th Street Connector.

20-6101: Tax Refunds

Approve refunds in the amount of $11,527.20 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes, and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6104: Retail Tenant Lease - Government District Parking Deck

(A) Adopt a resolution titled “Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners Resolution Declaring Intent to Lease Property to Timothy Pavone, Owner of The Law Offices of Attorney Timothy J. Pavone” and (B) appropriate $74,215.40 from Unallocated Capital Reserve Fund (9001) for Brokers & Commission Fees and Tenant Improvements.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document # 125.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT
20-6083: Grant Application - U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding - Sheriff's Office

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Program for up to $58,008 for COVID-19 related supplies and expenses and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the amount awarded to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Sheriff for the duration of the grant.

20-6095: Grant Application - 2020 U.S. Tennis Association (USTA) North Carolina 10 and Under Equipment Grant

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application for up to $1,200 in equipment from USTA of North Carolina; (B) if awarded, receive the equipment from USTA; and, (C) if awarded, amend the FY2019-2020 General Fund (0001) budget ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate up to $1,200 of donated funds from Partners for Parks for the required match for the equipment purchase.

20-6096: Grant Application - Medicare Improvements for Patients & Providers Act (MIPPA)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application to the North Carolina Department of Insurance for Medicare Improvements for Patients Act of up to $12,500 to expand Medicare and Low-Income Subsidy Education, Counseling, and Enrollment Services offered in the community and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Park and Recreation Department for the duration of the grant.

20-6103: Memorandum of Agreement - Antiquity Greenway

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a Memorandum of Agreement between the County and Town of Cornelius for the operation and maintenance of the portion of greenway referred to as “Antiquity Greenway” located in the Town of Cornelius.

20-6107: CDBG Plan Update - 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan and FY20 Annual Plan

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to approve the Five-Year Consolidated Plan 2020-2024 and FY20 Annual Action Plan for Mecklenburg County’s Community Development Block Grant program, funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Note: As required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Mecklenburg County prepares a Five-Year Consolidated Plan to integrate planning efforts for the County’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, which focus on the housing and community development needs of low-and moderate-income persons. The purpose of a Consolidated Plan is to identify housing and community development needs and to develop specific goals and objectives to address these needs over a five-year period. This is the fourth Consolidated Plan for Mecklenburg County and covers the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024.
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20-6110: Budget Amendment-VFD Fund Balance Appropriation

Motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to amend the FY2019- FY2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to appropriate $76,500 in available fund balance in the Charlotte ETJ Fire Protection Service District Fund (9021) to finance a Sewer Main Extension Project.

Note: Steele Creek Volunteer Fire Department is requesting $76,500 to cover the initial cost for a sewer main extension project located in front of 8524 Steele Creek Road. The fund balance appropriation requested will be used to finance a 680-foot extension to the existing 8-foot sewer main.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

20-6114: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Powell thanked everyone for thinking about food desserts, health disparities, mental health, and community engagement.

Commissioner Leake called to the attention to the community about Audrey Kell, with hopes that the superintendent and staff would handle the issues there. She wanted the seniors to keep the faith and spoke in remembrance of Sharekia Johnson, who worked in the County Manager’s Office.

Commissioner Jerrell thanked his colleagues for the support and the lifting up of working families, as he believes they are many times lost in the shuffle. He also said congratulations to both Adrian Cox and Lyden Williams for stepping up into their new positions with the County and made notice of the Board being proud of Michael Bryant.

Commissioner Harden gave thanks to all her constituents in District 5 for their commitment to the stay-at-home order.

Commissioner Cotham thanked staff for all that they do in these unprecedented times.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked a question about an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Fuller said that he learned in his religious tradition that this too shall pass.

Commissioner Scarborough said let’s keep doing great for the people.

Commissioner Dunlap gave thanks to the essential workers, because they put their lives on the line. He gave thanks to the staff for making sure the County moves forward and congratulated both Adrian Cox and Lyden Williams in their new roles with the County.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

________________________ _________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk George Dunlap, Chair
BUDGET/PUBLIC POLICY MEETING

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER – 9 AM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely for a Budget/ Public Policy meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2020 at 9:01 a.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

20-6143: Budget Overview County Manager’s Recommended Budget FY 2020- 2021

Adrian Cox, Acting Budget Director, provided the Board with an overview of the County Manager’s recommended budget for FY 2021. Mr. Cox stated the economic impact of COVID-19 was anticipated to have a large impact on sales tax that would carry into Fiscal Year 2020/2021. He went over the comparison of sales tax collected in prior years to the budgeted sales tax in FY2020, the estimated sales tax for FY2021 prior to COVID-19 and the revised estimate recommended for FY2021. He said the current year budget for sales tax was $208 million and the estimate for the revenue prior to COVID-19 was $223 million. Mr. Cox stated the recommended budget included estimated sales tax revenue for the fiscal year beginning in July, of $200 million, which was a decline of $7.5 million or 3.6%. They had previously estimated an increase of $15 million, but now, factoring COVID-19, we were estimating a decrease of $7 million.

Revenue

Mr. Cox reviewed the summary of all County dollar revenue estimated for the general fund. He said the value of one penny was estimated to be $18,752,000 and the Manager recommended to maintain the property tax at the current rate of 61.69 cents, and property tax was estimated to increase by $24.5 million or 2.8%. Sales tax was projected to be a $7.5 million reduction over the 2020 adopted budget. Investment income projected to be a 52% reduction over the current budget, worth $6.2 million. Changes in other County dollar revenues included license and permits, charges for services, administrative/indirect overhead for fee-funded services, and all other County dollar revenue resulted in a net growth in County dollars of $19.2 million or less than 2% before making any changes. The Manager recommended that property tax would change 13.3 pennies to 12.58 pennies, adding three-fourths of a cent in property tax or $14 million to the general fund. He said the change would not jeopardize the County's ability to fund future capital and would allow for payment of all debt service while setting aside $60 million for future debt. The Manager also recommended to allocate $19 million from available fund balance reserves, per the fund balance policy. He said those two strategies bring the total available County dollars in the general fund to $52 million, 4.6% increase.

Mr. Cox reviewed the County's Fund Balance Policy. The minimum of total General Fund Balance and Debt Service Fund combined to the General Fund actual revenues would be 28%. If the General Fund Balance fell below the minimum 28% of total General Fund revenues, the funds must be replenished over the next two fiscal years The Unassigned
Fund Balance would be maintained at a level sufficient to provide the resources to meet operating cost needs and allow for unforeseen needs of an emergency nature to permit orderly adjustments to changes resulting from termination or significant reductions in revenue sources. He noted that every fund balance dollar spent on a reoccurring expense would eventually need to be replaced with on-going revenue; otherwise, the budget would have a structural deficit.

Mr. Cox reviewed the three debt service fund categories. Restricted, would be required by State Statue, included amounts not readily available to spend such as receivables, deferred revenue and encumbrances. Committed, which would be amounts approved by the Board to be used for a specific purpose. Unassigned, would be a portion that had not been restricted, committed, or assigned to specific purpose or other funds. Mr. Cox stated that of the County's estimated fund balance for June 30, 2020, total fund balance was $705 million, $237 million in debt services fund and $468 in the general fund. He said $29 million was restricted; $280 million was committed in the debt service fund, and $134 million restricted in the general fund. He said $58 million was committed in the general fund. There was $224 million in unassigned fund balance estimated for the general fund and $52 million was recommended in the Manager’s FY2021 budget. He said they estimated that $50 million would remain of unassigned fund balance, prior to triggering a pay-back requirement.

Mr. Cox said the fund balance was also recommended in the amount of $33 million to provide the one-time expenses: $17.3 million for enterprise reserves; $6.3 million for facility maintenance; $4 million for affordable housing; $2.4 million for the 2023 revaluation; $1 million for contribution to the capital campaign for the Kane Center for the Arts; $600,000 for restricted contingency to develop initiatives to address food deserts; $350,000 to develop a Library Master Plan; $271,000 to replace bullet-proof vest for the Sherriff's Department; $271,000 for two vans and computers; $250,000 for cyber-security hardware and consulting; $150,000 to convert paper files to digital in the Public Defender's Office; $122,000 for training and temporary fiscal staffing. He said when combined with the $19 million, the total fund balance allocated in the Manager’s recommended budget was $52 million, $30 million less than the amount adopted in the current year budget. He mentioned that the $52 million in general fund, County-dollar growth was recommended at $26.5 million for County services and $25.7 million for education services. He said County-dollar growth in the General Fund was allocated for those two categories at approximately the same percent.

Mr. Cox responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Funding by Board Priority

Mr. Cox reviewed the details of the Board’s investments recommended for the Board’s five funding priorities. He said the Manager’s recommended budget included $23 million in new investments aligned to the Board’s budget priority and when added to existing funding, the total annual investment recommended by the Manager was $176 million. He said for the priority to reduce racial disparities, the recommended budget included $2.5 million in new investment; the largest of those were the Unite Charlotte Program followed by funding to address food deserts in the County.

Mr. Cox went over the details of the investments. He stated that $1.3 million was recommended to the United Way’s Unite Charlotte Program; $600,000 was recommended set aside in restricted contingency for initiatives to address food deserts in the County. He said $150,000 was recommended to fund a new community-service grant for the Young Black Leadership Alliance. Also recommended was $125,000 to support the initial phase of Three Sister’s Market Food Coop. The recommended budget also included $80,000 for additional interpreting services in child development services, $77,000 for a MWSBE Project Compliance Coordinator, $50,000 for a new community service grant with Loaves and Fishes, and $50,000 for a new community service grant with Prospera North Carolina. He said those investments totaled $2.5 million to reduce racial disparity.
Mr. Cox said for the priority to fund Meck Pre-K, the Manager recommended an additional $5.5 million; when added to existing funding, total Meck Pre-K funding would be $21.2 million. He said the new funding would allow for 20 new classrooms for a total of 89. He said total funding recommended for early childhood education was $42.2 million. He said for the priority to address affordable housing, new investments of $4 million were recommended, which included $3 million to the rental subsidy fund and $1 million for the second year of critical home repair. He said the total investment for the priority was $24.6 million.

Ms. Cox said for the priority to fund affordable housing, the Manager recommended an additional $3 million to the housing subsidy fund, which added to the $11 million placed in the fund in FY2020; $1 million was recommended for the second year of the critical home repair initiative through Habitat for Humanity. He said the recommended budget also included $30,000 for a new community service grant with Timeout Youth Center, to provide housing for LGBTQ youth, ages 11 through 20.

Ms. Cox said for the priority to fund mental health support, the Manager recommended $6.2 million in new investments. He said this included funding for CMS support staff, exceptional student staffing, and investments to address mental health within the detention facilities. He said when added to the existing funding, total funding to support mental health was recommended at $50.5 million. Mr. Cox reviewed the details of the mental health investment; $3.4 million was recommended for CMS to add 15 social workers, 15 counselors, five psychiatrists, and two behavioral health specialists. He said $1.2 million was included to fund an increase in the contracted medical services, adding additional staffing to the detention facilities. He said $946,000 was recommended for CMS to add staffing to support exceptional students; $350 was recommended to fund a grant match in partnership with the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council to expand therapeutic services to raise the age youth had been touched by the criminal justice system, and $180,000 for a new community service grant with Mental Health America Central Carolinas for a total of $6.2 million.

Mr. Cox said for the priority to fund parks and greenways, the Manager recommended $5.2 million in new funding. He reviewed the details of the investments. He stated $2.8 million was included for staffing at the Eastway Regional Recreation Center, and $1.5 million for the utilities, maintenance, and security to operate the new facility. He said the recommended budget also added $280,000 to operate Latta Creek, Steven’s Creek Nature Centers, and $159,000 was included to enhance security patrols at multiple locations. He said $137,000 was for expenses related to the new greenway sections; $100,000 to add two positions for American Legion Memorial Stadium, $100,000 for field maintenance, $70,000 for additional summer camps, and $60,000 to add nature center programming, for a total of $5.2 million.

Mr. Cox said the Manager’s recommended budget also included funding to support County employees. He said in FY2020, the County began a comprehensive review of the classifications and compensations and realized County employees lagged competitors, as pay structures had not been adjusted in over a decade, which caused challenges in recruitment and retention. He said the 5.5% increase provided in the FY2020 budget was the first step to bring salaries closer to competitive. He said due to the estimated revenue loss of COVID-19, the second step implementing the results of the new review would be delayed but that although they must delay the update to the classification and compensation system, the Manager’s recommended budget did include $9.2 million to provide a three percent pay increase, $4 million to provide an increase in employer contribution to the Local Government Employee’s Retirement System. He said $1.3 million would be for medical and dental insurance, $708,000 to annualize positions that were approved in FY2020, $444,000 for law enforcement separation, and $682,000 to support a three percent increase for MEDIC. The total of these investments was $16.3 million. He said that positions recommended in the Manager’s budget total to 6,381 and the increase was primarily driven by part time and limited, part-time staff added to operate new facilities and park and recreation. She said that full time recommended positions had a net increase of one over the FY2020 budget, in comparison of FY2019 to the FY2020 adopted budget, the net increase in full-time positions was 132.
Mr. Cox reviewed the recommended budgets for CPCC and CMS. The operating budget for CPCC was recommended at $39,000,000, an increase of $1.2 million. FY2020 was the fifth year of a five-year deferred maintenance place that began in FY2016. He said the recommended budget continued deferred maintenance funding for CPCC in the amount of $3 million. The recommended budget for CMS operating expense was $527 million, which was an increase of $25.6 million. Including capital maintenance, the total funding for CMS was $532 million. He said the recommended budget provided $15 million to continue addressing deferred maintenance in the upcoming year.

Mr. Cox reviewed what was excused with what was requested by CMS and what was recommended. The recommended budget fully funded charter enrollment growth of $9,000,000. The budget provided $5,000,000 in one-time-funding to support building services, but it did not include the request for a facility planning direct. He said funding was included for the local impact of retirement rate increases, and as in previous years, the County Manager had recommended funding to provide additional student support staff. He said this request was fully funded at $3.4 million to provide 15 social workers, 15 bedance counselors; five psychologists; and two behavioral health specialists. The recommended budget included $946,000 for exceptional children support. This funding would provide for staffing for exceptional children, but additional funding that had been requested to supplement the State funding for this particular program was not included. He said $548,000 was recommended to support one third of the request for maintenance and operations for one newly constructed school; one time funding was included in the recommended budget in the amount of $1.3 million for a second year of the enterprise resource planning modernization project, and $1 million was also included with the local impact health insurance increases.

Mr. Cox went over the requests that were not recommended for funding. He said in FY2020, the adopted budget included $7.4 million to fund the local impact of the estimated state increase or pay for administrative, certified, and non-certified staff. He said the increases were not included in the State budget; therefore, the funding should be available for CMS to support the other increase in local impact for FY2021. He said other requests were not included that were typically the responsibility of the State or City, such as: security personnel and school resource officer. He said the Manager’s recommended budget for CMS totals $25.6 million, which was 70% of the amount that was requested.

Mr. Cox reviewed the community service grants process. He said there were 16 recommended community service grants in the Manager’s budget and two sunset community service grants that would be transitioned onto vendors; of the 16 grants, there were six new grantees. He focused on the new grants. Best Buddies International was recommended for $600,000, to provide social skills and leadership development for individuals with developmental disabilities. Camino Community Development was recommended for $178,000 to support a new program to provide individual counseling at their health and wellness center to service the Hispanic/Latino population. Loaves and Fishes was recommended for $50,000 to provide groceries through a network of food pantries. Mental Health America of Central Carolinas was recommended for $180,000, and they worked to provide one-on-one and group support for families with youth who experiences mental health challenges. Prospera North Carolina was recommended for $50,000, as they provide bilingual assistance to Hispanic entrepreneurs. The Young Black Leadership Alliance funded at $150,000 helped to connect youth with college and
Mr. Cox reviewed the funding for the arts, stating that the FY2020 budget included $2,050,000 to the Arts and Science Council for existing programs, which included Studio 345; cultural blocks programs; and maintenance of Spirit Square. He said the Manager's recommended budget included an additional $900,000 for Arts and Science Council to support three grant programs. He said $200,000 was to support grants to individual artists, $200,000 to support community vision grants, and $500,000 to fund operating grants for the Arts and Science Council. He said this brought the total funding to $2,950,000. He said in addition, the budget also included $1 million to support the Cain Center for the Arts.

Ms. Diorio responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

Agency Funding

Mr. Cox reviewed the nature of funding by each agency. He said he would focus on the other funding included in the agency budget, since he had already spoken to those items. He said for asset and facility management, $1.6 million to provide weapon screening stations at the Valarie C. Woodard building. He said this funding also included one administrative support manage security access to facilities. He said $521,000 was included for the utilities, maintenance, and security for government and library facilities; $33,000 for contractual costs for GPS monitoring of county vehicles, and the total new funding for this agency was $4.1 million.

Mr. Cox said for the County Assessor's Office, $1.3 million was included for the revaluation reserve fund from preparation for the 2023 revaluation; $1 million was included to make security enhancements and upgrades to the assessment software. In addition, there was $250,000 for continued document scanning for a total agency funding of $2.7 million.

Mr. Cox said for the Community Support Services, $43,000 would be for the operating costs to locate two of the mental health clinicians for the new Family Justice Center, then Criminal Justice Services, there is a $174,000 that was recommended for file scanning for the Public Defender’s Office.

Mr. Cox said for the Department of Social Services, $886,000 was recommended for targeted retention strategies to the Youth and Family Services; those strategies included funding for overtime, afterhours pay, and increase in employee wellness and coaching. He said he had already spoke to the raise the age grand match under the mental health priority. He said $258,000 was included for increased demand for child placements, and $250,000 was also included to continue a transformation initiative to improve efficiency of application processing and eligibility determination. He said $107,000 would fund operating costs to collocate seven DSS employees in the new Family Justice Center, and $86,000 was also included to support increased cost for mills to expand services at new mill sites that were open in the current year. He said funding of $1.9 million was recommended for the agency.

Mr. Cox said for Emergency Medical Services, or MEDIC, there was $746,000 included for growing contractual cost related to personnel expenses; $682,000 was included to provide for a three percent raise in salary for MEDIC employees, and $560,000 would provide additional funding to expand MEDIC's capital program for replacement of ambulances, hardware, and IT equipment. He said $140,000 was recommended to fund growing cost for insurance, and $72,000 would provide funding for an additional telecommunicator. He said the total funding for MEDIC would increase by $2.2 million.

Mr. Cox said for Information Services and Technology, $1.1 million was recommended to fund software that supports the enterprise operations and security; $463,000 was recommended for hardware for connectivity upgrades at County parks and LUISA sites, as well as additional firewalls and network equipment. He said $250,000 would support the enterprise need to archive text messages and $50,000 was recommended to add
support during the RNC. He said funding in the amount of $1.9 million was being recommended for the information services and technology department. He said for $77,000 a MWSBE Compliance Coordinator was recommended for the Office of Economic Development.

Mr. Cox said for Park and Recreation all of the items were included in the Board priority for Parks and Greenways, which would include the operating for Eastway Recreation Center staffing, operating related to the greenway expansions, staff and operation for American Legion Memorial Stadium, turf maintenance and irrigation, additional programing for summer camps and at nature centers and preserves. He said the utilities maintenance and security cost for Eastway were included in the asset and facility management. He said the total additional funding that was recommended for parks and recreations for $3.3 million.

Mr. Cox said for the Public Health Department, there was $241,000 that was included for a lease at the Charlotte East site for the WIC program; $193,000 would provide advance tuberculosis testing and additional operating expenses at our clinics. He said $159,000 was included to provide additional funding for the LabCorp contract, and $104,000 was recommended to support increased enrollment in Children’s Development Services agency, as well as $80,000 for additional interpreting services. He said one new school nurse was recommended to staff Rae K-8 STEAM Academy, and $60,000 was included to provide additional funding for prep. He said additional funding of $902,000 was included in the recommended FY2021 budget for public health.

Mr. Cox said for Public Information, $75,000 was added to manage and provide content for a digital billboard on the Fourth Street parking deck and $51,000 for software improvements to ensure continued compliance with ADA for the website. He said $126,000 was recommended to support public information, and for the libraries, $350,000 was included to support the facility masterplan addressing library deserts. He said $73,000 was for lease escalation for a total of $423,000.

Mr. Cox said for the Register of Deeds, $125,000 was included in the budget to add one administrative support coordinator and some additional temporary staff. He said for the Sherriff’s Office, he had spoke previously about the $1.2 million included for contracting services related to mental health and that there was also $698,000 to increase contract services for laundry and food preparation; $682,000 was included to provide additional staff for the RNC, and $218,000 would fund replacement of bullet proof vest. He said $100,000 would fund supplies related to clothing and hygiene for juvenile offenders, and $54,000 would replace three narcotic detection K-9. He said $3,000,000 in additional funding was recommended for the Sherriff’s Office.

Commissioners made comments regarding the presentation.

Law Enforcement and Fire Protection Districts.

Mr. Cox said for Law Enforcement and Fire Protective Service District the revenue for Cornelius Law Enforcement Service District also included $453,000 in funding from the general fund for lake patrol, and based on the tax value and value of the penny, a tax increase was needed to support the contractual expense for Cornelius Law Enforcement Service District with the same amount of funding. He said the recommended rates were the results of changes in the tax values, value of a penny, and the calls for fire protection. He said a rate increase was recommended for Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, and Huntersville. He said Cooks Volunteer Fire Department was recommended for a full year of funding per their request.

Mr. Cox said since the last recession, the policies, that were set in place by the County Manager and the commitment to fiscal discipline by the Board of County Commissioners, gave the County a strong foundation for the impact of the revenue loss that they had anticipated for FY2021, while continuing to provide critical service, making modest investments to the Board’s budget priorities. He said FY2021, was characterized by uncertainty; however, they were better suited to respond to the uncertainties from maintaining a fund balance.
A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to Board.

RECESS

The Board recessed the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

RECONVENE

The Board reconvened at 2:36 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center.

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to go into closed session in Room 267.

The meeting recessed at 2:39 p.m. to go into closed session in Room 267. The meeting resumed in open session at 3:40 p.m.

LAND ACQUISITIONS

Land Acquisition – Asbury Chapel Area Parkland

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcel 019-351-02 (+/- 2.000 acres) in the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the Town of Huntersville from Lisa and Thomas Rosenbaum for a purchase price of $350,000.

Land Acquisition – Asbury Chapel Area Parkland

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcel 019-351-03 (+/- 3.360 acres) in the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the Town of Huntersville from Sonya and Paul McGee, Angela and John Scavone, and Lisa and Thomas Rosenbaum for a purchase price of $365,000.

Land Acquisition – Holbrooks Road Property

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcel 019-191-01 (+/- 27.940 acres) from Phillip Scott Hedrick and spouse Catharine D. Hedrick, Edward Watson Hedrick and spouse, Patricia P. Hedrick, and Elaine Hedrick Ashley and spouse William C. Ashley in the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the Town of Huntersville for Park and Recreation and Solid Waste purposes for a purchase price totaling $960,000.

Land Acquisition – Steele Creek Area Solid Waste Site

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcels 201-181-02 and 201-181-44 (+/- 10.538 acres) in the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the City of Charlotte from Wingfoot Land Management, LLC and Pettus Properties, Inc. for Solid Waste purposes for a purchase price of $1,670,000.
NOMINATIONS/APPOINTMENTS

20-6037: Nominations/Appointments

Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee

The Board considered three appointments to one-year terms expiring April 30, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Leslie Scott, Elena Sepulveda, and Barbara Wooten.

Ms. Scott, Ms. Sepulveda, and Ms. Wooten were reappointed.

Central Piedmont Community College Board of Trustees

The Board considered one appointment to a four-year term expiring June 30, 2024.

Commissioners Leake and Powell nominated Ilieva Ageenko, Jimmy Dunn, and Lilly Raymond.

This board requires an interview process conducted by an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board.

This appointment will be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

Citizens Capital Budget Advisory Committee

The Board considered two appointments to three-year terms expiring July 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Leake to appoint Leon Cunningham and Erik Pearson.

The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham

Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Pearson were appointed.

Human Resources Advisory Committee

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring March 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to reappoint Larry Valenti.

Mr. Valenti was reappointed.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term expiring June 30, 2021 in the General Public category.
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Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell nominated Janet Ellison.
Commissioner Fuller nominated Phyllis Barnett.
This appointment will be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

Library Board of Trustees
The Board considered one appointment to a four-year term expiring June 30, 2024.
Chair Dunlap and Commissioner Scarborough nominated Amy Hawn Nelson.
Commissioner Cotham nominated Karen Linyard.
This board requires an interview process conducted by an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board.
This appointment will be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

Commissioner Jerrell left the meeting at 4:16 p.m.

Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee
The Board considered three appointments to three-year terms expiring May 30, 2023.
A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint William Hudson, Janice Robinson, and Sharrone Robinson.
Please note William Hudson previously resigned and declined the reappointment. This appointment will be brought back to a future meeting.

Small Business and Entrepreneurship Advisory Board
The Board considered one appointment to one three-year term expiring June 30, 2023.
Commissioner Fuller nominated Olive Stewart. There were no other nominations.
A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Olive Stewart.
Ms. Stewart was appointed.

Waste Management Advisory Board
The Board considered five appointments to three-year terms expiring April 30, 2023.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to reappoint Henry Antshel, Linda Ashendorf, Christopher Brown, Jo Covington Harashima, and Jeremy O'Brien
Mr. Antshel, Ms. Ashendorf, Mr. Brown, Ms. Harashima, and Mr. O'Brien were reappointed.
The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term expiring October 31, 2021 for a Town of Matthews representative.
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The Town of Matthews recommended Charles "Andrew" Stienecker for reappointment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to reappoint Charles "Andrew" Stienecker.

Mr. Stienecker was appointed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioners directed staff to convene Board Committee meetings again beginning in June.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

___________________________  ___________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk    George Dunlap, Chair
SPECIAL MEETING

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 1 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely for a Special Meeting on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

20-6144: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools FY21 Budget Request

Elyse Dashew, CMS Board of Education Chair, gave introductory remarks.

Earnest Winston, CMS Superintendent, presented the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools FY21 Budget Request. He stated he had watched the community respond to the international crisis and that he wanted to first acknowledge the work of the County Manager, Dena Diorio. He said her team was responsive and had been a mainstay since the beginning. He recognized the hard work and thanked the Manager and Commissioners for all they have done throughout the crisis. He stated COVID-19 created a world of uncertainty and that the school system, like the County, was having to reimagine how to deliver services in the new normal. He said they created the budget pre-COVID-19.

Mr. Winston stated that last year, the County provided funding which allowed them to create opportunities for the students and staff members and that one of the most significant investments they made last year was the funding they provided for the local supplement. He said that funding allowed CMS to have the highest local supplement in the State of North Carolina, which helped them to recruit and retain the best teaching talent in the State. He gave thanks for that commitment.

Mr. Winston said that in addition to the local supplement for teachers, their investment in other employees was also greatly appreciated and that they were able to give a salary increase to all staff and raise the minimum hourly rate for the lowest paid employees to $13.22. He said last year they prioritized the social and emotional health of the students, due to it being a driver in their overall life outcome. He said their funding provided 27 social workers, 10 counselors, 10 psychologists, eight supervising coordinators.

Mr. Winston said that in addition to the operational needs, they were fortunate to receive capital investment as well and that a number of years ago they started providing funding which allowed them to be proactive with preventive maintenance, and that the investment in preventive maintenance allowed them to take care of the capital investments before issues arose. He said with that funding, they were able to replace door paint, carpets, worn flooring, HVAC, and roof cleaning and inspections. He said they had made preventative maintenance a strategy to increase the time between capital replacements.
Mr. Winston reviewed what the community needed. He said it was important to name, because of all the uncertainty, they must focus on the community’s most valued asset, which was the children. He said the FY2021 proposed budget was focused on the investments that reinforced the foundation, which were: students, staff, and support they provide them. He walked the Board through their asks. He said the first ask was for Sustaining Operations with the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Systems Modernization Year 2 for HR/Payroll core modules projected to go live in January 2021 and financial core modules projected to go live in July 2021 for $1.3 million.

Mr. Winston reviewed the next ask, which was for an investment in the employees with the phase II market rate adjustment for hourly staff to increase to $14.11 minimum, plus compression adjustments. He stated there was also an ask for a salary increases of 2.1% for certified staff; 2.1% principals; and 1% non-certified staff, as well as a health rate increase from $6,306 to $6,647 and a retirement rate increase of 19.70% to 21.44.

Mr. Winston reviewed the ask for Student enrollment growth, including enrollment growth costs for 315 new students; three speech pathologists, five Exceptional Children (EC) teachers, two EC Pre-K teachers, two EC Pre-K teacher assistants for special population growth; charter school pass-through costs for 1,807 new students; and a new school resource officer with the addition of grade 7 at a K-8 school for a total of $9.9 million. He said their ask also included new schools staffing and operating costs, including maintenance and operating costs for one new and two replacement schools. He said the original Collingswood was built in 1959 and Montclaire Elementary was built in 1958. He said they would need additional funding to cover the cost of expanding square footage.

Mr. Winston said they were opening a brand-new school, Rea Farms STEAM Academy in the southern part of the County. He showed a representation of costs to staff a new school and cover costs of operating larger replacement schools. He said they had calculated maintenance and operating costs at $4.85 per square foot for additional space.

Mr. Winston highlighted their ask of $3.4 million to support the children with staffing/social emotional learning support adding five psychologists; 15 social workers; 15 counselors; two behavioral specialists; and technology devices and tools for support staff. An additional ask for supporting the children was $1.9 million for Exceptional Children staffing and special education support, by staffing two occupational therapists; five EC teachers; five teacher assistants; four itinerant EC teachers; and contracted nursing services for EC students. For keeping the children and schools safe and secure, there was a $8 million ask to hire 15 campus security associates; two locksmiths; one fire alarm specialist; and provide off-duty officers at locations with increased traffic.

Mr. Winston said there was a $5.1 million ask for building services preventative maintenance and staffing, which would cover: roof cleaning; plumbing; HVAC, boilers & pneumatic control maintenance; fire ant treatment; ceiling tile replacement; carpet replacement; bathroom partitions; one facility planning director. Lastly, he said there was a $5 million request for compliance office and legal support with one public records/legal specialist; one compliance and transparency officer; and one administrative support staff; as well as other non-personnel support, such as training, computer software, and supplies.

Mr. Winston said the proposed budget addressed their most pressing needs and provided support through the unprecedented times and their total ask was for $36 million in additional funding from the County for next year. HE said the County currently provided $509 million to them, and he thanked the County for that. He said the present year’s request was for $538 million, which included the $36 million he just reviewed. He stated the total capital budget request was just under $33 million and that did not include any bond capital funding.

Mr. Winston thanked the Board for their ongoing support over the years and for the strengthened relationship between both of the organizations.

Commissioner Fuller pointed out the local supplement increase, which pushed the County’s school system to have the highest, average, local-salary supplement for the
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teachers in the entire state of North Carolina. He felt it was very important, and he was grateful and happy that they were at the top, where they should be. He wanted to maintain that and understood CMS wanting to get the minimum salary up. He asked if the phase two, market-rate adjustments and salary increases were two different things.

Mr. Winston responded yes.

Commissioner Fuller asked which employees the minimum $14.11 pay raise would apply to and asked if it would be mostly non-certified staff.

Mr. Winston responded yes, non-certified staff.

Commissioner Fuller asked in terms of the ERP, if there was a timing issue related to the project being completed and if it was a multi-year project.

Mr. Winston responded that significant investments had been made in the project and that in order to keep it on track they were seeking the funding and that it was year two of a three-year phase-in.

Commissioner Fuller asked if there would be another $1.3 million next fiscal year.

Mr. Winston stated there would be another investment the following fiscal year.

Commissioner Fuller asked if it would be equal to.

Mr. Winston stated that was correct.

Commissioner Fuller asked about the variance between the bond request and recent changes that him and the Board of Education had made in relation to West Charlotte High School. He said he found the response to a question he had about this was less than satisfying to him. He asked for an explanation on why CMS had decided to change the framework of a facility that was on the capital list, then told the public what they voted for was not what they would get.

Mr. Winston responded that he always pledged to be a good steward of tax-payer dollars and understood the sentiment that existed around the project, as there was a lot of concern. He said Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education and CMS staff did not make any decision to deliver anything less than what was believed to have been in the best interest of the students and staff at the school sites. He said the decision to build high schools with 125 classrooms, at the time of the bond referendum a few years ago, did not reflect their best thinking on a desired student population or size, nor was it consistent with the established standards they had. He stated in last February, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education voted to adjust the classroom counts as the three, new high schools which were included in the 2017 bond referendum, and a clear majority of the board members committed a school size of 2,500, which 100 classrooms would actually accommodate. He said all three of the high schools included in the 2017 bond would be the same size and offer the same comprehensive, educational environment that they believed all students in CMS deserved.

Commissioner Leake asked what responsibility the State had in educating the children, versus what the County would give.

Mr. Winston responded that as far as it related to the State, the number was approximately $933 million, and the total was $1.6 billion.

Commissioner Leake asked what taxpayers from Mecklenburg County provided for the school district.

Mr. Winston stated the County provided $509 million for this school year.

Commissioner Leake asked if they got everything they asked for.
Mr. Winston responded that the total request was a tad bit more than what was received.
Commissioner Leake asked if what the County had given them was comparable to what they had been given in the past.

Mr. Winston said that was correct and that they were appreciative of it.

Commissioner Leake asked how many national certified teachers they had.

Mr. Winston responded in terms of certified teachers it was about 9,400 and that he would get back to her with how many national board-certified teachers they had.

Commissioner Leake asked how much money they received from the federal government.

Mr. Winston responded that they receive approximately $126 million from the federal government and other grants.

Commissioner Leake asked what the grand total received last year by the school board was.

Mr. Winston stated about $1.57 billion.

Commissioner Leake asked what level black children were at for academic growth versus others by gender and race.

Mr. Winston said he would get the specifics for her but that he would tell her it was not nearly where it needed to be or where the leadership in the district expected them to be. He stated there was a lot of work to be done in that area.

Commissioner Leake stated if the children were not reading and writing, they could not be productive citizens and when they ask for salaries for non-certified personnel, some of the children would fall in that area. She said they had a problem as it related to preparing the young people, and she worried about the support the children received. She requested that they always indicated the amount of funds they received for that year so they would understand the cost and what they had.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what it meant for every child to graduate with a meaningful opportunity and career opportunities. He also asked that of the 2019 graduates, how many of them met that standard.

Mr. Winston responded that they lived in a time where kids would be assuming jobs that would not exist today, so it was their obligation to prepare children for whatever opportunity may go their way and so they could choose to go into whatever career path or area of higher education that they chose. He said it was important they provided the students with options so they could make that choice. He stated that was what his expectation was when they talked about how they prepared kids to be college and/or career ready. He said he would bring back the information on how many of the 2019 graduates met that standard.

Commissioner Jerrell asked where central one and central two was located.

Mr. Winston stated they were predominately center-city schools.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if the schools were predominantly children of color.

Mr. Winston responded yes.

Commissioner Jerrell wanted to know what the plan was to address the situation.

Mr. Winston stated they were hard at work on a plan for the under-preforming schools and that they would be happy to come back to give the details of the plan.
Commissioner Harden stated she was proud of the teacher supplements that was funded last year. She asked if all of the 55 positions from last year, which dealt with school counselors and social/mental health and social workers were filled.

Dr. Cotrane Penn, CMS Executive Director of Student Wellness and Academic Support, responded that 10 of the counselor positions were funded by the County and that the State of North Carolina passed a school safety bill in late September which provided them with some additional positions, and they hired additional middle and high school counselors out of that funding. He said of that funding source, the counseling positions had five unfilled of the total 19 between the County and State last year.

Commissioner Harden said she knew they had asked for more of those positions, and she was curious to why the positions were not filled.

Dr. Penn responded that hiring for counselors was done at the State level and hiring for social workers and psychologists was done at the district level. She said other than there being some leadership changes in some of the schools, she was not sure why but that she guessed it may have been because the time of the year since there were positions posted but not filled. She said typically it meant the leadership team did not find a strong candidate.

Commissioner Harden said she would like to see schools’ years start with the full slate of staff the funded. She asked how much of the $6.2 million was needed for charter school enrollment growth.

Ms. Winston stated the way they were tracking at present day was that they would come in just slightly under budget.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how they came up with the charter school enrollment growth number.

Sheila Shirley, CMS District Chief Financial Officer, responded they were required for the charter school pass-through request was required to provide the per-pupil amount they received from the County they would be required to provide an equivalent per-pupil amount for the charter school students who were Mecklenburg County residents who attended any charter school across the State. She stated they were required to make estimates for how many charter school students there would be. She said they did not make the estimates but that the information was requested from the State to quantify how many additional students they believed they would have in the next year and would add it to the current number to come up with the total projected enrollment for both charters and CMS together to compute an overall, pupil amount and apply it to their total population.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated she felt the State’s contribution versus the County’s contribution was out of balance. She asked how it was determined how the needs of the County would come in in terms of priorities. She said education was extremely important to all of their constituents, because they would all agree that children are the most-valuable asset but that she did not feel the public had a clear understanding of how the schools were funded.

Ms. Dashew said in North Carolina, schools were funded jointly by the County and State and in the past 10 years, there was a rollback in State funding of public schools. She said they had worked hard to reverse that and show the importance of the investment in the schools. She said there was a perception around other parts of the State, that Mecklenburg County was very wealthy and that there was no poverty here; therefore, Mecklenburg County did not need help from the State. She said in some ways, they had more of a challenge than other counties due to that perception. She said they had no taxing authority in CMS, which was the way it was in North Carolina and while it was their job to be conscientious and responsible with funding, they had no way to raise those dollars. She said that was part of why the State had put that responsibility on the Counties to help with that.
Commissioner Powell stated that there were people who thought since the schools were closed, CMS was saving money. She felt it was very important for the community to know that while the schools were closed, needs increased elsewhere. She asked what it took to form their street team and how many students it encompassed.

Dr. Penn said her department was managing and staffing the street team, and they were working with a team of 36 staff members who were working together in eight teams to conduct home visits and essentially locator services for what started as 3,000 students. She said they were down quite a bit as students had made contact through remote services, and they had found parents and students and made contact with them. She said each school had one team social worker, and the other member of the team was either a counselor, school psychologist, or a native Spanish speaker to ensure families could communicate in their native language.

Commissioner Powell mentioned it was important for the community to know the how much they were spending while students were out of school for COVID-19. She asked what the custodial wage was and if it was $13.22.

Ms. Winston said yes, that was the minimum.

Commissioner Powell stated that there needed to be somewhere in the budget where they were addressing everything so that all students had access to water warm enough to wash their hands and soap stations and things like that in every school moving forward. She did not believe that people would feel comfortable sending their children back to school without it. She asked what the population expectation was for new EC students.

Mr. Winston responded that the needs for EC students grew by about 500 this school year.

Commissioner Powell mentioned that it was also important for the community to have visibility to the responsibility the government has to educate every children regardless of needs and how much extra the needs costs when they are special needs.

Chair Dunlap asked what the current per-pupil expenditure was, as well as the projected enrollment for last year when they did the budget, as well as how many showed up. He was wanting to know whether or not there were overtures made in last year’s budget. He said essentially the Manager recommended to the Board to fund their entire budget with the exception of about $11 million. In terms of the investing in employees, that was one of the things the State should be paying for anyway. He wanted people to understand where the Manager was as it related to the request.

Mr. Winston said $10,723 and the County’s portion of that was $3,468 to provide contact. He said he would get back to the Board with the projected enrollment from last year. He said the number that showed up was 146,888 students for this year.

Chair Dunlap said at any rate, that was an almost $11,000 per-pupil expenditure. He asked as it related to the overall budget, how much flexibility they had with the budget once it was adopted by the County.

Mr. Winston responded that they were able to allocate the budget based on their priorities as a district.

Chair Dunlap asked where the funds came from for upfits and renovations to the administrative building of $10 million. He wanted to know if it was part of the ask from the last year’s budget.

Mr. Winston responded that was in 2016 for the Education Center from part of the capital budget. He said the proceeds from the sale of the Education Center on Martin Luther King Boulevard helped to provide the funding for the Atrium or new Ed Center.

Chair Dunlap said in 2008, during the recession, the County had a deficit and had various departments call back monies in order to pay for the deficit. He mentioned their budget
was pre-COVID-19 and asked if they had made it after the start of COVID-19, would the budget request have been the same, and if so, why.

Mr. Winston responded that the ask was for the four functions, their priority, and he knew there were additional State and federal funding that had been allocated specifically for COVID-19 expenses. He said while they had not received those dollars, there had been an allocation of those funds to districts across the Country for specific COVID-19-related expenses.

Commissioner Fuller continued where he left off in speaking about West Charlotte High School. He stated he brought it up due to a matter of public concern when they represent to the public that they were asking them to vote on bonds, which would be used in a particular way, yet it was changed up on the public, which would diminish trust in the government. He said he did not think that was right or fair and that if the school system did not believe the request in the bond was where they were going to go, that would create an even bigger problem for people to trust what they said, in particular that they could trust in the school system that when they say they need something it was actually what they needed and that they had considered the request and made it fairly and clearly to the public. He said it was almost a billion dollars that the community voted for, and to be told later that they were not going to spend the money as promised, was a big problem.

Commissioner Leake said as it related to substitute teachers, the substitutes were based in Title One schools and that was a [inaudible] example of what was happening in this part of the community where the strongest teachers were needed the most. In regards to the bonds, she said many of them worked very hard to have those bonds passed and to go behind closed doors and not even discuss it with the Board, as they had never had a discussion with them about the change of the bond, the Board was holding them accountable for that and hoped they would stay with the 122 classrooms they said they would have in the building, because if not, the community would never have trust and that was something valued. She said they would be going back to the public to have them vote for more, so she hoped they would do the right thing and do what they had asked for. She asked how much money they received when they sold the building downtown and who kept the money.

Mr. Winston responded that he believed trust was extremely important and from their vantage point, things changed, and they received new information and wanted to be able to respond based on the newest information that they had. He believed sometimes when they spoke about transparency [inaudible] to be able to acknowledge when they had erred. He said they needed to have admitted they made a mistake with the initial number, and he believed transparency builds trust with the community. He said West Charlotte High School would be a state-of-the-art school when finished. He said the three communities that the three new high schools were in would be the same, and West Charlotte would not receive any less than any other community in Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what he expected to see from the students when they return, based on the adverse impact of COVID-19. He also asked if teachers in CMS have the choice of what school they would go to and would not go to? He asked if that was true, do he believe that was an effective model. He asked if not, what they were doing to change that, so they were putting the best teachers in the schools with highest need.

Mr. Winston stated he believed when they returned, many of them would show significant needs that they would have to address. He said he thought they would also have to focus on ensuring they provide academic, social, and emotional support that all the students need. He believed it was a fair assessment to say the students would have some additional needs they would have to address and do diagnostics to determine what those were. He thought the summer, learning loss would be a little wider than from traditional summers due to the current circumstances. He said he believed they had a responsibility to all of the students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg who were not as prepared as some of their peers, due to no fault of their own, and thanks to the support of the County, they had been able to provide students who needed a little extra, with the additional resources needed. He felt one of the most effective and important tools they could provide a student with was strong, effective teachers. He said substitutes got to choose where they work, but
the full-time, regular teachers worked for the school system and were placed where they were needed the most. He said they firmly believed they had a responsibility to put their best teachers- He said all children deserved a highly effective teacher in front of them.

Commissioner Harden asked the to-date amount of federal and state CARES funding that they would receive.

Mr. Shirley responded approximately $33.5 million from the federal CARES Act, which may change slightly. She said there were a number of processes that needed to happen at the State level before the funds were actually allocated to the individual school districts and it was her understanding that the Department of Public Instruction had one year before the funds had to revert, so they had that long in order to get the funds to them. She said she knew they had been working diligently to try to get the allocations finalized and the processes completed. She was hopefully they would receive the funds before June 30. She said they were also hopefully of receiving funds from House Bill 1043. She said there were several buckets of those resources, and nutrition had a bucket of $75 million; technology devices of $35 million; contracted mental health at $10 million and supplemental learning opportunities at $70 million. She said they do expect to receive some of those funds. She said they would have to be expended by December and the funds under the federal CARES Act of $33.5 million would be available to spend until September 2021.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she believed the community expected them to work together on the budgets and expressed that she felt the small time slot was inadequate. She asked how much CMS was spending on safety in the budget, due to gun violence. She also asked if any gun manufacturers had ever offered any grants.

Mr. Winston responded that he was not aware of any grant offers to the district but that he would double check. He said he would provide the specific breakdown as it related to school buildings and social and emotional wellbeing of students.

Commissioner Powell made a request that with the amount of funding the County provided to CMS, she felt CMS needed to dedicate staff to being responsive to parent and community questions in a timely manner with humans answering the phone. She felt as though it had created a gap between peoples’ concerns and responsiveness.

Mr. Winston said as it related to the pandemic, they set up a helpline for families, students, and parents who had general questions or questions about meal distribution sites or remote learning or social and emotional needs. He said the district also had an ombudsman office which helped parents, community members, and students who had questions or concerns to get specific information. He also acknowledged their Community Partnerships and Family Engagement Team, who were out in the community building partnerships, strengthening existing ones with different businesses, such as non-profit, for-profit, faith leaders, and so on. He said they do have staff to be able to address those concerns and the Board of Education had a Board Services Office that was staffed with employees who could take those concerns or questions that constituents had.

Commissioner Powell recommended that the contact information Mr. Winston provided was put on the front of the CMS website.

Mr. Winston answered a previously asked question. He stated CMS had 2,241 National Board-Certified Teachers in the district, which put them fourth in the Nation and second in the State. He said he knew the schools were collecting information on students as they were closing out the school year, in order to find out what gaps may exist and if they were passing. He said the information would be passed along in their cumulative folders to be able to help schools when kids did return, in order to prepare for the start of next year.

A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
Andrew Grant, Town Manager of Cornelius, presented a FY2021 request for support of the capital campaign for the Cain Center for the Arts. He stated that the arts were important as they inspired, built community, educated, entertained, and provide economic development. He said that in 2013, their community vision officially kicked off when the town redevelopment bonds in the amount of $4 million was approved by Cornelius residents, and in 2017, the Town purchased a site and entered into an agreement with the non-profit organization Cain Center for the Arts. He said that the agreement spelled out parameters for fundraising and the design of the facility. He said in 2018, the funding commenced and was taken on by the Cain Center for the Arts. He said that in 2019 they began the schematic design and that they were now in the middle of their construction draw.

Mr. Grant presented a map of the Town of Cornelius and pointed out where the facility would be located. He stated it would be located in the town center. He pointed out they strategically located the facility to be convenient to all north Mecklenburg County residents and residents beyond. He said the facility would serve as a cultural and community hub for the region, as well as a home for experiences that nurture a sense of community and enriches all of their lives. He said it would be a home for the arts and education for both young and old and that even without a building, they had facilitated numerous educational outreach programs. He said in 2019, without a building, the Cain Center was able to facilitate 25 performances, many of which were in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. He said they were in partnerships with the Children’s Theater and Charlotte Ballet and that in total, over 8,000 students were served by the outreach programs. He said the Cain Center planned to continue the outreach and to reach out to the Pre-K population as well.

Mr. Grant said the Town of Cornelius had its own Park and Recreation Department, with a long, successful history and that for the past 13 years, they had operated an art center of their own. He said through their partnership with Cain, they anticipated to allow the Cain Center to manage the programs they were offering. He said Cornelius had, on any given year, 224 visual arts programs to be offered to the community, with programs including painting, drawing, photography, jewelry making, art exhibits, and special holiday events. He said that in total, they averaged 4,600 program participants a year.

Mr. Grant said that in the new facility, the Town would contract with the Cain Center to provide the programs and that more would be added; the primary focus of the Town was on digital arts. He said that performing arts would be the focus of the Cain Center, in addition to the visual arts. He said within the facility, the construction drawings would have a 400-seat theater, for performances provided by national, regional, and local talent. He said the design was calling for adjustable floor seating and that the facility could also be transformed into a banquet-type facility, seating 125 to 150 people. He said there would be two visual arts classrooms and a dance studio. He said there would be an art gallery, which would also double as an event space, and a town park for outdoor events and concerts, in addition to a plaza in the middle of town center. He said there would be some ancillary support spaces as well. He pointed out various features on the site map.

Mr. Grant said if you were to think about NoDa and what that looked like prior to the development of that art district, this would be similar but even better. He said they would have an area where they would do some land-use planning to tweak the land-use plan and code of ordinances to allow for uses that were compatible and supportive of the art district. He said it would span about a half of a mile of corridor of the Town center and that it stretched all the way down to the Smithfield Community. He said they would also look at items, such as increasing the residential density, having new type of residential product in the area supportive of restaurants and a very vibrant area of town to draw the community.

Mr. Grant briefly reviewed floorplans, stating that the first floor of the plan showed about 250 seats of the theater and about 1,100 square-foot digital arts classroom. He said there
were about 150 seats on the balcony, and it was also where they had their 1,200 square foot dance studio in the left-hand corner and another classroom as well. He said there would also be meeting space.

Mr. Grant reviewed the timeline, stating that they would finish their construction drawings in late summer or early fall of this year. He said that assuming that fundraising continued to go well they would commence construction, which would be 14 to 18 months, in summer 2021. He said they would be able to open their doors in late 2022 or early 2023. He said the overall cost was $25 million and the Town was contributing through land purchase and redevelopment bonds in a total of $5.5 million. He said the fundraising goal was $19.5 million, and Cain Center had been doing an excellent job by raising pledges currently at the amount of $10 million. He said the remaining campaign was approximately $9.5 million and that the Cain Center continued to diligently work with that. He said the Town did respectfully request a $1 million capital contribution toward the project from the County.

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to extend the meeting until all questions were answered.

Commissioners expressed their support for the Cain Center of the Arts.

A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:32 p.m.
BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely in Formal Session on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, with invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag led by Commissioner Leake.

20-6136: Budget Public Hearing

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing.

The following speakers addressed the Board regarding the Manager’s Recommended FY2021 Budget:

1. Laura Yates Clark – United Way of Central Carolinas
2. John Martin – Young Black Leadership Alliance (Unite Charlotte Agency)
3. Jania Massey – Stiletto Boss University (Unite Charlotte Agency)
4. Tiffany Ingram – MECK Pre-K
5. Cheryl Richards – Early Education
6. Shantora Cohen – MECK Pre-K
7. Dontarius Gilmore – MECK Pre-K
8. Heidi Pruess – Park and Recreation Commission
9. Teri Flake – MECK Pre-K
10. Mike Blackwelder – Early Education
11. Amanda Blanton – MECK Pre-K
12. Elizabeth Borja – Early Education
13. Brittany Deluca – MECK Pre-K
14. Susan Doggett – Community Service Grant - Special Olympics NC
15. Darlene Heater – University City Partners
16. Rob Harrington – Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library
17. Lisa Cline – Building School Equity and Preserving Green Space
18. John Quillin – Budget
19. MyLoan Dinh – Budget
20. Hannah Hasan – Budget
21. Liz Winer – Early Education
22. Trinisha Dean – MECK Pre-K
23. Tammy Martin – Young Black Leadership Alliance
24. Zahria Sanders – Young Black Leadership Alliance
25. Dr. Ricky Woods – Village HeartBeat Inc.
26. Delores Johnson Hurt – CMS Funding
27. Randolph Frierson – Budget
28. Amanda Thompson – Budget
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29. Kenneth Pless – Pay Raise for CMS Custodial Staff
30. Hope Tarpley-McCoy – 3% Pay Increase for County Employees
31. Mary Kelly – Budget
32. Diane Phillips – County Budget
33. Debra Weeks – Budget, COVID-19 and the United Way

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

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Emily A. Kunze, Clerk    George Dunlap, Chair
FORMAL SESSION

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely in Formal Session on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 6:03 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, the invocation by Commissioner Leake and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6168: Emergency Medical Services Week

Commissioner Powell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring May 17 - 23, 2020 as “Emergency Medical Services Week” in Mecklenburg County.

The copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6139: Public Appearance

The following speaker(s) addressed the Board of County Commissioners:

- Ariel Thompson, Beauty of Motherhood - Breast Feeding Assistance

APPOINTMENTS

20-6166: Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term expiring June 30, 2021 in the General Public category.

The following persons were nominated: Phyllis Barnette and Jana Ellison.

Chair Dunlap requested a roll call vote to appoint Phyllis Barnette.

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
Ms. Barnette received the majority of votes (5:4); as a result, no vote was taken for Ms. Ellison.

Ms. Barnette was appointed.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – None**

**MANAGER’S REPORT**

20-6141: COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Department Director provided an update on the COVID-19 response efforts. She said as of today, there were 2,735 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 69 deaths, and 15 long-term care facilities in outbreak status. She said we did receive a truck from the State with protective equipment for all of our long-term care facilities, and Emergency Management was in the process of delivering those supplies that would be a 14-day supply for them. She said we have seen an increase in testing over the last several weeks; the State had requested that each county came up with a plan to test five percent of their population in 30 days, and we tested 25% of that five percent in just nine days with that increased testing. She said we have seen higher case counts almost every day; today was our highest case count at 89 new cases.

She said we have seen a fairly large uptick in the number of Hispanic cases; now a third of all of our reported cases were among Hispanics, and disparities in the area of poverty all contribute to this. She said we were trying to address the situation with expanded outreach and education. We developed the Spanish tool kit, which was on our website, and we have additional staff who worked specifically with the Latino community to do targeted outreach; they were working with Hispanic-owned and serving businesses. She said we were also doing a good bit of work with media outlets, and radio spots would start later this week, and we have done quite a few interviews with their media.

She said to the Board that although the number of cases had risen significantly, the percent positives had seen a slight decrease, which was the right direction we want to go in. She said our hospitalizations have been stable; however, we were seeing a slight decrease in our social distancing, which was to be expected with some of the release of restrictions that we have seen in our community. Mr. Harris showed the Board a new dashboard, created with Emergency Management, that would be updated daily at 5:00 p.m. She said we would continue to do the twice-weekly, data reports, and those reports would allow us to frame the issues as the arise from data and put them in community context. She said we would continue to do those reports as well; the dashboard would do live after it was being presented to you tonight. She said the link was from the County’s COVID-19 webpage for people to access the dashboard. Ms. Harris said the dashboard had four different categories: community impact overview; social distancing status; medical facilities locater; and local businesses. At some point, we would probably be adding testing sites as well.

COVID-19 Revenues and Response Plan

Sarah Cunningham, Chief Financial Officer provided a presentation regarding the COVID-19 revenues and response plan. She said we were operating an unprecedented emergency event; this was a public health crisis affecting the entire world, and the effects of COVID-19 was immediate and deep. She said where states, on average, saw a 12% decline of the great recession now with a 20% decline during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said there was federal assistance help, but we would expect it to be a long window of reimbursement. She said there was three basic kinds of revenues that we were looking at; one was known revenues. She said we also received CDC funding, and that was federal funding via the State, which was limited to public health, about $560,000. She said the next bucket was likely revenue, where we know the source, requirements and the dollars were uncertain. This includes FEMA Disaster Funding, which was federal via the State, which reimbursed us for the cost of response and mitigation for economic impacts, and the third bucket was possible revenues, and these were grant opportunities that require application. She said one example of that was Economic Development Administration CARES Act funding; that was a federal program that was not typically available to local governments, and we may qualify.
She said taking a look at cost of COVID-19, we were defining COVID-19 cost as those in response to COVID-19 and take a variety of forms, such as public health costs assistance to those who were impacted by COVID-19; technology costs; PPE; and other operational costs including the cost to transition back to the office with the new normal. She said we had a process set up to be able to review each cost and had set up financial and human resource systems so we could track staff time and expenses with a COVID-19 tag. She said we were performing analysis of these cost over time, and we were in a changing environment of performing trend analysis. She said in taking a look at COVID-19 costs as of May 15th, the County had $13.2 million in COVID-19 costs, including expenditures and encumbrances. This includes 11.4 million of non-personnel expenses, 1.8 million in staff costs, including special pay authorities, county emergency leave and federal emergency leave. She said we expect the costs to grow in the future as we continue our COVID-19 mitigation activities; some of these costs were eligible for reimbursement through coronavirus review fund or other federal or state programs and some was not.

She said we plan to look at restricted funding streams first, meaning where we had specific grants and streams with limited purposes and making sure that we had allocated cost so we could use those to the maximum potential. She said looking at the CARES, Corona Virus Relief Fund, these were funds that could be used for both public health and mitigate the impact of COVID-19. She said we would want to look at county funds that had potential for FEMA and other reimbursements, and we would want to make sure that we were considering the needs of all Mecklenburg County residents and the Commissioners’ interests, impact, timing, and potential assistance available to achieve the same goals; we would want to ensure each investment meets CARES Act criteria, and the investment should address public health needs or negative economic impacts resulting from COVID-19, and the investment as a whole should seek to fully utilize the funding and address the County and board priorities, including public health, impacts of COVID-19 on working families and people of color and other needs, and we wanted to make sure we was thinking about retaining some amount of fund for future unknowns. She said these were payments that may be used to cover costs that were necessary expenditures due to the health emergency with respect to COVID-19; these costs were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020. She said the funds may not be used to replace revenues due to COVID-19, and any funds not spent would need to be returned to Treasury. She said as a part of this framework; we proposed categories that factor on County needs and priorities including things like the cost of PPE for county staff and improvements for facilities to promote social distancing and safety as we return to the office; it includes housing for the homeless and direct support to the housing and homeless community, such as restrooms and wash stations. She said it could include public health, economic development, and other investments, like food access and investments to address equity issues driven by COVID-19. She said some investments may cross multiple categories and that they would identify the proposal category and evaluate each proposal by impact, ability to expend by end of the cycle, and whether other funding would be available. She said the State was expected to provide the Counties 25% match with respect to FEMA assistance. She said an estimated cost of hotels, including security and food was $5.8 million through December 30, 2020 and because we could fully recover these costs through FEMA, we was revising County staff to proposed uses down to $12.4 million, including the $2 million contingency; this leaves $26.8 million in our relief funds for investment, and we sought the Commissioners’ input on the use of these remaining funds.

She said the $5.5 million that was incorporated for the Small Business Emergency Stabilization Fund was likely not eligible, because the loans that were paid back would not be considered spent. She said the majority of the $1 million in COVID-19 personnel costs, to date, were not eligible, because they were not for staff responding to COVID-19 or because the County was requesting and seeking repayment of these through other grants and resources. She said there were $5.9 million in costs incurred to date that was eligible after these two categories $1.6 million on hotels, and there was $3 million that we can use from the Corona Virus Relief Fund. For the proposed Coronavirus Relief Fund Allocation, estimated future costs of $12.3 million supports continuation of current activities and new investments through December 30, 2020, and the majority of future expenses were in public health and employee and facility safety. She said the next steps were to support economic development, equality, mental health, small business, working families, and other priorities or needs for our community.
Commissioner Cotham asked what was happening in the environment of construction workers and what the County was doing to help them.

Dena Diorio, County Manager responded that we were not seeing the use of masks and social distance and that it had been an opportunity for us to have conversation with management about the resources they needed to make available and the opportunities for using those resources appropriately among the folks that work for them.

Commissioner Cotham asked how many individuals there were and where the construction sites were located.

Ms. Diorio responded that she did not have specific numbers of individuals who have been infected; some sites have five, six, seven, but we were not talking about an entire crew. The locations had been spread through the community. She said the ones she saw were the larger construction sites at this point.

Commissioner Fuller said he believed there were a lot of loose ends, and not in a negative way, but he believed, the loose ends needed to be brought together. He thought something more formal should be done to address those issue.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to approve beginning the process to create a Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Reopening and Recovery Task Force, for the purpose of constructing a comprehensive plan for Mecklenburg County to guide our reopening process in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to set a course for rebuilding our community in the aftermath of this pandemic in the areas of public health, behavioral health, hardships suffered by working families, housing and homelessness, employment, education, business, and the non-profit sector, among others. Members would consist of a range of experts and others to be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners. We would ensure that any recommendations from the County Manager’s business roundtable would be included in this plan. The task force would formally be created by resolution at our meeting on June 2, 2020.

Commissioner Fuller said that the task force would be for Mecklenburg County to evaluate what needs to be done and what plans we could be put in place to reopen. He said my thought was we would formally create the task force at our June 2, 2020 meeting, so we would have time between tonight and June 2, 2020 to write a resolution that formally creates the task force.

Ms. Diorio asked how the motion relates to the CARES funding and the availability of the CARES funding, and was it your intention that the task force decides that a decision that the Board of County Commissioners was going to make? She said we only have until December 30, 2020 to spend that money if we want to spend it and make an impact.

Commissioner Fuller said he thought that would be possible.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

**YES:** Commissioners Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

**NO:** Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, and Powell

Commissioners requested more information on the construction workers and sites.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if maps and demographics could be added to the dashboard, so all information was in one place. He also asked if there were any clusters of the virus appearing in particular industries and if the numbers indicated that we were moving in the right direction.

Ms. Harris said that she would try to implement improvements to the dashboard. She said there was a cluster in a baking warehouse facility, but the situation has greatly improved. She said numbers were rising but they were seeing a decrease in positivity rates and community spread.
Commissioner Harden said she had been meeting with professionals that work with seniors in long term care and nursing homes on a weekly basis. She said there were two major concerns, testing – it was hard to get a baseline and was it possible to get a mobile unit to the facilities.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she was concerned that the CARES Act funding for the County was only for the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) and did not include the six towns.

Ms. Diorio said there was $21 million of CARES Act funding that had not yet been allocated and she was looking for direction from the Board. She said the funds had already been appropriated. She said the funds had to be spent by December 31, 2020 and she needed direction to put programs in place.

The COVID-19 Revenues and Response Plan presentation and proposed Coronavirus Relief Fund Investments Detail is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Tyrone Wade, County Manager, said I want to make the Board aware, and for the record, that in light of recent legislation to account for public hearings in a remote setting, the statute now allows and has been amended that the Board can take action tonight but the item you actually approve, should you approve these matters, would not be effective until May 21, 2020; in other words, the statute allows 24 hours after the action on the Board for additional comments, should there be any.


A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing to hear all interested parties who appear with respect to the closing of a portion of right-of-way for Neck Road.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and to adopt the Order of Closing for a Portion of Neck Road Right-of-Way.

Note: As the current property owner, Mecklenburg County petitioned to close a 4.62-acre portion of the public right-of-way for Neck Road (SR 2074). The portion of said right-of-way currently provides access to the Cowan’s Ford Wildlife Refuge and Holly Bend historic house site, both controlled by Mecklenburg County. The County would like to install a new gate to signify the entrance to the refuge and to restrict public access during non-operation hours. Before the gate can be installed, rights-of-way must be abandoned and closed.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document #126.

20-6137: TEFRA Hearing – Bradford Preparatory School

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to open the TEFRA public hearing and receive comments on the proposed financing by Bradford Preparatory School.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously, to close the public hearing and to adopt a Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mecklenburg, North Carolina, approving the issuance by the Public Finance Authority of its education revenue bonds (Bradford Preparatory School) series 2020 in an aggregate principal amount not exceed $40,000,000.

Note: As more fully explained in the Resolution BPS Bears LLC (the"Borrower") a North Carolina limited ability company whose sole member is Bradford Preparatory School (the \"Lessee\") has requested that the Public Finance Authority, a public authority existing under the laws of the State of Wisconsin (the "Authority"), issue its Education Revenue Bonds (Bradford Preparatory School) series 2020 (the "Bonds") in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed $40,000,000 and loan the proceeds thereof to the Borrower for the following purposes: (a) financing the
acquisition of certain land and charter educational facilities of the Lessee and the Borrower to be owned by the Borrower and leased to the Lessee for use as a charter school known as "Bradford Preparatory School" (the "School") located at 2502, and 2510 Salome Church Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28262; (b) refinancing certain indebtedness incurred by the Lessee to acquire certain land and charter educational facilities of the Lessee and the Borrower to be owned by the Borrower and leased to the Lessee for use as the school located at 2130, and 2300 Salome Church Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28262 (clauses (a) and (b) together, the "Project"); and (c) paying all or a portion of the costs of issuance of the Bonds.

Bradford Preparatory School is using the Wisconsin Public Finance Authority as the issuer of the Bonds because of a desire to have a 30-year maturity on the debt; the North Carolina Capital Facilities Finance Agency, which would be the North Carolina issuer, has a policy which prohibits a bond maturity greater than 20 years.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document #127.

20-6138: TEFRA Hearing – Pioneer Springs Community School

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously, to open the TEFRA public hearing and receive comments on the proposed financing by Pioneer Springs Community School.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and to adopt a Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mecklenburg, North Carolina, approving the issuance by the public finance authority of its education revenue bonds (Pioneer Springs Community School) series 2020 in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed $15,000,000.

Note: As more fully explained in the Resolution, Tetrapod Holdings, LLC (the "Borrower"), a North Carolina limited liability company whose sole member is Pioneer Springs Community School, Inc. (the "Lessee"), a North Carolina non-profit corporation, has requested that the Public Finance Authority, a public authority existing under the laws of the State of Wisconsin (the "Authority"), issue its Education Revenue Bonds (Pioneer Springs Community School) series 2020 (the "Bonds") in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed $15,000,000 and loan the proceeds thereof to the Borrower for the following purposes:

(a) financing and refinancing the acquisition, construction, renovation, improvement, and equipping of certain land and charter educational facilities of the Borrower and Lessee to be owned by the Borrower and leased to the Lessee for use as a charter school known as "Pioneer Springs Community School: located or to be located at 9132, 9200, 9232, 9300, and 9314 Bob Beatty Road, Charlotte, North Carolina 28269 (the "Project"); (b) refinancing one or more taxable loans incurred by the Lessee to finance the Lessee’s Teachers’ and State Employees Retirement System withdrawal payment; (c) funding a debt service reserve fund for the Bonds; (d) paying capitalized interest on the Bonds, if any; and (e) paying all or a portion of the costs of issuance of the Bonds;

Pioneer Springs Community School is using the Wisconsin Public Finance Authority as the issuer if the Bonds because of a desire to have a 30-year maturity on the debt; the North Carolina Capital Facilities Finance Agency which would be the North Carolina issuer, has a policy which prohibits a bond maturity greater than 20 years.

Resolution recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document #128.

20-6142: Public Hearing – Surface Water Pollution Control Ordinance Revision

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to open public the hearing to receive comments on revisions to the Mecklenburg County Surface Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and to adopt revisions to the Mecklenburg County Surface Water Pollution Control Ordinance.
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Note: The ordinance prohibits discharges of pollution to the storm drain system and surface waters of Mecklenburg County. The ordinance was originally adopted on May 5, 2004. The proposed revisions will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the ordinance at protecting Mecklenburg County’s surface water resources. The revisions have been provided to the County Attorney. On February 20, 2020, the revisions received support from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Advisory Committee. Revisions were also presented to the Environmental Stewardship Committee on March 10, 2020.

Provided below is a summary of the major proposed changes to the Mecklenburg County Surface Water Pollution Control Ordinance.

1. All Sections: Various wording changes were made throughout the document without changing the regulatory requirements or overall intent of the ordinance.

2. Section 2. General Authorization and Ordinance Purpose: The authorization for the ordinance was added and the purpose of the ordinance was expanded to include specific objectives.

3. Section 4. Definitions: Definitions were added and changed as necessary in Section 4 to support ordinance revisions.

4. Section 5. Prohibitions, Accidental Discharge(s)(c): Accidental discharges were added as a violation of the ordinance.

5. Section 5. Prohibitions, Improper Storage, Handling, or Processing of Materials(d): Improper storage, handling, or processing of materials was added as a violation of the ordinance if it resulted in the deposition of pollutants on the land that may become mixed with stormwater and enter the stormwater system or surface waters.

6. Section 5. Prohibitions, Failure to Comply(e): Failure to comply with any requirements or corrective actions set forth in any notice made pursuant to the ordinance was added as a discrete violation of the ordinance.

7. Section 5. Prohibitions, Use of High PAH Pavement Products Prohibited(f): The use of pavement products with greater than 0.1% polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) by weight on an asphalt or concrete surface was added as a violation of the ordinance.

8. Section 5. Prohibitions, Obstruction(g): Obstructing, hampering, or interfering with county personnel carrying out official duties authorized by this ordinance was added as a violation.

9. Section 5. Prohibitions, Allowable Incidental Discharges of Non-Storm Water(h): The following allowable discharges were added: diverted stream flows; and flows from riparian habitats and wetlands. Swimming pool and hot tub discharges continue to be allowed provided they do not contain chlorine, bromine, salt, or any other treatment chemicals. Backwash discharges from swimming pools and hot tubs and saltwater pool discharges are identified as prohibited in the revisions. Single-family and charity vehicle washing continues to be allowed; however, designated vehicle wash areas at multi-family residential complexes are identified as prohibited in the revisions if they connect, directly or indirectly, to the stormwater system or the waters of the state. In addition, the revisions specify that charity vehicle washing performed by the same organization or at the same location on a routine basis (more than one time in a thirty-day period) is not allowed.

10. Section 6. Powers and Authority for Inspection, Authority to Inspect and Monitor(a): The revisions add a stipulation that when security measures are in force that would require identification and clearance before entry into the premises, arrangements with security personnel must be made so that, upon presentation of identification, personnel will be permitted to enter and perform their specific duties and responsibilities without delay.

11. Section 6. Powers and Authority for Inspection, Search Warrants(b): The revisions added a provision for obtaining a search warrant to conduct inspections to the extent permitted by law.

12. Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Remedies Not Limited(a): The revisions add a provision that the remedies provided in the ordinance are not exclusive and may be combined with any other remedies authorized by law.

13. Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Notice of Violation(b): The revisions add a provision that any person who violates the ordinance, or allows a direct or indirect, act or acts which causes a violation of the ordinance will be issued a written notice of violation. The specific content of the notice is also described as well as how it will be served.

14. Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Civil Penalties(c): The revisions clarify that a civil penalty may be assessed for the time period from the date the violation first occurs until the date that the violation ceases as verified by staff. The revisions also indicate that penalties may be assessed concurrent with a notice of violation when staff are hampered or
obstructed from carrying out official duties; a repeat or continuing violation has occurred; and/or there is a willful or intentional violation of the ordinance. In addition, the revisions add the following factors for inclusion in determining the amount of a civil penalty: knowledge of the requirements by the violator and/or reasonable opportunity or obligation to obtain such knowledge; and technical and economic reasonableness of reducing or eliminating the violation. Another change is that the previous version of the ordinance required that civil penalties collected would be credited to the Mecklenburg County general fund as non-tax revenue, whereas the revised version stipulates that all penalties shall be remitted to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System as required by State law.

15. **Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Compliance Agreement(e):** The revisions add a provision for the use of a Compliance Agreement as a remedy to obtain compliance.

16. **Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Compliance Order(f):** The revisions add a provision for the use of a Compliance Order to obtain compliance.

17. **Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties. Cease and Desist Order(g):** The revisions add a provision for the use of a Cease and Desist Order to obtain compliance.

18. **Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Withholding of Inspections, Permits, or Other Approvals(h):** The revisions add a provision for withholding inspections, permits, and other approvals as a means for obtaining compliance.

19. **Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Abatement by the County(j):** The revisions include specific information regarding the process for abatement of violations by the County when the violator fails to comply.

20. **Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Emergencies(k):** The revisions include provisions for abatement of violations when there is an immediate threat to public health, safety or the environment.

21. **Section 7. Enforcement Remedies and Penalties, Injunctive Relief(l):** The revisions include a provision for obtaining injunctive relief through the courts as an added compliance measure.

22. **Section 8. Appeal Process:** The revisions include significantly more detail regarding the appeal process for violations of the ordinance, including public hearing procedures.

Ordinance recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document #129.

**MANAGER’S REPORT**

**20-6167: 7th & Tryon Redevelopment Project – Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Update**

Mark Hahn, Director of Asset and Facility Management Department, provided an update on the 7th & Tryon redevelopment project and outlined the key terms of the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Master Developer, BP-Metropolitan NC, LLC. He said the redevelopment project was a coordinated effort by four landowners to combine their property for a 1.5 block redevelopment that would transform the area as recommended by the North Tryon Vision Plan. He said the four property owners and master developer that had coordinated the negotiation and was party to the MOU include Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library, Bank of America, and BP Metropolitan and Master Developer. Mr. Hahn described the property ownership. He spoke about the vision for the transformative project, stating the redevelopment offered a unique opportunity for private-public partnership that could benefit all of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. He said the vision for this project was to create the more open and inclusive corridor and housing, retail, and office uses, and the project was more important now than ever to a community in need of an economic lift and a boost to its civic spirit. He said it would generate new tax base by converting public property to private use and convert 600 million for development of office, residential, retail, and mixed use and provides an attractive space for major corporate office tenant and office space to grow talent attraction. He said the project would bring thousands of jobs to the North Tryon area, and it delivers affordable housing along with the creation of engaging, outdoor open spaces with a healthy, outdoor-dining atmosphere. He said the redevelopment would have a significant economic impact by having created an estimated of 1,200 to 1,500 construction jobs and 250 permanent facility-based jobs upon opening, and the impact for local suppliers during construction were estimated to be $75 million. The goal for participation by MWSBE vendors was estimated to generate $35 to $40 million providing a boost for those local firms; new property tax revenue at full buildout was estimated to add $4.1 million annually and new annual local sales tax revenue was estimated to be $674,000 in new annual fiscal sales tax revenue.
He said for the key terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, having started with the sale and purchase of the redevelopment site, the total amount of property to be sold by the developer was across the 1.5 block area, as shown here in yellow. He said the sales price was $21.5 million, and the property would be sold to Metropolitan in one land transaction. He said of the total area being sold, the County’s land accounts for approximately .108 acres at a pro-rated value of approximately $7.4 million; upon execution of the master development agreement, Metropolitan would deposit $500,000 into an escrow account to secure performance of their obligations under the agreement and credited against the purchase property of the property at closing.

He said the County and library would be responsible for demolishing portions of the main library and Spirit Square pertaining to the McGowan and Spirit Theater; he stated that Metropolitan acknowledges the County would be required to give users of Spirit Square at least 12 months prior notice of the commencement of demolition. The redevelopment project would include sufficient parking below ground and above grade to accommodate the program requirements of the main library and the two Spirit Square theaters. He stated the redevelopment required coordination with the library project. He said the development agreement itself would include the applicable key terms of the MOU as well as an estimated timeline for commencement of construction of all the project components. He said regarding grants or other public sector support, the City and County would continue to collaborate on providing not less than a $25 million tax increment grant for the public purpose and below ground and above grade parking structures. He said the MOU included a requirement that Metropolitan would contribute $3 million at the closing of the sale of the 7th and Tryon property. He said the stakeholders would not enter into any agreement for a 180-day period for the sale or redevelopment of their property on this site with any party other than Metropolitan or the buyer; violation by stakeholders could result in up to $4.1 million.

He said the County land proceeds provided $7.4 million and Bank of America Land proceeds provided $8.3 million, having included a $3 million contribution from the development team provided a total of $18.8 million available to invest in affordable housing. He said one option was for housing through an on-site master lease right on North Tryon; a second option was for housing on the INLIVIAN priority, and option three was for offsite housing units at other locations in the County. He said you would see the allocation amount of $14.5 million could be applied to any of these three options or could be a mix of the options; that was a decision before you as we finalize the terms of the MOU. He said the $14.5 million investment delivers 36 units at the full range of 30%, 60%, and 80% AMI levels, 12 at 30%; 12 at 60%, and 12 at 80%. He said the average AMI would be 58%. He said for option two, the INLIVIAN the number of units and AMI was determined as part of the development land for their property. He said with option three, offsite development, there would be 52 units at 30% AMI, 18 units at 50% AMI, 120 units at 60% AMI, and 17 units at 80% AMI.

He said the Board would consider authorization for the County Manager to execute the MOU at the next regular meeting; after execution of the MOU, negotiation of the development agreement would begin. He said once the development agreement was finalized, the Board would consider approval of that agreement and authorization for the County Manager to execute. We would intend to bring the options for Spirit Square renovations back to the Board for execution of final option and approval of funding. He said there was a sense of urgency among numerous parties to finalize the MOU and keep this project moving. He said the master developer would need to manage agreements to land an anchor tenant and component developers of mixed-use commercial and multi-family build.

Chair Dunlap said he appointed Commissioner Fuller to address ongoing issues as it relates to this development.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said we did have a meeting with the master developer to talk about where we would go from here. After five years of work on this project, what you were seeing here tonight was the best effort to bring a project forward that was affordable that we believe was actually executable in the near term. She said what we brought today addresses all of the questions that the Board had around affordable housing; it provided a number of options for the Board to consider around affordable housing, understanding that affordable housing on North Tryon was a priority, so it was providing for that.
Commissioner Fuller said he attended that meeting, and there were a number of stakeholders there, Bank of America, the City, the library, and INLIVIAN. He said he had to say he was a bit bothered by some things that happened at the meeting and thought while these affordable housing options were edible, he did not know it was the best that we could do. He said in particularly, he had some issues with what he had regarded as the sideling of a government entity, previously referred to as the Housing Authority, now INLIVIAN. He said we say that affordable housing was at the core of this project, the choices that we had for affordable housing, that would be right there in the central business district, seemed to have been sidelined, while there were a clear opportunity with a fellow public entity that could produce affordable housing in fairly substantial numbers. He said he did not think we had to blow up what we had done. He said he just thought that we would need to work harder on affordable housing.

Commissioner Cotham said she appreciate the idea of affordable housing uptown, but we had so many people, 36 plus families; she can’t feel good about 36. She liked the idea of the offsite. They were a main part of this and left the group and wanted to negotiate this their selves; that was their right. She said she had a hard time going back to support them when they were a part of the team and left; I like the idea of the last one, and it would help more people than 36. She said we would get more bang for our buck, and she liked that aspect of it. She said people who were of lower income/moderate income, she was just concerned about them living uptown, because it was more expensive, and may not be as comforting; it may make us feel good, but to a family or senior citizen who might live a little slower may be more comfortable in an area with more things affordable that are closer to them. She said she was leaning towards the third option.

Commissioner Scarborough said go for it. She said the housing units in the uptown area would do a lot for Charlotte.

Commissioner Fuller said he appreciated Commissioner Cotham’s comments about this. He said he didn’t want to address dirty laundry being aired from March 5th, but it was sufficive to say that he did not think it was as clear as he had been lead to believe about INLIVIAN’s participation, and he did not think it was fair to characterize INLIVIAN as being somehow selfish or destroying the deal. He said the evidence did not lead him to that conclusion. He said having said that, he still thought we had an entity in this town whose mission, by statute, is to create affordable housing in our community, and the notion that we would not be the central core principle of this project did not match up with the evidence. He said he thought we could get a bigger role and the bigger win would be that we would get this offsite housing and get a lot more of it but also get housing on this prime property, and I thought we could do that by someway joining with INLIVIAN portion of the project to accomplish that. He said he thought it would be a win for everybody.

Commissioner Leake asked why INLIVIAN decided to back out and then come back with us. She asked what their problem was.

Mr. Hahn responded they really had a much different business model and needs than the other landowners; they had a desire to regain control of their land through a lease. They wanted to have equity in the project. These were all things that are part of their typical business model, and they had a desire to be involved in the construction. He said the remaining landowners desired cash sale so our land proceeds could be used to support affordable housing or other needs. Based on those sort of diff models, it came to the point that INLIVIAN decided to pursue direct negotiations with the developer and that was something that went on for a few months, and he guessed it did not come to an agreement.

Commissioner Leak asked how they came back.

Mr. Hahn responded they were back in this as an option for you to consider investing some of your land proceeds or this $14.5 million that was available if you wanted to have the option to set aside some money for development on their site by INLIVIAN, and that would just be a matter of determining what that looks like when they would come up with a plan for that.

Commissioner Leake said her concern was for workers who work downtown and live downtown also which might fall under the line of medium-income or low-income individuals. She said someone would have to come from somewhere to have jobs to afford to even stay there. She asked how that would leave this community?
Commissioner Jerrell said he appreciated multiple options. He said he wasn’t tracking with the idea that because people were socioeconomically disadvantage, they wouldn’t enjoy uptown living. He said we do not just have choice A, B, or C; we could take a combination of all three of these things; how do we get the biggest bang for the buck? He said he would like to hear, now that this is out in the open, from INLIVIAN to really get a better understanding of their thoughts around this. He asked for the total number of units, all together, in option one.

Mr. Hanh responded he thought around 400, but he would get that number for you.

Commissioner Jerrell said tell us a little bit about the developer and their track record when it comes to MWSBE; I know we had a 30% and called it a good faith effort. He asked what good faith constituted and if there were a penalty for not meeting it.

Mr. Hanh said the developer was using a local contractor who had a very good track record with MWSBE participation, so he would be very optimistic that they would meet that goal. He said the development agreement was where that language would typically be included, and of course we were not there yet; we were just now talking about a memorandum of understanding that would get us to an agreement, so the language was what you saw and would need to be developed further to include something stronger.

Commissioner Jerrell asked how large the INLIVIAN site was.

Mr. Hanh responded that he would get back with that answer.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if we wanted to spread the proceeds around to all three options, could we do that?

Mr. Hanh said yes.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if there was anything that would stop us from bringing Mr. Meacham in at our next meeting to hear some thoughts from INLIVIAN?

Ms. Diorio said the next meeting was straw votes. The last time they talked to them they said it would be 9 to 12 months before they could come up with a plan, so if the Board’s desire was to come up with option two, you could set your money aside and see what their plan was, or you could decide to allocate our proceeds between options one and three, but if in 12 months from now they came back with a plan, it would not preclude the Board to decide if they would want to allocate some of our fund balance or other funds to support INLIVIAN in their project. She said she did not want them to perceive if they did not make the decision on INLIVIAN now that they could never do it. She thought there were opportunities in the future to support them if they came back to us with an executable plan.

Commissioner Harden said she would have liked to work with INLIVIAN on this; she agreed completely with Commissioner Fuller’s assessment. She said she did not want to wait nine months to figure out where the money would go. She said she would guess if they would go with option two that they would need to hear from INLIVIAN pretty quickly about something that feels executable or something that feels they could at least commit to a certain number of units down the road. She said she thought they owed it to the public when they exercise this MOU to be able to say this was how much affordable housing would do. She said she was fully in support of hearing from them again, but she just thought they would need to give something they could talk to the public about in terms of what the money buys the community. She thanked Mr. Hanh and Diorio for putting the 12-month notice for Spirit Square. She said she was prepared to support units like what were proposed in the first option.
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said who was going to get the boost from this project - that was a question they needed to ask their selves. She said 10% affordable housing was not a solve for affordable housing, that it would never solve affordable housing and that when you talk about 24,000 to 34,000 units that we were short; these new projects that came up where they have 10% affordable housing is not a solve but symbolism, and that was important. She said she did not want to live in a city only for the elite. She said she did want to know what INLIVIAN’s plan was, and she supported options one and three, as long as when they do have their plan, the County could be a part of it. She said she did not like the idea of demolishing Spirit Square unless a space is put back for artists; she wants to see where the artists’ space would be. She asked how many years of investment would it take to pay the $25 million dollars back to the County?

Mr. Hanh said he did not have the details on that, typically 10 to 12 years.

Commissioner Powell asked about the non-binging MOU.

Mr. Wade said a memorandum of understanding is an agreement between parties, and we had not worked through it yet. We will work through the details to talk about whatever the direct the Board wants to go.

Commissioner Powell said everything they talked about today was non-binding. The non-binding made it feel it was not official, but it was official, because the more it moves along the more strength it gains. She said she just wanted to get clarification on that.

Mr. Wade said if he could interject, there were portions that were binding, exclusivity clause, access to the site, termination clauses, sort of more boiler plate things. He said the non-binding portions were the rest of it basically.

Commissioner Powell said she agreed with a lot Commissioners Fuller and Rodriguez-McDowell said. She said she did not have a good idea about this, as she is concerned about the vision, public benefits, and decisions are being tweaked again by people with disproportionate sway. She requested to hear from the community, INLIVIAN, equitable communities; the community building initiative group; and the public before going forward and she could not move forward until hearing from them. She said she was concerned about what she was hearing about community members. She said when someone tells her there is a sense of urgency it makes her slow down like she really needs to think through it.

Chair Dunlap asked how long the project was being developed?

Ms. Diorio said probably almost five years.

Chair Dunlap said five years did not seem like a rush to him and that in five years they had heard from a lot of people. He said they had the best of both worlds in that they could do all three, but the question was if they were willing to sacrifice residents for the many in the exchange for the few. He said they could build 36 units or an excess of 200 units all for the same people. He asked about a stipulation with them working with another developer, which suggested to him that they could not work with INIVIAN outside of the development or could not bring them back into the development period.

Mr. Wade said he would have to pull up that document.

Chair Dunlap said even if they did option one and three, they could come back at a later time and still do option two even though he still thinks they are sacrificing a lot of people for 36 units. He said his biggest concern was cost escalation. He requested to schedule a special, virtual meeting specifically for the purpose of having INIVIAN come and address the entire Board, so the issue is off the table at the time of the vote.

Ms. Diorio said we are going to vote on this June 2nd, but we have a whole day scheduled next Tuesday and Wednesday, and if we can get with INIVIAN tomorrow we would be able to get them to come one of those two days.

Chair Dunlap said that is fine and to instruct them to come with a plan, not a promise as we need to know how their numbers work.
The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS**

The Commissioners received the monthly department management reports for May 2020 for informational purposes.

The presentation was on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – None**

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – None**

**CONSENT ITEMS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the following Consent items:

20-6121: Fee Ordinance Changes - Land Use and Environmental Services Agency

Adopt amended Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) Fee Ordinance. Ordinance recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, #130.

20-6123: Storm Water Program - FY20 Hazard Mitigation McDowell Farms

(A) Accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Mary Roeum and Bobby Nguyen, owners of property located at 6429 Mounting Rock Road, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 167-221-57), for $242,000, (B) accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from I’John and Bria Gatewood, owners of property located at 6507 Mounting Rock Road, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 167-221-63), for $200,000 and (C) authorize local emergency response agencies to use the structures for training exercises.

20-6129: Grant Application: FY20-21 JCPC Alternatives to Commitment Program (SL 2005) – CJS

(A) Affirm submission of a grant application to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety for FY20-21 JCPC Alternatives to Commitment Program (SL 2005) up to $100,000 for delivering vocational skills training and Moral Reconciliation Therapy for Level III and select Level II juveniles and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the amount awarded in the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant periods within Criminal Justice Services.

Note: (A) Re-Entry Services Unit would deliver vocational skills training and Moral Reconciliation Therapy for Level III and select Level II juveniles, age 12 and above, with high risks and/or high needs. The program would include delivery of employment retention skills building curriculum and cognitive behavioral interventions for up to 100 juveniles under the supervision of the 26th Judicial District Juvenile Court; services would be offered in both pre-release and post-release settings. The Criminal Justice Case Manager position would be responsible for both vocational skills training and cognitive behavioral group facilitation. (B) Aligns to Goal 2: Objective 1: Strategy B to provide services for juveniles at the highest risk for entering the adult system (ages 12+ years of age). Additionally, focuses on the increase expected in the targeted Raise the Age population ages 16+ years of age by providing additional vocational supports to increase likelihood of employment success.
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**20-6130: Grant Application: FY20-21 JCPC-Endorsed Level II Dispositional Alternative Program – CJS**

(A) Affirm submission of a grant application to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety for FY20-21 JCPC-Endorsed Level II Dispositional Alternative Program up to $170,686 for delivering a vocational services program for Level II and select Level I juveniles, (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the amount awarded in the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant period within Criminal Justice Services and (C) authorize an additional grant-funded position in Criminal Justice Services, a Criminal Justice Case Manager, in the amount of up to $48,500.

Note: (A) Re-Entry Services Unit would deliver a vocational services program for Level II and select Level I juveniles, age 15 and above, with high risks and/or high needs. The program would include delivery of employment retention skills building curriculum, job training and/or job placement for up to 100 juveniles under the supervision of the 26th Judicial District Juvenile Court. The Criminal Justice Case Manager positions would be responsible for vocational counseling, group facilitation and education/vocational development, as well as contracted community supports. (B) Aligns to Goal 2: Objective 1: Strategy B to provide case management for juveniles at the highest risk for entering the adult system (ages 15+ years of age). Additionally, focuses on the increase expected in this target population due to implementation of Raise the Age in December 2019 by providing additional vocational supports to increase likelihood of employment success.

**20-6131: Greenway Donation - Six Mile Creek**

Accept the fee simple donation of Tax Parcel 231-122-53 (+/- 3.809 acres), owned by Pulte Home Corporation, for the Six Mile Creek Greenway.

**20-6135: Tax Refunds**

Approve refunds in the amount of $96,446.39 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor

Note: This Board action was necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of taxpayer recipients was on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.**

**20-6116: Budget Amendment - Criminal Justice Services (Revenue Increase)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in revenue of $37,048 from Cardinal Innovations Healthcare in the General Fund (0001) within Criminal Justice Services.

Note: The North Carolina Department of Human and Health Services had provided Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) funding to apply towards jail diversion strategies in their catchment areas that was tied to the Stepping Up initiative. Stepping Up was a national NACO initiative geared towards addressing behavioral health in jail populations across the country. CJS currently chairs the Mecklenburg County Stepping Up efforts and conducts a significant amount of jail diversion work. CJS had partnered with CMPD to utilize funds to continue to develop a technology platform that serves as a behavioral health repository for Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) officers. The platform provides CIT officers the capacity to record and share information with other CIT officers on behavioral health encounters in the field. Cardinal was Mecklenburg County's MCO.
20-6158: Capital Project Ordinances

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) amend FY 2016 Authorization Park and Recreation Capital Project Ordinance adopted July 15, 2020 to decrease Hucks Road Regional Park Project by $50,000 and (B) amend FY 2018 Authorization Park and Recreation Capital Project Ordinance adopted June 4, 2020 to increase David B. Waymer Recreation Center Renovations Project by $50,000.

Note: Hucks Road Regional Park project was substantially complete, and Park & Recreation was transferring funds to the Waymer Gym project to purchase furniture, fixtures, and equipment.

Ordinances recorded in full in Minute/Ordinance Book 48-A, Document #131 and #132.

20-6126: Budget Amendment - Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (Revenue and Expense Increase)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) recognize, receive and appropriate $525,890 from Inmate Commissary revenue to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521); (B) recognize, receive and appropriate $211,100 from Vocational Facility telephone revenue to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521); (C) recognize, receive and appropriate $543,000 from concealed handgun permit fees to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521); and, (D) recognize, receive and appropriate $8,622 from seized assets to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521).

Note: (A) All funds collected through Jail commissary operations was to be used for inmate education, library and self-sufficiency programs, as well as supplies and equipment to support the programs. (B) All funds received from 16.8 percent of commissions from the inmate telephone system was to be used for inmate vocational education programs. (C) The Sheriff's Office share of all funds resulting from the issuance of concealed carry permits would be used for law enforcement purposes only. These funds would be used for the purchase of supplies and equipment as necessary but would not be used for the purchase of information technology. (D) Funds was generated from seized assets and would allow the Sheriff's Office to enter into contracts and expend money in accordance with the Special Revenue Fund ordinance.

20-6128: Budget Amendment - Sheriff's Office (Revenue Increase)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) recognize, receive and appropriate $525,890 from Inmate Commissary revenue to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521); (B) recognize, receive and appropriate $211,100 from Vocational Facility telephone revenue to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521); (C) recognize, receive and appropriate $543,000 from concealed handgun permit fees to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521); and, (D) recognize, receive and appropriate $8,622 from seized assets to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521).

Note: Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) had been awarded $2,500 from the Major County Sheriffs of America's (MCSA) Diamond Premiere Partner, AXON as part of their "Food and Shelter for First Responders Program". AXON had been at the front of technological advances such as the taser and this was just another example of how AXON was stepping up to support law enforcement. MCSO would use the funding to provide all shifts working throughout the agency with a meal to augment the disruption caused by Covid-19 to the ODR.

20-6133: Health Department Amended Fee Schedule

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to approve the new services and fees for Telehealth Services.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 crisis, NC Division of Health and Human Services implemented changes to the Medicaid Billing policies. NC Medicaid had temporarily modified the requirements for telehealth services. Telehealth services allow the Department to provide telehealth services
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to patients with Medicaid regardless of where the patient or provider was located. The State had approved the retro-effective date for the modified services to March 10, 2020.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

20-6148: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Leake stated she wanted to mention what a business in Districted was doing in the community; this business was providing lunch for its staff of 152 people; She said she would get the name of it and say it in the next meeting.

Commissioner Jerrell thanked staff for their continued work and effort through this time. He thanked his colleagues as well. He said he made a hashtag, #maskupmeck and reminded the community to wear a mask.

Commissioner Harden said there were some people in the community who have not received any benefits yet in the community; there were people who had applied for unemployment and different grants and have not received that yet. There were families sitting around the table now wondering how they would pay their bills in June. She reminded her colleagues that they have to be as responsive as possible to the challenges that were facing many families in the community. She also stated that it was important that we were united in the importance of wearing masks.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell highlighted her support for the task force that Commissioner Fuller proposed, because what she wanted to focus on was recovering.

Commissioner Powell thanked Commissioners Rodriguez-McDowell and Dunlap for bringing up parody to towns; she said she thought it was extremely important to have had mindfulness of all the towns while working with the $21 million.

Commissioner Cotham gave credit to Ms. Diorio and Mr. Hahn for the presentation and many years of time spend on this. She also thanked Gibbie Harris for her continue work on COVID-19 and said there were a lot of wonderful advocates for affordable housing, including the Housing Advisory Board, which does great work.

Commissioner Fuller thanked his colleagues for the close attention that was paid to the difficult issues that were being dealt with; he thanked the County Manager and staff for all the work they did to tee the issues up for the Board to make decisions.

Chair Dunlap said he loved the #maskupmeck hashtag and said he could not forget the fact that a lot of vulnerable people were not wearing mask. He stated he did not know how to get people to take it seriously. He reminded the community about the Emergency Medical Services and to commended them and recognized them for the work they had provided to the community.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

_________________________________        _________________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk            George Dunlap, Chair
BUDGET STRAW VOTES – DAY 1

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 8 AM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely for Straw Votes on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 8:02 a.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent until Noted: Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Fuller arrived at 8:05 a.m.

20-6180: Budget Straw Vote Workshop

Adrian Cox, Acting Budget Director, introduced several technical adjustments to the Board due to revenue reductions that arose since the Manager introduced her recommended budget:

- ABC Revenue: Revenue distribution to the County estimated in the ABC Board’s recently adopted budget would be $5,242,064; the initial estimate in the Recommended Budget was $6,987,049, a decrease of $1,744,985.

- Federal Inmate Revenue: Average Daily Population of Federal inmates had seen a recent decline as inmates have been moved to Federal facilities. The initial estimate in the Recommended Budget was $26,760,634. The revised estimate would be $25,234,713, a reduction of $1,525,921.

- FY2021 Lapsed Salary: To offset this reduction in revenues, it was recommended to reduce the net salary budget based on lapsed spending that could occur due to vacancies. This reduction would eventually need to be restored if vacancies were filled; this would be a $3,270,906 reduction.

Mr. Cox reviewed the Q&A document and provided an overview of the Straw Vote process.

Mr. Cox and Dena Diorio, County Manager responded to comments and questions from Commissioners.

Chair Dunlap explained that straw votes would not require a second when a motion is made.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to incorporate the following 13 items into the FY2021 budget; that the board consider each of these proposed budget items seriatim,
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limiting discussion to 5 minutes per commissioner in the first round, with a 3-minute second round, if necessary; to maintain the property tax rate at $0.6169; to direct the county manager and her staff to recommend to the board sufficient budget adjustments to accommodate these proposed items such that the total budget increase over the FY2020 adopted budget will not exceed the $5.6 million recommended by the manager.

1. $3,000,000 - Equitable Access to Food and Eliminating Food Deserts

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate one-time funding in the amount of $3 million to support a County initiative to increase equitable access to food and eliminate food deserts in the crescent, to support land acquisition, leasing, subsidy, incentives, goods, or services supporting the effort to mitigate food insecurity.

Commissioner Fuller responded to Commissioner questions.

A vote was taken on the budget amendment and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

2. $75,000 - Child Fatality Prevention and Protection Team Study

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate one-time funding of $75,000 to conduct a Child Fatality Prevention & Protection Team Study and create a county plan in preparation for the October 2021 changes to the Families First Act that would change how Title IV-E funding could be used; funding could then be available for child abuse and neglect prevention.

Commissioner Fuller responded to Commissioner questions.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

3. $50,000 - My Brother’s Keeper

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate one-time funding of $50,000 to My Brother’s Keeper Charlotte-Mecklenburg, an organization dedicated to improving outcomes for boys and young men of color by serving as the backbone organization of a collective impact effort to support policies and organizations that address persistent opportunity gaps and to help ensure that all of Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s boys and young men of color have the opportunity to achieve. Our participation would be in collaboration with the City of Charlotte.

Commissioner Jerrell said that he serves on the Steering Committee and would recuse himself from voting on this item.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

4. $75,000 - Youth Conservation Corps

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate one-time funding of $75,000 to the Youth Conservation Corps Summer Program to allow county youth ages 16-18 to work for eight weeks on a crew receiving an hourly wage and a $1,200 educational stipend from AmeriCorps at the end of the service. Projects include trail construction and park improvement.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to a vote on a subsequent substitute motion.

Commissioner Powell asked if they had a dollar amount. She wanted to know the amount of the original request.
Leslie Johnson, Assistant County Manager, said there was a request that was submitted to Park and Recreation in late April, with regard to the ability to participate again this year and being able to do Youth Corps summer job opportunities and with that request they had foundation support and this year they do not have any foundation support. They were hoping the County could be in position to provide funding to allow for the work experience for the individuals. She said they had since sent a separate correspondence that came May 11 indicating they were anticipating getting some monetary contributions from Duke Energy Foundation and as such, the request they would need in order to fund the program and partner with the County in having youth participate in summer opportunities would be $42,800.

Chair Dunlap asked if the original request was $42,800, how it got to $75,000.

Commissioner Fuller said he believed the original request was $75,000 and that he agreed the more kids that could be supported, the better.

Ms. Johnson responded that the original request was for $52,800, not the $75,000. She said they then anticipated a contribution from Duke Energy Foundation in the amount of $10,000. She said they had since revised the original submission to a new correspondence which indicated the request was $42,800.

Chair Dunlap asked where the $75,000 came from.

Ms. Johnson responded that she did not know where the $75,000 came from.

Chair Dunlap said that the Board should not allot more money than requested and suggested that they made the motion for up to the amount of $75,000, should the Youth Conservation Corps use a second crew, instead of appropriating the full balance.

A substitute motion was made by Chair Dunlap to appropriate a one-time fund of up to $75,000, to the Youth Conservation Corps Summer Program, based on how many crews they have, to allow county youth ages 16-18 to work for eight weeks on a crew receiving an hourly wage and a $1,200 educational stipend from AmeriCorps at the end of the service.

Chair Dunlap responded to questions from Commissioners about the substitute motion.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as unanimous.

5. $50,000 - Small Business Consortium

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate one-time funding of $50,000 to the Small Business Consortium Build to enhance its capacity to support MWSBE contractors through education, networking, and access to international markets.

Commissioners made comments in support of the motion.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

6. $82,000 - Roof Above

Motion was made by Commission Fuller to appropriate one-time funding of $82,000 to Roof Above (Men's Shelter) Case Management Staffing Referral program for emergency food assistance, rent assistance, and social services for a new 341-unit naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) project that will support affordable housing and permanent supporting housing. Other partners include $12M from private donors, $5.4 M from the City of Charlotte, and $600,000 from LISC.

Ms. Diorio said that it was not one-time funding and that if the Board wanted to do it, it would have to be reoccurring, and the cost would increase each year. She said she believed in 2023 it would be about $241,000, and that it would be about $281,000 to build out the whole program. She said the funding was not for actual housing units, it was
funding to pay support staff for the apartment complex that would help the homeless get back on their feet.

Amended motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate a re-occurring amount of $82,000, which would be analyzed annually, to Roof Above (Men's Shelter) Case Management Staffing Referral program for emergency food assistance, rent assistance, and social services for a new 341-unit naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH) project

Chair Dunlap said that the expense would increase over the years, so if he was going to amend the motion to make it reoccurring funding, not specific to the $82,000.

A vote was taken on the amended motion and recorded as unanimous.

7. $1,000,000 - Grassroot Organizations

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate a re-occurring $1,000,000, reduction of $331,000 from County Manager’s recommendation, to support grassroots organizations and consider administrative organizations in addition to United Way.

Ms. Diorio responded to Commissioner comments and questions.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

8. $320,250 - Reduce Gun Violence

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate a re-occurring $320,250 to support a county program to reduce gun violence (Public Health Department), including implementation of a Violence Intervention Specialist Program, and conducting a study to address gun violence as a public health matter.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to a vote on a subsequent substitute motion.

Commissioner Powell asked if the recommendation was from an advisory board.

Commissioner Fuller said not specifically; the idea of it was to support staffing for gun violence initiatives but also to have the study.

Commissioner Harden responded that there was a proposal which was in line with Atrium in terms of providing five Violence Intervention Specialists which would provide assessment, counseling, and support.

Ms. Diorio said Commissioner Fuller’s motion was to support a County program. She asked for clarification if the Board wanted to support Atrium’s proposal with the money going to Atrium Health.

Commissioner Fuller responded that his thinking was that they would support those specialists in the County’s effort to address gun violence which affected the community.

Ms. Diorio responded so, not necessarily to fund the proposal submitted by Atrium Health?

Commissioner Fuller stated not necessarily, though that would be part of it.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said her understanding of supporting this initiative was that it was a response to gun violence as a public-health crisis. She said she thought it was a great place to start.

Commissioner Cotham said she was not comfortable giving this to Atrium, because while they were a great organization, they had different goals that the County did. She said she had not forgotten the problems with the Health Department from years ago when they combined with Carolina’s Health Care. She expressed her dislike of having more studies
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on the subject. She said she could not support this as is and just with the idea of a study and yielding so much of it to Atrium. She felt they were well prepared in the Health Department to do the work.

Commissioner Fuller said he did not see it as a pass through to Atrium but as funding as the County’s response to gun violence, which would perhaps include supporting various programs. He said they had to start to do something instead of talking about it.

Chair Dunlap said he believed the concern was that at some point they would get a response and the question was would they would be able to respond appropriately by having the funds necessary to do whatever Ms. Harris and her staff recommended. He said in the initial conversation they had talked about developing a program for Mecklenburg County that did not include Atrium. He said while he was not opposed to including Atrium, he thought the Health Department still needed to bring a recommendation to the Board. He said in an effort to not lose the funding so that it may be available, they offered a suggestion to move the funds into restricted contingency until the County Health Director could bring a recommendation for appropriation that the Board could support. He believed the way it was being presented still created a lot of confusion about whether Atrium was involved or not.

A substitute motion was made by Chair Dunlap to move the re-occurring $320,250 to support a county program to reduce gun violence into a restricted contingency until such time the County Health Director could bring forth a recommendation, which would not preclude working with other agencies, for a program they could all get behind and support.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated that in her mind it was not a study that was being called for; it was a partnership with Atrium and the Violence Intervention Specialist Program that they would be partnering with. She said she thought it would be County employees who were stationed at Atrium. She said that was her understanding. She wanted to make sure they did not delay it.

Commissioner Cotham said she believed they could do it their selves.

Commissioners commented in support of the substitute motion.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as unanimous.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 11:05 a.m. and reconvened at 11:10 a.m.

9. $500,000 – Staying and Aging in Place

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate a re-occurring $500,000 to support a Staying and Aging in Place program, with the City of Charlotte as the fiscal agent.

Commissioner Powell asked how much was currently appropriated.

Mr. Cox said they were not participating in the program.

Commissioner Jerrell said it was originally Aging in Place and incorporated Staying in Place to address gentrification. He expressed his desire to support the funding.

Commissioner Cotham stated that as an At-Large representative she struggled with supporting it if it wouldn’t also help the Towns. She recommended the County doing something without partnering with the City and suggested putting it into restricted contingency and to have the Tax Assessor and Tax Director to come back with some ideas on what they could do for all county residents. She said she did not want to leave anyone out and could not support this as it stood.
Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, stated that he had been in conversations with the City Attorney on the program and that the statute did not give the County the authority to do what the City did. He said if the Board was inclined to go down the path, they would have to find the legal was to do it. He said concerns had been expressed on how the program was formed because of concerns with the tax abatement and a number of other issues. He said while the program was still there, the jury was still out on the legality of the program and whether it needed to change; from the County’s perspective they needed to be very cautious as to what they developed. He said he thought a valid concern was, if the County appropriated the dollars, how would the money go to the Towns and those in the unincorporated area versus the City, which was focused on the City. He said that beyond that, he could not say whether or not there was a legal way to structure it, that there may be, but they had to think through what the consequences may be for a legal challenge on how the County puts its program in place.

Commissioner Fuller stated he supported what Commissioner Jerrell said about the need for the funding. He mentioned they could not stop gentrification but could help ameliorate the negative effects of it. He said he would support the contingency and also wanted it offered across the County.

Chair Dunlap said they had met with the City Manager and that they seemed to think the program would not be challenged and if it was, they would be able to defend it. He said because of the different rules between the City and the County, the County could not directly implement such a program, so Commissioner Jerrell’s request was to partner with the City, who had the structure already in place, to implement the program and as Commissioner Cotham suggested, it would be able to support those people in the County, who lived in the six towns and unincorporated area, who now cannot get access to the program, because they were not city residents. He said in other words, the program was to bring parity to County residents on the same line that the City residents currently had. He said if they put it into restricted contingency, they could do that and see greater clarification before they put the money into the City program. He said the question for him was whether or not they needed to appropriate that amount of money the first time around, because it was reoccurring and as the County Manager stated the City had appropriated about $750,000. He said they nearly three times as many people in the City as in the unincorporated area so that they question for him was whether or not they should do the program but whether or not they should appropriate $500,000 the first year.

Commissioner Powell asked Chair Dunlap what was the amount?

Commissioner Dunlap responded that he thought $250,000 would be adequate at least the first year, given the City had three times as many people as those in the unincorporated area.

Mr. Wade said he thought the City was clear that they had certain authority that the County did not have, that it was just the way it was written and as he had said, they had talked with the City Attorney to see whether or not there was something they could do, maybe via an interlocal agreement or something to work together to accomplish what the Board wanted to attempt to do, but they could not do it independently without having some [inaudible] issues from a legal perspective.

Chair Dunlap said the City would be responsible for the administration of the program to County residents who apply.

Commissioner Leake asked if they were re-routing the money so they could be in concert with the City.

Chair Dunlap said they wanted to make sure County residents not in City could have access.
Commissioner Jerrell stated he spoke with the UNC School of Government who had a slightly different legal opinion. He said they suggested that there could be a claw-back provision and did not expect any sort of challenge to come.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell suggested reducing the amount to first see how utilized the program would be, then in subsequent years they could raise the funding amount.

Commissioner Cotham asked if they could clearly say that it would include the Towns and unincorporated area.

Chair Dunlap said to make sure people were comfortable, he was going to make two recommendations, to reduce the amount to $250,000 for the first year and that they put it in restricted contingency and every Commissioner gets document that spells out how the program would work, so they would know exactly how the money will be spent.

A substitute motion was made by Chair Dunlap to reduce the amount to $250,000 to put it in restricted contingency and upon the Board’s approval of the implementation of the program, it would be moved out of restricted contingency. Chair Dunlap later clarified that the funding should be for County residents to pay County taxes.

Commissioner Powell said she wanted to be insured this would be dedicated to people outside of city limits.

Chair Dunlap said he did not know the answers.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the County participated in a program like this and gave the money to the City, this money would not be used to pay the County tax but be used to pay the County tax in the unincorporated area and the six towns, or was it intended to pay the County portion of the tax for the people who were eligible within the City of Charlotte?

Commissioner Powell said her understanding was that it would be $250,000 in restricted contingency for people outside of city limits.

Commissioner Dunlap stated that was the intent and that before the money would be moved from restricted contingency, the Board would get a document that said that.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated her hope in supporting the motion was in her understanding that whether they lived in the City or a town or the ETJ, this would be for the County portion of their property tax. She said she wanted to support this.

Commissioner Fuller wanted to clarify the issue, as he wondered whether they could forgive, pay, abate county taxes, because for the unincorporated areas, there would be no city tax; they do not pay city tax.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell
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10. $100,000 – Sustainability Director

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate a re-occurring $100,000 to hire a Sustainability Director to manage and coordinate the County's sustainability efforts.

Commissioner Fuller withdrew the item after having received information that the County already employed a Sustainability Manager.

11. $2,000,000 - Reduce Racial Disparities in Healthcare

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate re-occurring funding of $2,000,000 for a specific county initiative to increase access to and reduce racial disparities in health care (Public Health), including expanding the Village Heartbeat Program, increasing investments to prevent maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity, especially for Black women, addressing the social determinants of health, such as housing, transportation, nutrition counseling, healthy foods, lactation support, wellness, access to reproductive health services, stress management, and support for doulas, hire additional health care professionals to increase service hours at county clinics and investing in mobile health clinics and invest in scholarships and workforce training for public health workers.

Ms. Diorio responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

Chair Dunlap said the problem he had with the motion was that at no time did the staff express that they did not have the funds to do those things. He did not want to appropriate dollars where there may not be a need. He asked the County Manager if there was anything from staff or the Health Director stating they could not meet those needs.

Ms. Diorio stated that they had funded everything the Health Department presented her for consideration, and those items were not part of that.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Fuller, Harden, Jarrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, and Powell

12. $2,000,000 – Education and Training for Displaced, Working Class Residents

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate re-occurring funding in the amount of $2,000,000 to support displaced, working class residents to receive education and training for jobs in high-demand fields like healthcare.

Commissioner Powell asked if any of the COVID money could cover any of this.

Ms. Diorio responded that they could use some of their CARES funding to pay for it but that it had to be spent by December 30, 2020, so it would only provide training opportunities for a six-month period.

Commissioner Leake stated she was in support of the motion but that she would like to purchase a motel or some facility to turn into apartments and with training through another agency.

Chair Dunlap said he was having problems with this one but understood the intent. He said they fund the community college and that some people go to CPCC to get additional training so they could get additional jobs and that when they recruit companies through their Economic Development Program, many of the board members had asked what kind of training was involved and how do the people get the training. He said they knew the training was available and all they needed to do was connect people to the opportunity. He stated he was questioning the need for an additional stand-up program to do what they already had a number of community programs doing.
Commissioner Jerrell stated he would be willing and amenable to look at it as a way to subsidize the families, supporting those who go into the training programs, which met a certain criterion to help bridge the gap and not duplicate efforts.

Commissioner Cotham said putting it together was the key for the future, which would probably involve CPCC and some of the non-profits. She said they were the partners, and she would like to have input from them as to what they thought, because they were closer to the situation and knew better than the Board about how many people and what they could do. She said this was a reoccurring money and asked where the Manager would subtract from to do this. She said as it stood, she could not support it due to the reoccurring part and lack of definitive goals.

Commissioner Fuller said when the virus hit, many people lost their job and when they do go back, many people would not have a job. He asked what would be done. He believed they needed to prepare for the recovery from the virus. He mentioned the COVID-19 Task Force and said there would be a lot of people who would be in need of a job. He said they would need some resources to help them recover which would be beyond the COVID-19 money that they got from the CARES act. He saw this as part of what they would need.

Chair Dunlap said that Commissioners who would come behind them would have to figure out what was essential and what they fund. He said every time they put a reoccurring appropriation, those fundings reoccur every year into perpetuity. He asked if all the programs would just stop and need their help to fill the gap; he stated he did not think so, and that was precisely why Mecklenburg County had one of the lowest unemployment rates in the County, because all of the programs existed. He said they were not going away and that his guess was that some of them would be reinforced with State and Federal funds. He said for them to come behind it and say it was not enough, when they do not know how much would be there, to the point they needed to take away $2,000,000 next year that may be better used for some other program. He said those who remained on the Board would have to grapple with the budget again next year and would be limited in terms of the amount of money they had due to what they did this year.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to appropriate a one-time funding of $2,000,000 to support displaced, working-class residents to receive education and training for jobs in high-demand fields like healthcare.

Commissioner Cotham asked Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell why she made the substitute motion.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell responded that she thought of it as seed money and wanted to see if there was a way to do it where it was not reoccurring dollars. She thought it was a very interesting idea that she wanted to support and thought it may be more palatable if it was not reoccurring.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Harden, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Powell

Since the substitute motion failed, a vote was taken on the main motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, and Powell
13. $2,000,000 - Equity Investments for Park and Recreation

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to appropriate one-time funding in the amount of $2,000,000 for equity investments in our parks and recreational facilities underserved areas (as recommended by the PRC), particularly in historically underserved communities (such as the Tuckaseegee, Albemarle, Elon, and Methodist Home centers).

Commissioner Powell said last week she had asked for a report on how many infrastructure projects did we do in the recession that required- So, there were stimulus projects and infrastructure projects that required matching dollars in the recession. He asked if anybody on the telephone line had the results of that for Park and Recreation.

Lee Jones, Park and Recreation Director, said he believed that he had provided information on two projects that they knew of that was a part of that.

Commissioner Powell asked how many matching dollars did they need back then?

Mr. Jones said he would go back and check and see what that specific number is, and he had included that in the email, and I will try to pull that up as you continue in conversation.

Commissioner Powell said she knew that the Park Commission sent their priority list, and with all the experience she had on the Park Commission, she wanted to make sure, because it took so long to get back to pre-recession levels. She stated she wanted to make sure whatever was advocate was the most needed. She knew this was the number one priority and a huge priority. It is one of the pillars of everything that Park and Recreation does, but $2,000,000 is a lot of money, so you want to make sure that if we can get matching dollars, we get it, and we really need guidance from the park staff on the best way to use the two million at the time the stimulus dollars become available. So, for now, those are my thoughts. Thank you.

Commissioner Jerrell said he supported it.

Commissioner Harden said she thought it was this past week that the national study came out that ranked Charlotte-Mecklenburg extremely low in parks and funding allocated to parks and land available to parks. She said when they went through the referendum in the fall, they made a commitment. She said it was a commitment that says they care about their natural resources and care about parks and having more access to parks and that they are an important part of health. She said they were seeing people go to parks now more than they ever have. She said they had become critical now more than ever as they went through COVID, so the was funding so that we can make a dent in some small way in the tremendous gap that they knew they have in our commitment to park’s funding. I just want to say to the community, look at the things that we are fighting for. She said they were fighting for healthcare, jobs, the environment, and education, so this was a commitment to the environment, and they knew, just like they were on social mobility, they were also behind on our park investments, and this would help us address some of the disparities.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she was supporting the measure, because the Park and recreation Commission requested it, and she felt it was extremely important that they pay attention at this time to the uproar in our community around parks, and she thought this was one of their recommendations that she wanted to fully support, and I am not wedded to the particular asks that they have here, like if they wanted to change or

Commissioner Powell said there was a different park that had previously needed funds, and she was not wedded to where the investments were made. She just wanted to make sure that it is a meaningful investment, and it is an equity investment in parks, because we have such disparities.

Commissioner Cotham said she felt like a broken record, but she was still struggling with exactly what this was. She did not view her role as a County Commissioner as just, here is some money, go figure out what we are going to do. She was just uncomfortable, and respected staff and the great work they do. She said certainly they needed more park area and have needed more recreation centers, and she thought the west side deserved one for sure, but it was just that the Park and Recreation Department had not brought it to them specifically, nor told them what to do with it. She said the whole process was just uncomfortable for her, and she would like the more thorough vetting of things and knowing
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exactly and have people who are experts who are close to the situation and have the in-depth expertise to give us the information. She could appreciate if the this was something the park advisory board wanted, but again, they did not know where the Manager would subtract this from, and right now, they were in a difficult situation with COVID and could have an enormous surge in homelessness. She asked it they were going to say, we are sorry, but we spend $2,000,000 on parks. She said she like it more concrete and goal oriented with more of a timeline on it and more buy in from the Park and Recreation Department and the Manager’s Office and Park Advisory Board. She stated she was really uncomfortable with this.

Ms. Diorio said they did not look like operating budget requests and that they needed a little clarity about whether or not they were operating dollars or capital dollars, because if they were capital dollars, they would not ordinarily fund them out of the operating budget. She said they would fund them out of PAYGO or a different funding source.

Commissioner Dunlap said that was the question he was going to ask, because if they read it, it basically spoke as if they were talking about structures and facilities. He said they would not fund them out of our operating dollars but that they would come back to it.

Commissioner Fuller said he practiced law and one of the things that they rely on was the use of evidence; he stated you do not make decisions without considering what are the facts and what was the evidence, and what was happening here. He stated he had learned in my role of commissioner these numbers of years, that the role as a commissioner is a little bit different. Yes, of course you need evidence, and you need things to be spelled out precisely, but as a policy maker, and he said it several times today, and it was because he really felt this way. He said you do not always have to know every single brick on the road of the vision you have set. So, you have to look beyond just the how, not that you should not consider it. Not that it is not important. It is important, but our role as policy makers is to set vision to say this is important, and you know how you know how important it is? Because I am saying we are going to spend this much money doing it. Now, if staff come back saying, I see your vision, but we can accomplish your vision in a different dollar amount. Okay, well we can consider that. Just because you appropriate money does not mean that you have to spend every single dollar of it, and we expect staff to inform us about how to reach the vision that we set, and I think that budgets are our priorities. I think that every single one of the items that we have considered today has been about moving the needle, about making bold action, and that is uncomfortable. As human beings, we do not like to change, and we like to move incrementally, but if you are going to get big things done, you have got to do them in a bold way. He said incrementalism has its place, but if they were going to address the problems that we see, in a bold way, you have got to act boldly, and I think that is what this particular item is about. He did not want them to shrink from the task of being bold and representing all of the people of the County, so I hope that does not hold people back. It ought to be something that we are concerned with, that we pay attention to, that we work on, absolutely, but it should not hold us back from doing the things that we need to do to address the needs that we know our people face.

Commissioner Dunlap said the Manager brought this up to him earlier, and anyone who had been around me for any period of time knew he liked consistency, but why traditionally funded parks in the operation budget? He said for today they set a new precedent. It also concerns me that all of a sudden, we have forgotten that we are developing a 10-year master plan. The 10-year master plan has the ability to address equity concerns; what this motion does is sets apart an additional $2,000,000 to go into these areas, which over time, has the ability to create inequity, and that is not the way you solve the problem. I think most of us vote for the money to do the 10-year master plan, because we saw the need for Park and Recreation all across this community. We engaged citizens and give us advice as to where park facilities ought to be and what kind of funding we ought to appropriate. This is also the reason we have a capital plan so that we can plan for how we spend the capital project. We tend to forget that these are advisory boards and not decision-making boards. What is interesting is that I have heard some complain about various committees making decisions that are in fact the decision of the Commissioners, but today, it seems like we are giving a green light to that. If we want what is fair and equitable all across Mecklenburg County, we have a responsibility to let Park and Recreation Task Force, which involves citizens, do its job. We have a Park
and Recreation Committee that is made up of a few people. We have an expanded committee that is working on the 10-year plan. Under any other set of circumstances, we would not let so few people make that decision, but it seems to me, that is where we are headed. I would hope that we would not part funding capital projects out of operating dollars. It is never ending.

Commissioner Powell said she did not draft this request, so she should maybe ask for an alternate.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Powell to appropriate $2,000,000 for land acquisition for Park and Recreation and one of the guiding lights in Park and Recreation would be to look for land in underserved areas.

Commissioner Powell said so, land acquisition would be what my alternate request for Park and Recreation, and if it was $2,000,000 for the next 100 years, it still would not be enough to buy land that is needed for the population that we serve. It is a tiny amount of dollars to come up to where we need to be to be one of the best in the nation. Parks that we have are excellent parks, but we do not have enough of them. So, that would be my alternate. Appropriate $2,000,000 for land acquisition. I also want to say, the Park Commissioner did not make a decision. They sent the recommendations, and they do not make recommendations without staff. They are some of the finest people that I have ever known who volunteer and serve to advise us on things that we need advice on, so they did not tell us what to do. They just listed their priorities, and it would have been $12,000,000 total just to go with what their recommendations were, but that is not what you see here. It was just a little piece of their first recommendation. So, I think that based on my very [inaudible], that land acquisition is the best use of dollars.

Commissioner Leake said I am looking at this, and I see where it says equity investments in our park and recreational facilities that is in underserve area. Are we talking about replacing or refurbishing those facilities? If so, I am supporting all of that, especially on the westside of town and where there is growth and community especially in District 2, so I am going to ask that we add to this list, not just Tuckaseegee Road but Albemarle Road, but Elon and Methodist Home Centers that we provide equity across the County. I notice that in the news it said that Mecklenburg County now is larger than San Francisco, and we will never catch up with San Francisco with this outdoor program, so I am going to support this.

Commissioner Jerrell said I need a little help on clarity. When the Park and Recreation Commission sent their recommendations over, I know land acquisition was a part of that. I do believe that is extremely important, and I am willing to certainly consider land acquisition as it relates to underserved areas. I think that is a good way to frame it, but if you could go back to what was the reason why we would not be able to focus on our recreation centers as outlined in the first bullet point? I think I missed that.

Commissioner Dunlap said the difference is how you are funding it. With this request, we are funding it out of operational dollars, when we typically do that with capital dollars, and that is what our CIP is all about. The other thing is that if we did it for the purpose of land, we could do it at a one-time funding, thereby, helping out bottom line on the overall operating budget, and we could do it out of fund balance.

Commissioner Jerrell said thank you for the clarification; I was a little lost on that part of the conversation. The other piece I want to go over real quick, the recreation centers that were listed are not a part of the current CIP is another sticking point, correct? So, we would have to wait to add them into this until we start the discussions around a new CIP. Correct?

Chair Dunlap said that is correct.

Commissioner Jerrell said I want to support the $2,000,000 allocation; I definitely agree with the land acquisition, but I also believed wholeheartedly that equity among these recreation centers was extremely important, and I just do not know how to split the baby. I am hoping as we go down the line, we can find a way to incorporate the need for equity in the recreation centers that are outlined or not just limited to these but just those places where we know equity is needed, if there is a way to accomplish that without waiting whatever X number of years for a new CIP. I am going to leave it at that, and I am hoping that someone has somewhat of a solution.
Chair Dunlap said I am going to ask the Director of Park and Recreation to respond; I understand your concern. So, the CIP is one way we fund facilities. The Park Master Plan can help us develop our CIP. The biggest concern is as we have appropriated dollars, it strains out current budget, in particular because of COVID-19, and we are taking operating dollars out of our budget to now fund capital projects, which we have never done before.

Lee Jones, Park and Recreation Director, said I just wanted to clarify a couple of things in response to the comments you have just made. First and foremost, the County made the right decision in funding our Comprehensive Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Master Plan Meck Play Book, because through that Master Plan, that is going to drive what we are going to be doing next 5, 10, 20 years through that process, and that is going to be shaped by input from all county residents, and we have a committed Steering Committee that includes participation by members of the Park and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Jones said the key tenants to that Master Plan that have come up thus far are these core areas that include commitment to equity in developing and maintaining our parks; evolve and grow to maintain the needs of our growing community through new facilities and programs; move beyond the boundaries to better connect residents to our facilities; and tell more stories to increase awareness and expand the impact of our offering. He said these recommendations will direct the type of park amenities we plan and build and innovate and the programs that we have, and that is going to really guide us, and the major focus of that is equity. This has been one of the key tenants that has been driving our department investment in infrastructure and focus since I became Director, and that has been coupled with support, not only from the Board but also from the County Manager’s Office and very intentional in the fact that we are working on now several projects in 20 different categories through some one-time, capital reserve funding that we were able to receive last year. Those are not capital projects; those are improvements, which I think those speak to. I have had conversations with each and every member of the current board of County Commissioners on needs in their specific areas of focus and in their communities have been raised by their constituents and have gone out and actually examined sites, including with my Assistant County Manager to actually determine where the needs were, and that is what we are focusing on. We know we cannot do everything at one time. Through this plan, it is going to guide us to do these things in these different categories, particularly as it relates to getting to a point of being equitable in the type of facilities or quality of facilities we provide.

Mr. Jones said he thought that would help to address some of the concerns that were raised in the trust for public land study, and we have already developed through almost nine months of research and work on the history of what we have done and how the Park and Recreation system grew and evolved over the last 80 years and can see what areas we need to address that may not give us that score that we are looking for in TPL but will certainly enhance the quality of the park and recreation offerings that we provide to our residents.

Commissioner Harden asked if they knew what she thought was going to be helpful. She stated it was money, because we are behind, and we have been behind, and our community asks us for more parks. So, here is what I would say, I hear what staff is saying, and I’m saying we need to do more. I see our green spaces folding away by the second, and I see our tree canopy being lost, and I think that our community is begging us to make more investments in our park and recreation center, especially in underserved areas. We have really smart staff people, and I think that by allocating this funding, we are saying that this is important, and that is why I am going to vote for this.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said I’m troubled by this one, because I am not sure about this being the right place, so I don’t have any further questions. I just need a little minute here to think about it. I do not have further questions. Thank you.

Commissioner Cotham said I think this is dangerous, to set a precedent, to take money out of our operating funds when we’ve never done this and to totally ignore all the work that has been done and will be done, I just think this is very dangerous precious we are on, and I cannot support this. I think it is the wrong item at the wrong time and the wrong
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place. As I listen to our Director Jones, I certainly felt the experience, expertise, and comfort of a highly qualified leader working with the community and different committees, and this is how we build consensus for things. This is how we get great results. That has been a model that has worked tremendously. The voters had a chance in 2019 to vote for a tax for more money for parks, and they resoundingly said no, but the County has still tried to catch up, and we have added more staff and done a lot. I just think this is a left turn we do not need to make, and to not do this in the boundaries of the history of how we pay for things, this to me is like a whim, and I cannot support this as this model, at this time, and to start a new precedent, I feel I am in the twilight zone. So, I cannot support this.

Commissioner Fuller said I do not think that we need to get all bent out of shape about it. Let me offer perhaps an alternate idea. I certainly appreciate questions of our County Manager asks and the comments of Director Jones. I do think that it is a fair point that we use other dollars other than operating for capital purposes. This is really more than anything capital related. It could be some program elements to it, but probably it is majority capital. I would offer a substitute motion to make this a one-time item, so it would not have to come out of our operating dollars, but it would still be for the purpose of making equity investments in our park and recreation facilities.

Chair Dunlap said Mr. Attorney you need to help me with this one now. I have a second substitute motion. We need to ask questions on the second substitute, because you are allowed to have two substitute motions, right?

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney said that is correct. I think that we just need to clarify the second substitute was from Commissioner Fuller so that the Body understands what they are discussing.

Commissioner Fuller said my substitute motion was a substitute to the original, right?

Chair Dunlap said no, Commissioner Powell had a substitute motion which was to use the $2 million for the land. Right now, we are responding to Commissioner Fuller's substitute motions, which is to make the $2,000,000 a one-time funding.

Commissioner Cotham said I do not have any questions, and I cannot see that solves the challenges that I see for this.

A second substitute motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to make the $2,000,000 a one-time funding ask so it would not have to come out of our operating dollars, but it would still be for the purpose of making equity investments in our park and recreation facilities.

Chair Dunlap said this is a reminder that even a one-time funding comes out of the operating dollars unless we are going to get it out of the fund balance.

A vote was taken on the second substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, and Powell

Chair Dunlap said Commissioner Fuller's motion passed, a one-time funding of $2,000,000.

ADDITIONAL BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Eliminate Funding for Three Percent Across the Board Employee Raises

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell not to support increased funding for across the board raises but to target hard to the recruit and retain positions of Park Rangers, Park Maintenance Operations, Public Health Nurses, School Nurse, Code Enforcement, and IT.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to a vote on a subsequent substitute motion.
Commissioner Powell responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions on her motion.

Commissioner Harden said the County needed $4.3 million in additional county dollars to fund the gap and she thought, in looking at the compensation category, three percent across the board was something she could not support either.

Commissioner Cotham said as someone who had their own executive search firm for 10 years and worked in recruiting and compensation, she could not support this as she believed it would show discord among the employees. She said she was extremely against the idea.

Commissioner Fuller said one idea he thought about was that they had gone through a number of items that would have budget impact and part of the motion was to allow the County Manager and staff to come back with adjustments to accommodate the things they had spent most of the day talking about. He felt focusing on that item would unnecessarily hamper staff in being able to do that, and he was uncomfortable about the staff moral if they said a raise was only targeted to certain people. He said it may be possible to do targeted raises but that he had some concern about it.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she could not support the across the Board raises either and that she understood it was something that had been done in the past that when one person got a raise everyone got a raise, but she did not feel that was the right way to go. She felt they needed to do targeted raises based on hard to fill and people who were in jobs which were super taxing and extra compensation would help add to retention of those positions. She said she did not buy into the idea that it would cause resentment among the over 5,000 employees. She said especially in light of the pandemic and high unemployment rate, she did not feel they could go across the board. She said there were so many people in the community who had lost their jobs and the fact the County employees had their job and had their benefits funded and hazard pay and things like that, that has to be enough this year as far as across the board goes. She said she was not married to the motion exactly, despite being in favor of targeted raises, as she felt there were other jobs that could be looked at, such as social workers and detention officers. She said she was thinking more of $3 million in targeted raise then using the other $6 million to fund the outlined priorities.

Chair Dunlap said one of the best ways to create distension among employees was to pick some over the other and that was what the motion seemed to want to do. He said if they really wanted to talk about the retention of employees, they needed to address what the HR Director had said for two years and had it not been for COVID-19, his guess was that they would have implemented a plan to pay people according to their particular categories, based on the things she outlined at the retreat in terms of how people get promoted, how people move up the latter, and how people are compensated. He said that was not possible, so to create an inequity was not the way to address that, because when the plan goes back to the Board, the HR Director would then have to look at the compensation of them being the only ones who received a pay raise and the creation of an inequity. He said that would make it more difficult for them to create a plan that was equitable, and he did not think creating inequities was the way to do that.

Commissioner Powell stated she did not want to create an inequity and that she had so much respect for the Director of Human Resources and knew her plan was much bigger than what was proposed in the County Manager’s budget. She just thought it was a bad time to give an across the board raise with all of the unforeseen things that were happening, and she thought it would be good to target. She said she understood however the Board voted, and she just wanted to throw it out there.

Commissioner Jerrell said he would not support the motion and that at the end of the day, he had to think about that the vast majority of the County employees were not inline with their peers who worked outside of government in similar roles, and that had to be taken into consideration. He said he felt they had to put their money where their mouth is and did not feel three percent was outrageous; he felt it was reasonable and inline and would help them move closer to where they needed to go. He said the HR Director did indicate
if they made targeted decisions, it would make her job more difficult and move them farther away from the ball.

Commissioner Harden said she was not for a tax increase, so she thought they had to cut somewhere. She said she was a state employee and had not had a raise in four years and her husband’s company, which was a multi-national, large company, said there would be zero raise this year. She said she felt they paid employees well and had a great healthcare system and unmatched retirement system. She said very few people had pensions anymore and that they were funding employee’s increase in healthcare and fully funding this year’s retirement issue. She felt with a 5.5% raise last year on top of a three percent raise this year that they needed an outwardly facing budget and that the community was asking them to step up in terms of funding, education, gun violence, healthcare, workforce development, and the environment and that they wanted the Board to focus on outward needs, so for the Board to not fund those needs but to fund internal wants would send the wrong message about what they were supposed to do as commissioners. She said she appreciated the employees and was right there with them as a state employee. She said they needed to be sensitive to the employees who had hazard pay, working amongst the community, especially possibly exposing their selves to the virus.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said outside of the County, she had never worked anywhere that got across the board raise and that raises were typically targeted towards performance and that sort of thing. She said she was incredibly proud of the Mecklenburg County team of employees, and she was impressed with every employee she had met. She said she to was proud to be a Mecklenburg County employee. She said she felt they deserved raises and were low paid in comparison to people in the business and corporate world; she just did not feel it was the time for government employees to receive a raise when the community members were suffering so greatly. She said if they could not do targeted raises, they should do no raises.

Commissioner Cotham said their main asset was their employees and that the employees worked way beyond their hours and the people they served were struggling and were in a very difficult situation. She said they need the employees to feel valued and respected and for them to be able to give their best to the residents, many who were struggling physically, financially, and mentally. She said they needed employees who felt valued, who would give their best and felt the across the board raise was in order.

Commissioner Fuller said with respect to across the board raises, he did struggle with that due to the County giving a substantial raise the year before and in combination with the current situation. He said Mecklenburg County did not lay off any employees and did not expect that they would have to, as they were in a good enough financial position that they did not have to do that. He said he believed the employees were top notch and that was the opinion across the Country of Mecklenburg County’s staff.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough to support the County Manager’s recommendation.

Commissioner Harden spoke about all the benefits the County offered.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said it was not even a decision point for her, and she would support employees all day long, because without them, nothing happens.

Commissioner Harden said if the three percent raise was passed, they would have increased the employees by 8.5% in the past two years.

Commissioner Jerrell said when they were having discussions around working families, the employees were included in that.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said when raises were made across the board, you lump in people who were at the highest end of the pay scale as well. She said if it were targeted towards the lowest end of the pay scale, she may have a different vote.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:
YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

$30,000 – Trees Charlotte

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell that should there be money left over from the Youth Conservation Core, appropriate $30,000 to Trees Charlotte.

Commissioner Harden requested information on why they didn’t recommend the funding of Tree Charlotte.

Ms. Diorio stated they were one of the community service grant recipients and FY20 was their first year, and they were unable to meet their performance targets. She said they had to refund money back to the County since they were unable to meet targets.

Commissioner Powell withdrew her motion.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 2:32 p.m. and reconvened at 2:37 p.m.

$100,000 - Sustainability Director

Motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to appropriate a re-occurring $100,000 to hire a Sustainability Director to manage and coordinate the County’s sustainability efforts.

Ms. Diorio responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Harden, Jerrell, Leake, and Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, and Powell

CMS Funding for Employee Raises

Chair Dunlap stated that as part of CMS budget request, there was a request for monies for compensation for employees. He said he dealt with their budget a long time, as well as the County [inaudible] for 12 years and he believed the school system could make available money to support their priorities. They advocated to bring all of the full-time staff up to a $15 wage. He said the City did the same, but the school system has not and were relying on the County’s funds to do so. He said currently they fund the school system over $500 million and it appeared to him that it was not a priority.

Motion was made by Chair Dunlap to move $11 million of CMS funding into a restricted contingency fund until CMS provides a plan for Board approval, to ensure all full-time, non-certified CMS staff earn a minimum of $15 per hour; CMS would maintain flexibility to utilize other non-restricted funding to spend on the categories needed.

Commissioner Powell asked where the money was coming from.

Chair Dunlap said it would be moved from the Manager’s recommended budget. He said they would be taking $11 million out until they provide for the County a plan to pay all of the non-certified employees, then they would move the money from contingency back to CMS. He said if it did not cost $11 million, they would still get the rest of it, but he wanted to see the plan to fund the salary.
Commissioner Leake said the budget for the school board for this year was $1.57 billion, and if they could not decide how to spend the money to make sure those people who needed to be were paid appropriately, then they have a problem.

Commissioner Jerrell found it very disturbing that the narrative continues to persist that it is up to the Board of County Commissioners to continuously support raises and the staff of a different entity that was voted upon by the people of Mecklenburg County. He believed it was borderline irresponsible. He said they had been doing over and above their responsibility and had led by example.

Commissioner Harden made a friendly amendment to the proposed motion, to give the school board flexibility to decide how they want to spend how they want to decide how they want to spend that funding.

Chair Dunlap said that was the intent in the first place, to give them the remaining portion to use as they deemed appropriately.

Commissioner Cotham stated they provide $372,000 more than what we are obligated to provide and in the last budget the provided $7.3 million to allow CMS to pay hourly staff at the level of $13.22, in accordance with the State doing their part, but the State ended up not doing their part. She said last year CMS gained $7.3 million and did not return it, so there was that money they could use toward a pay increase. She said they also provided a million to hire 18 additional custodians. She said that was the obligation of the state and she did not have a problem with putting money aside but would like to know what happened to the $7.3 million and if they hired the 18 custodians last year.

Ms. Diorio said they don’t know about the custodians and would follow up but that they put $7.4M in current fiscal year to do raises for locally funded employees to match what the State would get, but the State never passed a budget, so the State never gave state employees a raise, so CMS took the $7.4 million and provided increases to non-certified staff up to $13.11 an hour, not just for locally-funded employees but for all the State-funded employees as well. She said that was not the intent for them to provide the raise to state funded employees, but they did and told the County after the fact, because the County thought they would have the money available for the upcoming budget year; however, that was not the case.

Ms. Diorio said the total funding was $527 million.

Chair Dunlap clarified the $11 million came out of the $527 million, and once they had approved the plan, they would get the $11 million to go back to the budget.

Ms. Diorio said if increased or decreased more than 10% they would have to go back to the Board of County Commissioners for approval.

Chair Dunlap stated that his rational was that for three years in a row, they increased the teachers’ salary by one percent annually, which was nearly $36 million that the County did for CMS teachers. He said in looking at the $7.4 million they did last year and didn’t get back and the projections of number of students, which start escalating, they do not get back any money from that.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

CMS Performance

Commissioner Leake said that was not what they were doing, because the scores were still the same or less and they were appropriately placing teachers.

Ms. Diorio the funding they use to educate students was really across the board throughout the budget. She would recommend taking a percentage if she wanted to do that. She said they were giving them $25.6 million.

Commissioner Leake stated she wanted to take $25 million.
Ms. Diorio said their instructional services budget was about $273 million and if she took $23 million, that was about 10% of their instructional services budget.

Commissioner Leake asked to take 30%.

Ms. Diorio said it was about $82 million.

Commissioner Leake said her concern was that they had to be held accountable to educating the children. If they looked at the test scores and the growth the children were not experiencing due to inappropriate student assignment and children not being put where they could be educated, they need to be held accountable. She said they were still getting grants to educate the children.

Ms. Diorio said the community service grants was about $1.7 million.

Commissioner Leake said that was plus what they got from the County to educate to educate the children.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake to put at least an additional $30 million, from the $28.6 million, in a restricted contingency fund, until Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools gives the Board a plan to educate all children.

Commissioners made comments.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he wouldn’t be opposed to making it district specific or schools that were most vulnerable.

Commissioner Harden felt the request was too punitive.

Commissioner Cotham stated she thought it was a proportional response from Commissioner Leake.

Commissioner Fuller stated answers from CMS about student performance were not acceptable and that if you want to get someone’s attention, mess with their money.

Chair Dunlap asked what kind of overtures or amenities they were willing to make to at least give them time to get something in place to respond to Commissioner Leake’s concern. He would also like to know how additional dollars may impact the educational opportunities of the children they were trying to educate.

Commissioner Leake said to say the children may not be educated if we dry up the money, they were not being educated anyway. She said money was not the major issue; the issue was the willingness to teach black children how to read and write so they would not have to go to prison or be on the government through welfare or whatever else they may find their selves doing. She said she was looking at the welfare of the children coming behind them who had been in the school system for 12 years and had been yet to be educated in District 2, 3, and 4.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to table the motion until tomorrow, in order to establish conditions for release of the money.

Commissioner Scarborough left the meeting at 4:11 P.M.

Commissioner Leake requested the school board to bring a recommendation of how the thought they could come up with accountability and change the flow of not educating the children, more specifically a formula that would give a quality education for the children.

Commissioner Jerrell requested to know what was in the works regarding their ability to measure when they speak about their meaningful career opportunity for the graduates. He stated he wanted a measurable plan for that. He asked what their plan was in the most vulnerable areas for providing needed resources.

Commissioner Fuller requested metrics to know they were moving the needle in accomplishing something.
A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as unanimous.

**$50,000 - Information Technology – Republican National Convention**

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake to move a one-time $50,000 of Information Technology funding for cybersecurity consulting for the Republican National Convention into a restricted contingency fund; if funding is needed, the Board will approve funding at that time and seek reimbursement.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to a vote on a subsequent substitute motion.

**Commissioner Scarborough rejoined the meeting at 4:21 P.M.**

Ms. Diorio responded that part of it was for the Sheriff’s Office to be able to do some things around arrest processing and other types of work, and the $50,000 in IT was for some IT security work around cybersecurity defense. She stated cutting that money from IT, the County would be put at risk. She said if the RNC went as planned, they would need to take the necessary steps to protect the integrity of the infrastructure. Cutting that money would hurt no one but the County.

Commissioner Powell stated that she would not support taking money out, as the County needed to be protected, especially with cybersecurity.

Commissioner Leake said they talk about protecting the people, but the President said he was not coming if the Governor did not open the community and they had not voted as a county board to support that process. She said she was following what her governor said and not what the President said, as he was putting their lives in danger.

Ms. Diorio said the plans around how the convention would be managed were ongoing.

Commissioner Harden said she wanted the community to know that the Board never had a chance to chime in on the RNC coming to Charlotte, and she felt it would be helpful if they had a more detailed conversation with the Health Director to ask questions about when 50,000 people come. She said they should ask the City for reimbursement.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell agreed with what was said and believed they should get reimbursed since the City was getting funds to fund the convention do not support taxpayer money to fortify their selves against the RNC coming.

Commissioner Cotham believed the utmost concern was the protection of the County and any kind of security update would help them.

Commissioner Fuller stated no one asked him if he supported the RNC coming to Charlotte and that if they had he would have told them no.

Commissioner Scarborough said she did not have a problem with the RNC coming and stated they bring money like everyone else.

Commissioner Dunlap said they should be treated no differently than anyone else, and as Commissioner Scarborough said, they did not have those conversations when the DNC came and there were Republicans on the Board at that time. He said $50,000 was insignificant from a $1.9 billion budget and when thinking about how the $50,000 was used, it was not really about the RNC but about Mecklenburg County’s protection.

Commissioner Powell stated she wanted the County to be protected and did not want this to turn into a divisive problem.

Commissioner Leake asked when some of the Commissioners bring up issues, why are we called divisive.

Commissioner Fuller stated he did not want his comments to be misconstrued as being against having Republicans in Charlotte, as he had no problem if they came. He said he
was talking about this person currently sitting in the office, as that was what he objected to.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Leake to place the $50,000 in contingency, and if the funds are needed, the Board would vote to release them and seek reimbursement.

Commissioner Fuller believed it would be a public health threat to have the RNC here during the pandemic.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jarrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

**Eliminate Three Percent Across the Board Raises for Commissioners and Executive Staff**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to remove County Commissioners and the Executive Staff from receiving the across the board three percent raise.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Harden and Rodriguez-McDowell

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, and Scarborough

Ms. Diorio responded to questions from Commissioner Jerrell regarding funding for the Courts and the Register of Deeds.

**Maintain $0.6169 Property Tax Rate**

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to maintain the property tax rate at $0.6169 and to direct the County Manager and her staff to recommend to the Board sufficient budget adjustments to accommodate these proposed items such that the total budget increase over the FY2020 adopted budget would not exceed the $5.6 million recommended by the Manager.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as followed:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

**RECESS**

The meeting recessed at 5:08 p.m. The meeting was scheduled to reconvene on Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.
Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, reconvened for Straw Votes on Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 10:02 a.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Adrian Cox, Acting Budget Director, reviewed the list of adjustments to the Manager’s Budget that were approved by the Board the previous day. He stated the result was an increase in ongoing funding of $4.4 million and an increase in fund balance of $5.2 million. He said in order to accommodate the changes, the following adjustments would need to be made to the Fund Balance in order to maintain the current tax rate:

- Eliminate $22,182 for Training for Procurement Division Employees
- Postpone $45,000 for E-Scanning of County Assessor’s Files for Efficient Storage
- Eliminate $100,000 for Finance Backlog
- Defer $200,000 for IT CPU & Hard drives
- Reduce $300,000 for Fleet Reserve
- Reduce $500,000 for Capital Reserve
- Eliminate $600,000 for Restricted Contingency for Food Desert Initiatives
- Defer $1,300,000 for County Assessor Revaluation Fund Transfer
- Recommend Reduction of $2,182,818 for CMS Building Maintenance

Total Fund Balance - $5,250,000

Mr. Cox reviewed the ongoing reductions to the Manager’s recommended budget:

- Eliminate $100,000 for Read Charlotte
- Eliminate $200,000 for ASC - Artist Grants
- Eliminate $200,000 for ASC - Vision Grants
- Reduce $246,250 for Deferred Maintenance (CPCC)
- Reduce $675,000 from Rental Subsidy Fund for Keeping Families Together*
- Reduce $1,000,000 for Deferred Maintenance (County & Library Facilities)
- Reduce $2,000,000 for Deferred Maintenance (CMS)

Total Ongoing - $4,421,250

*This program was not recommended for elimination but recommended to be operated from the affordable housing fund.

Commissioners asked questions, and Ms. Diorio and Mr. Cox responded.

Commissioner Leake asked if money was being taken away from the food desert.

Ms. Diorio stated the total food desert amount in the budget would be $3,000,000.
Commissioner Leake stated she was fine with that.
Commissioner Jerrell asked what deficit they would start with next year for the budget based on presented adjustments.

Mr. Cox said $19 million.

Commissioner Harden asked what other options they had other than defunding Read Charlotte and inquired about using lapsed salaries.

Ms. Diorio stated they did not recommend that, and it would make a very uncertain situation tremendously worse.

Commissioner Harden said if they looked at the recommended cuts, the County Manager recommended cutting libraries, more money to CMS, affordable housing, arts, and reading programs.

Ms. Diorio responded that these were the recommended reductions they put on the table based on adjustments that the Board made, and they did not believe the reductions in deferred maintenance had a critical impact. She stated the Board asked her to make recommendations that would have the least harm on the budget, and she believed those were the ones which would have the least harm on the budget because there were still very significant dollars appropriated for deferred maintenance activities. She said the Keeping Families Together program was not being eliminated but instead funded through a different source; the arts program still had a half of a million in new money, so it was not a cut. She said those were additions they did not have before. She said the Read Charlotte commitment was only a five-year commitment, and this was year six. She said there was nothing in there they believed would have irreparable harm.

Chair Dunlap said none of this would have been necessary if we had we not added additional dollars based on Board recommendations.

Commissioner Harden stated she wanted the community to understand that when they added those dollars for healthcare and education, they did not want the other dollars supplanted from education. She wanted it to be clear, from her perspective, her intentions were for there to be redirections in other-

Commissioner Cotham said she was expecting something like this, because they had to subtract from where they gave the largest allotment of money, so she thought percentage wise, it was more than fair, and she also thought there was a little flexibility there. She stated votes had consequences, and they could not have it both ways.

Commissioner Fuller said the Manager and staff did what they asked them to do, which was to recommend adjustments to them based on the items they added. He said in looking at them, he cringed for a moment when he saw Read Charlotte and the ASC grants, and those three lines together are 500,000. He said his question was could he decide that instead of putting those in the ongoing, that they made a one-time appropriation with the understanding that they would be back to the issue again next year about whether it should be an ongoing in the amounts. He asked if it would work for Read Charlotte was a one-time, since it was at the 6th year of a 5-year commitment.

Ms. Diorio stated it was certainly an option but that she expects it would have to be rolled into the operating budget in year 2022 and they already had $19 million in fund balance that they were using to balance the budget in FY21, so it was just more that would have to be absorbed into the operating budget in FY2022, creating a bigger budget gap.

Commissioner Fuller asked if it could be a one-time thing rather than going on, in terms of the $100,000.

Ms. Diorio stated yes, for the $100,000, because they had been funding that for five years out of fund balance, because they did not want to make a commitment longer than the five years. She said they did include it in ongoing with the expectations to continue to support it, but the commitment was only for five years, and if the Board wanted to make it a six-year commitment then they could fund the $100,000 out of fund balance for one additional year.

Commissioner Fuller felt that would be a better option. He asked with the art grant and vision grant if there would be other places, they were spending money where they could
have another revenue source for them or adjustments that would likely come that they
could still get some funding for later in the year.

Ms. Diorio said she had a feeling they would have revenue generally over the course of
the year, so there was no commitment they could make, and they would have to take a
wait and see approach on what revenues look like as they got into the second quarter of
the fiscal year, but she was very concerned about sales tax.

Commissioner Fuller said maybe they could have it in the back of their minds for
depending on how things go.

Commissioner Powell said what made her the most concern was the IT cut; she asked
how IT could absorb it.

Mr. Cox said it would just be deferring the replacement until they could make the
replacement.

Ms. Diorio said they had also instructed them to look internally within their budget to see
if they could find a way to fully or partially fund that within their existing budget.

Chair Dunlap said they added $6,000,000 in reoccurring funds, and there was no certainty
all of it could be spent in one year; some programs would have to be developed and stood
up and may not need funding for at least six months. He said they could reconsider the
three, $2,000,000 appropriations and reduce them by $3,000,000, which would be a total
of $6,000,000, which would mean the cuts would be reduced by $3,000,000 and they
would only have to find $1.4 million in the reoccurring category.

Motion was made by Commissioner Harden to move Read Charlotte, the artist grants,
and the vision grants into the fund balance category for a one-time funding.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to a vote on a subsequent substitute motion.

Commissioner Dunlap asked how it would work moving reoccurring dollars into one-time
funding.

Ms. Diorio stated the next Board of County Commissioners would have to determine if
they wanted to fund them and put them back into the ongoing category. She reminded
them the motion was to not increase the overall budget, and this motion would increase
the budget by $500,000. She said they would have to redo the motion from yesterday
about the total amount of the budget.

Commissioner Harden asked about the funding for the Belk Bowl, since she believed they
may not be able to happen.

Commissioner Dunlap said they could defer the items to the middle of the year and revisit
them based on whether or not the Belk Bowl would happen or not. He said they couldn’t
put it in restricted contingency because they had to have funds to do it with.

Ms. Diorio said they could defer until later in the year and even though they did not know
if those events would happen, there was a chance it would still happen without fans, which
means they would be able to contribute to that. She said even if they cut those dollars to
fund those items, in FY22 those events would come back, and they would have to fund
them, so using existing dollars to fund that meant they would just have to come back and
revisit the items in the future to fund them on a go-forward basis.

Ms. Diorio responded to Commissioners’ questions.

A substitute motion was made by Chair Dunlap to accept the County Manager’s
recommendations and defer these items and revisit them in six months.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as followed:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-
McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Harden

Commissioner Fuller asked about the status of Commissioner Leake’s tabled motion
related to CMS funding.
Commissioner Leake stated she did not want to revisit it today; she would deal with it at a later time.

Motion was by Commissioner Fuller and was seconded by Commissioner Leake to direct the County Manager and staff to draft the FY-2021 Operating Budget Ordinance to be adopted at the Board’s June 2, 2020 meeting, reflecting the approved items by the Board and maintaining a property tax rate of .6169.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

RECESS

Commissioner Powell said she had an appointment and would be late to the afternoon meeting.

The meeting recessed at 11:31 a.m. and reconvened at 2:01 p.m. for a presentation from INLIVIAN.

All Commissioners were present except Commissioner Powell who joined the meeting later as noted in the minutes.

8TH & TRYON PROPOSAL

Dena Diorio, County Manager, stated this would be a follow up to the May 19, 2020 meeting when the Board asked for INLIVIAN to come make a presentation around its proposal to develop its parcel of land at 8th and Tryon Street.

Fulton Meacham, President and Chief Executive Officer of INLIVIAN, stated he would help the Board to understand who INLIVIAN was, who they served, and ultimately what they would accomplish with their 8th and Tryon strategy. He stated INLIVIAN mission was to create innovation housing solutions in desirable communities for residents of diverse incomes and facilitate access to services to help them succeed. He said three years ago they changed their strategies of how they were doing affordable housing and started to create a more sustainable plan where they moved from being a public housing authority to more of a non-profit real estate development company and property management company to meet the City’s needs. He said though the name has changed, they still served the community’s most needed, the residents who are 30% of area median income, and more than 70% of their population was those families. He said they also served the full spectrum, all the way to market rate. He started they were the largest, affordable-housing program in the State, serving over 10,000 households. He stated they served over 26,000 of Mecklenburg County’s citizens.

Mr. Meacham stated what they were trying to do at INLIVIAN was create a housing continuum for the families they served. He reviewed what was defined as a housing continuum, all the way from homelessness to homeownership. He mentioned the 34,000 unit need in affordable housing and the workforce housing gap, which created an issue of a gap or trap for those in the affordable housing area, because in the program, they also have a family, self-sufficiency program, which would help families move from dependency to independency with a case manager and work requirement. He started as they moved up the economic later, there was no place to go housing wise, because there was not enough workforce housing. He said at the American dream for most families was out of reach because affordable homeownership was not what it needed to be either. He said it was an important, critical issue that needed to be solved, because rents were going up higher than individual’s incomes. He said the average rent in uptown Charlotte was about $1,500 a month and if you were to add a modest utility to that, it was roughly $1,700
a month, and in order to be able to afford that rent, families would need to make $68,000 a year to live there.

Mr. Meacham said the people who were being priced out of were, for example, the hotel desk clerks, bartenders, maids, food cooks, hairstylists, bank tellers, teachers, and plumbers. He said he couldn’t think of a better place for the families to live than uptown, because in uptown they had hotels, restaurants, banks, construction jobs, and a variety of transportation options. He stated uptown was a true live, work, and play environment, which everyone should have an opportunity to participate in. He said INLIVIAN couldn’t do these things by itself, and they created public and private partnerships all over the State and had some fantastic partners.

Connie Staudinger, Horizon Development Properties, said HDP was a non-profit subsidiary of the 80-year old INLIVIAN, and they were created to develop Charlotte mixed-use/mixed-income properties and to realize their mission, which was very much like INLIVIAN’s. She said to realize their mission they continued to build and nurture relationships with local, state, and federal government, private developers, and debt and equity providers. She said since her arrival in 2018, HDP had induced the issuance of $322 million in housing bonds to develop and preserve nearly 260,000 units of affordable housing. She said they understood about the MWBE participation and the goal in the RFP and their contracting goal was 20%.

Scott Nordheimer, Urban Atlantic Qualifications, said he was one of the founders and they were pleased to be part of the consortium with INLIVIAN. He said Urban Atlantic had been one of the leaders in mixed-income/mixed-use communities in doing over $3 billion, they operated in over 10 states and were based in the Washington D.C. area but have operated in the NC market for over 15 years. He said they had a track record of inclusiveness with their communities being inner dispersed together. He said even before their founding in 1998, the founders were involved in over 10% of the Hope Six Developments, which gave them a lot of experience in terms of low-income, housing tax credits and mixing of low income with market rate. He showed a list of the six communities, which were representative of over a billion dollars’ worth of mixed-income communities they owned, operated, and had developed.

Brad Bartholomew, Odell Associates, stated he was the CEO, and they were an architecture and design firm located in Charlotte. He said it was their 80th year of being in Charlotte, Mecklenburg County. He showed examples of projects they were responsible for and stated they have done projects all over the Country. He said they wanted to create places to live within the urban core and with a market-rate level of quality for people of all socio-economic levels and that meant as they went through the project, those were the kinds of things they would measure, the different options and ideas they came up with on how they could deliver upon those goals.

Mr. Meacham stated the vision of the project was to transform two, catalytic blocks in Uptown Charlotte to create a walkable, welcoming, and inclusive environment with urban plazas surrounded by commerce, knowledge, culture, entertainment, and a diversity of housing options. He said that was the vision of the North Tryon plan. He said thought the 7th and Tryon group had moved forward with a one-half block plan. He stated what the Commissioners asked them to do was to come and develop a mixed-use, mixed-income program for their 2.2-acre site, which they titled the 8th and Tryon strategy. He reviewed the site with the Commissioners. He said he felt very comfortable that the 8th and Tryon strategy checked all of the boxed to ensure there was affordable housing in uptown.

Bereket Selassie, Urban Atlantic Qualifications, said he was a managing director and lead business development for the firm. He went through the plan with Commissioners, stating what their company focused on was a better approach to mixed-income housing, which had been brought about by innovations in the financing markets in the last 15 years or so. He said that better way was to intersperse the affordable units and market-rate units within the same building. He said they only way for someone to know which unit was which, was for the tenant to self-identify, but there would be no physical, unit difference inside nor outside. He said that would lead to significant cost savings due to not needing to build separate lobbies, amenities, and elevators, they could now all share. He said often in affordable buildings they would tend to be smaller than their market-rate
components, so having a small building with its own lobby and separate elevators and everything else needed by code was a very expensive proposition. He said this was more efficient and cost effective, and they believed it would lead to better outcomes for communities, because it feels like one community.

Mr. Selassie stated they looked at a range of development options on the 2.2-acre site before coming up with their conclusions, the first part of it was examining where rents for similar projects were in Charlotte. He reviewed a list of notable projects uptown, looking at their average rents and determined their projection of what they believed the average rent would be at their site in light of where it stood relative to the competition. He said they also looked at a range of development options for the site and the three they ended up focusing on in the end were an adaptive reuse of Hall House, where they would retain hall house, renovate it, convert it into a mix-income building and also along side that, build a smaller, new-construction building that would be five to six stories tall and hide the above-grade garage that they would use for the project. He said the next option he looked at was a six-story project of new construction that would also wrap a residential garage so that the garage was not visible from the street. He said the last option the focused on was a taller, denser typology that would be a mix of wood frame and steel that would allow them to build up to 15 stories. He said they were all produced by Odell Design.

Mr. Selassie went over the options, saying option one, reuse option, would give the fewest number of options at 275; number two, all new construction, would yield them 368 units; and option three would yield them roughly 85 additional units. He mentioned that qualitatively the three options had different concerns, such as: the ceiling heights at Hall house being low; may be overshadowed by future development with option two; may be too many units at one time for one project for option three. He said economically, the three options also had different tradeoffs. He said for number one, the re-use option because of the [inaudible] it would lead to lower rents, which would impact the financeability of the project and also an adaptive reuse of a historic building would lead to a huge funding gap which would not be economically viable.

Mr. Selassie said at the other end of the spectrum, option three had higher construction costs associated with that typology resulting in a $15 million funding gap on the affordable side and a $16 million deficit on the market-rate side for a total of $31 million that you would need to cut from the project in order to make it financially, economically viable. He said they could not do that on the market-rate side, because investors would not invest, and banks would not lend you the money you need for that kind of project. He said on the affordable side, they felt as thought a $15 million funding gap would be an enormous ask for the community, relative to the number of affordable units they were creating on site. He said option two, the wood-frame option, despite it yielding less units, it had a more manageable funding gap on the affordable site and no funding gap on the market-rate side, so it was an economically viable project. He said they ended up concluding a wood framed building, roughly six stories in height, was the best development option for the site. He said there would be ground-level retail along Tryon and the mix of units would be a 70/30 mix, resulting in 258 market-rate units and 110 affordable units.

Mr. Selassie said their total project cost would be $103 million based on contractor feedback they had received. He said it was two, independent financings, which was part of the challenge of the approach, because you would have a market-rate investment and an affordable investment group, and although they were in the same building, they were separated in the structure. He said both elements would have to be viable in order for the project to go forward. He said in the wood-frame typology it would be viable, and the funding gap on the affordable units would be roughly $6 million as their current projection. He said this assumed 4% low-income, tax credits for the affordable units, which were by-right. He said the funding gap would be solely for the affordable housing but the result would be creating a 368 unit, mixed-income community in this highly desirable area, that had met the goal of 70/30/30, meaning 70% of the units would be market rate, 30% affordable, and of the 30% 1/3 would be held for people with 30% AMI or less.

Mr. Meacham mentioned that another big thing for the Commissioners to understand was that the affordable would be into perpetuity, as they were working with organizations that have been around for a long time. He said this project would give people the dignity to be able to live where they work and play, which was extremely important to INLIVIAN, and funding this would allow that to happen.
Commissioners asked questions and received answers from Mr. Meacham.

Commissioner Leake asked about seniors, unit size, transportation, and grounds upkeep. She was not in favor of the option three high rise.

Mr. Meacham responded that transportation was really key [inaudible]. He stated they had not fully developed the sizes of the units, but it would meet the market needs and be the same as the market-rate units. He said seniors were absolutely welcomed.

Commissioner Jerrell asked how COVID-19 may impact the project and if anything was baked in around that. He asked what may change the numbers in terms of the $6 million gap. He also asked about the 4% and 9% tax credit.

Mr. Nordheimer said in terms of COVID-19 impacting the debt inequity, at the present time, Urban was still receiving debt inequity in their other communities and closing on it. He said clearly COVID is an immediate issue; both INLIVIAN and Urban were long-term owners. He said they would get through the issue, but their ability right now was proving itself as they had been closing on construction loans and equity in markets like Charlotte, Washington D.C., and other cities. He stated Charlotte was a viable city long term, and they were dealing with the short-term issues but did not seeing it impacting in terms of the ability to move forward in terms of a speedy way.

Mr. Selassie responded to Commissioners' questions.

Commissioner Harden applauded them on their MWSBE goal.

Commissioner Cotham asked what amenities the apartments would have.

Mr. Selassie responded the apartments would have a full-fitness facility, a pool, business center, washer and dryer, and other things that bring socioeconomic building together by the amenities and recreation.

Commissioner Cotham asked if INLIVIAN would continue to own and operate the property.

Mr. Meacham replied that operation would be contracted out to a third-party, property management company but that they would maintain land ownership.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the County would contribute an additional $6,000,000 over and above the $14 odd million, they would already be spending with the 7th and Tryon piece.

Mr. Meacham responded that what they were putting in front of them was another alternative. He said there was no question they would be asking for the $6,000,000 and it was less than the $14.5 million. He said they wanted to be collaborative in all ways, but that was exactly what they were asking today, if this plan was competitive to the other plans.

Chair Dunlap asked who the funders were for the project.

Meacham responded that it would be INLIVIAN, Urban Atlantic, at this point the Positive Finance Agency and other investors on market-rate side and hopefully the County.

Chair Dunlap asked if they had assurances from the other investors.

Mr. Nordheimer responded that they had assurances from the equity side and believed that even though COVID-19 was doing on that it would be a [inaudible] on the debt side from the banks who would want to provide it but that they had not gone out and solicited the banks at this time.

Chair Dunlap asked if they had a timeline to let the County know that you secured financing other than gap.

Mr. Nordheimer responded that the project financing would come in two phases, initially term sheets from the conventional lenders, which would probably be in month nine after they had gotten [inaudible] on the construction drawings, and they would have preliminary indication they could report out, because term sheets move into commitments. He stated they would keep everyone apprised during that time period.

Commissioner Powell joined the remote meeting at 3:26 p.m.
Mr. Nordheimer responded to Commissioners’ questions.

Commissioner Cotham asked, regarding the $6,000,000, if they were making a joint ask with the City or if they had a separate ask to the City for a different amount of money.

Mr. Meacham responded they had a separate ask, and he did not believe the City’s Housing Trust Fund was open. He believed they could all work together to see if it was available.

Commissioner Cotham asked if he knew what the ask was from the City.

Mr. Meacham responded not yet.

Commissioners asked questions, and Mr. Bartholomew responded.

Chair Dunlap asked if Mecklenburg County was to invest, would they be able to receive an assurance that someone making $25,000 or less would qualify for a unit.

Mr. Meacham said they would have written assurances, because through the North Carolina Housing Tax Credit, you have to meet income requirements in order to receive the tax credits and keep the tax credits. He said they would make sure that happened and they had a compliance group which would come in often to look at the properties to make sure each unit that was subsidized by tax credit would meet the income thresholds.

Mr. Nordheimer responded that there would be severe financial penalties.

Chair Dunlap reminded the Board that they would be making a decision relative to the 7th Street Development project June 2, 2020.

Commissioner Harden asked if it would be valuable to share the presentation with the City.

Mr. Meacham responded that they could talk to the City about a collaboration if she would like.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she would also like the City to be at the table.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Dunlap conducted a roll call vote to adjourn the meeting. The vote was recorded as unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk  George Dunlap, Chair
FORMAL SESSION

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely in Formal Session on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 6:01 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, the invocation led by Commissioner Powell, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Powell said she would like to acknowledge the genuine outrage from the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbury, and others; she said she would like to extend sympathy to their families and friends who are grieving. She said they were all seeing and hearing from protesters who were flooded with emotions, pain, frustration, fear, anger, uncertainty, overwhelmed, and exhausted from dealing with layer and layer of hurt for so many years, for generation, tired of fighting to be heard and trying to prove everyone was created equal. She said she prayed for unity and leadership that units. She said that she prayed they would work together to get to the heart of the protest and take the time to listen to different perspectives and that they would all have the courage to stand up to the power of those who have disproportionate influence. She said she prayed they would all take action for what is right and believes they are all brothers and sisters and urged to pray for leadership that would unite.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6179: Proclamation - National Gun Violence Awareness Day

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said this proclamation declares the first Friday in June to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day in Mecklenburg County to honor and remember all of the victims and survivors of gun violence and to declare that we as a county and a country must do more to reduce gun violence. Anyone can join this campaign by pledging to wear orange on June 5th, the first Friday in June in 2020 to help raise awareness about gun violence. With this proclamation, we renew our commitment to reduce gun violence and pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the wrong hands by encouraging responsible gun ownership, to help keep our children and all of our people safe. This is also perfect timing as we allocate real dollars, $320,250 to implementing a violence intervention specialist program in our FY 21 budget on this very day. I am proud to support this proclamation and this budget item.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring the first Friday in June, June 5th, 2020, as “National Gun Violence Awareness Day” in Mecklenburg County.
Commissioner Leake said she just wanted to make a statement as it related to the National Gun Violence Awareness Day. She said all of the Board was familiar with what took place a couple of weeks ago to one of the County’s staff, and it was close to her heart, because it took away the lives of a mother and son without a necessity of having been so. She asked for continued prayer for them and the Country.

Commissioner Cotham said she wanted to raise awareness on how gun violence has impacted this community. The following were homicide victims who had died by gun violence: Daquavoan Lavar Brown, he was 17-years old, Kareem Shamon McCleod, he was 22-years old and died on Clanton Road. Phillip Patrick Young, affectionately called Bill Trill, he was 29 and died on the Plaza and Eastway Drive. Napoleon Franklin Brown was 27, and he loved basketball; he died at the Burger King on Beatties Ford Road by I-85. Kyle Shannon, affectionately known as Slim, was 17-years old and went to Garinger High. Jordan Hill was 20 years old and was shot on Pruitt Street in West Charlotte. Joshua Javier Diaz was 28-years old and died on Albemarle road. Cladararious Biddle died on the Plaza while sitting in his car at 8:00 in the morning. Samuel Harrison Stitt was 22 and had already organized a Stop the Violence motorcycle ride; his mother said she did not want her son to be a statistic. Darnell Lamont Harris, he was 48-years old and worked at Steak and Shake on South Boulevard; he protected customers during a robbery and saved lives. Darnell Mills was 20-years old and died on East W.T. Harris by having been shot in the head by a passenger in his car. Darren C. Ford was 25-years old and died on Katherine Simmons Avenue off Beatties Ford Road; he had a four-year old daughter. Deontray Shakale Love was 19-years old and died on Idlewild Road and Snow Lane. Jacquez Keyshawn Moore was 19-years old when he died. David Lindsey died in East Charlotte while sitting in his car; he was a barber at No Grease Barbershop, and everyone said he was one of the good guys. La-reko Williams was 21-years old, and he died on Old Pineville Road; he was young and loved Scooby Doo. Bobby McKeithen was 16-years old and died at Butler High School. Riley Howell and Ellis Parlier, the two who died at UNC-Charlotte.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6176: Public Appearance

The following speakers address the Board of Commissioners:

1. Rev. Jordan Boyd - Inequality at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
2. Dr. Ricky Woods - Inequality at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

APPOINTMENTS – NONE

PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-6185: Adult Care Home and Nursing Home Community Advisory Committees Annual Report

Hillary Kaylor, Regional Ombudsman for Mecklenburg Nursing Homes, said the Board was able to recommend a lot of people to the Committee and the Committee actually did orientation and implemented over 30 new volunteers in the programs, which increased their visibility quite a bit and their ability to do more facility visits. She said back in April 2019 they were able to be involved in Advocacy Day in Raleigh and were able to advocate for the personal needs’ money increase for the residents on special assistance or Medicaid. She said it went through with a lot of support but that they were not in the final budget for the Governor’s budget.
Lindsey Tice, Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman, said there were some challenges this year with a couple of the adult care homes back in June 2019. She said almost a full year ago we had one senior living facility in Mint Hill that was actually closed by the fire marshal, because their fire enunciation panel and sound system was not up to code. She said the residents were evacuated to the other buildings all across our region, so not a great time for those residents who lived there, but it was for their safety. She said they did return back in December 2019; the renovations took a lot longer than originally expected. She said the Regency at Pineville, down near CNC Pineville had their license revoked by the State of North Carolina in the end of 2018. She said it has reopened under new management and is now called The Charlotte. She said they are becoming a full-fledged facility again.

She said one of the continuing challenges was that while there were many nursing homes, assisted living, and family care home options, very few were affordable. She said probably the most affordable assisted living would be $4,500 a month, and that number can go up to $12,000 a month, which is a lot of money. She said there are very few adult care homes that even accept the State-County special assistance program, which was a Medicaid-type program for low income. She said the regulations did not require the facilities to accept it. She said there were maybe five that did accept it. She said there was a very large gap of people who fall in the middle of being able to afford a private pay and who can qualify for State-County special assistance. She said the challenge for a lot of people, maybe $20 over the cutoff rate, putting them in a harder time for finding a facility.

She said they had a little bit of growth that would be happening as they had a new adult care home that will be in Huntersville and a couple of more CCRC's, continuing care retirement communities, that were opening up in the Charlotte area. She said they would be something similar to a South Minster, Sharon Towers, Pines at Davidson, Plantation Estates, where a neighborhood would have independent living, memory care, and skilled nursing all on the same site. She said they had three of those that were in planning in Mecklenburg County, with one that would be close to being finished in South Park. She said they did have some growth in that area but had a lack of affordable housing for people in long-term care in Mecklenburg County. She said she also covered Stanley County, and there were more options in some of the smaller counties in the region for folks who needed a more affordable bed than what there was to offer in Mecklenburg County. She said they were very good stewards of visiting their facilities and that they have not been able to visit since March 19, 2020 due to COVID-19, so things were a different world for them right now. She said they had certainly utilized Zoom, Face Time, and WebEx to stay in touch and advocate for their residents in long-term care.

Commissioner Jerrell showed appreciation to Ms. Kaylor and Ms. Tice and all the members of the Committee for all they had been doing as it related to the seniors. He said it was so important that they ensured they would be taken care of. He said he was specifically concerned about the nursing homes. He said assuming there was a different level of residency when it came to certain facilities, obviously people of means and some of the facilities were well-taken care of, but that his concern was for the folks in nursing homes. He requested more color around the impact of COVID-10, since he noticed that COVID-19 had really impacted people adversely as reports show. He asked what they saw and heard and how they were acting as intermediaries in that regard.

Ms. Kaylor said they had seen a dramatic increase, with a slow to rise number since March, as there were four to six nursing homes that had COVID-19 cases and in the past two weeks, the number had risen from 15 to 17. She said they were very concerned, because they felt even though the community may have been in phase one of reopening, the long-term care facilities were still not there. She said they were a congregate setting, and they were there for a reason; they were frail, have a disability, multiple chronic health concerns, so they were seeing that it came creeping into those facilities a bit later, and they were worried about how long it would stay. She said she was very concerned. She said they were diligently calling their facilities to keep in touch with them, sending resources from the health department and CDC and PPE equipment collections. She said she had been reaching out to the resident council presidents at the facilities to ask how things were going and that not being there to see it was their biggest challenge.
Ms. Tice said adult care homes had not had many outbreaks but did have a few early on, including congregate sites that were not licensed assisted livings. She said as of now, she only had two in outbreaks. She said assisted livings could vary a lot, with a lot of assisted livings in Mecklenburg County that serve a younger demographic, folks who have had significant, mental illness without another good place for them to be. She said those were the folks she was concerned about during the outbreaks, because they were used to getting up and going, and that was very hard for them. She said the facilities had been very good about meeting their needs with the activities department, but that it was not perfect. She said one of the other voiced concerns was the dementia care units, mainly found within assisted livings, as she said they did not quite understand or did not want to group everyone together, but that there were quite a few who did not understand the iPad and why they were visiting with their daughter on the phone. She said that could be upsetting to residents, and they were constantly working with their facilities to try to come up with activities and ideas and other interactions for those residents. She said she and Hillary had started a postcard, with the ombudsman organization, that they were sending out to their residents regarding their stimulus payment and how it was there’s and did not belong to the facility for any back bills unless the resident decided to use it for that purpose. She said they had been trying to get creative in advocating for the residents and had their hand in the pot without being there.

Commissioner Harden said seniors had been making up a considerable portion of the people who were impacted by COVID-19 but that not as many dollars are relief funds are going to seniors. She asked them to talk about the need for PPE, testing, support for mental health, and technology. She asked what was happening after six weeks of COVID-19 a failure to thrive because of the isolation was starting to be seen.

Ms. Tice said they were seeing that every facility was in a different place when it came to testing; some of the facilities, because of their company policy, may have gone full throttle and done base-line testing for the whole facility and some had not done that as well. She said some of the things she had spoken to staff and administration was that when they had two or three cases, they should have tasted everyone so they would have had a baseline and been able to move forward. She said she thought the availability of testing was still there but that they had not jumped over the threshold to complete of that, and they wanted to make sure the testing was readily available to them. She said she thought the social isolation for the residents was a big concern and that there had been some state advocacy to get tables for each facility, maybe 10-20 to talk to their family members, do safe visits outside the porch at a certain area. She said they still know families go to windows and check in with their loved ones and lay eyes on them and try to do it safely, but that they do feel because they are not eating in congregate sets but instead inside their rooms alone and not doing activities together, they were doing it individually and were in need of activity-related huddles and cards that keep people busy. She said the PPE equipment had ebbs and flows in availability, and we know that masks were now finally good, and gloves and gowns may not be. She said they were kind of looking to the future of the reopening and what that would mean. She said throughout that period of time, she and Lindsey had been getting a lot of phone calls about families desperately wanting to visit and only under certain circumstances and end of life could they visit, so it had been really hard on the families and residents. She said they were concerned what the outcome would look like on the other end.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked Ms. Tice and Ms. Kaylor for the work they do. She highlighted the lack of affordable options and the fact that the adult care hope options were severely limited when it came to facilities which accepted State-County special assistance/Medicaid for payment. She said most of those were memory care facilities and the average private pay rate was $3,500 to $11,000 per month, which was a significant disparity in affordable care. She said that was something they do not talk about enough and raising awareness about it was very important. She said she had an 80-year old mother living with her and knew there were many people out there who had the struggle of how to care for the elderly.

Commissioner Fuller asked when they hear about what is happening, particularly at long-term care facilities, what is going on? He said he also worries about employees, because
he had been hearing about employees who did not have sufficient personal protective equipment and had gotten infected.

Ms. Kaylor responded that she thought they were in a little better place at the moment but that he was right, for the past two months, things had not been readily available how much to order, and she knew with infection control, in the facilities, it had been a big challenge of making sure they were using the equipment the way they should and removing it the way they should and going from room to room or from a facility that has a unit of COVID-19 versus ones that were not having any cases. She said there was a big challenge even the regulatory agencies in the State were on hold for regulatory visits in the buildings in the past two past two weeks that had opened up, and they were doing a number of infection control surveys in regulator visits in the buildings. She told him she heard the same things he heard that the equipment is there and comes and goes when they have a lot of gloves and not a lot of masks. She said she also worried about the fact that a lot of the staff works in multiple locations and that cross-level contamination as well. She said that was a big concern going forward of how long they would need to keep up the tremendous need for the PPEs.

Commissioner Leake asked about the Task Force and when and where it met. She said her concern was the $30 per month for a member who was confined, as that was only sometimes $1 a day to an individual to want to splurge just a bit.

Ms. Kaylor responded that the meetings have been weekly on Monday afternoons.

Commissioner Leake said she was concerned about salaries for the staff who were working in the confines of the facilities. She said to let them look at the facilities and what the State and federal government were doing and encourage them to do a better job.

### MANAGER’S REPORT

#### 20-6205: Spirit Square - Redevelopment Options

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said we were looking for the Board to vote on which option they would like to proceed with tonight. She said that the item was in conjunction with the next item on agenda and that there was nothing that they had not already seen with this item before.

Mark Hahn, AIA, Director of Asset and Facility Management, provided a presentation on redevelopment options for Spirit Square. He alerted the Board that the cost estimates had increased significantly since the last time he presented the information. He said on average, the cost had increased $10 million for each option, and while the factors varied somewhat depending on the option, the most substantial increase included overall cost increases for labor and materials, based on the current construction market and cost escalation for three years that was not included in the previous estimates, and new work to build the existing ramps from the theaters had not been designed yet for the previous estimates, as well as new work associated with providing rehearsal and multi-purpose space that is required by bidding code for assembly areas.

He said all three options had pedestrian open space and plazas; to achieve that, a little more than half of Spirit Square was shown to be demolished in Option A. He said the estimated cost of construction for this option was $31.6 million, including upgrades for both theaters and soft costs were coming in at $7.9 million for a total estimate project cost of $39.5 million. He said Option A would create a new pedestrian connection from Tryon Street to mid-block plaza and maintain two theaters with significant renovations to all floors of the Duke Energy Theater facility, as well as it would share space with New Main Library and provide new entrances, relocate ticketing, concessions, and restrooms for theaters. He said it would add rehearsal & meeting space in the black box theater building, with theater HVAC integrated with Main Library, and would provide a new theater exits at pedestrian connection.
He said Option B was very similar to Option A, but it removed all Spirit Square functions, except McGlohon Theater and the additional removal of the Duke Theater would take away support and circulation that was need for McGlohon Theater. He said the estimated cost of construction for Option B is about $25.8 million, including upgrades to the McGlohon Theater, with a soft cost coming in at $6.4 million, for a total estimated project cost of $32.2 million. He said this was the least expensive option of the three; however, they would lose the black box theater entirely, which could create a very serious challenge. He said Option B would provide a limited new addition for McGlohon support spaces to replace key functions demolished including: stairs and an elevator for access and exiting; storage and support spaces; would share space with New Main Library, would provide new entrances, relocates ticketing, concessions, and restrooms for McGlohon, and it would provide new theater exits at the pedestrian connection.

He said the demolition for Option C was the same as Option B, with everything removed except the McGlohon Theater. He said because this option added the newest space of all of the options, it was also the most expensive, with the estimated construction cost being $38 million, including the theater upgrades from McGlohon. He said soft costs came in at $9.5 million for a total estimated project cost of $47.5 million. He said Option C would provide a new addition with larger black box theater and would replace all theater support spaces demolished and would provide enhancements including: rehearsal space, offices, storage, dressing rooms, would create a new opportunity for outdoor performances with a stage opening to the mid-block public plaza, and would share space with new Main Library. He said the County would have two new regional recreation centers opening on the east and north side of the County over the next couple of years, and those would provide some very significant opportunities for new meeting spaces as well.

He said having compared the total cost of all three options, you would notice that Options B and C were the lowest and highest cost options. He said we believed that Option B was not feasible due to the loss of the black box theater; we thought Option C may not be worth the high cost of replacing a theater that exists and can be renovated. He said Option A provided optimal space for public plazas and redevelopment, retained both theaters and provided the opportunity to connect the main library and theaters.

Mr. Hahn responded to comments and questions from Commissioners.

The Board was presented with three options, and Chair Dunlap took a roll call vote to determine the preferred option.

The results of the vote are recorded below:

**OPTION A:** Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough

**OPTION C:** Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

Option A received the majority of votes and was selected for implementation.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**20-6206: 7th & Tryon Redevelopment Project - Memorandum of Understanding**

Mark Hahn, AIA, Director of Asset and Facility Management, provided a presentation on the 7th & Tryon Redevelopment Project and Memorandum of Understanding. He went over the requested action. He mentioned the developer was not involved in the construction of offsite units. He briefly reviewed the redevelopment site and property ownership. He reviewed funding availability for affordable housing, stating that the County would have $7.4 million sale proceeds to invest; Bank of America would have $8.3 million, and $3.0 million in proceeds from development team, totaling $18.7 million in affordable housing funds available to be invested in various options, with a $14.5 million County allocation and $4.2 million from Bank of America reserved for offsite. He said there were four options for investing funding in affordable housing, with Option 1 being a blended solution, which includes both Uptown and off-site housing units. He said it assumed all of the County's allocatable amount of $14.5 million if invested in the Uptown 7th and Tryon
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Development. He said it produces 36 affordable units, with a full range of AMI’s and unit sizes with a 20-year affordable term. He said the option was including Bank of America’s $4.2 million allocation for 207 affordable units constructed off site at various locations around the County, totaling 243 units.

He said the second option would be to allocate $6 million of the $14.5 million available in Inlivian for 110 units they would develop on their own site, which would leave $8.5 million available to allocate for the 7th and Tryon site for 20 affordable units, and $4.2 million remains allocated off site for the 207 units, bringing the total number of affordable units to 337 units. He said the third option would be a $6 million allocation to Inlivian and allocated the remaining $8.5 million offside instead of uptown, with the $4.2 million Bank of America allocation, the total number of affordable units would be 691. He said Option 4 allocates the full $14.5 million off site when combined with the $4.2 million Bank of America investment, a total of 762 affordable units in that option.

He said upon execution of the master development agreement, Metropolitan would deposit $500,000 into an escrow account under the agreement. He stated Metropolitan acknowledged the County is required to give users of Spirit Square at least 12 months prior to notice of demolition. He went over the Memorandum of Understanding key terms for the planned project components which included: below ground and above grade parking structures; approximately 160,000 SF mixed use building; office tower of approximately 450,000 SF of Class A office space; multi-family component; retail facilities. He went over the Memorandum of Understanding key terms for the development agreement, which included: estimated timeline to commence construction for project components; designate spatial relationship between the components; afford buyer flexibility of design, schedule, and performance; and requires MWSBE participation goal of 30%. He went over the Memorandum of Understanding key terms for additional public sector support, which included: the City and County Tax Increment Grant (TIG): not less than $25 million for below grade and above ground parking the City of Charlotte Community Investment Plan: $2 Million to $5 Million. He said the MOU also includes a clause that gave Metropolitan the right to redevelop the site for 180-day period after execution of the MOU, and if any stakeholder would violate this obligation, it could result in a reimbursement to the developer of up to a cap of $4.1 million. He said next steps would be the negotiation of the actual development agreement, then once the agreement was finalized, the Board would consider approval of the agreement and authorization for the County Manager to execute the development agreement.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said at the point that INIVIAN was prepared to come forward, we could have decided whether or not we wanted to support their project at a later date, but that at this point, the recommendation would be to allocate the $14.5 million that we have as a part of the proceeds of the project, and if we did not want to allocate additional dollars for additional units, we could certainly do that. He said they would need to go back to look at the financing and how it would be achieved.

Four options were presented for consideration; Chair Dunlap took a roll call vote to determine the preferred option.

The results of the vote are recorded below:

**OPTION 2:** Commissioners Fuller and Powell

**OPTION 3:** Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell and Scarborough

The Commissioners voted to select Option 3.

Option 3 included the following components for affordable housing: $6 Million of County allocable funds for 110 affordable units on the Inlivian property; $8.5 Million of County allocable funds for 374 affordable units at offsite locations; and $4.2 Million of Bank of America funds for 207 affordable units at offsite locations, for a total investment of $18.7 Million for 691 affordable units.
A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute (in coordination with other landowners involved in the project) an MOU for the 7th & Tryon Redevelopment project with the Master Developer, BP-Metropolitan NC, LLC to also include a provision to coordinate with Inlivian, on their 8th and Tryon Project, similar to the coordination provision listed in paragraph 9 of the MOU.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Scarborough, Leake, Jerrell, Harden, and Rodriguez-McDowell

No: Commissioners Cotham and Powell

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6172: Interlocal Agreement with the City of Charlotte - Ballantyne Redevelopment

Peter Zeiler, Director, Office of Economic Development and Ned Curran, Northwood Development LLC provided presentations regarding the proposed Interlocal Agreement with the City of Charlotte and Ballantyne Redevelopment.

Mr. Zeiler said this project was first presented to the Economic Development Committee on March 4, 2020. He said the Economic Development Grants function similar to Business Investment Grant. The developer would assume all financial risk if development would not be completed. He said the County had entered into seven agreements: one fully paid, four currently receiving payments, one under construction, and one expired and unconstructed.

He reviewed the current Ballantyne Infrastructure agreement, stating that the improvement cost capped at $11 million, actual cost $16 million; this was a 15-year, 45% grant, capped at $7,150,000, plus interest of 3.7%. He noted that in year eight, FY2021, the County payment was $1,011,964 and City payment was $571,024, with a total amount of $1,582,988. He said the County would retain an estimated $4,327,765 in collected taxes. He went over the Ballantyne development since 2011 rezoning. He said seven new office towers had been constructed, and a new YMCA would have been a result of the community-infrastructure capacity. He showed some of the major companies that would move into the new offices; two were fortune 500s. He went over the Ballantyne Redevelopment proposal stating that in February 2017, Bissel Cos sold Ballantyne Corporate Park to Northwood Development LLC. He said Summer 2017, Northwood Development LLC began a comprehensive planning and development review process, and in May 2020, Northwood Development LLC sought to reposition Ballantyne.

He reviewed the Ballantyne Redevelopment proposal stating that in February 2017, Bissel Cos sold Ballantyne Corporate Park to Northwood Development LLC. He said Summer 2017, Northwood Development LLC began a comprehensive planning and development review process, and in May 2020, Northwood Development LLC sought to reposition Ballantyne.

He reviewed the affordable housing obligations, stating two acres of developable land per phase were to be donated for the development of 260 affordable units. He said for Phase 1, there would be up to 130 units affordable, with 20% of the units between 50%-60% AMI, 30% between 60%-70% AMI, and 50% between 70%-80% AMI. He said Phase 2 there would be up to 130 units affordable, with 20% of the units between 50%-60% AMI, 30% between 60%-70%, and 50% of units between 70%-80%. He said this project requires significant amounts of upfront dollars. He said the total for this infrastructure cost is $106 million. He said of that, the developer will fund $64 million, and they requested $42 million in public funding; $17 million will come from the City Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) - Infrastructure. He said the remaining $25 million would come from the City/County Development Agreement. He went over the Estimated Development Agreement payment schedule, which had an interest rate of 3.7%. He said the expected pay off would be in
nine years, and the estimated grant payment at the end of the nine years would be $18 million. He said the project, at its peak of construction in 2024, would estimate to induce 1,734 jobs. He said the estimated tax revenue by year 15 would be $9,596,600, and the estimated cumulative new revenue by year 15 would be $79,588,780. He said on May 4, 2020, the City of Charlotte’s Zoning Committee voted 5-2; May 11, 2020, the project was presented, and June 8, 2020 Council will vote on $17.5 million CIP and $25 million TIG interlocal agreement.

Ned Curran, Northwood Development, LLC said Ballantyne was 25 years old, and the ambitious plan of Ballantyne reimagines and revitalizes it with a new sense of urban feeling and mixed use with affordable housing, schools, arts and culture, parks and greenways, traffic mitigation, and multimodal transportation. He said it was important that it embraces the values that they hold dear as key elements of what a community should be. He said it was important that it embraces the values that they hold dear as key elements of what a community should be.

Commissioner Jerrell thanked the team. He said he thought it was a sweet spot starting at the 50% affordable housing. He said one concern he had was that the MWSBE goal of eight percent seemed really light to him. He said he would like to know how they could move that number and make it double at least.

Mr. Curran responded that in the aggregate, it was a 20% in comparison to other projects, and that each project was unique and related to the projects that were involved. He said they worked very closely with Charlotte Business INClucion group for months. He said there were elements in this that were challenging because they had specialty bridges, which required specialists, and working with the CBI there just were not trades there. He said they worked very hard hand and hand to identify those goals.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said they had really stepped up and answered the criticisms and desires. She said at the beginning you all were at 80% AMI for affordable housing and that they had turned the project into something she was proud to support. She said this project did not have County land and hoped it would become a model for how other developers would do affordable housing and that having gotten those kinds of percentages in there is what is needed as a community. She said she fully supported it.

Commissioner Cotham said she was impressed with the project. She said she knew it would create a lot of revenue for Mecklenburg County and that it could be used for schools and other services, which would benefit long term. She said she only hopes that increased transportation out there would be part of this.

Mr. Curran responded virtually every mode of transportation is encourage and addressed in the 500 acres, because we clearly wanted to get one person out of the [inaudible]. He said they knew they would have express bus service in addition to the regular CATs service. He said Northwood was committing the entire right-of-way necessary for light rail someday to come down I-485. He said they would also convert some of the cart paths into bike or walking paths or trails. He said they thought about eventually autonomous vehicles which would shuttle people through the park.

Commissioner Fuller said one thing that was important was collaboration between public and private sectors. He said he would support the project and thought there was a lot to like. He said he thought they would each benefit from the $1.5 billion that would be generated here. He said there were two things he was not crazy about, one being that while the affordable housing was there, he wasn’t crazy that it was on a different piece of property, making it able to be identified as the affordable housing buildings. He said he thought they would need to look through that, because while they are trying to do equity work, they didn’t want to be creating inequity in the course of building the project. He said the other thing was the MWSBE, as he felt the number was low; he encouraged him to continue to find ways to get the number higher.

Commissioner Powell said slide two mentioned the community priority on schools; she said that would have a significant impacted on already overcrowded schools. She asked what he was doing to help with this.
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Mr. Curran responded he said he thought the school metric that was used looked at the units that we would have and the children it would produce and how that correlates into the schools and the degree of overcrowding in schools. He said they knew that in the southern portion of our County that there were overcrowded schools. He said it was master planned to accommodate schools in locations where traffic distributions and safety of students was at its peak. He said the apartments would appeal to young individuals then more to the older, so the school-age distribution is a little bit different than the normal calculations that single-family residential would be. He said part of the metric also was what is the contribution. He said this portion of 500 acres had generated $100 million in direct and indirect taxes to the County and not produced a school age child.

Commissioner Powell said she loved the focus on connectivity and greenspace and hoped she would commit to native landscaping.

Commissioner Leake asked if training and education had been a part of his consideration to prepare the community for the jobs that would be there.

Mr. Curran responded yes, we were working with local institutions and high schools in the areas. Northwood itself had about 600 employees with Northwood office and our hospitality function. He said most of their employees were service sector employees, and they worked with them in training programs, and we are very pleased that most of them are with us for a very long time. He said they work with the public transportation systems to ensure those who do not live close by have transportation.

Commissioner Dunlap thanked them for working with the County. He said he was concerned about the MWSBE goal with five percent but that they came in tonight with an eight percent commitment and that he had to acknowledge that it would take some special companies to do that kind of work and it would be more of a challenge. He said he looks forward to them taking the vote.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she was appreciative of the access, which she thinks is the best part of the project that it opens the area to more people. She thought when they get to the place of mixtures of people living together that it would help to desegregate the schools. She said she knows there will be an impact on schools and thanked them for looking at resources on that. She said the tax revenue would help with the schools and that was the number one issue her constituents talk about.

Commissioner Powell said there would be a lot to be excited about, but she is still concerned about how elected leaders make decisions because of the tax base without thinking of the impact, especially on the schools.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to (A) adopt a Resolution approving an Interlocal Agreement with the City of Charlotte for the reimbursement of public improvements to be constructed by a private developer in support of new economic development opportunities by committing 45% of the incremental ad valorem taxes created by the project for a period of fifteen years and (B) authorize the County Manager to execute a contract for the same, with any necessary or helpful nonmaterial changes.

The presentations are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Resolution is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #1.

20-6191: Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance Adoption

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to adopt the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Mecklenburg County Budget Ordinance and request the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education to develop and present a meaningful plan of work by December 2020 designed to achieve the following benchmarks for its students: (1) College and career readiness/academic achievement disparity between white students and students of color to be no greater than 10% by 2024, using test scores from
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2018 as a base year and (2) The annual numeration of how many students who graduate and move on to meaningful employment or higher education using 2018 as a base year.

Commissioner Jerrell said the ability to be specific was extremely important and ability for us to be serious about our intention to close our achievement gap of our black and brown students was important. He said it was also important for CMS to come to us with data showing the needle is moving, and right now, the only moving was into spaces they did not want them, into poverty, jails and other places, and they needed to move them out. Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked what the terms were.

Chair Dunlap responded that when looking at the CMS website it said that every student graduates with a meaningful employment or higher education opportunities, but there was no way to track whether or not that ever happens. He said historically, CMS had always had measurable goals but that you would not know that now. She said Commissioner Leake wants to get back to measurable goals to achieve.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked there would be no holding back money at this point?

Chair Dunlap said no, not for the purpose that she is intending.

Commissioner Cotham congratulated Commissioner Leake for her leadership and advocating for the children.

Commissioner Fuller thanked Commissioner Leake for starting the process. He said people were looking at for transparency and accountability for their kids. He said they needed the needle to be moved. She said in December they would have a plan on how to move the needle for particularly back and brown children forward and then we can talk about the resources we need to achieve the goals. She said all she was asking was for the children to be able to read, write, and do arithmetic.

Commissioner Leake said they talked about racial disparities, and they have been in front of us every day on television. She said they talk about affordable housing, but if they could not read or write, they could not get a job to even but housing. She said there was no accountability and schools in her district for 15 years were still failing.

Chair Dunlap said he was looking forward to this plan to see if we were progressing or not.

Commissioner Jerrell wanted to point out that in District 4 the data points out that 65% of the black kids from kindergarten to 5th grade were at level one and two out of five. He said another school with another 65% level one and two. He said this was to show a sense of urgency, and the trend was the same all across the County when it comes to black students.

Commissioner Harden said part of her wanted to give CMS flexibility to come back with more rigorous goals. She asked if it was the right thing for the Board to pick the goals or for CMS to come back and present their goals.

Commissioner Leake said the educators should be educating the kids, so come up with a plan that is measurable.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she believed the work that CMS was doing was some of the most important work, and she thought they already had a plan and were trying to implement a plan that they had been working on and bring it forward. She said she believed that was their area of expertise and also believed they had been perpetually underfunded by the State. She said she felt it was time to let the commissioners with schools, with lower scores than her districts, to take the lead.

Commissioner Fuller said he was fairly sure when the Board of Education responds they would take the initiative to address other issues or be more rigorous if they had the capacity to do so.
Commissioner Scarborough said they needed another joint meeting with CMS.

Commissioner Powell said the Board wanted literacy for everyone in CMS and hoped they can work with the Board of Education going forward.

The motion carried by the following vote:

**YES:** Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

**NO:** Commissioner Powell

*Note: Approval of the Budget Ordinance will adopt a balanced operating budget of expenditures and revenues for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 as required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act. The Budget Ordinance results in a total budget of $1.9 billion and a property tax rate of 61.69 cents. It reflects the tax rate for the following Law Enforcement Service Districts: Charlotte = 17.81 cents; Cornelius= 22.90 cents; Davidson = 14.32 cents; Huntersville = 15.84 cents; Mint Hill = 15.58 cents; and Pineville at 16.37 cents. Also, the following reflects the tax rates for the fire service districts for the following Extra Territorial Jurisdictions (ETJs): Charlotte = 7.50 cents; Cornelius = 6.12 cents; Davidson = 8.90 cents; Huntersville = 4.56 cents; and, Mint Hill = 7.00 cents.*

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #2.

**20-6190: ITEM REMOVED: Capital Project Ordinances**

This item was removed from the agenda and will be brought back for Board consideration on June 16, 2020.

**20-6177: COVID-19 Response Update**

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on the COVID-19 cases and response in Mecklenburg County. Ms. Harris said there had been 4354 cases of covid-19 in Mecklenburg county, which was an addition of 204 cases today. She said they were seeing significant increase daily in the number of positive cases. She said there had been 97 deaths and were currently 17 long-term care facilities in outbreak status. She said what that represented was a number that had come out of outbreak status and a number that had come in. She understood the concerns about the isolation that people are feeling in the facilities but wanted to reinforce the fact that the virus was very dangerous in the facilities and that they were doing everything they could to manage those situations when they arose. She said they had worked with the State and local emergency preparation to ensure they had the PPE they had needed. She said staff had been pushing the needs forward to make sure they are addressed. She said one of the issues they had continued to have was gowns and that was for everyone, not just long-term care facilities. She said they had still been doing significant testing working with these facilities with both residents and staff who are in outbreak status.

She said they had recently gotten CDC guidance to be able to pickup the testing even quicker. She said MEDIC and the regional healthcare entity had been making visits to some of the facilities who were having the biggest issues to make recommendations. She said staffing had been an issue in long-term care facilities with cross contamination. She said they were continuing to work on those things. She said increased testing had been seen, and CVS opened sites for testing as well. She said case investigation had new software implemented to help with contact tracing. She said they had added 170 staff for contact tracing and case investigation. She said the trends were going up with the percent positive increase being up 9% or 10% over the past 14 days, which is a fairly significant increase for us. She said the hospitals had been seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases as well, but the hospitals are still in good shape and have capacity. She said they had also been seeing continuing decreases in social distancing in the community.
Commissioner Fuller read his proposed resolution for implementing the COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake to adopt a Resolution to form the Mecklenburg County COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what the impact reopening was having. She asked if Mecklenburg County should be in discussion around altering or looking at the plan differently than the way it was being executed through the state based on our population. Ms. Harris said she was not sure that they were far enough through Phase 2 to fully understand the impact that it would have and that unfortunately the events over the last couple of days and lack of social distancing had a potential of having impact. She thought the issue was not so much about having to implement the governor's plan but how people were reacting to the opening up. She said they were at a position of watching the data right now.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what conversations were happening to make sure they were not being reactive instead of proactive.

Ms. Harris said she said they were trying to figure out how best to approach the situation and figure out how best to address those issues. She said those conversations were happening.

Commissioner Harden said it looked like they were on an upswing of hospitalizations. She asked if it was true.

Ms. Harris responded yes.

Commissioner Harden asked if they could require that masks be worn in the community, given the protests that were going on.

Ms. Harris responded that right now they were in the position to abide by the governor’s recommendations in the plan and re-emphasized wearing masks, not requiring.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said there had been many conversations about that and it created a lot of problems for law enforcement in enforcing it. She said it is all about encouraging people and marketing what they need to be doing.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she would like to know if the increase in positives were still coming from the Hispanic community.

Ms. Harris responded that the increases were across the board and not one specific population contributing.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked what Commissioner Fuller's intention was as far as the commissioners’ role in that.

Commissioner Fuller responded that he thought about it and their entire board will appoint the members; he said maybe they would nominate themselves and a City Council person but that it was for future discussion on how to populate the task force.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked when that conversation would happen.

Commissioner Fuller responded he thought it was important to get the structure first. He said it would not be a long time.

Commissioner Fuller asked Ms. Harris if they should be worried about the increased positive cases, decreased social distancing, and increased hospitalizations.

Ms. Harris responded that they should be cautious about this since none of us have immunity. She said the question was if we would be able to manage the level of infection
in the community. She said they should be watching the numbers but that at that point she was not sure they needed to be reacting or even proactively looking at significant changes.

Commissioner Fuller said his suspicion was that they would see more cases getting back to where they started. He asked if he was seeing that wrong.

Ms. Harris responded not necessarily and that she was glad the Governor gave five weeks for Phase 2, as it would give more time to assess the impact of reopening.

Commissioner Powell said it sounded as though they may be in Phase 2 longer than we thought, and youth athletic leagues are in an uproar about not being able to reserve fields. She asked if they could apply for a waiver with a plan for safety in Phase 2.

Ms. Harris responded that she knew some businesses had applied for waivers through the State, and some had been accepted and some had not. She said they were always considered, and whether they were implemented or not depended upon our best decisions on how much people would be exposed by the activity. She said youth activities that are not contact sport, and those were laminated in number, could be participated in. She said the challenge was Park and Rec was not reserving those fields.

Commissioner Powell said she did get a response from Director of Park and Rec and had to represent my constituents and make sure if they had a safety plan that they were considered and lead them to how they could apply for a waiver. She asked if Ms. Diorio still had concerns on the short time frame of the resolution.

Ms. Diorio responded that it depended on what she wanted the task force to do; she said there were concerns of being able to spend the money by December 30, 2020. She said she would need to get with Commissioner Fuller to work through that. She asked if this was something a person would go through the traditional advisory board and apply or if they would be nominated by the Board.

Commissioner Leake asked what they would like for the Health and Human Services Committee to do and that that was why they had committees, to be helpers in the process for the community.

Ms. Harris responded that they had been communicating with the full Board weekly and she knew the committee had not been able to meet, because everything that was going on.

Ms. Diorio said the committee hasn't been meeting and if the committee wanted to meet, they could schedule a meeting of the Health and Service Committee. She said she is happy to do that to share whatever information she wanted to put together in an agenda they would share.

Chair Dunlap asked how long it would take for the cases to show up at testing sites if they caught it in the past few days

Ms. Harris responded about 14 days.

Chair Dunlap recommended a campaign or social media campaign on masks. Requested that Commissioner Fuller meets with Ms. Diorio to get the Task Force started. He recommended a total of 18 people at large and for each commissioner recommend one person.

Commissioner Fuller responded saying he would expect it to be like our other advisory committees with respect to nominations and to be managed by the Clerk. He said the Task Force was not to decide how to spend the CARES act money, as the Board would make those decisions. He said he did not believe they needed to wait for the Task Force in order to decide what to do with the CARES act money.

Chair Dunlap requested for the Manager bring back recommendations.
Commissioner Harden asked if that was related to the CARES Act spending. Chair Dunlap responded yes.

Commissioner Harden said she appreciated the City’s process. She said she hoped for the commissioners to be involved in the funding.

Commissioner Powell said it was really important to have voices from the towns to be included.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

Resolution recorded in full in Minutes/Ordinance Book 49, Document #3.

**DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE**

**STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE**

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE**

**CONSENT ITEMS**

Chair Dunlap took a roll call vote to approve the Consent items that were not pulled from the agenda. The vote was recorded as unanimous to approve the following Consent items:

20-6140: Minutes

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: March 4, 2020 Closed Sessions; March 10, 2020 Budget/Public Policy Meeting; March 11, 2020 Special Meeting; March 17, 2020 Closed Session; March 17, 2020 Regular Meeting; April 7, 2020 Regular Meeting; April 22, 2020 Regular Meeting; May 5, 2020 Regular Meeting; and May 12, 2020 Closed Sessions.

20-6156: Budget Amendment - DSS (Revenue Increase)

Recognize, receive, and appropriate $506,103 from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to the General Grant Fund (G001) within the Department of Social Services for the duration of the funding period.

*Note: Mecklenburg County has been allocated Families First Coronavirus Response Act nutrition funds in the amount of $506,103 to support meal services to vulnerable seniors during this unprecedented time. This funding will pay for meal services not only to homebound seniors but also for meal delivery to congregate seniors who need nutrition support when nutrition sites are closed. To date, there are 1101 homebound seniors and 574 congregate program seniors receiving home-delivered meals. It is anticipated that this number will increase in the coming months as more older adults in the community face hardship and require nutrition support. These funds will support this effort and must be spent by September 30, 2021.*

20-6159: Budget Amendment - DSS (Revenue Increase)

(A) Amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in Federal IV-E Revenue of $885,750 in the General Fund (0001) within the Department of Social Services and (B) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $2,321 in State funds from the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) for the Project Care Grant in General Fund (0001) within the Department of Social Services.
20-6173: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $5,273.50 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $185,888.58 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action was necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of taxpayer recipients was on file with the Clerk to the Board.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.

20-6132: Grant Application - Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Bulletproof Vest Program (Sheriff's Office)

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application to the Bureau of Justice Assistance - Bulletproof Vest Program - for reimbursement of the purchase cost of bulletproof vests up to 50% of cost or $30,923. (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the amount awarded to the General Grants Fund (G001) within the Sheriff's Office for the duration of the grant.

20-6147: Budget Amendment - Sheriff's Office - Revenue Increase

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2019-2020 budget ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $205,000 from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (DPS) to the General Fund (0001) within the Sheriff's Office, (B) amend the 2019-2020 budget ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $125,000 in federal revenue to the General Fund (0001) within the Sheriff's Office and (C) approve a carry-forward and appropriation to FY 2021 of $125,000 to purchase a Mail Screener.

Note: (A) Overtime expenditures within the Sheriff's Office have increased significantly the last quarter with much of the increase associated with Juvenile Detention Officer training certification being conducted by DPS. The State did not agree to a two-week Detention Officer Certification Course that was proposed because of duplication in course content in lieu of their four-week course. As a result, we have expended a significant amount of money for overtime for thirty staff to attend three different training sessions from January to April. DPS has agreed to supplement the additional overtime with a reimbursement up to $285,000. (B) The Sheriff's Office requested a Mail Screener to inspect mail to prevent contraband/drugs from being introduced into the Detention Facility. Because of budget constraints, the Mail Screener was not recommended for funding as part of the Manager's FY21 recommended budget. The Sheriff's Office is requesting the appropriation of $125,000 in federal revenue to purchase the Mail Screener in the current year. Based on current projections, we conservatively project a $1.0 million increase in federal revenue over the FY20 budget. (C) Due to purchasing requirements and guidelines for FY 2020 equipment purchases over $100,000, there is not enough time to ensure that the purchase of the Mail Screener can be finalized in the current fiscal year.

20-6154: Set a Public Hearing for Closing the Right-of-Way for Mallaranny Road

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to (A) set a public hearing for July 7, 2020 to hear all interested parties who appear with respect to closing all of the right-of-way for Mallaranny Road. (B) adopt resolution declaring intent to close right-of-way for Mallaranny Road.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #4.
20-6155: Budget Amendment - Community Support Services

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate $45,000 for user fees in General Grants Fund (G001) within Community Support Services Department that will be used in conjunction with HUD (Housing and Urban Development) funding for the administration of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Note: The user fees are costs to homeless/housing service agencies for Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) licenses. Each agency is billed based on the cost per license/per user. The user fees in the amount of $45,000 will be collected from partner agencies to fund the administration of the HMIS system. User fees will be budgeted in the multi-year grant unit with HUD funds.

20-6160: Grant Positions - Criminal Justice Services

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to authorize two grant funded full-time positions, resourcing existing MacArthur Foundation grant funds in the Criminal Justice Services Department.

Note: Criminal Justice Services is requesting authorization of two additional positions to be funded via this grant. The Criminal Justice Case Manager will report to and support the Pretrial team. The MH Licensed Clinician will report and support the Forensic Evaluation Unit. Both positions will assist with improving the success rates of defendants referred to supervision who are high-risk/high need. The licensed clinician and case manager will provide more clinically focused supervision to better meet the needs of clients to reduce their risk of failure and jail readmission while on Pretrial Supervision. These positions will continue the work of the Safety and Justice Challenge by enhancing the existing services offered by our Pretrial Services staff to better address the needs of clients who are at an increased risk of failure and expanding the use of evidence-based supervision practices to create holistic and supportive case management services. By hiring a licensed mental health clinician and case manager to create a more streamlined engagement and supervision process for high risk, high need defendants released to Pretrial Supervision, defendants will receive tailored services to address underlying issues related to their failure risk, including immediate housing, transportation for court hearings, medication, and referrals to address behavioral health issues. This new supervision team will create an opportunity for a fluid continuum of supervision services for clients as needed, such that they may be served by both the enhanced unit and the core unit, as necessary to support their success. To better address and reduce the risk of failure among defendants in the core supervision unit, training on evidence-based case management practices and implementation of procedurally just practices will be implemented under this application, as well.

20-6161: FY21 Proposed Funding Allocation Plan - Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (CJS)

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller and carried unanimously to (A) recognize, receive and appropriate FY21 Department of Public Safety-Division of Juvenile Justice Funds in the amount of $2,051,713 for the Department of Criminal Justice Services to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant and (B) approve FY21 Funding allocation plan as recommended by the Mecklenburg County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council in the amount of $2,051,713.

Note: The JCPC is charged with reviewing the needs of juveniles within the community who are delinquent or at-risk of becoming court-involved, assessing local services needs and presenting an annual service proposal to the BOCC. The JCPC would like to allocate funds to programs that meet the needs of juveniles in our community.
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20-6162: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase/Decrease)

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to approve a decrease of $21,513 state revenue to the General Fund (0001) for Food and Lodging within the Health Department, (B) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to approve an increase of $17,000 federal revenue to the General Fund (0001) for Community Linkages to Care of Overdose Prevention and Response within the Health Department and (C) recognize, receive, and appropriate $314,879 of federal revenue from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) to the General Grant Fund (G001) within the Health Department for the Ryan White program.

Note: (A) The North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH) awards state funds to the Health Department programs. The Health Department received notification of decreased funding of $21,513 for the Food and Lodging program. The funding allows Environmental Health program to implement state-mandated sanitation regulations. (B) The North Carolina Division of Public Health (DPH) awards Federal funds to the Health Department to support some public health programs. The Health Department received notification of increased funding of $17,000 for the Community Linkages to Care of Overdose Prevention and Response. The funding enables local health departments to implement the project for community-based programs to prevent fatal and non-fatal opioid overdoses, increase access and linkages to care services for the most vulnerable populations and build local capacity to respond to the overdose crisis in North Carolina.

20-6163: Construction Contract - CMGC Renovations

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to award a construction contract to Place Services, Inc. in the amount of $3,994,656.

Commissioner Harden directed the Board's attention to the MWSBE utilization for the item. She said at the Economic Development Committee meeting held earlier in the day one of the discussions highlighted how important it is that the Commissioners set a standard and an expectation about MWSBE utilization. She said she wanted to highlight we have a long way to go. She said she wanted to make sure that we recognize that we have to start making higher bars for our projects, especially the ones that we have control over; these are renovations within our own building.

Commissioner Fuller said he saw that also and was incredibly disappointed by it, but he thought that we’ve got to make those expectations real when we are talking about the selection. So, I would encourage the Board to make these decisions earlier to ensure we get vendors earlier that do not come to us with 0% for MWSBE.

Chair Dunlap said in some cases we do have job specific opportunity and there is no minority contractor available, it’s the same thing as sole source.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

Note: This contract is for renovations to the County’s occupied floors in the CMGC. Renovations include reconfiguration of workspaces, new finishes, lighting, and Audio-Visual upgrades. The County occupies space on the 11th floor, half of the 4th floor and part of the 2nd floor. Temporary renovations will occur on the 4th floor to provide workspace for occupants currently on the 11th floor during construction on the 11th floor. Once renovations are complete on the 11th floor, the 4th floor will be renovated for the relocation of the Economic Development Office from the CMGC 2nd floor and the Public Information Department from the Valerie C. Woodard Center. The 2nd floor will then be renovated into a conference suite.
This project was advertised in the Charlotte Post on April 2, 2020, the Charlotte Observer on April 5, 2020, and the North Carolina Interactive Purchasing System website on April 2, 2020. A pre-bid meeting was held on April 23, 2020. Eleven bids were received and opened on May 7, 2020. Based on the lump sum base bid, plus contingency allowance, and Alternate No. 1 to replace existing ceiling tiles and grid with new, the low bidder is Place Services, Inc. in the amount of $3,994,656. Anticipated MWSBE Utilization: Prime Contractor: MBE 0%; WBE 0%; SBE 0%; Sub-Contractors: MBE 17%; WBE 4%; SBE 18%.

20-6165: Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Positions – Ending the HIV Epidemic Grant

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to recognize, receive, and appropriate $850,000 and approve the creation of 3 fulltime positions funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) - Ending the HIV Epidemic grant in the General Grant fund G001.

20-6170: Budget Amendment - Carryforward of Unspent Under Armour Funding

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Powell and carried unanimously to amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance for the General Fund (0001) to allow the carryforward of unspent funds from 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance for Park and Recreation for programming related to the Under Armour Project which remain available at June 30, 2020 up to $25,000.

20-6175: Grant Application - DSS - Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) ACT

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to (A) affirm the application to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for the Federal CARES Act Grant for the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services for Fiscal Year 2020 through 2022 in the General Grant Fund (G001) for up to the amount of $4,095,288 (B) recognize, receive, and appropriate the amount awarded from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) to the General Grants Fund (G001) within the Department of Social Services for the duration of the grant.

Note: The North Carolina Department of Transportation - Integrated Mobility Division released the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) application. Funds are available to rural, large, and small urban transportation systems to continue providing services and assist with operating expenses for items including staff, supplies, and other related transportation operating expenses. As a recipient of 5307 funds, Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS) is eligible to apply for these funds. The term for the grant is from January 20, 2020 to June 20, 2022 and the grant is 100% reimbursable.

20-6189: Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Fee Ordinance for FY2021

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Powell and carried unanimously to approve revisions to the Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Fee Ordinance.

Note: Annually, LUESA Solid Waste proposes to change the Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Fee Ordinance by revising certain fees in the Solid Waste Program area to respond to inflation and contract service fees charged to Mecklenburg County. These changes include but are not limited to: 1. continue implementation of the incremental multi-year fee plan developed in FY2017. 2. no increase to the volumetric fees for residential customers who use County Drop-Off Centers; changes will now allow residents to drop up to 5 bags of yard waste at no charge. 3. increasing the fees for non-residential/out of county customers who use County Drop Centers from $65 to $75 annually. 4. increase the disposal fee for use of the Speedway Landfill by $1.10 per ton, pursuant to contractual required increases.

Ordinance recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #5.
COMMISSIONER REPORTS

20-6178: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Jerrell said he thought everyone’s heart was heavy from what they witness and offered his condolences to the Floyd family and was sick that they were back in a space of protesting another tragedy in this country. He said somehow, someway this one had really pricked the way of people not only in the country by around the world and that he was glad about that and forced to face ourselves and talk about the systemic and institutional structures that create barriers that perpetuate racism and inequity. He said he was glad to see so many joining the fight and lifting their voices and had not been just black people but all races and multi-cultural support. He said he appreciates his colleagues for having given him support and allowing him to vent and share his frustrations. He wanted the public to know he was frustrated, hurt, and angry, that he did not condone rioting and looting, but he understood the anger. He said he did not find it productive and that everyone should be constructive and not destructive. He said he also knew that as an elected official he had a tremendous responsibility to be a voice for those people, speaking on their half, and to do everything that he could to level the playing field, setting the conditions that could actually change lives. He said while they had gone through this, they had put together some tremendous budgets that could change lives. He said he had taken a victory lap in many cases and hadn’t followed up to make sure those voices he heard on Friday night while walking the street with tear gas around me and the chaos, he realized there was a lot more work to do, and tonight and in the future they are really challenged to make the change they are talking about, which was more than putting a line item down and letting it go. He said they have to listen and be a voice, and that when he thought of George Floyd, he thought of Trayvon Martin, Eric Gardner, Philando Castile, Sandra Bland, and Keith Lamont Scott. He said he thought they had a golden opportunity with this Board to really implement substantive change and challenges them all. He said they would need to get down and get to those who did not have a voice to get into the spaces they operate in in a consistent basis. He said his heart was heavy and challenged them to make those changes.

Commissioner Harden said there was a piece in the Charlotte Observer where many constituents sent a message to their black neighbors. She read, A Message to Our Black Neighbors, “we feel outrage, grief, disgust, and remorse. We stand with you in hurlement and weariness. We are fed up; it is time. We confess our complicity inertia and timidity. We own our responsibility right now. With God’s help, we will change ourselves and with you, we will change our institutions and our community.” She said tonight, she wanted to speak directly to District 5, her district. She said those words must be accompanies by our deeds. No more business as usual; we live in neighborhoods that were the standard for what redlining looked like. She said when the protest came to Myers Park, it came there, because that was the first redlined neighborhood of our community. She said they must change and that words must be accompanied with deeds. She said that required a two-step process, the first step that they have to tell the truth. She said the second thing was that they had to reconcile their complicity. She said they needed a truth and reconciliation process, where they tell the truth and we reconcile what we have done. She said she felt the had to ask their selves from that point forward what they were changing and make sure they were telling the truth and reconciling their complicity in the process. She said she appreciated Commissioner Jerrell’s comments and they had spent a lot of time on the phone in past couple of days. She said she appreciated the Board and budget they had adopted, because she honestly believed it was not business as usual; it identified racial disparities was the number one priority and to put significant dollars behind addressing food deserts and racial health disparities and workforce development, and disparities in parks and rec. She said she is really proud of those investments as they were a step in the right direction. She said continue to listen and they would continue to work hard. She said with God’s help, they will change their selves.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the week had been one of the hardest she had experienced as an elected leader, to had seen so much pain and so many crying out for change. She said she had seen it in every face she looked into and that George Floyd’s
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death was a tragedy and symbol of so much that had gone wrong in the Country and that
er her colleagues and her recognize that racism was a public crisis in so many ways, and
they wanted to take real steps to address it. She said people wanted to make that moment
to matter and not be in vein. She said the local government budget is their biggest
responsibility and where the people had elected them to act on the reforms, they believed
in. She said that was where they lived up to their ideals and why they were meant to be
there then at that point in time. She said it was clear to hear that they could not go on with
business-as-usual thinking, and they must be bold in response to their many issues that
plagued them as a community, especially as they had faced a public health crisis, turned
economic crisis, turned everything is now a crisis. She said they had to respond to the
moment in our history with new ideas and innovative thinking and they must utilize the
funds they had to provide the services that shake the future. She said that was their
chance and moment to see if they could be bold and aspire to more. She said it was not
the time to play it safe, that they could be smart about how they would use the moment
to their advantage to shape the future and that was why they were proud of the budget
and all they tried to incorporate into It having known racial disparity was their number one
priority before the uprisings came along.

She added that she thought with the hourly-paid, CMS workers' issue, it got pulled into
the entire budget and did not get talked about. She said she thought it was regrettable
how they got there and wished they could have had the conversation that could have
been brought up at the last meeting they had with CMS on May 13, 2020, when they
reiterated their three-phase proposal at that time. She said she did not think they made
an issue of it at that time but that having said that, she said she was in support of the
hourly workers getting to $15 an hour in the budget year. She said she was in support of
them not waiting another year and another year based on their declining revenues. She
said those were people who deserve a base wage that is the same as the base wage of
other government workers in the community. She said it was hard to get there, followed
by yes but that it was right. She said it was the reset button and that it was painful to
press. She mentioned making a motion for the County to forgo their raises in light of the
raises from last year. She said at most, she was in support of targeted raises for the
workers who were paid below their peers in the private sector and who were on the
frontlines in the COVID-19 response. She said she had also made a motion that
Commissioners and executive staff also not received raises and that the motion failed.
She said the truth of the matter was that their budgets would be stressed due to the
pandemic for quite some time to come but that they could not continue down the past of
business as usually, that they must take the lead, set the course, and shape the future
with full intention to live up to their ideals. She said she believed without the critical
investments in the hourly workers and in the new budget, they would be coasting to the
same outcomes they had now and that was not acceptable.

Commissioner Cotham said it had been a very difficult week after many difficult weeks of
just the pandemic, like we thought it couldn’t have gotten worse but then it did. She said
to the protesters that she saw them, heard them, mourned with them and wished she
could be with them. She said all the protests had brought her back in thought to the
1960’s. She said she remembered the urban unrest in the 1960’s, probably beginning with
1965 with the riots in Los Angeles. She said in 1968, after Martin Luther King was
assassinated, there were four days of riots. She said in Washington, D.C 1 people died,
and Washington D.C. was on fire. She said she had thought about those days, needed
support, and listened to the speech of Bobby Kennedy from when he told people in
Indianapolis of Martin Luther King being assassinated his remarkable words lifted me.
She said they had not been lifted by leaders like that in Washington but that she knew
when she watched that again. She mentioned he died 90 days later, as he was
assassinated as well. She said she had been touched as she listened to her colleagues
speak from the heart. She said the tragic death of George Floyd touched a nerve probably
closest to the death of Emmett Till in the mid-1950’s. She said he will be remembered
along with so many others who had been unjustly killed by racism and asked to remember
the children who were going through this without having the historical background, since
the children had been watching what is going on from television and will remember this.
She asked what they were doing to help them understand, despite there being really no
understanding of this. She said they were confused from already missing friends and
teachers, then see their parents and relatives glued to the television and see things uptown. She said they had to reach out to them, because they would have so many children who would be experiencing depression or PTSD from all of this if we do not talk to them or help them understand that they would be okay. She said she prays for the Country and City and asks God to help us, as past generations had gotten through difficult problems and they would too.

Commissioner Fuller said he thought about the fact that race and the problem of racism was America’s original sin that they had yet to [inaudible] for and that what he was on video, undeniable, the power of the law, taking a life of a black man on the street, who did not wake up that morning believing he would not making it through the day, with his breath having been taken away from power of the law. He said it was heavy because he deals with the law, as it is his profession. He said he thought about when he was out on the street, he would not get the change to give his resume or say he attended college and law school, had a law degree, practices law in three different states, served as County Commissioner and had served as Chair of the County Commission. He said he would not get to say any of that when on the street stopped by a police officer and he worried about how in just a split second, life could be snuffed out, merely because the color of your skin.

He said he just celebrated a birthday Sunday, and there was a lot of transition in his life now with his daughter going to college, son being in college and that they told him a couple of days ago his son had been stopped in his neighborhood twice and that his heart seized up just having heard that. He said he put that together with what happened to George Floyd, Philando Castillo and said in a split second. He said he believed they had to protest but that it was not enough. He said they had to make a difference and that talking about it was not enough, because they actually had to do the work. He said he was proud of the budget they mad current year, because he believed it would make a difference and that the story had not been told of what they put in that budget, not one single news paper article. He said it wasn’t seen, because it was not sexy, but that was the kind of work that had to be done, and that they would no get credit for all the things they did, but they had to be satisfied that they were making ad difference. He said he must have a sense of hold that things would get better at some point. He said you have to vote in November and end the madness in Washington. He said he prays for the community, his family, the family of others that some how they could find their ways together to make it a better place. He said America is still a great place and wouldn’t live anywhere else in the World, but that there was a lot of work to do, and he hopes they do that.

Commissioner Scarborough said she was delighted to have passed the budget. She said she was definitely where Commissioner Fuller was as things that are going on. She mentioned she was there during the Orangeburg and the Sumpter massacres and was in jail for two and three nights so every time she heard this stuff it brought back memories. She said may God continue to bless the folk who do not understand.

Commissioner Powel said she had provided her comments during the invocation.

Commissioner Leake thanked Dr. Woods and Rev. Boyd for their bravery to come speak before the public about a budget that was needed to make sure black and brown children would get an education. She said she was mad and couldn’t help but had been mad from experiences that were had. She said she had thought about her ancestors who were brought there and were not asked to come. She said they were still enslaved, and if someone did not believe it, to keep living. She said as a black woman, you suffer more, as there is a resentment and dislike. She said they work hard for the Democratic Party but that they do not head anything. She said she was upset with all of it as she had lived it before and would keep living it every 10 or 15 years and to hear the same rhetoric over and over of we must change and do better, but when would it come and how would it come? She said when you have a group of people who perceive you are troublemaker, because you speak up for your people, that she was going to keep speaking up for her people and that others would like her or not like her but she would still do the work she was sent there to do. She said out there protesting, yes, they need to protest; jobs are scarce. She said housing was scarce, and non-profit organizations were always headed by white people and her thing was that if you do not have poor people, they do not have
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a job; that was a fact. She said they had been begging to get food in the desert over the years and still did not have it. She said where they live was still not clean and they were talking about going to a Ballantyne and doing something and you drive through Lincoln Heights, Beatties Ford Road, off of Highway 16, anywhere you drive in the black neighborhood, paper needs picking up, and there were problems in the community that they had yet to settle for and it was about race. She said it was all about the color of your skin.

She said she was sick and tired of being sick and tired of talking about it, because that was all they wanted to do. She said there had to be some degree of accountability and they always wanted to quote Martin Luther King. She said yes, the people killed him, disrespected him when he lived, but every time you turn around it is something about what he had said, but had we helped make it a reality? She said she remembered the riots and Bobby Kennedy was killed in California. She said she remembered when the former president in 1963 was assassinated. She said it is [inaudible] who want to make a difference who never get to live to see it happen. She said they are still a segregated community; the children are segregated, and it was the worst segregation of the schools in the history of this community, and they were still segregated. She said she had some real problem to talk about in venting and that yes, they talk, but the next morning, it would be business as usual. She said she had learned to live with it and that man have said they did not like her, because she talked too much, but she said she had something to talk about. She said she had a story to tell, and she had lived a lonely life when it came to have dealt with people who resent the very fact that you wanted to speak up for your people. She said it was still there, that they wouldn't talk to her, laughed at her, criticized her, laughed at her because she pulled consent items. She said she would continue to pull consent items.

Chair Dunlap said he had his own personal struggled and believed he understood better than a lot of people, of why people were mad and upset. He thanked his colleagues for allowing the privilege to steer the ship, as he had served in government for 24 years and had never been prouder of a budget than he was this year. He thought some things that were put into the budget would create systemic change, the kind they had been talking about. He said the interesting thing about it was that people would not hear about it or see it, because people who were in the position to share, will not share it. He said there was a sweet relief in knowing they made a difference. He said he grieved, not just for George Floyd but for all of those who came before him; he said you never get use to the fact that there is another one. He said the question is what would change and when would it change.

He said in talking to young people, he understood their frustration, that they grew up with a sense of fairness and that was one of their issues is that he expects people to be fair. He said he had learned that when people want what they want, fairness would go out of the window. He said in thinking about how some of the school board members treated them when they wanted to be fair to people who had been left behind for such a long period of time. He said they called out to Calvary in an attempt to pressure them to do what they wanted them to do, when all they needed to do was the hard work. He said a lot of the elected officials want to be elected but not do the hard work. He said they would make them work for their children, which was the job they asked for and would make them treat their employees fairly. He said that was what young people saw when they show unfairness. He said if he had committed a murder, on a public street in front of a lot of people, he would have been arrested immediately and that people were upset because it took days and hours for people to have even considered making an arrest when that had happened was so obviously. He said it only took probable cause and that was a reasonable belief by reasonable people that a crime had been committed, so why did it take so long? He said when people had to look at that, they saw the injustice, and it had happened time and time again. He said when BBQ Becky called the police about a young man having a cookout in the park, to tell how fearful she was of a man who simply asked to put her dog on a leash. He said he understood why people were angry and upset. He said he had a conversation with his son, who has three sons, and his son said he understood now why he had yelled at him for not making a complete stop at the traffic light. He said it was because he knew he should not give police officers one reason to stop him and that he now appreciated that lesson. He said there was a lot of work they
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would need to do, and the Board was prepared to do it, as they had started tonight by making decisions that would have significant impact on the community, now, and into the future.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:16 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk
George Dunlap, Chair
Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely for a Budget/Public Policy meeting on Tuesday, June 9, 2020 at 2:30 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent: Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller

Absent Until Noted: Commissioners Patricia “Pat” Cotham and Ella B. Scarborough

Commissioner Cotham arrived at 2:32 p.m.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

20-6214: Update on Raise the Age and Juvenile Detention

Dena Diorio, County Manager, introduced Mecklenburg County Sherriff McFadden and Dr. Keith Cradle, Director of Youth/Juvenile Services.

Sherriff McFadden made an introductory statement.

Dr. Keith Cradle, Director of Youth/Juvenile Services, gave an update on the Raise the Age for juvenile offenders, stating the change would occur following the implementation on December 1, 2019 of the state’s Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act, which was commonly referred to as “Raise the Age.” He said the new law increased the age of juvenile court jurisdiction to include most crimes, other than motor vehicle offenses, committed by 16- and 17-year-olds, who would have been prosecuted and held in custody as adults. MCSO began housing juveniles on December 23, 2019. He stated this was the first step toward keeping Mecklenburg County families as close to and connected to their child as possible, while providing the very best programming, educational opportunities, and physical and mental health services they could, for those young people who were unfortunately in custody.

Dr. Cradle stated that for now, juveniles under the age of 16 who were charged in Mecklenburg County and ordered to be held in secure confinement would continue to be housed outside of Mecklenburg, most often in neighboring Cabarrus County. He said Sheriff McFadden stated they were optimistic that their partnership with DPS, and the Juvenile Justice Section would be positive and that they would explore expanding our services to younger residents down the line. He also said Sheriff McFadden remarked that it was all about doing what was in the best interest of the Mecklenburg County families, to the extent they could.

Dr. Cradle started off speaking about the Sheriff Department’s response to COVID-19,
stating that legal visitation would continue; however, there would be no contact. All juveniles being admitted into the facility were screened for potential coronavirus symptoms and all juveniles were screened prior to all transportation for illnesses, coughs, and fevers. He stated juveniles with any symptoms of the coronavirus would be isolated, and non-essential volunteers were denied access into the facility. He stated cleaning had increased throughout the facility and additional hand-sanitizer dispensers had been placed in high-volume areas, and they provided education on coronavirus and how to protect themselves as well as were given masks.

**Commissioner Scarborough arrived at 2:39 p.m.**

Dr. Cradle went over Facility/Staffing Updates, stating it was a 72-bed facility, and there were currently 23 juveniles assigned, and 65 officers who went through JJO Training and completed State exam and were now assigned to the facility. They are full service and perform intakes and releases. He said the facility would begin PREA Accreditation process in April.

Dr. Cradle reviewed the intentional alignment with County’s Plan as it related to their programming efforts, which involved the creation and development efforts to advance equity-based initiatives by having developed and launched in-house Implicit Bias training specific to the criminal justice system; worked with community organizations; worked with local JCPC and other criminal justice partners to identify additional areas of engagement, and the North Carolina Department of Public Safety Juvenile Justice had agreed to increase the rate for housing juveniles from $122 to $153.38, which was the current federal rate. The fiscal year 2020 revenue estimate for approximately seven months was $415,000 and more due to the Sheriff accepting 15-year old juveniles and revenue at 72-bed capacity estimated to be approximately $4 million.

Dr. Cradle reviewed current costs, stating the fiscal year 2019 cost per day for Detention Center North was $296.48/day and included direct and indirect cost, and the direct Sheriff’s Office cost was $237.58/day. He said FY2020 would include adult and juvenile cost since transition occurred on December 1, 2019, and the FY2020 cost per day would be higher because of the additional overtime expenditures to train the juvenile detention officers. He said the FY2020 budget for CMS was $545,995. They recently received contract for FY 2020 and said the FY2020 CMS request was for $658,000 and the FY2021 budget had $0.00 dollars appropriated to CMS in the Sheriff’s Office budget. Mr. Cradle stated they were currently working with CMS to define service-level expectations.

Dr. Cradle stated that as of June 1st, they were accepting 15-year-old juveniles, and they added two additional staff and were hiring the Recreation and Re-entry Coordinator soon. He said that the youth would be housed at North and Central and that the juvenile resident pods were in the process of having the paint updated. He said there was an 8:1 offender/officer ratio, wet cells, and natural light. He went over the youth uniform changes, stating they changed out the uniforms from jumpsuits to polos, khakis, and sneakers, and they also purchased recreational uniforms, which eliminate all jumpsuits in the facility.

Dr. Cradle reviewed what the ongoing challenges were, stating training staff who had a wide range of education and experiences and who typically had little training in behavioral principles and practices of positive behavioral interventions and supports. He stated the number of youth assigned to the facility changed frequently as new youth arrive and current youth complete their detention and were sent home or to other programs.

Dr. Cradle reviewed the service continuum needs, stating they continued to seek support from County/Community agencies tasked with working with juveniles, better data sharing across juvenile justice involved agencies; and time for data collection to provide sufficient outcomes. He stated it held great promise as a means to move from a correctional mindset that focused on punishment to one that supports and encourages positive change, in youth and the staff that serve them, and those changes endured not only through practices but changes in public policy and attitudes driven in our greater community.

Dr. Cradle responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.
Commissioner Scarborough asked how they could get involved.

Commissioner Harden expressed concern about the isolation involved with COVID-19 and mentioned how young people needed interaction. She asked what they were doing about their mental health.

Dr. Cradle responded that there were two CSS workers on staff day and night and weekends.

Chair Dunlap said they met last year with CMS relative to the education of the residents at the jail. He said what they learned was that the state and county paid for the residents to go to school and their school location changed from their primary school to their jail facility, and they expected the funding would follow them just like any other student in the district. He said what they were finding was the CMS was charging the Sherriff additional money for students they were already paying for. He said if they had not resolved that, maybe they needed to have another meeting, because they would not pay twice.

Sherriff McFadden invited the Board to visit the MCSO at any time and in wrapping up, he stated they wanted to take care of the kids first.

20-6215: Equity and Inclusion Update

Phin Xaypangna, Equity and Inclusion Manager, gave an equity and inclusion update, stating it was a difficult time to present to the Board with the impact in the communities of color, COVID-19, and now George Floyd’s death and the protest for injustice, it really has taken [inaudible] in how they pursue their equity work. She said the equity action plan was a start for a path forward, but at the same time, recognizing the areas of need where they could make a greater impact.

Ms. Xaypangna reviewed the development of the action plan, stating the County Manager made a commitment that they would look at their operational policies and practices from an equity lense. She said that from this, her position was created. She said that last year, a part of their number one priority was to reduce racial disparity, so it was a priority at all levels of the organization. She said that in April 2019, the County adopted its equity vision, which was that they envisioned all people in Mecklenburg County would have an equitable opportunity to thrive in the workplace and in the community.

Ms. Xaypangna said in light of recent events, she wanted to ensure they were grounded in their thinking and how they referred to the terms and concepts. Individual racism would be bigotry or discrimination by an individual based on race. Institutional racism would be policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently. Structural racism would be history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color. She gave examples of each one.

Ms. Xaypangna spoke about implementing best national practices of normalizing, organizing, and operationalizing. She went over why they lead with race, because racial inequities were deep and pervasive, and it encompassed every institution and system; racial anxiety was on the rise, and race was often an elephant in the room. She said they must normalize the conversation. She said learning an institutional and structural approach could be used with other areas of marginalization and mentioned that specificity mattered. She said they needed to be race focused, but not exclusive with always bring an “intersectional” analysis.

Ms. Xaypangna said that working within the institution to ensure that race would no longer play a predictive role in determining how well people did in American society. She said they have heard a lot about racial inequity and also thought it was important that they thought about what they would aspire to do, which was racial equity, where they would eliminate racial inequity [inaudible] for everyone. She stated that a goal was not just to close the gaps, because they did not want to just make it equally bad for everyone. She said they had to be able to target strategies to focus improvements for those who were
worse off and move beyond services and focus on changing policies, institutions, and structure. She said that often times, when people were thinking on closing the gaps, they were thinking in terms of treating symptoms, not causes, and as a result, end up talking about programs and services; while programs and services were critically important, they would never be sufficient to achieve racial equity unless they addressed policy, institution, and structure.

Ms. Xaypangna stated that back in FY18, they launched their work. They did a county-wide equity assessment, which created a baseline. She said at the same time, they trained over 250 from county leadership. She said they spend about nine months with the equity team to develop the Equity Action Plan, which was completed in FY19. She showed the Board who the members of the Equity Core Team were. She said they had a representative from every, single department, and the individuals were part of her team that was helping to advocate for the work that needed to go on outside of the department. She said they used the equity assessment and worked with the Equity Core Team to develop five pilot projects were integrated into the equity action plan, and 90% of the plan came from the pilot projects. She said they also benchmarked against other jurisdictions, cities such as Seattle, Austin, Asheville, Portland, and others. She said these were the ones leading the way in advancing racial equity. She said they spent quite a bit of time working with the cabinet to insure they were on board and helped to envision what it was they wanted to do with the equity action plan. She said all of that collectively became the plan.

A short video was displayed.

Ms. Xaypangna stated the plan was a critical start, and they were focusing internally, looking at policy practice and processes in terms of their structure. She said they did have a couple of strategies and actions that focused on external things in areas such as inclusive engagement partnerships. She said each goal strategy action item had accountability, community indicators, organizational performance measures, and a timeline. She said for the vision that all people in Mecklenburg County have an equitable opportunity to thrive they hoped to accomplish the following: that all hiring practices were equitable and provide better outcome for all employees; that all employees would have opportunity to advance, especially people of color who have not had those opportunities; all employees were given the skills and tools to advance racial equity; communities of color were engaged in the process; race was not a determinant of health outcome, especially for those serving the CRC; small businesses, businesses of color, and non-profit organizations were sharing in economic prosperity; all residents live and adjust in an equitable community where race did not project outcome in the criminal justice system; and that they have an infrastructure to hold their selves accountable and to sustain equity work as they recognize that it was a journey. She stated there were 61 action items and for FY20 and FY21 an FY22, she would be bringing one or two items in each of the goals.

Ms. Xaypangna recognized that for the last four or five months, they had been pretty much on hold for a lot of their work and once they were back to the new normal, they would start looking at where they were in terms of the timeline and what needed to be adjusted. She reviewed the FY20 action items, which were all in progress: establish annual accountability agreement with department directors incorporating into work plan; establish department equity action teams to support the development of the department specific equity action plans; provide introductory one day Advancing Racial Equity to all employees; develop Customized Racial Equity Toolkit and train mid-senior management on tool usage on policies/practices/procedures; assess options for increasing community participation during BOCC meetings; formalize community engagement in the BOCC’s budgetary process to ensure traditional marginalized groups are included in the process; incorporate a holistic system of care service model to include linkage to resources not included in CRC; provide feedback using equity lens on the MWSBE program evaluation and disparity study; and develop and launch an online Implicit Bias Training specific to the criminal justice system. She said drew attention to the formalized community engagement in the BOCC budgetary process to insure the traditionally marginalized groups were included in the process. She said she believed that there was some more work to be done in that particular action item.
Ms. Xaypangna reviewed FY21 action items, such as: develop an automated process to track, analyze and enforce existing practice of having a diverse interview panels by gender/race; ensure all hiring interview panel participants complete interviewing skills training, including an Implicit Bias Association self-assessment; work with departments to develop programs that allow cross-training opportunities within and across departments; use the racial equity tool to review HR policies and procedures regarding recruitment compensation, and update as needed; collect demographics representation baseline on existing County Advisory boards, identify gaps and develop approaches to address gaps; assess current community engagement efforts and develop Countywide Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Framework; and evaluate the Small Business Loan Program’s data and results.

Ms. Xaypangna reviewed FY22 action items, such as: study the feasibility of establishing Employee Resource Groups; identify and connect departments to partner with community colleges, universities, the Community to County Mentorship program and other local organizations that serve people of color without college degrees to help identify potential job candidates; work with departments to develop programs that allow cross-training opportunities within and across departments; use the racial equity tool to review HR policies and procedures regarding recruitment compensation, and update as needed; develop enterprise wide Language Access Plan to ensure equitable access to County services, programs, and activities for residents with limited English proficiency.

Ms. Xaypangna reviewed ongoing/annual action items, such as: provide ongoing learning to further operationalize equity; conduct biennial employee equity survey; convene partnership summits and community training to advance racial equity; review and develop recruiting strategies and source based on HR’s EEO Plan for Hispanics/Latinos; conduct internal job fairs to introduce employees to opportunities across departments; continue to review and include health data for future CRC service provisions for space recommendations; review and provide feedback on opportunities for improved standards and processes for data collection and reporting of MWSBE procurement data; and work with Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC), CJAG and other criminal justice partnering agencies to identify additional areas of engagement related specifically to issues of racial inequity.

Ms. Xaypangna said they conducted two townhalls addressing the impacts of communities of color with COVID-19 and their partners, the City of Charlotte, CBI, and Norsan Media. She said that went really well and that they realized people wanted to be engaged in the process, especially when you see the health disparities in every indicator of success. She said for employees, they continued virtual connection with Equity Core Team to keep members engaged, receive feedback, and share resources and shifting to Racial Equity Webinar Series to increase their skills/learning in advancing racial equity. She said the employees wanted to be engaged with this work and that for the protest and civil unrest they provided a Joint statement with their partners: City of Charlotte, Race Matters for Juvenile Justice & Community Building Initiative. In conjunction with partners, they were planning community dialogue(s) and creating opportunities for community engagement; offered facilitated conversations for employees in departments; and reviewed organizational performance measures. For COVID19, they worked with the City of Charlotte to assist with translations/videos in multiple languages; developed Covid19 Equity Rapid Response Tool and Questions to Answer for leadership to apply to their decisions; proposed Relief Funds Plan: Cultural/Linguistic Plan and engagement for Immigrant/Refugee Community ($290,000); and impacts on Community of Color Town Halls in partnership with City, CBI and Norsan Media.

The Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners can lead in racial equity by continuing to pose these questions when making policy decisions: What were the racial equity impacts? Who would benefit or be burdened? What are the root causes of inequities? Are there any unintended consequences? Continue to hold yourselves accountable and support initiatives impacting outcomes for all.

Ms. Xaypangna responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.
Gibbie Harris, Health Director, updated the Board on the COVID-19 response stating as of present day, they had a total of 5,606 cases of confirmed COVID-19 in Mecklenburg County, with 115 deaths. She said there were 20 congregate living sites in outbreak status. She pointed out they continued to see higher numbers in the Hispanic communities than in the other populations in Mecklenburg Counties. She said more than half of the cases have met the CDC criteria to be released from isolation. She said during the past week, they had averaged about 98 with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infections who were hospitalized for acute care. She said during the past week, an average of 9.7% had tested positive, which was an increase over the last 14 days. She said unfortunately they had seen a steady decrease in social distancing in Mecklenburg County. She said they had met their 30-day, testing goal, 5% of the community, which was good news, but the thing about COVID-19 that had been consistent was that it was constantly changing, so the guidance from the federal government as well as the State had changed around testing. She said there was a call from the White House to the State last week from the COVID-19 Task Force. She said they were working with a number of states that were seeing increased numbers and increased hospitalizations, and unfortunately North Carolina fell into that category. She said they were working with states to come up with solutions and the biggest one seemed to be an increase in testing requirements. She said they also identified a number of counties in each of the states that they feel needed the most focus and obviously Mecklenburg County, and there were seven others at this point. She stated they were currently testing about 2,000 people a day. She said they were in the process of working with the State, as well as the local partners who were doing testing, to have conversations about what that meant, what it looked like and understanding fully the need for resources to be able to meet those kind of increases both from the testing stand point and what kind of staffing, PPE, reagent, laboratory support was needed, having the resources to communicate with the community so that they understood the need for testing and that they were accessing testing. She said obviously they could put 20,000 tests out there, but that did not mean that 20,000 people would come in everyday for testing unless they understood the need for it and when it was appropriate for them. She said the other side of that was their isolation/quarantine efforts and as they moved through the pandemic, what they were beginning to find was that people were tiring of it.

Ms. Harris said the staff were having individuals who were not answering their phones when they try to contact them, and some were hanging up on them when they were contacting them. She said they would need to educate the community about why it was important for them to comply with isolation and quarantine if they were to get things back into the direction, they want to get them in. She said that a lot of effort was going on and they were exploring all of their options, and the State had promised resources to help with this and they were trying to put some definition around resource needs and find out what they could help with. She said they were also working with private entities who had the ability to come into the County to help with testing as well.

Ms. Harris said they pretty much had the County covered within everyone having access within five miles of a testing site, but that still did not mean it was as accessible as some needed it to be. She said they would continue to work on location and having additional sites in the community.

Ms. Harris responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Commissioners Cotham asked for those who were asymptomatic that attended the protest, would they be able to get tested if they were symptomatic if they were in the protest?

Ms. Harris said they received state guidance that they should be making testing available to anyone who attended any of the protests and they had conversations with the hospitals and the other venues in the County that they were aware of which were doing testing so they could start making that available for individuals.

Commissioners Harden asked what actions they needed to take to ensure people were taking phone calls of tracers.
Ms. Harris responded she believed there would be a major need around both the testing as well as the contact tracing piece and that it did not do them a whole lot of good to do testing if people were not going to comply with isolation quarantine. He said that was the main purpose for doing it, to keep people away from others if they had been infected or exposed. She believed that as they rolled out additional testing, they really had to hit that messaging pretty hard and needed to work with media to be able to do that. She said they also needed to work with churches, community-based organizations, and other leaders in the community to help get that message out.

Commissioner Harden said the Commissioners stood ready to help. She asked if there was any more consideration about requiring mask.

Ms. Harris said that was not discussed as a direction that anyone really wanted to go in right now, and there were a number of challenges with masking. She said WHO just released information that they were not really sure people who were asymptomatic played a big part in exposing others to the virus, so again the messaging was not clear, and the guidance was not either. She said they continued to recommend it but not require it.

Commissioner Harden expressed her concern with nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

Ms. Harris said they were in the process of ramping up their testing with their long-term care facilities and those which were in outbreak status. They were working to get them tested weekly and for staff to be tested weekly regardless of whether they are in outbreak status or not. She said as they expanded testing that would be an easier life for them.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell wanted to ensure the clear message was clear in terms of with access to testing.

Ms. Harris said if you have had exposure to someone with COVID-19, do not have symptoms, or you have been involved in one of the protests and around people without masks, we are saying yes, we are saying you should test without symptoms. She said they were not opening it county wide at this point, because they just had not build that capacity out, and that would happen over the next week hopefully, then we can expand further.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell clarified that in a week everyone, with and without symptoms, could be tested.

Ms. Harris responded that she hoped they would have that done in a week, as they were working on the plan. She said it depended on how quickly the State could provide them with the resources they were funding.

Ms. Diorio clarified that Dr. Cohen said it would not happen in a week. She said they would continue to push but that it would be a heavy lift for them to get the resources here to be able to go from 2,000 test a day to 20,000 test a day.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if all testing was free.

Ms. Harris responded what she could say for sure at this point was that the hospital systems will test and would bill if billing was available, but otherwise, it is free. She said she could not say for sure with the small clinics that were testing. She believed a few of those may be charging.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell expressed that may be confusing for folks, as they were not sure what to expect. She asked the current time frame for getting back test results.

Ms. Harris responded that there was a little bit of rapid testing available but that rapid testing did not necessarily have the same rate of clarity around the test results as the other testing did. She said the other testing would take 24 to 72 hours.
Commissioner Powell said she heard Ms. Harris state there was confusion around whether or not to recommend masks and they keep asking the question, so she thought it would be good for them to receive a formal response from the Emergency Management Team on why they were requiring masks, because she had heard from a lot of people, senior citizens and people who were scared to go to the grocery store when it was open for seniors, because not everyone was wearing a mask. She said she heard the WHO interviewed the other day but now they are singing a different tune. She found that to be very confusing and the reason she thought it was so important to formally address this was because it looked like they were having increased hospitalizations and people do not want to go back into phase 1. She said if they could prevent going backward, they needed to be as proactive as possible. She said there were some people who could not wear them.

Ms. Diorio clarified that the County could not unilaterally require it county wise, they would have to go back with the city and six towns to have a conversation about whether to or whether to not, because it would not make sense if you go to the City of Charlotte and had to wear one but go to Davidson and not have to wear one. She said that secondly, when they did have conversations around this, as they had a lot of push back from law enforcement, because they could not enforce it. She said they were pretty adamant about the fact that they did not support them requiring that. So would have to go back and have another conversation with law enforcement, who was pretty stressed with everything going on right now, to see whether or not they were willing to put this on their list of things to do in terms of enforcing people wearing face coverings when they leave their house. She said that was one of the big reasons that they did not try to move forward with it before, due to it being unenforceable.

Commissioner Powell stated it would be helpful for the public to understand everything that goes into that decision making, because they look to their leaders in crisis and were looking to them wondering why they were not requiring more.

Commissioner Leake said that it needed to be reported out to the community.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions. Ms. Diorio responded.

Chair Dunlap stated he wanted to be clear that while the Mecklenburg County Commissioners could not require people to wear mask, they were asking people to do several things: wear mask, wash hands continuously, social distance, get tested if you participated in a protest.

Chair Dunlap said they were asked to come up with a structure for the task force for the COVID-19 recovery. He said they decided they would comprise a committee of 23 people who can be nominated or self-nominated. He said the Board will come together and review all the names of everyone who had been nominated or submitted, then we will go through our normal process of making nominations for people to serve on the task force. He said from that group, they would select a Chair and Vice Chair.

**20-6195: Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Harden said she heard people were tired of this, but she believed the most important thing everyone could do was to tell people the truth about what was happening with COVID-19 right now. She said the conditions were at the highest they had ever been, and these were the circumstances that caused them to go into phase one. She said the truth was exactly what Chair Dunlap said, that they needed people to wear mask and wash their hands.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell reiterated her concern for the Hispanic community, as 37% of the positive cases were coming from the Hispanic category. She wanted them to think about ways to reach out to the community more. She suggested having real-time translations of the press conferences.
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Commissioner Leake stated they should not have a meeting during a major funeral of George Floyd that was taking place.

Commissioner Dunlap said get tested, wear your mask, and social distance.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

__________________________     __________________________
Emily, A. Kunze, Clerk     George Dunlap, Chair
Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely in Formal Session on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present:
Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, the invocation led by Commissioner Powell and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The Board of Commissioners began their meeting with an 8 minute and 46 second moment of silence in commemoration of George Floyd.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:
- 20-6196: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6201: by Commissioner Leake

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6227: Proclamation Declaring Racism as a Public Health Crisis

Commissioner Jerrell thanked the Chair for his leadership and Board and staff for the continued commitment as it related to having addressed disparities and the focus to change health outcomes for communities of color. He said that as elected officials, nothing was more important than the health and wellbeing of the residents, and they knew that racism was a driving force of the social determinants of health and barrier to health equity. He said they sat in the acknowledgement that racism went beyond the action of an individual and that it was more about the systems that existed and create those disproportional outcomes for people of color. He said the shift in focus and acknowledgement of the facts with the proclamation was critical as they moved forward and that he was honored to read the proclamation.

Commissioner Jerrell read the proclamation.
WHEREAS, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners has identified Reducing Racial Disparity as a critical priority and essential to an effective systemic response to delivering health and human services in Mecklenburg County; and

WHEREAS, racism unfairly disadvantages Black and Brown individuals and communities, while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities, and Mecklenburg County’s collective prosperity depends upon the equitable access to opportunity for every resident; and

WHEREAS, racism has produced and perpetuates poverty through intentional and unintentional policies that create barriers to economic mobility; and is a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism that is internalized or interpersonal and systemic racism that is institutional or structural, and

WHEREAS, criminal justice practices have caused deep disparities, harm, and mistrust; African American residents of Mecklenburg County are eight times more likely to die of homicide; and 73% of homicide victims were African American in Mecklenburg County; and

WHEREAS, a growing body of literature shows that social determinants — otherwise known as the conditions in which an individual is born and in which he or she lives, works, or recreates — are key drivers of health inequities. For generations, communities of color have faced vast disparities in job opportunities, income, and inherited family wealth. They are less likely to have housing security, access to quality schools, healthy food, and green spaces. This involves systemic racism all of which can undermine mental and physical well-being; and

WHEREAS, in addition it is well-documented that racism itself has an adverse impact on health. Chronic stress caused by discrimination can trigger a cascade of adverse health outcomes, from high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, immunodeficiency, and accelerated aging, all of which are high in the African American community. There is also evidence suggesting that the racism endured by black mothers contributes to the high maternal and infant mortality rate; and

WHEREAS, in Mecklenburg County, the COVID-19 pandemic has made visible and intensified racial health disparities with Black and Brown communities comprising 57% of all COVID-19 cases and 41.2% of coronavirus deaths; and

WHEREAS, Blacks are twice as likely to not have health insurance, 3 times more likely to experience chronic diseases and 70% of new HIV infections; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, the Board of County Commissioners received a report and recommendations on a call to action to eliminate health disparities in Mecklenburg County, yet the rates of disparity have widened.

NOW THEREFORE. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners believes that racism can form the basis for a public health crisis affecting our entire County and should be treated with the urgency and funding of a public health crisis. Looking at racism in this way offers legislators, health officials, and others an opportunity to analyze data and discuss how to dismantle or change problematic institutions. Mecklenburg County will seek to promote racial equity through policies approved by the Board of Commissioners and will encourage other local, state and national entities to recognize racism as a public health crisis as well.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously, to adopt a Proclamation Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis.

Commissioner Powell said she would have included environmental protection and access to parks.

Commissioner Leake thanked the Chair for providing recognition of the 8 minutes and 46 seconds and for it to be followed asking the Board to do something that it had not done
yet and hopefully would do was to protect the people of Mecklenburg County through the means by which they service the people of Mecklenburg County. She thanked Commissioner Jarrell for affording the community to hear from a commissioner who happened to be a black male who was an endangered species in the Country in present day. She said she prayed that through the efforts of the Board and through the efforts of all in America and abroad who addressed and brought a change to all of the issues that confronted them. She stated she was happy to serve and declare those issues and problems they had, which was racism, which had been talked about year after year.

Commissioner Harden said this was probably one of the most important proclamations that they had ever done and that one of the most important and effective things they could do to improve the health and human services of the community was to mitigate racism.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she was very proud to support the proclamation and said in the research of the proclamation, she learned Mecklenburg County had already created a task force in 2006 and a report called Eliminating Health Disparities, a Call to Action, yet they knew the disparities had only livened in the last 14 years. She said as they made the proclamation, she really wanted them to figure out how they could make the proclamation have real meaning and action plan. She said there were probably great steps that came out of the last call for action but asked what they would do differently now to make it a change moment for the community. She said they put meaningful dollars in the FY21 budget but that they really needed to remain focused on changing the systems. She said she was so proud to be part of the Board and to look forward to the work they could do together.

Commissioner Cotham thanked the Chair for the 8 minutes and 46 seconds for the Board to reflect on the horror and atrocity in Minneapolis and loss of life of Mr. George Floyd and thanked Commissioner Jarrell for reading the proclamation. She believed the important thing for the community was not the proclamation but polices the Board would create moving forward. She thought they needed to focus on the policies.

Commissioner Fuller thanked Chair Dunlap for the 8 minutes and 46 second pause making it real for the Board but became fatally real for George Floyd, who lost his life in those 8 minutes and 46 second, at the hands of the law, the government even. He said to follow that with this proclamation would be so appropriate and not possible to overstate the importance of what the proclamation meant. He said it was really a declaration of Mecklenburg County, that Mecklenburg County regards racism as so serious that they were declaring it a public health crisis because everyone knew racism went so deep to the core of the Nation’s very existence and that racism was the original sin of America. He said when you thought about the pernicious affects of that, the violence that had come with it, the deprivation that persisted, the legacy of slavery and Jim Crowe, all of the things still there in present time. He said they see the events like what happened to George Floyd as a reminder that it had not left them so what they were doing was in their sphere of influence and while they may not have direct control over the criminal justice process, they were responsible for conditions having been addressed which lead to African Americans or others in color who come in contact with the criminal justice system. He said they could not forget that the determinants were what led people like George Floyd to even be in contact with the police officer.

Commissioner Fuller said to not forget that the proclamation was for everyone, not just African Americans or people who were discriminated against but for everyone, because everyone benefited when racism was removed from the expenditure of funds, from attention, from focus. He said by making the proclamation, they now authorized resources to be marshalled to address the question; it was the threshold for them to be able to spend money to remove the public health crisis. He said he did not want anyone to think it was just words on a page. He said it was something really important that they were doing and that for that reason he would make a motion to sent a copy of the proclamation to every single county in North Carolina and every legislator in the general assembly and to the North Carolina General Assembly, and to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners so that everyone in North Carolina would know what Mecklenburg County did and that they could lead the charge for other counties in the State to adopt a similar proclamation and that the County and State could be a model for the rest of the Country.
A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously, to send a copy of the Proclamation to every county in North Carolina, every legislator in the North Carolina General Assembly, and to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6224: Order of the Hornet Induction of Chancellor Philip L. Dubois

A motion was made by Chair Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously, to induct Chancellor Philip L. Dubois into the Mecklenburg County Order of the Hornet.

The Board provided comments and best wishes to Chancellor Philip L. Dubois.

Note: The Order of the Hornet was established in 1972. It is bestowed by the Board of County Commissioners on persons who have displayed valor or high order of service uniquely and specifically to the citizens of Mecklenburg County. This is the highest honor bestowed by the Board. The Order of the Hornet was founded in the spirit of the early Mecklenburg patriots who signed the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775 and proclaimed the County’s freedom from Britain more than a year before the U.S. Declaration of Independence was signed. Those early patriots valiantly fought for their independence during the Revolution and gave Lord Cornwallis such difficulties during his occupation of Charlotte that he termed the town a “hornet’s nest” of rebellion. Because Chancellor Philip Dubois reflects the honor, strength, and fierce American patriotism that so stung Lord Cornwallis, he was recommended for membership in the Order of the Hornet.

Dr. Dubois’ career in higher education spans more than 40 years. As a first-generation college student, he earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of California, Davis, and a master’s and doctoral degree in political science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. On March 18, 2005, Dubois was named UNC Charlotte’s fourth chancellor. After a 15-year tenure, Dr. Philip L. Dubois retired on June 30, 2020. As Chancellor, Dubois helped the University build a strong partnership with the greater Charlotte area to ensure the vitality of our growing region and his dedicated leadership placed UNC Charlotte on a remarkable growth trajectory, with enrollment reaching nearly 30,000, as a leading urban research institution focused on the economic, educational, environmental, health and social needs of our region.

A copy of the Order of the Hornet is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6211: Proclamation - Glenn Chamberlain Blaisdell Day

Commissioner Leake read the proclamation.

WHEREAS, Glenn Chamberlain Blaisdell was born March 31, 1927 in Boston, Massachusetts to the late Clifford and Marguerette Blaisdell; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blaisdell enlisted in the U. S. Navy at the age of 17 and selflessly served his County in the Philippines during World War II; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blaisdell attended night school at the University of Georgia, while working full-time, and received degrees in accounting and law; and

WHEREAS, in 1967 Mr. Blaisdell moved to Charlotte, North Carolina to work for Mecklenburg County, where he served in several roles including County Accountant, Director of Finance, and from 1970-1980 as County Manager; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blaisdell took great pride in his work for Mecklenburg County and was a great asset to the County; and
WHEREAS, Mr. Blaisdell, age 93, who was curious about the world around him and never stopped learning, passed away on May 5, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blaisdell was predeceased by his wife, Virginia Nice Blaisdell, and his beloved cat, Pumpkin and is survived by his son, Mark Blaisdell-Buck, his daughter-in-law, Glenda Blaisdell-Buck; his grandson, Morgan Blaisdell and Morgan's wife, Morgan Sharp, and their two children, Avery Sharp Blaisdell and Quinn Sharp Blaisdell; his granddaughter, Caitlin Blaisdell; and his daughter, Catherine Blaisdell Ardrey; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Blaisdell loved his family, especially his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, who all loved and admired him very much.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners honors the life and legacy of Glenn Chamberlain Blaisdell and hereby proclaims Wednesday, June 17, 2020 as GLENN CHAMBERLAIN BLAISDELL DAY in Mecklenburg County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously, to adopt a proclamation proclaiming June 17, 2020 as Glenn Chamberlain Blaisdell Day in Mecklenburg County.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6219: Proclamation - Racial Inequality Awareness Week

Commissioner Leake read the proclamation.

WHEREAS, George Perry Floyd, Jr. was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina on October 14, 1974 and raised in Houston Texas; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Floyd was educated through the Houston school system and graduated from Jack Yates High School where he played on both the basketball and football team and was a star tight end football player; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Floyd attended South Florida Community College and played for the basketball team as a center and power forward; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Floyd left Houston and was embracing afresh start on life in Minneapolis, Minnesota where he worked as a Security Support for the Salvation Army’s Harbor Light Center and Congo Latin Bistro; and

WHEREAS, on Monday, May 25, 200 the world witnessed the inhumane death of Mr. Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police Department officers; and

WHEREAS, studies have shown that the rate at which black Americans are killed by police is more than twice as high as the rate for white Americans; and

WHEREAS, through the efforts of people across the world we hope that America will awaken to the need of providing respect, equal citizen and support of all citizens regardless of race, religion, color, or creed; and

WHEREAS, as a way of overcoming racial disparity, Mecklenburg County, through the Health Department, must provide accessible health sites to service all people, through the Board of Education, provide an education for students that will make them college or job ready, mandate a living wage, provide access to quality food and promote healthy living.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners will support implementing these requests a reality for all citizens of our community to truly live, work, and recreate and hereby proclaims June 15-20, 2020 as “RACIAL INEQUALITY AWARENESS WEEK” in Mecklenburg County and encourage all citizens to join us in this special observance.
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A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously, to adopt a proclamation declaring June 15-20, 2020 as Racial Inequality Awareness Week.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6193: Public Appearance

The following persons appeared to speak during the Public Appearance portion of the agenda:

Marianne Gaffney - Appreciation for Board's passage of Proclamation Declaring Racism as a Public Health Issue and the moment of silence commemorating George Floyd.

APPOINTMENTS – NONE

PUBLIC HEARING

20-6187: Continued Public hearing for Closing a Portion of Right-of-Way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney stated the item was before the Board back in March and was continued to allow for the road construction to be completed. However, due to weather, the construction is still not complete, and the hearing will need to be continued until July 7, 2020.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously, to continue the public hearing with respect to the closing of a portion of right-of-way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane until July 7, 2020.

20-6204: TEFRA Hearing - ACTS Retirement-Life Communities, Inc ACTS Retirement Resolution

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously, to open TEFRA public hearing and receive comments on the proposed financing by ACTS Retirement-Life Communities.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously, to close the public hearing and to adopt a resolution of the Board of Commissioners of the County of Mecklenburg, North Carolina, approving the issuance by the Public Finance Authority of its ACTS Retirement Life Communities, Inc. Obligated Group, Series 2020 bonds in one or more series (the "bonds"), in an amount not to exceed $60,000,000.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #6.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE
MANAGER’S REPORT

20-6213: Discovery Place Nature Museum Project Update

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said there was work that was done with the community for several months on revisions to the plan to satisfy some of the concerns the neighbors had with the project and they believed they were at a place that satisfied the concerns of the neighbors.

Lee Jones, Parks and Recreation Director introduced Bert Lynn.

Bert Lynn, Capital Planning Director, Park and Recreation, said the building was almost 70 years old and had reached the end of its effective life. He said changes in building systems, accessibility, and life safety standards and limitations to improve and enhance exhibits all pointed to the need for a new building. He said the new building would allow Discovery Place to meet modern museum accreditation standards. He went over building specifications, stating that the current building was 13,000 sf; current design at 25,900 sf and with 61 original parking spaces and with a minimum of 87 required. He gave an overview of the site conditions that must be considered as part of the project. He said the master plan effort was led by Discovery Place 2015 and the design team selected with kick-off meeting May 2019; CM at Risk contractor, Roger Leeper, was selected in July of 2019. Preliminary design was completed and shared with community groups and applied for access and buffer variance, access variance approved. He said there were two items which required a variance from the City, which would affect the location of the driveway access to the new center and the location of the parking lot. He mentioned that the variance regarding the location of the parking lot was denied.

Mr. Lynn said as for the site, the existing building location was ideal, and the entry was located on the lower level adjacent to greenway and park. He said the proposed building was approximately 25,900 sf and 11,800 sf public space 14,100 sf back of house. He provided more details to the proposed building. There would be the following amenities: entrance plaza; public exhibits; pollinator garden; apiary; frog bog; outdoor exhibits; otter habitat; outdoor classroom; canopy walk; aviary; learning kiosks; walking trail.

Mr. Lynn said that many neighbors had shared there was not enough community engagement during the master plan process several years ago. He said there was concern that the impact of the new building to the site and tree canopy would be too great and neighbors were concerned that a new, larger, Discovery Place Nature would contribute to more traffic and increased on-street parking along Sterling Road. Neighbors were also concerned about access to the parking area after hours and overnight. He said based on received feed back from the meeting, the design team studies a number of site-layout scenarios that would address those concerns. He went over discussions from the second neighborhood meeting from January 2020 and many neighbors felt the site impact was still too invasive due to the long, linear parking area in the turn around located at the end of the parking area. He said they were asked to reconsider additional site plan revisions to explore a more compact option for the new, enlarged parking area.

Mr. Lynn said they were able to meet again with the neighbors the week of June 1, 2020 via Skype and went over the final site concept. He stated the bus drop off would be on Princeton with access through site, with a turnaround integrated into parking area would improve circulation and minimize impact to site/adjacent properties. He went over the buffer between the adjacent homes and parking lot. Planted buffer between residential properties and parking lot. The new parking lot would be offset approximately 38 feet from the property line, and the buffer would include existing trees, planted trees, and shrubs, have a minimum of six-foot tall privacy fence.

Mr. Lynn reviewed next steps, including that the design would be resumed in summer of 2020, construction would begin in 2021, and estimated completion would be in early 2023.

Mr. Lynn responded to comments and questions from the Commissioners.
Commissioner Powell said she had been involved every step of the way since 2015 and had never voted yes; she did not support the site and will not. She said Freedom Park is already too overcrowded; it would be a better fit to put in District 2 or District 4. She requested to be invited to the next community meeting.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6190: Capital Project Ordinances

Sarah Cunningham, Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of the capital project ordinances. She said the CIP was a 5-year plan for sustaining and improving the County’s infrastructure. Identifies the type, timing, location, and proposed financing of capital projects. CIP funds capital investments in: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; Park and Recreation; Government Facilities; Central Piedmont Community College; Library.

Capital ordinances provide the capital budget to implement the CIP. The ordinances would increase the Capital Plan from $1.61 billion to $1.75 billion. CMS had a significant increase of $89.2 million to cover additional costs of land and construction. She said CMS ordinances tonight would provide $75.5 million of this funding, the remainder would be covered in projects slated to start next year. She said the ordinances will also implement items that have already been approved by the Board, including, $2 million Park and Recreation land increase; $8 million for Government Facilities CGMC and Security, and $39.5 million for Spirit Square. She said as of May 31, 2020, $262.9 million has been spent.

She said CMS estimated $89.2 million more needed to achieve the projects outlined in the FY2019-FY2023 CIP, $100.4 million in cost increases for land, and additional construction costs across 20 projects, $30 million for land, $70.4 million for increased project costs, offset in part with savings of $11.2 million where bids have come in below projected, and Collinswood Language Academy, Harding High School, and K-8 Language Immersion Schools.

She provided an update on the CMS FY2019-FY2023 CIP. She said there was $30 million in new funding for land: $2.5 million request for Elementary school relief; $27.5 million for South Mecklenburg High School relief; projects: advanced funding, FY2019, and FY2020 Project cost increases, net of savings; repurposes $12.5 million from land for construction costs, South Mecklenburg High School, EE Waddell Renovation, Garinger High School Renovation and Addition. She said that as of May 31, 2020, CMS had spent $142.1 million.

Ms. Cunningham reviewed the Park and Recreation FY2019-FY2023 CIP: a total of $8.6 million in FY2021 and $37 million for the 5-year CIP for land; as of May 31, $14.5 million had been spent to acquire land under the CIP; for projects, it would authorize Eastfield Regional Park to begin construction, for an estimated cost of $5 million total expenses for Park and Recreation: $69.1 million of the $302.2 million has been spent to date.

She reviewed the government facilities FY2019-FY2023 CIP. She said there was an increase of $3.8 million for the CGMC Renovation Budget using savings from prior CIP and to implement Phase II of County Security Upgrades will cause an increase of $4.8 million for a total of $7.6 million. She said the total expenses for Government Facilities was $20.4 million of the $170.8 million CIP spent to date.

Ms. Cunningham reviewed the Central Piedmont Community College FY2019-FY2023 CIP. Central Piedmont Community College Projects had all been authorized through prior year ordinances. She said there were a total of $151.1 million appropriations in the CIP for Central Campus, Harris Campus, and land acquisition. She said that as of May 31, 2020, $21.5 million had been spent.

She reviewed the Library FY2019-FY2023 CIP. The ordinance provided $39.5 million for Spirit Square and Main Library connected projects and the Main Library and Scaleybark Library Replacement previously authorized for a total of $66.7 million in the current CIP. She said that of the total $106.2 million, including Spirit Square, $6.4 million had been
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how they could address the situation of extremely crowded middle schools in District six and stated she did not want to wait until the next bond, as it felt too far away. She said what she was hearing from the District six residents was that they could not wait that long. She said she was just putting it that there was some way they could help find a solution outside of the next bond. She said she was willing to try to do anything that she could to try to make that happen.

Chair Dunlap requested an updated list of vacant land, buildings not in use, and the impact of COVID-19 on the budget. He said that he wanted projects re-reviewed.

Earnest Winston, CMS Superintendent; Carol Stamper, Deputy CMS Superintendent; Dena Diorio and Sarah Cunningham responded to comments and questions from Commissioners.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously, to (A) approve the FY2021 Authorization Land Acquisition, (B) approve FY2021 Authorization School Facilities Capital Project Ordinance; (C) amend FY2020 Authorization School Facilities Capital Project Ordinance; (D) approve FY2021 Authorization Park and Recreation Capital Project Ordinance, and (F) amend FY2016 Authorization Government Facilities Capital Project Ordinance.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to (E) amend the FY2018 Authorization Library Facilities Main and Spirit Square.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to (G) amend FY2019 Authorization Government Facilities Capital Project Ordinance.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Leake, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Harden, to (H) amend FY2020 Authorization Government Facilities Capital Project Ordinance.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Ordinances recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49 Document Nos. 7-14.
Gibbie Harris, Health Director thanked the Board for the proclamation on racism and stated that as the Public Health Director, she supported the recognition of racism as a public health issue and was grateful for the leadership and commitment and support of public health in Mecklenburg County. She committed to working with the Board and community on the actions needed to address this crisis.

Ms. Harris gave an update on COVID-19. She said by the end of the present day, there were a total of 7,336 confirmed cases in Mecklenburg County, with 134 deaths. She said there were 20 outbreaks in congregate living facilities in the community. She said that on June 14, 2020 they had 6,810 lab confirmed cases and had been seeing increased testing in the community and over the last 18 days they had seen triple-digit numbers of new cases identified in the community.

She reviewed current characteristics of COVID-19 cases and stated that among reported COVID 19 cases: 3 in 4 were adults ages 20 to 59. She stated that 1 in 10 were hospitalized and just over half, 3421, were released from isolation. She said that 36.8% were Hispanic, most of whom are younger adults ages 20 to 39. She said there were two children with Multi-system Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS C). She stated both of them had done well but that unfortunately there was a child in the community on a ventilator. She went over lab confirmed COVID-19 cases, per 100,000 residents, by zip code of patient’s residence, as of June 14, 2020. She said there was wide-spread COVID-19 in the communities but that there were some areas with higher rates than others.

Ms. Harris reviewed current characteristics of COVID19 deaths, stating that among COVID 19 related deaths: most (91%) were adults 60 years and older, with underlying chronic health conditions and that there were increasing numbers (8.6%) in the 40-59 age group. She stated that all but two were with underlying health conditions and that 62% were residents at long-term care facilities. She said that 58.7% were non-Hispanic White.

Ms. Harris reviewed the expansion of COVID-19 testing. She said that there was expanded testing guidance for additional priority groups and that health systems would continue testing at facilities and mobile sites. She said there were new retail testing locations at 15 CVS Pharmacies and two Walmart stores. She stated increased testing and wrap around services were through federally qualified health centers and that there were planning additional community-based testing sites with NC DHHS and commercial laboratories.

Ms. Harris reviewed the current support for congregate living sites; she stated that MCPH began conducting routine outreach to all Congregate Living Sites to provide guidance and assistance with COVID 19 related issues. She said they were working with facilities that were in outbreak status to increase testing, especially among staff and were seeking State support in that effort. She said for facilities experiencing outbreaks, MCPH provided initial guidance on infection control, helped coordinate PPE, and regular follow up until the outbreak ended. She said they were moving towards increased frequency of testing of staff in all congregated living sites. She was hoping that most would be tested weekly and that it would allow them to cut down on the number of cases in the sites.

Ms. Harris reviewed the current outreach to vulnerable populations; she identified locations for mobile testing sites in minority communities and were setting up new data feeds to monitor testing data by race and geography. She stated there was a spread of key messages and up-to-date information through media partners, such as: tv, radio, print, and web. She said they also did outreach to minority owned and minority service businesses as well as to churches to seek guidance on messaging and best approaches to reach these communities; provide guidance, toolkits, and signage as needed. She said that unfortunately the mobility in the County had neared base-line levels. She said they were getting close to where they were before they did their stay at home order in terms of mobility in the community which was an indicator of the social distancing in Mecklenburg County. She said that COVID-19 was still a very present threat to the
community. She said testing alone and contact tracing alone would not get them out of the pandemic. She said there was still no cure or vaccine for the virus and that it was up to us all to do their part.

Commissioner Leake asked that with school opening August 17, 2020, if they had any plans to for how they planned to open the school system.

Ms. Harris said no but that they were working with the school system and the State.

Commissioner Leake asked clarifying questions, and Ms. Harris provided answers.

Commissioner Jerrell stated that he was in favor of them mandating wearing masks. He stated that Ms. Harris mentioned something on the site about providing information on testing locations and asked where that could be found.

Ms. Harris said it could be found on the public health page and the County website as well.

Commissioner Harden stated that she was willing to implement mandatory masks.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions, and Ms. Harris provided answers.

Commissioner Cotham asked if you had COVID-19 and passed away what would the death certificate say.

Ms. Harris responded that if an individual had multiple health conditions that could contribute to death, it would always be hard to determine what the exact factor was that caused it. She said that at this point, if someone tested with COVID-19 and died, that would be expected by the State and CDC that they record it as a COVID-19 death. She said that was the guidance that medical providers had, that it had to be on the death certificate. She said it does not mean that they would not put a secondary or they may even put COVID-19 as a secondary cause as opposed to a primary cause, but it would still count as a COVID-19 death.

Commissioner Jerrell felt they were loosing the messaging more, because as much as they would say people should wash their hands and put their mask on the messaging they were really sending was that they were inexorably moving toward reopening no matter what the data was, they were moving toward reopening. HE said he felt in the beginning of this, Mecklenburg County was leading and on the front edge but that he did not feel as thought they were on the front edge anymore and that if felt as thought they were just on the sit lines watching it happen. He said they were above the level where they were when they felt they had to issue a stay at home order, yet they were kind of like the frog in the pot of water. He said it was cold when they put the frog in and when you turn up the heat, it was still going up and the frog was going to be cooked before he ever knew it. He said that was what he felt they were doing, watching the heat go up and doing pretty much nothing about it. He said they were seeing articles in national papers about a surge of the pandemic in the south. He said they had inconsistent messaging, so people were not listening. He said they needed to act and one thing he thought they needed to do was require masks. He said it seemed like the least they could do.

Commissioner Scarborough left the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, to receive a recommendation at the next regular Board meeting whether the County will require masks or face coverings in Mecklenburg County; in addition, receive information regarding the potential implications of that requirement.

Commissioner Fuller said it was a policy decision for the Board and not a decision for the Emergency Operations Management.

Commissioner Cotham said she would vote no because they did not have permission from the towns.
Commissioner Fuller said they should be leading their other municipalities on the question instead of simply assuming they would answer no when they decided they wanted to make it a requirement in Mecklenburg County.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell

NO: Commissioner Cotham

Chair Dunlap said a lot of other communities around the U.S. were recommending masks and they had some protocols and exceptions to when you should not be mandated to wear masks. He said if the staff would do some research, he believed it was already out there. He mentioned people with disabilities and other medical reasons of as to why people could not wear masks. He mentioned staff in facilities being tested and said his concern was why everyone was not being tested.

Ms. Harris responded that when they first started seeing facility outbreaks, it took some doing to get everyone tested in the facilities but that now it was almost automatic and once they had one individual testing positive, they would test everyone in the facility. He said the concern about testing staff was that they were the ones going in and out of the facilities, which did not mean that they would not continue to test within the facility, but they biggest concern were those individuals who were there during the day or night then go back to the community and come back in. She said it did not mean that they would not be testing the residents as well.

Chair Dunlap said that part of the solution in getting compliance was having the corporate community make the same requirements. He said if every business required people to have a mask to enter, people would realize they could not go anywhere without one. He said that was part of what he believed would help them get there, to have all the businesses require people to wear masks to enter their facility. He said he believed that would go a long way in terms of reaching the goal of having everyone wear a mask. He said if the biggest problems were in nursing homes, that was where the focus should be. He said it seemed they were all over the place, and he would like to know what the overall strategy was.

Ms. Harris said when there was notification that there had been a case in a nursing home, be it a staff person or an individual, they would immediately be in touch with the administration in that facility and work with them to get everyone tested. She said at that point they have their environmental health staff as well as MEDIC and the regional hospital systems to make some facility visits to ensure their infection control, policies, and procedures were in a good place and people were actually compliant with it. She said they made them help them make decisions about how to locate positives within the environment, so they were not exposing others and so staff who were working with COVID-19 positives were separated from staff who were working with those who were not COVID-19 positive. She said they were regularly in touch with those facilities throughout the process while there was still an outbreak status. She said throughout the process while they were still in outbreak status they would work and have conversations with them almost every day to understand what their PPE needs were and that they had been providing that through the EOC and ensuring they had what they need.

Ms. Harris said they were doing any needed education with staff to ensure they were implementing the infection control policies that they needed to be implementing and a couple of places were there was not enough staffing, they worked with the State to ensure staffing was being brought in so that there was sufficient staffing to care for the residents in the facility and restricting new residents from coming in during outbreak status. She said that was standard during any communicable desires outbreak within a facility. She said they had been working with the State as they were the ones who license the facilities through a different branch of state government and that they had been somewhat involved but not as involved as they would like them to be w guidance to the facilities, so they had been trying to do as much of that as they could their selves but they did not license them
and did not have the same level of control over what they did. She said most of them were really eager to get out of outbreak status, so they were listening to them and doing what they were asking them to do.

She said the big challenge they were seeing was with the staff who work in multiple facilities, so they were being tested to try to prevent them from transferring COVID-19 themselves. She said they would work with them until they were three weeks without a case before, they come out of outbreak status. She said at that point they were not shifting away from that but that they also were starting to work with those who were not in outbreak status to test their staff regularly as well, because that was how COVID-19 was coming into their facility. She said if it was not already there, it was coming from those going into the facility and that the facilities still were not receiving visitors. She said they had staff specifically assigned to each facility to work with that facility to get to know the administration and to ensure what was happening in the facility needs to.

Chair Dunlap requested the strategy to be documented.

Commissioner Scarborough returned to the meeting at 9:53 p.m.

Commissioner Powell requested information the percentage of people in each age who had underlying health conditions.

Commissioner Fuller said he did not hear an answer to the question of what the plan and that was was a concern he had been raising for quite some time and he would keep raising it. He said those were questions that elected leaders had to make and he wanted to encourage them to understand that they had to involved the elected leaders in what they were doing, because they were the ones who were called upon the be held responsible and they could not fulfill the responsibility if they were not engaged in the conversations. He said they were watching their numbers grow in the County and he did not think it was sufficient to say they were waiting for guidance from the State or federal government as he did not think that was enough. He said he would continue to said that issue, because he felt they had ceded their authority and leadership, and he did not like being in that position.

Chair Dunlap requested that the community continue to wear masks, wash hands often, and to social distance. He said the alternative would be going back to level one.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Coronavirus Relief Fund

Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager, reviewed the Coronavirus Relief Fund Proposed Spend Plan and said the purpose of the presentation was to present a proposal for spending the $39 million that Mecklenburg County had received from the federal government to support the response to the Corona Virus. With the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Congress passed a $2.5 Trillion package to aid: Individuals & families; Businesses; State & local governments through a variety of federal agencies, state, & direct local funding. It established the Coronavirus Relief Fund equaling $150 Billion and Mecklenburg County received $39.2 Million.

In terms of COVID-19 related costs to date, for Employee & Facility Safety, the cost was $3,139,000, with $2,974,000 being CRF eligible. For public health, the cost was $2,527,000 with $988,000 being CRF eligible. For housing and small business, the cost was $5,500,000, with $0 being CRF eligible. For housing and personnel costs, the cost was $4,860,700 with $2,610,200 being CRF eligible. For housing and homelessness, the cost was $300,000 with $48,000 being CRF eligible. For other, the cost was $1,576,000 with $1,576,000 being CRF eligible. The other category included the $1.3M contribution to the Char-Mecklenburg Relief Fund, staff support, and FEMA consultation. The grand total was $17,902,700 with $9,706,500 being CRF eligible and $907,706,500. In terms of projected COVID-19 related costs, it was projected to be $15,846,125, with the total amount of $24,042,280 CRF eligible costs.
For the proposed funding plan, $15.2M remained for investments in broad categories, and it factored impactful investments that could be made immediately and initiatives that will require additional planning. It would give consideration to the towns and unincorporated areas and included investments that clearly aligned to the guidance and could be tracked for accounting purposes. All investments must address COVID-19 and be fully spent by December 30, 2020. It would consider other funding sources available for COVID 19 Response, such as: the City of Charlotte for $154.5M CRF; CMS for $33.6M CARES Act; CPCC for $10.8M CARES Act; and Elections $1.03M State Legislative Funding.

For targeted investments in the broad categories, Community Response would include assistance for individuals, families, and seniors impacted by COVID-19, such as: rental & mortgage assistance, food & utilities assistance, and a workforce development. For Continuity of Operations would include investments required to return the organization to full operations, such as: PPE, facility modifications, and technology. Economic Development would include financial support to assists businesses with recovering from COVID 19. Emergency Response would include investments to offset expenses incurred in response to COVID 19, such as: salaries and communications. He went over examples of immediate investments.

He gave a summary of the requests from Huntersville, Davidson, Matthews, and Cornelius, Mint Hill, which sought reimbursements for costs incurred to date as well as the projected costs to December 30, 2020. He said the investments also included costs associated with providing general assistance to the residents in the townships for expenses associated with emergency response. He said there was a $216,000 place holder for any additional investments in the towns, unincorporated areas, and nonprofits. He gave a summary of the request amounts for non-profits, Ada Jenkins Center; Pineville Neighbor’s Place; Matthew’s Help Center; and Servant’s Heart of Mint Hill for general assistance for mortgage, rent, and utilities totaling up to $1,285,000. He stated that the following: digital divide; housing assistance; investments in senior programs & supportive services, including assisted living facilities; small business assistance; mental health support; workforce development; working families; would need additional time to plan.

He reviewed examples of the immediate investments. Towns, unincorporated areas and non-profits, $2,785,000, which would include financial support. General assistance, $1,500,000, which would include rental at $1 million and utility assistance at $500,000. Food security, $1,000,000, which would include funding for food pantries throughout the County. PPE, $1,000,000, which would include community wide distribution of personal protection equipment. Serving seniors during COVID-19, $1,000,000, which would include funding for grants to support seniors to ensure sufficient support in response to COVID-19. The grants would fund expenses such as: PPE, testing, cleaning sanitizer, counseling, mental health support, shields, and screens. Community engagement, $500,000, which would include design strategies and initiatives for high-risk populations. Senior nutrition, $300,000, which would include expansion of senior citizen nutrition program.

He said the next steps to be addressed were to provide feedback on the proposed Coronavirus Relief Fund spend plan, while being mindful that all funds must be spent by December 30, 2020 and that the Board would only have one regular meeting each month beginning in July to September; finalize the Coronavirus Relief Fund spend plan; identify vendors, review proposals for alignment to the CRF guidance, and draft & execute contracts provide status updates to the Board on specific initiatives and briefings on new guidance; continue to assess other needs and bring back proposals for spending contingency; and brief the Board on the planned investments at the next regular meeting on July 7, 2020.

Mr. Bryant, Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, Dena Diorio, County Manager, and Starla Tanner, Legislative Affairs Liaison, responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously, to approve the proposed spending plan for the Coronavirus Relief
Fund dollars, including financial support for the Towns, unincorporated areas and non-profits, general assistance, food security, personal protective equipment, serving senior during COVID-19, community engagement and senior nutrition totaling $8,085,000; and, staff will come back on July 7, 2020 with additional information on items that require more planning; including addressing the digital divide, housing assistance, investments in senior programs & supportive services, including assisted living facilities, small business assistance, mental Health support, workforce development and working families.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS' MONTHLY REPORTS

20-6222: Department Management Monthly Reports

The Board received as information the monthly department management reports for June 2020 in the agenda.

Note: The County Manager requested department directors develop department management monthly reports highlighting key activities and initiatives within the departments showing relevant performance indicators of departmental activities.

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously, to approve the following consent agenda items:

20-6192: Minutes


20-6197: Grant Application - State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement Program – LUESA

(A) Approve submission of a grant application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement Program grant funding up to $200,000 and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate amount awarded to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

Note: Mecklenburg County Air Quality is applying for up to $200,000 in State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement Program (SEJCA) grant funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The SEJCA funding will be used to develop and implement a community-based social marketing pilot project in a local, underserved community. The grant defines “underserved community” as a community with environmental justice concerns and/or vulnerable populations, including minority, low-income, and homeless populations. Community-based Social Marketing (CBSM) is a strategy based on research in the social sciences which involves identifying the barriers and benefits to a desired outcome and addressing those in ways that are accepted and embraced by the community. This pilot project will address the role that air quality plays as a trigger for respiratory conditions and community members will be involved in developing the pilot project. While local air quality has improved, the Charlotte region only narrowly meets that health-based standard for ground-level ozone, as respiratory irritant.
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This SEJCA funding will allow County staff to work directly in an underserved community to mitigate the role air quality plays in poor respiratory health. No matching/County funds are required.

20-6199: Contract Award - Grady Cole Center-Electrical Modifications and Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning (HVAC) Replacement Project

Award a Contract to The Bowers Group, LLC in the amount of $3,156,330 for the Grady Cole Center-Electrical Modifications and HVAC Replacement Project.

20-6200: Fleet Auction Revenue and Expenses

(A) Recognize, receive and appropriate $144,174.01 from vehicle auction revenue to the Vehicle Replacement Reserve Fund (9010) for future vehicle purchases and (B) amend the 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in revenue of $9,099.45 from vehicle auction to the General Fund (0001) within DSS Transportation Unit.

20-6202: Tax Refunds

Approve refunds in the amount of $276.65 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6203: Mecklenburg County North Mecklenburg Recycling Center Office Project

Authorize the Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with AVM Contractors, LLC for the Mecklenburg County North Mecklenburg Recycling Center Office project in the amount of $515,254.

20-6207: Greenway Donation - Stewart Creek

(A) Accept a permanent greenway easement (+/- .132 acres) on Tax Parcel 071-114-12 from Savona II, LLC for Stewart Creek Greenway and (B) accept a temporary construction easement on Tax Parcel 071-114-12 (+/- 036 square feet) from Savona II, LLC for the construction of Stewart Creek Greenway.

20-6208: Retail Tenant Lease - Government District Parking Deck

(A) Adopt the Resolution titled "Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners Resolution Authorizing Lease of Property to Timothy Pavone, owner of The Law Offices of Attorney Timothy J. Pavone and (B) recognize, receive and appropriate $74,215.40 from Unallocated Capital Reserve Fund.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #15.

20-6209: Amended Fee Schedule - Health Department

Approve a new fee of $23.46 for specimen collection for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (COVID-19).

Note: Due to the COVID-19 crisis, NC Medicaid/Medicare have added a reimbursable charge for the specimen collection for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This charge is also reimbursable under the HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Program. In accordance with federal guidelines, no patient will be charged for COVID19 specimen collection or testing. The fee is $23.46 per specimen.
20-6218: I-277 Pedestrian Bridge

Approve the I-277 Pedestrian Bridge Interlocal Agreement.

Note: In 2004, the City of Charlotte removed the pedestrian bridge crossing component from the LYNX Blue Line Extension Project as a cost savings measure. The removal of the crossing left behind a critical link in the multi-use trail, which runs between South End and Uptown. As a result, it was agreed to restore the pedestrian bridge at a cost of $11 million. Contributions towards the cost of the bridge is as follow: $3.1M - Mecklenburg County; $3.1M City of Charlotte; $3.3M - NC DOT; and, $1.5M - private, non-profit and grants. As part of the FY2019 Operating Budget, the Board of County Commissioners allocated $3.1M to capital reserves to contribute to the pedestrian project as part of its contribution. This funding proposal meets City goals that include promoting transportation choices through adopted plans such as the Center City 2020 Vision Plan.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

20-6196: Budget Amendment - County Assessor's Office (Carry Forward of Unspent Funds)

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to amend the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance for the General Fund (0001) to allow the carry forward of unspent funds from the 2019-2020 Budget Ordinance for the General Fund (0001) within the County Assessor's Office for the 2023 Revaluation which remain available at June 30, 2020 up to $150,000.

20-6201: FY21 Funding Plan - DSS Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG)

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to approve the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) funding plan for FY21.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

20-6221: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Leake thanked Commissioner Jerrell for his proclamation. She mentioned the newsletter put out by the Health Department and thanked Mr. Trotman, Ms. Heartbeat, and others who had worked to make it successful. She said that out of the crisis, she prayed that some good would come and life not continue as it was as they bury and grieve all day about their children, yet unborn, to come into a world that says based upon your color that you were not accepted. She said black lives matter.

Commissioner Jerrell said June 17, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. in Marshall Park Black Men United would get together for a rally as a sign that black men wanted to come together in the community to denounce racism and talk and lend their voices to the discussion around interaction with law enforcement by black men in the disproportionate outcomes that they saw. He invited everyone. He reminded everyone that the fifth anniversary of Charleston Mother Emanuel shooting would be June 17, 2020. He mentioned that Commissioner Leake received racist, hate letter and wanted the community to know and Commissioner Leak to know and understand that there was no greater voice in the community for particularly black people and he wanted her to know that they all stood with her, had her back, and stood on her shoulders as she had been a soldier in the field for many years. He said it was a shame they still came to the point where people do what they do without respect for people who should certainly be respected. He said Commissioner Leake, you
are not standing alone, as they were all there for her.

**Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell lost internet connection to the meeting at 10:50 p.m. She rejoined the meeting at 10:54 p.m.**

Commissioner Harden said to Commissioner Leake that they stood with her as her colleagues and that she was sorry that happened and that she agreed there was no greater voice. She also made recognition to the three dads on the Board and told all of the dads in the community Happy Father's Day. She mentioned her dad was in the community and wanted to give him all kinds of appreciation. She mentioned the seniors dying from COVID-19 and her appreciation for Chair Dunlap asking what they were doing strategically to focus in on that, since that was where a lot of the suffering was happening.

Commissioner Cotham joined her colleagues when she said she was so very sorry that yet again she had received another hateful, racist, letter. She wished a Happy Father’s Day to the Board and staff.

Commissioner Fuller said he was proud to serve on the Board with the eight other commissioners and that they did something significant and that the story was yet to be told about the investments they had called for and taken. He said the consequences would be seen in the months and years to come. He said he was hopeful and prayerful that things would be different, and the protests were being heard and that there were people in office who would respond to what people had been crying out about for decades. He said the only way it would change is for elected leaders to demand change and accept nothing less than change. He said that was the work they were doing and that they had to keep at it.

Commissioner Scarborough said they must turn from their wicked ways and that she believed they could move on if people believed they must put their beliefs in practice.

Commissioner Dunlap mentioned a story about how he would yell at his son for not making a complete stop while driving and how his son now understood why, that it was because his dad did not want him to give police officers any reason to stop him. He said it made him feel good that he finally understood the message he gave his son at age 16. He said if you would pay attention to national news and even with what was going on, it had not stopped what was going on in the Country and they needed to be vigilant and needed to raise their voices in order to demand change. He asked for everyone’s support to do that. He said he would be looking forward to more good news about their ability to increase affordable housing in the community.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:04 p.m.

_______________________________  _______________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk          George Dunlap, Chair
CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget/Public Policy meeting at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, in Room 267 on Tuesday, June 23, 2020 at 2:34 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

20-6243: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to discuss business location and expansion and to consult with attorney.

RECESS

The meeting recessed to go into closed session at 2:36 p.m. The meeting returned to open session at 4:06 p.m. in Room 267.

OTHER BUSINESS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Harden to move all appointments and nominations to a September agenda.

Commissioner Harden made a friendly amendment to proceed with nominations to the Board of Equalization and Review, Central Piedmont Community College of Trustees, and the Library Board of Trustees because they had already completed the interviews.

A vote was taken on the motion and was recorded as follows:

Yes: Commissioners Cotham, Leake, and Scarborough
No: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

20-6234: Update on Habitat for Humanity - Critical Home Repair

Laura Belcher, President and CEO of Habitat for Humanity Charlotte Region, provided an update on the Habitat for Humanity Critical Home Repair Program. Ms. Belcher went over what Habitat was working on in the region, stating that the mission of the Habitat Charlotte region was to bring people together to build homes, community, and hope, and they had been doing that in the area for nearly 40 years. She said they recently went through a merger with Our Towns Habitat on February 29, 2020. She said that Habitat Charlotte historically served the City of Charlotte and Pineville and the unincorporated parts of the County, and Our Towns Habitat served Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, and all of...
Iredell County. She said the two organizations were brought together to form one affiliate in order to be more intentional on how they work across the entire service area. She said now they covered all of Mecklenburg County, with the exception of Matthews and Mint Hill, up into Iredell County and together they had served over 2,500 families over the last years.

Ms. Belcher said they were known for their new-home construction and critical-home repair and financial literacy activity. She said for homeownership they focus on the area median income of providing housing for people who were between 30% and 60%. She said they would increase that to 69% to 80% when they want to have more income diversity across a neighborhood. She felt they were addressing home-ownership opportunities where the private market would not meet folks in terms of lending opportunities. She said when they would build, it was with a focus on 2, 3, 4, and 5-bedroom homes and doing both density building of single-family homes and townhomes and that they were working to do both infill lots. She said that they were also doing recycled homes, which were previously owned homes and would rehab the homes and sell them to families that were income qualified below 80%. She said in FY21, they will do 59 new and recycled homes and the plan for the next coming year will be to do 63.

Ms. Belcher said it was important to insure they had affordable home ownership in the community through new construction and the critical home repair for the preservation of houses because of the decline of affordable homes. She said that for years there was a really good supply of homes under $150,000, and in the last several years, those had been completely depleted for both existing and new homes. She said the result of that when there is no wage income is a real compression of who could afford homes. She said that the combination was important to meet the ongoing community pressure.

Ms. Belcher spoke about the critical home repair, a program with which they were partnering with the County. She stated in the past year in the broader projects, they completed 84 projects in FY20, considering a suspension they took due to the pandemic. She said in March they saw critical home repair activities stop, in light of the fact that most of the people they serve were seniors, and they wanted to make sure they were protecting the clients they serve and that staff. She said they took about 60 days to evaluate how they could provide a safe environment for staff and the families they partner with and slowly reintroduced critical home repairs into the programing in late May with the intention of being fully up and running again by July 1, 2020. She said in FY21 they planned to serve 126 families through the critical home repair. She said they focus on families in the community who are below 80% area median income, in single-family, detached homes, which must be owner occupied. She said they look at the value of the home to make sure it is not too high, look at the scope of the repairs to make sure they are not out of balance with the cost of the home, and they look at the family and their willingness to partner with Habitat and work with them on their project to complete the work.

Ms. Belcher said there was value in understanding why when working with the critical home repair, especially the fact that most of the constituents were seniors was that the goal was really to enable people to age in place. She said there was such an increasing population of seniors. She said critical to that population was for them to be able to feel that they were safe in their homes, and one thing that they hear from the home owners in the work they do with them to understand their concerns and their needs was the safety of their home, as they want to feel they could live there, age in place, and be safe. Ms. Belcher spoke about fall hazards. She said they knew if people could not stay in their homes, there was a lot of financial barriers to where they may be able to go.

Ms. Belcher responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Chair Dunlap asked how people could get in touch with her if they wanted to apply for a critical home repair.

Ms. Belcher responded that the easiest way was through the application hotline that could be called. She said the website had the number. She said they were also moving to an online application, which would be put on habitatcltregion.com
Commissioner Leake asked how much the County had to pay Habitat for Humanity to do the work.

Ms. Belcher responded that within the County contract there was a four percent allocation for overhead cost. She said for a million dollars it would be $40,000 to administer the contract, plus costs of supplies.

Commissioner Leake said they received a printout which showed the work that was done and that it said windows but did not say if they had to replace all of the windows in the house or just two windows. She said that was the kind of report that she would like to see, with associated costs.

Commissioner Leake asked if there were other companies which do the same thing, to determine if Habitat for Humanity was cheaper for them or if they could get more done for less money without shoddy work but good work so it would last people.

Commissioner Leake stated she had a problem with them not using black contractors, because it was taxpayer money and some contractors said they did not hear anything from Habitat for humanity to even be interviewed to be a part of the process.

Ms. Belcher responded that she wanted to ensure it was clear that when she started the presentation on new construction, it was just to share an update on what they were doing in new construction but that all of the County investment was in repairs. She said in terms of black contractors they were working with minority small business and women owned list. She said that each house was an individual scope in terms of what would be repaired. She said they notify folks who were on the list through the City and State that they had opportunities and were open to new contractors.

Commissioner Leake asked what percentage they used this year.

Ms. Belcher response was that 31% of the subcontractor dollars went to minority, women-owned businesses.

Commissioner Leake asked for that to me in a report to the Board.

Ms. Belcher agreed.

Commissioner Leake asked if they had any money in balance for the year since they had to stop.

Ms. Belcher responded they had spent nearly $800,000 when they stopped and now that they had started again, they believed that they would have incurred almost all but $50,000 of the million dollars by June 30, 2020 and that was the intention to roll that into the next fiscal year and spend it with the new allocations.

Commissioner Leake asked if they were looking to renew the contract with the County.

Ms. Belcher responded yes.

Commissioner Leake stated they wanted to ensure they looked at others who may be able to do the work, not saying that they were not doing a job but because it was always good to have others to see what they cost.

Ms. Belcher responded they would be happy to have any of the commissioners visit any of the homes to see a before and after.

Commissioner Fuller asked if she had an idea of what the total need in the community was so they could see where they were with the million dollars.

Ms. Belcher responded that it was a good question, because it would be hard to determine the condition of inside an owner-occupied home from street. She stated they had been working with both UNC Charlotte and the City of Charlotte to try to quantify a need of what
the owner-occupied, single-family, residence-substandard housing. She said it was believed to be thought it was in the 20,000-unit range plus or minus, so there was a huge need in the community. She said in current year they anticipated working with 126 families in the community with a potential need of 20,000 residences.

Commissioner Fuller asked if that was 20,000 of the same or of it intersected with the number of affordable houses.

Ms. Belcher stated it was completely separate. She said those families would already be in affordable housing, so it was a completely separate analysis. She said that what they had served over 700 families through critical home repair and looking at where the 700 households compared to the neighborhood incomes and extrapolate some of the need. She said there was a need for 34,000 units of new construction and probably 20,000 in rehabilitation.

Commissioner Fuller asked if they were required to pay it back.

Ms. Belcher responded that the cost for the family would depend on their AMI. She said for someone who applied with the most-restrictive incomes, your 30% AMI, it would be a full grant.

Ms. Belcher stated it was very minimal what the family would be investing, as most of it was a grant. She said in return they would put a deed restriction on the home so that if the family wanted to sell the home and move on, they would be able to recoup that money and invest it back into additional housing.

Commissioner Fuller said to his understanding was they had limits to what type of grants they could give. He asked if they were able to do this better by funding this non-profit versus trying to accomplish the same thing their self.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney responded he believed there were two different questions legally. He said one legally, that they could do it and then what was the best way. He said legally, you could do it a long as they ensured there was a public purpose. He said the best way to do it probably was whether or not they actually funded versus giving the money to someone such as habitat. He said in other words, Habitat could not do what the County could not do, or they could not pay habitat to do something.

Commissioner Fuller said he believed there was room to invest more and that they would see how the next year went but thought it was a tremendous investment to keep people in their homes, especially seniors.

Commissioner Cotham said she could never forget how overwhelmed residents were and the relief they felt after the repairs were made.

Commissioner Harden asked her to continue reaching out to the district representatives when doing homes in their community. Ms. Belcher responded absolutely.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the seniors had to repay for the work.

Ms. Belcher responded it was based on sliding scale based on the household income and that if they were below 30% AMI, they would not have to pay anything.

**RECESS**

The meeting recessed at 4:54 p.m. and reconvened at 5:06 p.m.

**20-6232: Department Strategic Business Plan Updates**

Dr. Monica R. Allen, Strategic Planning & Evaluation Director, provided an update on
department strategic business planning work. She said they started all their work in 2014, building a framework to put a three-year business planning process in place, and in 2017 they implemented their plans for the first time in County history. She said that allowed them to customize the departmental business plans for each of the County departments as opposed to having one overarching umbrella. She said that since 2017 they had a lot of successes by having implemented 24 strategic business plans, which included any new department which came online during that time period. She said they had approximately 50 departmental goals that all of the directors were focusing on over a three-year period. She said it resulted in about $375 million in investments in our strategic business plans. She said that was a partnership between Strategic Planning and Budget, where they worked with the directors to develop those plans, turned them over to Budget and during that part of the process, whatever was in the business plans, as well as other information, was used to inform the development of the County’s budget. She said that all-in-all, all 24 County departments with business plans in place, met at least one of their goals and in many cases, some departments met all of the goals outlined for the three-year period.

Dr. Allen showed the Board what the County did well. She said in 2016 81% of County employees felt satisfied with County security, and in 2019, 87% of County employees were satisfied with County security. She highlighted that the library wanted to focus on three main objectives: to provide technology for the changing needs in the community, ensure library collections evolved to meet the needs of a diverse and changing community, and the third object was around the recruiting developing, and retaining highly effective staff and volunteers. She said that based on several other executed strategies, as well as the investments made in library infrastructure. She said the library was able to start up a vendor laptop loan program as well as a hot-spot loan program, which both help to break down barriers in access to individuals who may have had some barriers to not getting access to WI-FI or the internet, as well as laptops. She said based on the investments in infrastructure, from FY16 to FY19, they improved the WI-FI usage/increase from 60,000,000 sessions to 1.35 million sessions.

Dr. Allen said for the Criminal Justice Service Department, one of its goals was to focus on advancing effective evidence-based programing to meet the individual needs of persons within the community. She said they specifically focused on one of the services called Recovery Courts, which was called Drug Treatment Court and that their whole goal was to use those best practices to work with their particular clients. She said they leveraged self-evaluation tools provided by the National Association of Drug Court. She said they also leveraged some best practices associated with the Ohio Risk Assessment System, and that system helped CJS identify high-risk individuals that they needed to serve. She said as a result of successful best practices and other work identified from FY18 to FY19, the Department increased the graduation rates for those participants for the Recovery Court’s program across all six courts: District Recovery Court; DWI Recovery Court; FIRST; Wellness Court; Superior Recovery Court; Youth Court.

Dr. Allen said for the Department of Human Resources, they had a one-year plan, because they opened their doors June 2018 but that there were a lot of successes that were seen with CRC to include servicing over 93,000 customer tickets. She said there was also a 96% satisfaction rating for those individuals who went to the Community Resource Center to access the services provided by Social Services, Public Health, Child Support, and Community Support Services.

Dr. Allen said for the County Human Resources Department, they had a couple of goals within their three-year strategic business plan and despite the change in leadership, they continued marching forward to achieve those goals and were able to focus on goal two, which was improving the physical, mental health and wellness of County employees. She said that one of their strategies was to redesign the benefits plan to ensure the County was providing comprehensive options for employees and to expand its contractual relationship with Our Health. She said they needed to provide them those options and HR was able to do that. She said as a result of their work, employees participated in more than 14,000 in year one wellness activities, which was a net increase over the three-year period.
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Dr. Allen said that with MEDIC, one of its goals was to reduce the demand on MEDIC and they were looking at a lot of their data and realized there were high-frequency users who were constantly using 911 services for transport to the hospital, so MEDIC was able to partner with Community Support Services and Social Services to develop interventions in a collaborative monitor so they could target those individuals who were high-frequency users. She said as a result of the collective and collaborative efforts, they were able to reduce the number of EMS transports by 20.8% over a two-year period. She said the program would continue in the agencies FY20 through FY22 plan.

Dr. Allen said for Park and Recreation, the focus was to expand facilities, maintenance, and improvement plans and they sought a lot of funding for deferred maintenance. She said as a result of those investments, the Department was able to replace 39 playgrounds. She said one of the success metrics that they took a look at was the reduction in the backlog of deferred maintenance projects by costs. She said there was reduction from $18.5 million in FY17 to approximately $4.5 million in FY19. She said additionally there was positive perceptions in the community where they were satisfied by the facilities.

Dr. Allen said Public Health had a lot of challenges in dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, but prior to COVID-19 they had accomplished a lot, such as the HIV services program, which was very focused on over the three-year period. She said one of the things that they implemented was the getting to zero plan, to achieve continued reduction of new cases of HIV and they also implemented the prep pilot program to uninsured individuals, and as a result of their efforts, they were able to serve 129 individuals in the prep pilot program by the end of FY19, which resulted in 0% of the patience in the prep pilot program converting to HIV during that same period of time.

Dr. Allen said with the Public Information Department, its goal three was to increase the invisibility of Mecklenburg County using public information community relations. She said they had investments tied to this, but there were no new investments in the three-year period. She said despite no new investments, the Department was able to accomplish a lot, such as leading the 2019 reevaluation through the Department’s outreach strategy, getting the word out about the new community resource center, and ultimately, creating an award-winning box tool kit that made it easier to interact with local government. She said some of their success was in the Department increasing the number of community meetings which were arranged, helping the County Manager hold 41 speaking engagements in FY18 and helping the Chair of the Board of Commissioners hold 20 speaking engagements during that same time period.

Dr. Allen said with everything there would always be opportunity to improve and she went over a few of those. She said in going back to Asset and Facilities Management, one of their goals was to reduce energy usage in Mecklenburg County, and there were no new investments made in that area. She said they were able to see some success, because in 2018 it was reduced by 2.5% and in 2019 it was reduced by 5%.

Dr. Allen said in terms of Homelessness Services, there was a goal to decrease the homeless households by the end of 2019 and there was a lot of successes to get to that, but one of the metrics where they saw an opportunity was with the point and time count. She said there was a little bit of uptick in terms of the number of homeless individuals per capita, which was per 1,000. She said they were waiting for the 2020 data that would not be made available until September, and around that time information could be shared with the Board.

Dr. Allen said with Information Technology Services, a great job had been done with the implementation of projects and one of the benchmark metrics was an industry standard in terms of the amount of the money that goes into the non-digressionary pot. She said he fell short of that 60% standard. She said in FY18, 45% of those projects were in that category, versus 52%. She said they had seen some increase over the two fiscal-year period although they fell shy of the 60%.

Dr. Allen said the Medical Examiner had a goal to win a national best in class operation and within that goal there were several objectives, and one of the objectives was to achieve the name accretion, the National Association of Examiners accreditation, but
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unfortunately, mid plan they had to stop and focus their work to address the opioid crisis where they were seeing increases in cases and increase in workload. She said they put a pause on going after the accreditation but were still working on it.

Dr. Allen said in regard to the Office of Economic Development, one of its goals were to implement a contract management system by FY18 and because the by FY18 was in there, they were actually able to implement that system in February of 2020. Dr. Allen said for Park and Recreation, a big part of their success is from providing available programs and services in the community, as well as increasing awareness of the programs and services. She said one of the challenges they had in the strategic planning analysis they did was around understanding if they were increasing or expanding those programs. She said they knew that was an opportunity for them going forward and that based on the goal of facility awareness, there was data around the annual community service about why they did not participate in a Park and Recreation program in the last year and 61 to 63% of the people indicated they were not aware. She said that was what they saw in a three-year analysis, but she did know since that time there had been some investments in the marketing side of the house and as part of the department's FY20-FY22 plan, they were going to create an overarching marketing plan.

Dr. Allen said as she had mentioned with Public Health there were some great successes and as far as environmental services, in terms of restaurant inspections, they did miss some of the State required inspections they needed to do, but there was a whole host of reasons as to why. She said some of the drivers that affected performance was when an individual comes on board as an inspector, they have to go through a lengthy training and certification process before they were authorized to begin inspections. She said even if she was hired in September, she may still have to go through a six-month training before being able to do the first inspection. She said the result of a budget investment in FY19 may not show up until FY20, so there is lag there. She said another driver was employee turnover and that a lot of the inspectors were hired by other counties and in some cases, there were increase in salaries and signing bonuses so the inspectors will in some cases get certified to do the work then get lured away. She said there were also a higher number of inspectors acquired. She said they saw an increase in number of restaurants which means the number needing to be inspected increased and may have outpaced their capacity to be able to do those inspections. She said there was a lot of opportunity there, but Ms. Harris was on the case to make sure performance did not decline further.

Dr. Allen said for the Department of Social Service Economic Services Division, they had several great strides, as the services provided Medicaid benefits in the community and foods and nutrition benefits in the community, and one of the other things they do as a strategy was to try to link people to access to employment. She said the department placed several of the social workers at NC Works Career Center at Goodwill's Opportunity Campus to enhance collaboration and access. She said theye the Department also began working on a unified workforce development program pilot to focus on 40 of the most difficult individuals to place. She said that pilot rolled over into the Department of Community Resources once that department got stood up and later an individual was hired which was specifically designated to build out the program. She said the program was underway, and there were some long-term strategies.

Dr. Allen said that in terms of next steps, she knew there was a lot of work that needed to be done in terms of taking a look at the strategic business plans and did not know the impact of COVID-19 on performance or strategy execution so one thing they would do when the fiscal year closes was get the data and information from departments and take a look at that to see if any strategy or action needed to be adjusted in the year two of the three-year business plan. She said they also wanted to incorporate the new board items, such as food desserts and additional funding towards public health and expanded services. She felt it would be good to have ongoing reporting to the executive team and Mecklenburg County Board of County Commissioners.

Dr. Allen responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.
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20-6252: "Welcome Back Mecklenburg" Overview

Derrick Ramos, Assistant County Manager and Chief of Staff, provided an update on Mecklenburg County's proposed reopen strategy. He reviewed the following guiding principles of Welcome Back Mecklenburg: protect the health and safety of county employees; ready county facilities, infrastructure and hygiene supplies; safely reopen county services to the public utilizing a staged approach; engage and educate employees and the public on reopen plan; adapt to changing public health conditions and guidance.

Mr. Ramos reviewed the following strategies and measures to protect the health and safety of County employees: issue Welcome Back Mecklenburg COVID-19 Workforce Guidance; ensure social distancing through utilizing telework, staggered shifts and building occupancy limits; address employees in high-risk categories, employees facing COVID-19-related childcare issues, etc.; implement employee health screening training, COVID-19 exposure and sickness protocol; provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to eligible employees; and provide all employees with cloth face coverings.

Mr. Ramos reviewed the following strategies and measures that would be in place to ready County facilities, in terms of infrastructure and hygiene supplies: protective shields would be installed and social distancing markers and signage in customer buildings; continue ‘enhanced cleaning’ services to frequently disinfect high-touch points; deploy additional information technology equipment, and expand video conferencing and virtual applications; modify office workstations, cubicles, furniture and common areas as appropriate; centralize sourcing of hygiene supplies, such as hand sanitizer, cleaning wipes, and tissues, to maximize supply.

Mr. Ramos reviewed the following strategies and measures to safely reopen County services to the public by utilizing a staged approach: a four-stage approach over initial six-month period; departments developed tailored return to work strategies based on unique business requirements; reopen in-person County services based on need; and implementing appropriate safety measures; continue telework for most internal-support Departments and functions.

Mr. Ramos reviewed the following strategies and measures to engage and educate employees and the public on the plan to reopen: keep all audiences constantly aware of how Mecklenburg County is safely reopening offices, programs and services; inform the public with MeckNC.gov Welcome Back Mecklenburg website and social media including timeline, plans and updates; inform employees through Welcome Back Mecklenburg Resource Guide, employee video, Town Halls, and MeckWeb; utilize the 2020 Employee Climate Survey to gauge employee sentiment on telework, communication and return to work recommendations; an Our Health outreach initiative to conduct mental health and wellness checks on county employees

Mr. Ramos reviewed the following strategies and measures to adapt to changing public health conditions and guidance: utilize staged approach permits maximum flexibility and adaptability; adjustments can be made based on latest health conditions and guidance, including from Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and/or the Governor.

Mr. Ramos responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

20-6251: COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on the COVID-19 response in Mecklenburg County. She stated there were 8,801 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 144 deaths. She said there were 21 facilities which were still in outbreak status. She said the numbers on the State site were a little bit higher, because they were counting cases that were tested in Mecklenburg County but did not necessarily live in Mecklenburg County. She reminded the Board that three out of four were young adults and there were other places around the world that were seeing younger people testing positive, which was something Mecklenburg County had been seeing all along. She said that 38% were Hispanic and a younger population, mostly between 20 and 39. She said that one in 15
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were hospitalized, which was an increase over the past week and half had been released from isolation.

Ms. Harris said there was widespread community transmission and there were some parts of the County that were more heavily affected but there was no part of the County without COVID-19. She said there were 142 deaths as of June 21, 2020, and they were spread out over time. She said one thing they were seeing nationally was that there seemed to be fewer deaths per number of cases. She said their mortality rate had been hanging around 2.4 most of the time and that they were still seeing it but were watching it to see if it would change any. She said in terms of deaths, almost 90% were 60 years or older but that there was an increase in numbers from 40-59-year old, which was 10% of the deaths now. She said all but two of the deaths have had other underlying health conditions. She said 62% of the deaths had been in long-term care facilities and almost 58% were non-Hispanic white.

Ms. Harris stated that in terms of the percent positives, over the last seven days, they had been 9.4%, which was a slight decrease from the previous seven days, down from 10.5%. She said they were still averaging about 25,000 tests per day, which would vary some, and there were about 135,000 tests completed in Mecklenburg County to date. She said there had been a decrease in the number of tests, which resulted in a decrease in the number of positives. She said there were 128 average daily in the hospital census, which was up from 106 over the past seven days. She said the hospitalizations had been on a steady incline since the middle of May. She said that had translated into increases in the ICU beds as well but that they were not seeing increases in the use of ventilators.

Ms. Harris said the social distancing model had not been updated since June 13, but the number continued to trail downwards, and they were almost back to baseline from before they moved into the stay-at-home order. She said they were continuing to work on testing and were working daily with the North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services, as well as the North Carolina Division of Public Health, as well as Emergency Management, looking at options with increasing testing. She said they were planning around it with their partners and were accessing supplies and PPE for those who had the ability to expand testing and were developing additional partnerships, both private and public and they were working with the State to improve data availability. She said a couple of things that they wanted to point out was when they report their positivity rate, they were only focused on the data from Novant and Atrium, because that was the only place they had consistently gotten the negatives as well as the positives. She said the State was finally starting to provide them with some additional data and they were almost at the point where they could include the CDS testing data in that positivity rate as well, so they would see what that would do with the numbers. She said the other thing she would point out was that they were accessing supplies and PPE and were looking at partnerships but what they were hearing from the hospital systems was that they were maxed out with their testing and what it would take was a number of things for them to be able to expand testing, but the biggest need was additional staffing. She said conversations were happening with the State around the possibilities there but as the number of people in the hospitals went up, the hospitals were having to pull back staff that they had been using for testing to be in the hospitals doing the work they were doing before they started doing testing. She said they were working through some of those things and there were just some challenges they had to try to accommodate and look at other options.

Ms. Harris notified the Board that they were providing testing Saturday and Sunday at the Valarie C. Woodard Center and were working with MAKO Laboratories, who were doing the collection and testing. She said it would be at no charge other than the County’s staff time. She said Emergency Management was helping with some staffing and they were working with some churches who were helping with volunteers. She said MAKO would be providing the staffing that would be collecting the testing, as well as the supplies for that and would charge insurance for people who had it, otherwise, there would be no charge to anyone going through. She said they would have four testing lanes for drive-thru and one tent for walkups. She said that was one of the problems they were having with CVS, their only option was drive through, you could not walk up and be tested. She said they were making sure they had that available as well. She said that event would go from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. She said they would be able to test up to 1,000 a day. She
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reviewed marketing for the testing event.

Ms. Harris said that testing was just the first part of the process and there was a backend, where people got their results and what happened after they got their results. She said for investigation and contract tracing their daily volume for new cases was around 225 a day that they had to work. She said they had an average of about 20 long-term care and other facilities that were in outbreak status, and they had a daily volume of case closures which required contacting the individuals, making sure they met the requirements, and closing out the cases. She said that was about 100 a day and the daily volume of individual contacts were over 400 a day. She said there was a daily volume of employer and business contacts, and the County had a separate staff to contact those individuals and talk through it with the businesses to make sure they were doing what they needed to do and if there was a worry about any of her staff or people who may had been exposed. She said there were about 115 of those contacts a day. She said the workload for a case investigator was about 10 to 15 cases per day for the individuals who dealt with the positives. She said there were individual contact tracers who would take the information which came from the investigations and contacts the people who had been exposed. She said they do about 20 of those per day, per person. She said the employer and business contact tracers work with about 18 a day. She said there were also several individuals who were specifically assigned to the long-term care facilities and they have a specific facility they work with so there would be a relationship with that facility. She said the operation would go on seven days a week. A week. She said most of the staff were working at least six days a week and they were asking everyone to work at least one day a weekend, which was going on since March.

Ms. Harris said that they had talked about resources for the congregate sites but there were a number of different things that they provide to them and there was regular communication with those sites when they were in an outbreak status, and it was the same staff person who was interacting with them on a regular basis unless they needed something the staff person could not provide. She said they were making visits to some of the sites that were having issues so they could work through those issues with them.

Ms. Harris said in terms of outreach to vulnerable populations, the only thing added was working with the business round-table communication workgroup to make sure they were in lock step with the communication they were working on now and that they helped them get it out in the best possible way. She said the CDC was working on some specific clarification around masking which should come out in the next couple of days. She said the governor would probably make an announcement about masking tomorrow. She said there were a lot of local discussions about it and the Mayor asked the Governor to move forward with masking requirements. She said she believed it was Mathews that passed a resolution last night requiring some type of masking in the County. She said the main issue was enforcement and they needed to find a way to encourage masking in a way that did not stigmatize people or create situations where they put law enforcement in a situation where they were trying to enforce something that could incite something else. She said masks work when everyone wears one.

Ms. Harris said there was an article written about Minneapolis when they started with the protests, they handed out a lot of masks. She said there was significant testing done shortly after of large numbers of people who had attended the protests. She said 32,000 were tested by one company, with a positivity rate of 1.8%. She said another 8,500 were testing by another company and the positivity rate was .9%. She said they believed it meant that when you were outside and had mask on, it limited the exposure, so the positivity rate of people in those events was very low.

Commissioners made comments and asked follow-up questions. Ms. Harris responded to questions.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what the target for testing was in the community.

Ms. Harris responded the testing target was initially five percent of the population in 30 days, which was met. She said the next target that was pitched out there by the federal government and state was 20,000 a day, which was significant and obviously way more
than they were currently testing. She said the State had backed off of that number to some extent and still wanted to expand testing. She said it would take manpower to do some of this.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if everyone who wanted a test could get a test.

Ms. Harris said pretty much.

Commissioner Jerrell requested having people out passing out mask to mass-gathering goers.

Commissioner Fuller asked about food-safety when it came to eating out.

Ms. Harris responded that if you were picking up food, she would not be as concerned about COVID-19 as she would some other type of foodborne illness but that they were back to inspections as they were before and were focusing on the entities which were the riskiest and paying close attention to them to insure they are inspected and the others as well. She said they did spot checks during the whole COVID-19 process up to this point but that now they were back in the facilities doing the inspections.

Commissioner Fuller asked if there was a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 through preparation.

Ms. Harris said no, it is a respiratory virus and was droplets and that cooked food would take care of any of the virus that may have a droplet but that they were also educating during the inspections.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Leake for staff to bring back a legal document for the Board to formally adopt on July 7, 2020 to require people to wear masks in Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Fuller stated if the Governor were to impose something, they could certainly take that into account, but he did not want to just depend on what the Governor wanted to do, as the Board’s concern was Mecklenburg County as opposed to the whole state.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, said he did not think he had the authority to do it that way because under Emergency Management Act they were restricted to only act within the confines of the act as written, and if it was within Mecklenburg County, by law, you must get the Towns and City to buy in. He said any act they passed, if it was not legal, would not be enforced by a court.

Commissioner Fuller stated that they could require it in Mecklenburg County; that with respect of inside municipalities, yes, they would have their own rule and would not necessarily have to follow it but that he would hope they would provide leadership in the City of Charlotte and towns. He said Matthews had already signed on and he suspected they would find agreement. He said he understood Mr. Wade had said they had some capacity, and whatever capacity they had, he wanted to use it.

Mr. Wade responded within the ETJ because the City of Charlotte would have to sign off within the City.

Commissioner Fuller stated he understood that and believed City Council would enjoy their lead on the issue and would adopt it their selves but that he wanted them to come back and to whatever the extent of their authority was to do it, for them to do it.

Mr. Wade stated they were under the Governor’s order currently and if he wanted to change what they were under they would have to recraft the emergency declaration that Mecklenburg County was under.

Commissioner Fuller stated they rescinded it.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, stated staff would see how many towns wanted to sign on and that they would bring it back July 7th for a vote to see how far they would get.
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Commissioner Fuller said his motion was for the Board to require masks in Meck County to the extent of their legal authority and to the extent others come along. He wanted it to be clear that the Board was putting a requirement in for masks, not just for businesses but for everyone to the extent of their authority. He asked if that was legal.

Mr. Wade said with that caveat, to the extent of our legal authority, was much better.

Commissioner Harden mentioned if they did it now it would be in place for July 4th.

Ms. Diorio said only the signature of the Chair was required and that if they did it tonight, they could go and try to execute and did not need to bring it back July 7th to have them vote again.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Leake to adopt a rule to require masks in Mecklenburg County to the extent of the Board's legal authority.

Commissioner Cotham spoke on her concern of possibility confusing the public and worried about the timing on it.

Commissioners made comments and asked clarifying questions. Commissioner Fuller responded.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

Yes: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

No: Commissioners Cotham and Powell

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell made notice to the amount hospitalizations versus the amount of COVID-19 positive cases there were in the Hispanic community.

Ms. Harris said they were paying close attention to that and that at this point there may have been as situation where someone should have gone to the hospital and refused to go. She said they did not have the reason for that but could make assumptions, but that was all they would be. She said the others who needed to be hospitalized have been. She said they were working with the hospital systems to pay close attention to that as well.

Chair Dunlap asked when Ms. Harris expected to see case spike from the local protests. He said the date came and went and they did not see a substantial spike and asked if they should be encouraged.

Ms. Harris responded yes and that they would see what happened on the weekend.

NOMINATIONS/APPOINTMENTS

20-6198: Mecklenburg EMS Agency (Medic)

Mecklenburg EMS Agency

The Board considered an appointment to an unexpired term expiring December 31, 2022 for an Atrium Health position and an appointment to an unexpired term effective July 1, 2020 and expiring December 31, 2022 for the County Manager’s position.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to appoint Dr. David Callaway, Chief, Operational & Disaster Medicine, Atrium Health’s Carolinas Medical Center as an Atrium Health representative and (B) appoint Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager as the Mecklenburg County
representative.

Dr. Callaway and Mr. Bryant were appointed.

**Note:** In 1996, the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners along with County management staff worked with EMS management and leaders in both the medical and business communities to address the needs of the County’s EMS department. The Amended and Restated Joint Undertaking Agreement, approved by the Board of County Commissioners in November 2009, states the affairs of the Agency shall be governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners which shall be appointed by the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners as follows: a. Three (3) persons shall be Charlotte-Mecklenburg Hospital Authority (CMHA) employees nominated by the CMHA Chief Executive Officer; and b. Three (3) persons shall be Novant Health Southern Piedmont Region (Presbyterian) employees nominated by the Presbyterian Chief Executive Officer; and c. One (1) person shall be a County employee nominated by the County Manager.

**20-6182: Appointments**

**Board of Equalization and Review**

The Board considered two appointments for three-year terms expiring March 31, 2023.

On June 1, 2020 an Ad Hoc Interview Committee convened to interview nominees to the Board. The Committee unanimously recommended Bailey Patrick and Chris Word for appointment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to appoint Bailey Patrick and Chris Word.

Ms. Patrick and Mr. Word were appointed.

**Central Piedmont Community College Board of Trustees**

The Board considered one appointment for four-year term expiring June 30, 2024.

On June 1, 2020 an Ad Hoc Interview Committee convened to interview nominees to the Board. The Committee unanimously recommended William Dunn for appointment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to appoint William Dunn.

The vote was taken and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Cotham

Mr. Dunn was appointed.

**Library Board of Trustees**

The Board considered one appointment for a four-year term expiring June 30, 2024.

On June 1, 2020 an Ad Hoc Interview Committee convened to interview nominees to the Board. The Committee voted 3:1 to recommend Amy Hawn Nelson for appointment.
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A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to appoint Amy Hawn Nelson.

Ms. Nelson was appointed.

20-6186: Nominations/Appointments

Arts and Science Advisory Council

The Board considered four appointments for two-year terms expiring June 30, 2022 in the At-Large category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Janice Davidson and Philip Thomas and to appoint Danielle Walcott and David Webb.

Ms. Davidson and Mr. Thomas were reappointed. Ms. Walcott and Mr. Webb were appointed.

The Board considered one appointment for a two-year term expiring June 30, 2022 in the Northwest - District 1 category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Donna Rice.

Ms. Rice was reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment for a two-year term expiring June 30, 2022 in the Central - District 3 category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Shannon Homesley.

Ms. Homesley was reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment for a two-year term expiring June 30, 2022 in the Central - District 4 category.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to reappoint Betty Wicker.

Ms. Wicker was reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment for a two-year term expiring June 30, 2022 in the Southeast - District 5 category.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Mary Lytch.

Ms. Lytch was reappointed.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee

The Board considered three appointments for three-year terms expiring July 31, 2023 and one appointment for an unexpired term expiring September 30, 2020 and then continuing for a full three-year term expiring September 30, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Tiera Craig, Kelly Cuddihy, Morgan Hinton and Kelly Spencer.
Ms. Craig, Ms. Cuddihy, Ms. Hinton, and Ms. Spencer were appointed.

Charlotte Water Advisory Committee

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023 in the Real Estate Developer category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to reappoint Dorian Carter.

Mr. Carter was reappointed.

Citizens Transit Advisory Group

The Board considered one appointment to a two-year term expiring June 30, 2022.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to reappoint Davena Mgbeokwere.

Ms. Mgbeokwere was reappointed.

Human Resources Advisory Committee

The Board considered five appointments to three-year terms expiring June 30, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to reappoint Carol Ashby, Cezanne Cody, Carole Isom-Barnes, Dru Meier and Jacqueline Moss.

Ms. Ashby, Ms. Cody, Ms. Isom-Barnes, Ms. Moss, and Mr. Meier were reappointed.

Library Board of Trustees

The Board considered one appointment to a four-year term expiring June 30, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Kimmery Martin.

Ms. Martin was reappointed.

Park and Recreation Commission

The Board considered two appointments for three-year terms expiring June 30, 2023 in the South Region 3 and South Region 2 categories.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Rufus Kearney and Mark Loflin.

Mr. Kearney and Mr. Loflin were reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023 in the Southern Towns category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Milady Meadows.
Ms. Meadows was appointed.

**Public Arts Commission**

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023 in the Education Representative category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Lia Newman.

Ms. Newman was reappointed.

**Planning Commission**

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Keba Samuel.

Mr. Samuel was reappointed.

The Board considered two appointments for three-year terms expiring June 30, 2023. One position is a Board of Education slot.

The Board agreed to interview all four applicants. Chair Dunlap appointed an ad hoc committee to interview four potential candidates. The committee was Commissioner Cotham, Chairperson, Commissioner Harden, Commissioner Leake, and Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell. Interviews will be conducted for Richard Black, Astrid Chirinos, Ronnie Harvey, and Harold Norman, Jr.

These appointments will be brought back to the August 5, 2020 meeting for consideration.

**Region F Aging Advisory Committee**

The Board considered two delegate appointments for two-year terms expiring June 30, 2022.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Deborah Atkinson and Jeffrey Dean.

Ms. Atkinson and Mr. Dean were reappointed.

**Waste Management Advisory Board**

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023.

Motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Martin Doss, as recommended by City Council.

Mr. Doss was reappointed.

**20-6231: Nominations/Appointments – COVID 19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force**

The Board considered the appointment of 23 members, including Dena Diorio, County Manager, to the COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force.
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The Clerk’s Office received 89 applications.

The Board did not take any action; the Chair directed the Commissioners to submit written nominations to the Clerk by June 26, 2020. Appointments to the Task Force will occur at the July 7, 2020 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk
George Dunlap, Chair
Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, convened in Formal Session on Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 6:02 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent until Noted: Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-6212: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6223: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6230: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6235: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6238: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6239: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6241: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6242: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6249: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6253: by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell
AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6269: Joint Proclamation - Americans with Disabilities Act Awareness Day

Chair Dunlap read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Chairman Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to adopt a joint proclamation declaring July 26, 2020 as American with Disabilities Act Awareness Day in Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6217: Public Appearance

There were no speakers that addressed the Board.

APPOINTMENTS

20-6263: Nominations/Appointments - COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force

Chair Dunlap said the Board needed to clarify the County Manager’s role on the Task Force.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said she wanted to serve as staff to the Task Force, not as a member, if the Board would consider that.

Chair Dunlap said the issue with that was we had 23 members in the case that there was a tie, which was why the Manager was one of the 23.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to accept the recommendation of designating the County Manager to serve as staff for the COVID-19 Task Force and to have 23 members to the committee.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell

NO: Commissioner Dunlap

The Board considered appointing twenty-three (23) members to the COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force.

The Board received 89 applications for consideration. The Board of County
Commissioners submitted written nominations to the Clerk on June 26, 2020.

The results of the nominations are as follows:

- Victoria Avramovic, 5 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, and Powell
- Deanna Baumgardner, 2 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap and Powell
- Yvette Bessent, 4 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, Jerrell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Linda Bohling, 1 nomination by Commissioner Scarborough
- Kristi Booker, 2 nominations by Commissioners Fuller and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Gregory Boulanger, 3 nominations by Commissioners Fuller, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Brenda Campbell, 2 nominations by Commissioners Leake and Scarborough
- Tracie Campbell, 3 nominations by Commissioners Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
- Monique Cartwright, 1 nomination by Commissioners Scarborough
- Emily Chambers Sharpe, 3 nominations by Commissioners Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
- Jasmine Chaney, 4 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
- Marcie Chong, 3 nominations by Commissioners Harden, Jerrell, and Scarborough
- Bobby Cobb, 2 nominations by Commissioners Cotham and Powell
- Kimberley Cole, 1 nomination by Commissioners Rodriguez-McDowell
- Nathaniel Coley, 1 nomination by Commissioners Fuller
- Carrie Cook, 5 nominations by Commissioners Cotham Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Keith Cradle, 5 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Dena Diorio, 4 nominations by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap Jerrell, and Powell
- Reverend Sarah L. Ellis, 3 nominations by Commissioners Cotham, Jerrell, and Scarborough
- Cathleen Gallagher, 1 nomination by Commissioner Scarborough
- Constance Green-Johnson, 1 nomination by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell
- Charles Grouse, 1 nomination by Commissioner Powell
- Tonya Hamilton, 1 nomination by Commissioner Fuller
- Jordan Holt, 2 nominations by Commissioners Jerrell and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Jacob House, 1 nomination by Commissioner Harden
- Tara Hunter-McCoy, 1 nomination by Commissioner Powell
- Carlenia Ivory, 4 nominations by Commissioners Harlow, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough
- Mohammed Jibriel, 7 nominations by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Haden, Jerrell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
- Blanchard Kevin Kendrick, 3 nominations by Commissioners Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
− Chanell Ketchmore, 1 nomination by Commissioners Fuller and Powell
− Stacy King-Chaney, 1 nomination by Commissioner Powell
− Nancy Kuzniar, 1 nomination by Commissioner Scarborough
− Elena Lenis-Zuluaga, 3 nomination by Dunlap, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
− Dennis Lewis, 1 nomination by Commissioner Scarborough
− Gabriel Mathless, 3 nomination by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, and Harden
− Bernadette Joy Maulion, 4 nomination by Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, and Jerrell
− Lora McDowell, 1 nomination by Commissioner Dunlap
− Jessica Montana, 6 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harlow, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
− Rodney Moore, 1 nomination by Commissioner Jerrell
− Maria (Gina) Navarrete, 5 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, and Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
− Carrie Nelson, 1 nomination by Commissioner Powell
− Nicole Peterson, 2 nominations by Commissioners Fuller and Powell
− Mitzi Porter, 5 nominations by Cotham, Dunlap, Harden, Leake, and Powell
− Kaitlin Powers, 1 nomination by Commissioner Dunlap
− Mitzi Porter, 5 nominations by Cotham, Dunlap, Harden, Leake, and Powell
− Harold Rice, Jr., 4 nominations by Commissioners Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, and Powell
− Rachelle Salo, 1 nomination by Commissioner Harden
− Sierra Saumenig, 2 nominations by Commissioners Fuller and Powell
− Jessica Schorr Saxe, 4 nominations by Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Jerrell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
− Kenneth Schorr, 3 nominations by Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, and Harden
− Sam Smith, Jr., 3 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, and Jerrell
− Dr. Cheryl Spellman, 3 nominations by Commissioners Harden, Powell, and Scarborough
− Samuel Spencer IV, 2 nominations by Commissioners Cotham and Powell
− Sheila Spitz, 2 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap and Harden
− Elizabeth Star-Winer, 3 nominations by Commissioners Fuller, Harden, and Scarborough
− Sarah Stevens, 2 nominations by Commissioners Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell
− Vinod Thomas, 2 nominations by Commissioners Cotham and Scarborough
− Yvette Townsend-Ingram, 3 nominations by Commissioners Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
− Salma Villarreal, 5 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, Jerrell, and Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
− Martha Viser, 1 nomination by Commissioner Dunlap
− Kiana Washington, 1 nomination by Commissioner Jerrell
− Marcenia Waters, 1 nomination by Commissioner Jerrell
− Brandi Williams, 1 nomination by Commissioner Jerrell
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- Jennifer Williams, 1 nomination by Commissioner Dunlap
- Dietrick Williams, 6 nominations by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
- Dr. Jerome Williams, Jr., 7 nominations by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Harden to appoint all nominees who have four or more nominations.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to a vote on a subsequent substitute motion.

**Commissioner Scarborough joined the meeting at 6:25 p.m.**

Commissioner Powell stated she was comfortable appointing those with five or more nominations, but not four nominations.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Powell to appoint all nominees who have five or more nominations.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, and Jerrell

Victoria Avramovic, Carrie Cook, Keith Cradle, Mohammed Jibriel, Jessica Montana, Maria (Gina) Navarrete, Mitzi Porter, Salma Villarreal, Dietrick Williams, Dr. Jerome Williams, Jr. were appointed to the COVID-19 Task Force.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to appoint all nominees with at least four nominations.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, and Powell

Yvette Bessent, Jasmine Chaney, Carlenia Ivory, Blanchard Kevin Kendrick, Bernadette Joy Maulion, Harold Rice, Jr., and Jessica Schorr Saxe were appointed to the COVID-19 Task Force.

Nominations were conducted for the final six positions on the Task Force and recorded as follows:

- Evelyne Billingslea, nominated by Commissioner Leake
- Gregory Boulanger, nominated by Commissioner Fuller
- Brenda Campbell, nominated by Commissioner Leake
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- Reverend Sarah L. Ellis, nominated by Commissioner Cotham
- Charles Grouse, nominated by Commissioner Powell
- Gabriel Mathless, nominated by Commissioner Fuller
- Rodney Moore, nominated by Commissioner Jerrell
- Rachelle Salo, nominated by Commissioner Harden
- Sam Smith, Jr., nominated by Commissioner Jerrell
- Dr. Cheryl Spellman, nominated by Commissioner Harden
- Elizabeth Star-Winer, nominated by Commissioners Fuller and Harden
- Sarah Stevens, nominated by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell
- Marcenia Waters, nominated by Commissioner Jerrell

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to close the nominations.

Commissioners advocated for their nominees.

A vote was taken on the last round of nominees for six appointments and recorded as follows:

- Evelyne Billingsea, 1 vote by Commissioner Leake
- Gregory Boulanger, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Brenda Campbell, 4 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Jerrell, and Leake
- Reverend Sarah L. Ellis, 2 votes by Commissioners Cotham and Jerrell
- Charles Grouse, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Gabriel Mathless, 3 votes by Commissioner Dunlap, Fuller, and Harden
- Rodney Moore, 1 vote by Commissioner Jerrell
- Rachelle Salo, 3 votes by Commissioner Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Sam Smith, Jr., 4 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, and Jerrell
- Dr. Cheryl Spellman, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Elizabeth Star-Winer votes by Commissioners 3, Dunlap, Fuller, and Harden
- Sarah Stevens, 4 votes by Commissioners Harden, Leake, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Marcenia Waters, 5 votes by Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to appoint all nominees with at least five votes.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to a vote on a subsequent substitute motion.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner
Harden to appoint those nominees with at least five votes and then vote on the following four nominees for the final two appointments: Brenda Campbell, Sarah Stevens, Elizabeth Star-Winer, and Sam Smith.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Fuller, Harden, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, and Leake

Greg Boulanger, Charles Grouse, Dr. Cheryl Spellman, and Marcenia Water were appointed.

A vote was taken on the final two appointments and recorded as follows:

- Brenda Campbell, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Leake, and Powell
- Sam Smith, Jr., 5 votes by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough
- Elizabeth Star-Winer, 4 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Harden, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Sarah Stevens, 4 votes by Commissioners Harden, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

Brenda Campbell and Sam Smith, Jr. were appointed.

Appointment of Co-Chairs and Alternate Members

The Board must consider appointing two co-chairs from the appointed membership.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough and seconded by Commissioner Harden for the COVID-19 Task Force to select the chair and co-chair.

Commissioner Fuller stated the resolution said the Board of County Commissioners were to appoint chair and co-chair.

Commissioner Jerrell said he thought the appointment of the co-chairs should be the Board’s responsibility. He said the other point he wanted to raise was having alternates on the Task Force. He said it is possible that there will be members that will not be able to serve through the entire process and either the Board could appoint alternates or would have to make new appointments, but that could potentially put a cog in the wheel in terms of decision-making. He said he would like to have more discussion about potentially having alternates ready on deck in case we lose members.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Fuller that the Board of County Commissioners appoint the chair and co-chair of the COVID-19 Task Force by the time of the Board’s next meeting.

Without a second, the motion was not considered.
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Commissioner Harden was concerned about waiting until August 5, 2020, which was the date of the next future meeting. She asked what their options were.

Chair Dunlap said they could think about it, and he could set up a time for them to send their vote for chair and co-chair though the Clerk, and the person who received the most votes for chair and co-chair would chair the COVID-19 Task Force.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell suggested an ad hoc committee be created to choose a chair and co-chair.

Chair Dunlap stated he would be willing to appoint an ad hoc committee of four that would bring a recommendation of Chair and Co-Chair back to the body for a vote at the August 5, 2020 meeting.

Commissioner Scarborough withdrew her motion.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint an ad hoc committee to bring back recommendations for two co-chairs for the Board to consider at the August 5, 2020 meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to appoint Elizabeth Star-Winer and Sarah Stevens as alternate members of the COVID-19 Task Force.

Elizabeth Star-Winer and Sarah Stevens were appointed as alternate members.

The following candidates were appointed to the COVID-19 Task Force:

1. Victoria Avramovic
2. Yvette Bessent
3. Gregory Boulanger
4. Brenda Campbell
5. Jasmine Chaney
6. Carrie Cook
7. Keith Cradle
8. Charles Grouse
9. Carlenia Ivory
10. Mohammed Jibriel
11. Blanchard Kevin Kendrick
12. Bernadette Joy Maulion
13. Jessica Montana
14. Maria (Gina) Navarrete
15. Mitzi Porter
17. Jessica Schorr Saxe
18. Sam Smith, Jr.
19. Cheryl Spellman
20. Elizabeth Star Winer (Alternate)
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21. Sarah Stevens (Alternate)
22. Salma Villarreal
23. Marcenia Waters
24. Dietrick Williams
25. Dr. Jerome Williams, Jr.

The two co-chairs will be selected at the August 5, 2020 meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:30 PM

20-6226: Continued Public Hearing for Closing a Portion of Right-of-Way for Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane

The public hearing was opened on February 18, 2020 and the Board of County Commissioners heard public comments and continued the public hearing until March 4, 2020. On March 4, 2020, Mattamy Carolina Corporation requested that the hearing be continued so they could work out an arrangement with the roads that may satisfy the Board. The Board voted to continue the public hearing to June 16, 2020. On June 16, 2020, the Board voted to continue the public hearing to July 7, 2020 so the developer could complete the construction of the roads.

Crystal Goode, Land Use Environment Services Agency, notified the Board that concerns regarding emergency-vehicle access had been addressed.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and approve the Order of Closing for the portion of Lahaina Lane and Ogden Lane public right-of-way.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49 Document #16.

20-6236: Public Hearing for Closing the Right-of-Way for Mallaranny Road

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and approve the Order of Closing the Right-of-Way for Mallaranny Road.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49 Document #17.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE

MANAGER’S REPORT
20-6256: BOCC FY2020 Budget Priorities Update

Adrian Cox, Acting Budget Director, provided a presentation with a status update on the Board’s FY2020 Budget Priorities. He noted all of the financial books had not yet closed for the year, but that any additional spending of the information he would present here would be minimal. He provided a summary of the spending for the FY2020 budget priorities, including highlights for each priority and investments made for FY2021. He said there was $65 million in investments made for the year in the five Board priorities. He said for the priority to Reduce Racial Disparities, $5.7 million/93% of the $6 million investment had been utilized. For Early Childhood Education, $11.27 million/53% had been utilized for 2020; of the $15.18 million investment for affordable housing, $12.45/82% had been used. He $6.8 million investment to support mental health had been fully utilized and for Parks and Greenways, $14.3 million/90% of the funding was utilized. He said of the $65 million in new investments, $50.4 million/78% was utilized in the form of actual expenses or ongoing commitments.

Mr. Cox went over some highlights for reducing racial disparities. He stated for FY2020, the adopted budget included $6 million for the priority, including investments in literacy, workforce development, census preparation, health disparities, MWSBE, and establishing a revolving loan fund. He said $2.25 million was spent during FY2020, and the County set up $3.32 million in commitments, including the small-business, revolving-loan fund that would be spent over the next five years, for a total of $5.6 million. He said funding of $440,000 was primarily due to cost that came in under the original estimates of the MWSBE study and some activities that could not be provided due to COVID-19 closures. He said all but one of the six positions had been hired.

Mr. Cox stated that for next year they established a small business revolving loan fund for $3.25 million; the fund was intended to provide loans to help startup businesses with a goal of 12 loans for year. He said the programs was in operation for three months prior to the onset of Covid-19, and during that three-month period, two loans were issues for a total of $59,000, and the funding would continue to be utilized over the next five years. He said over the past year they also purchased a mobile library, which had been designed and was now under construction, and the position for that activity had been filled. He said the adopted budget included $400,000 for census outreach through marketing materials and advertising to approve the response rate. He said at the time of the report, the County’s response rate was 60.7%, compared to their response rate for the State that was 57.7%.

Mr. Cox said in FY2020 the Board funded an MWSBE program assessment for $250,000, and data assessment for the study was complete, and the contractor was currently analyzing the information to complete the study this summer. He said the total cost of the work was estimated to be $400,000, with the portion that was funded in 2019. He said that actually cost was $350,000, because the consultant costs were lower than expected. He said the Sheriff’s Office was able to fill two of the three Community Engagement Team positions, and the team was now working in the community. He said the Health
Department has spent all of the $105,000 allocated to create HIV and STI awareness campaigns through multiple media outlets. He said last year the budget also included $100,000 for the Prep Program, and as of May, the Health Department had screened 312 patients, and nine individuals tested positive for HIV and had been offered treatment. He said there had been no new infections for individuals who participated in the program. He said the County had also added $97,000 for immunizations, and all of the funding had been utilized, and the Health Department had provided 3,200 Hepatitis A vaccinations.

Mr. Cox said for early childhood education, $21 million had been made in new investments for FY2020, $14 million to reduce childcare subsidy waitlist and $7.1 million for Meck Pre-K; $11.3 million was spent in the last year, and $9.8 million was unspent due to additional state funding for waitlist reduction and closures due to COVID-19. He said this reflected a one-time incident of underspending, which he did not anticipate would occur in FY2021 and beyond. He said for the child-care subsidy wait list, approximately $6.9 million of the $14 million would remain unspent due to an increase in state funding and closed facilities due to COVID-19. He said that funds were used to serve 1,400 children. He said $7 million in the funding for Meck Pre-K was used to add 36 additional classrooms, bringing the total to 69 last year. He said that $3 million remained unspent, and funding was also included in 200 to bring on a Management Coordinator to assist with the program in this position was filled in January.

Mr. Cox said for affordable housing, the Board included $15 million last year through services, home repair, shelters, and the rental-subsidy program. He said the County spend $2.3 million of the fund; however, $10.16 million remained in future commitments, largely in the form of multi-year contracts within the rental subsidy fund. He said it resulted in a total of $12.45 million of funding that was utilized. He said that $2.7 million remained unspent, with a $2.5 million balance available in the rental-subsidy fund, as well as some eviction-prevention services that were not needed when evictions were paused during COVID-19. He said this year, the County established a rental-subsidy fund with $11 million and of the amount, $8.5 million had been committed for rental subsidy programs, with Meck Hall, Link Housing, Lake Arbor, and Away Home. He said the Board received an update on the funding in the May budget discussions. He said since March when contracts were finalized, $200,000 had been spent and it was expected to accelerate in the upcoming years as the programs operated over multiple years. He said in 2020, the County also began the critical home repair program and partnership with Habitat for Humanity and was able to rehabilitate 39 homes. He said they would receive an update on the program June 23, 2020. He said 500,000 was funded for Legal Aid of the Carolinas to provide legal support and help people avoid eviction. He said from July up until March, when evictions were paused in North Carolina, 509 individuals were served through the program, utilizing $305,000 of the funding.

Mr. Cox stated that Charlotte’s Center for Legal Advocacy was funded at $170,000 from July through March, and the initiative provided services to 229 individuals, and $155,000 was utilized. He said for parks and greenways, the Board made a $15.9 million investment for the priority for FY2020, which brought Park and Recreation to pre-recession funding levels, which included operating the funding to accelerate greenway projects, additional
maintenance and operating for new facilities. He said the of the $15.9 million, $10.7 million was spent and an additional $4 million was committed for ongoing projects for a total of $14.3 million of the investment utilized last year. He said 33 of the 63 positions had been hired, and $1.6 million of unspent fund as well as the delays in hiring were due to the impact of COVID-19 on park operations and delays in opening new facilities. He said that $4.5 million of deferred maintenance was provided to make upgrades to park facilities, and the funds were fully utilized. He said $3.9 million was also provided for capital reserve projects for Park and Recreation. He said the funding had been allocated to 19 different projects, and $1 million had been spent to date; however, some projects were on pause due to COVID-19.

Mr. Cox said that the goal for project completion for capital reserve projects was 18 months, and the funds would be fully utilized as the projects are completed. He stated that $2 million was also included in the 2020 operating budget for park land, adding to the funding for land acquisition that was included in the County's CIP. He said the total of $16.9 million, $14.1 million had been committed to acquire 347 acres. He stated the balance of the funding would be used the secure additional land. He said $325,000 was invested to complete a park master plan; significant progress had been made on the plan, and the third phase of the plan was currently under way. He said the final plan was expected to be completed in early 2021. He said six positions were included in the 2020 budget to accelerate greenway expansion, and five of those six positions had been filled and preliminary design, site analysis, and surveying had begun on 11 new projects.

Mr. Cox stated the Board for Mental Health was the final Board priority, and $6.8 million was included for investments in mental health support; all other funding for the priority had been utilized. He said that 58 positions, including 55 CMS employees had been hired. He said that $5.8 million was provided to CMS to fund support positions, and CMS reported that all of the locally funded support positions had been filled. He said the 2020 budget also included funding for two social workers to conduct mental health screening and both had already been hired. He said they were temporarily assigned to the COVID-19 Social Work Response Team. He said a behavioral health coordinator was also hired within the foster care program.

Mr. Cox said that additional funding was included in 2020 for therapeutic foster care, and 96% of the total foster care budget was spent a year in. He said 340,000 included for foster care expense related to raise the age of legislation took effect in December. He said that it had been utilized to provide therapeutic foster care for female teens with juvenile justice involvement, and the County also received 350,000 to provide a matching grant to provide services to raise the age of male youth. He highlighted the $50,000 to fund supportive housing bed for recovery court clients; they had been maintained at 90% occupancy, and all funds had been expended. He said the total investment for the Board 2021 budget priories was $29.6 million in new investments and that they would provide updated during the upcoming year.

Ms. Diorio responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.
Commissioner Jerrell asked how they could support some of the businesses which were not eligible for support from the other programs hit by COVID-19.

Ms. Diorio said she believed there could be an opportunity to use some of their CARES money for grants to small businesses in the ETJ to complement what the City was doing.

Commissioner Fuller requested Board think about what they wanted to accomplish by the end of the year. He asked the Board to allocate some of the dollars to specific marketing for the programs so that the programs would not go unspent.

Commissioner Harden asked if the remaining Parks and Greenways dollars in the capital reserve would stay unencumbered in order to do the projects.

Mr. Cox responded yes, that the dollars would; the projects are multi-year projects with an 18-month completion target.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she was concerned with the eviction avalanche that was coming and suggested the idea of some sort of rental stabilization effort.

Ms. Diorio responded that the County had dedicated some of their federal dollars from CARES funding to rent and mortgage assistance, and the City had put a significant portion of their money towards rental and mortgage assistance as well. She stated the County had also allocated dollars to the non-profits in the northern and southern parts of the County and they still have about $7 million in federal dollars yet to be allocated.

_The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board._

**20-6255: COVID-19 Response Update**

_**Update on the COVID-19 Response**_

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on the COVID-19 response. She stated the County’s amount of positive COVID-19 cases continued to go up and that started June 22nd. She said the numbers would start to look a little different; they had updated the data using a new reporting function that was now available from the State Communicable Disease Management System. She said that information had not been available to the County up until this point and what that meant was that every case that was put into the system reported to the State would now be the data the County would report. She said what that would do is ensure case counts were not artificially impacted by delays due to other reporting systems or emotions in data reported by laboratories. She said that started as of June 22nd, which was about the time the numbers started to climb up.

Ms. Harris stated that as of the 5th, they had 12,452 lab-confirmed cases. She said characteristics of the cases were unchanged with three in four cases being adults. She said there was still a higher percentage in the Hispanic community. The data was still
a bit of a challenge for them due to the systems they were required to use; currently, about 40% of the cases had no assigned race or ethnicity, so when the County would report race or ethnicity, she was a bit concerned about the value of the data. She said they were talking to the State about it. She said it was being reported into the State systems from the testing sites and labs; the State had been requiring them for several weeks to require the race and ethnicity in reporting. She stated they were still finding significant gaps in the data. She said when the County calls people through the case-investigation process, what they were finding was that individuals were not necessarily forth coming with that information.

Ms. Harris said in terms of where the majority of the cases were, things really had not changed much. She said as of the 5th, they have had 156 deaths in Mecklenburg County and the numbers continue to be fairly small per day. The hospitals have an increased understanding of treatment options. She said about 59% of all deaths were from individuals who had come from long-term care facilities, and they had 19 deaths between the ages of 40 and 59. She said that number continued to go up. She said in terms of the percent positive, they had seen a slight increase over the last seven days, up to 11.6%, and the number continued to climb but not rapidly at this point. She said they were testing about 3,200 people a day in Mecklenburg County through the hospital systems and CVS Pharmacy, which was 184,000 tests that had been completed in Mecklenburg today. She said the State continued to encourage increasing testing, and they continued working on that with their partners and the State. She said the latest recommendation they had for them was that they test 12.5% of the population in 30 days, and they were on track to do that, and it did not include the testing they did the weekend before last. She said the challenge they had with continuing the increased testing was that they were overloading their laboratory systems. She said the turnaround time on tests results was around six to seven days, which did not help them nor give the information needed to contact trace and case investigate those individuals in a timely fashion to make any difference. She said they were working with the State to try to find other options for laboratory testing and also to work with the labs to increase their capacity. She said they were looking at other options for laboratory testing and also working with labs to increase their capacity.

Ms. Harris said their daily hospital census was up to about 165 people a day in Mecklenburg County, which was an average over the last seven days of an increase of over 144 last week. She said it had been a steady climb since the middle of May in the County. She said they had a testing event at Valarie C. Woodard and tested on Saturday and Sunday, June 28th and 29th. She said the provided drive-thru testing and had four lanes of testing for drive thru and one walk-up site. She said it was available to anyone without cost, and the work was supported by the Health Department staff and Emergency Management Staff, as well as volunteers from 13 faith-based organizations. She said in those two days, they tested 2,211 individuals in the community. She mentioned the churches and volunteer organizations were instrumental in helping them get through the two days, allowing them to give people breaks. She said 85% of those tested were less than 60-years old. She said the race and ethnicity breakdown was evenly split and 75% were Mecklenburg County residents;
nine percent came from surrounding North Carolina counties, and five percent came from South Carolina. She said half of the tested individuals had no insurance. She said of those tested, 323 came back as COVID-19 positive, which was a 14.6% positivity rate. She said that was much higher than they had expected. She said 70% of them were less than 40-years old. She said half of them were Hispanic, and 75% were county residents. She said seven percent were from surrounding North Carolina counties, and six percent were non-residents. She said of those who tested positive, 75% had no insurance.

Ms. Harris stated they were currently having visits from three groups coming from the federal agencies that were onsite with the Health Department, and they have had two public health service officers with them for the last week and a half, and they had been doing work alongside staff doing case investigations and contact tracing, as well as doing some analysis of the data and helping in any way they could. She said they would have a visit from a CDC team who was going to do a field-based contact tracing assessment for the County. She said they were interested in seeing how things were working at the local level and were going to be working with them to think through how they might streamline and improve the process, considering the numbers they were seeing in some communities. She said the third group was called CRAFT, the COVID Response Assessment Field Team, and there is a group coming with a representative from FEMA. She said they were interested in looking at the work they were doing on the ground and the County would end up with a report that would go up to the Presidents COVID-19 Task Force.

Ms. Harris gave a reminder that the child-care sites and school settings that were considered as clusters were now included in the list that was provided twice a week, and the State also provides that list as well, so that information would be out there. She said there had been some question about hospital-bed capacity, and the hospitals were running at about an 80% capacity. She said there were acute-care beds as well as their ICU beds, and there were individuals with COVID-19 on ventilators but that what they were seeing was that there was about 400 ventilators available at this time. She said their capacity was currently holding and were continuing to adjust their admissions based on the needs they were seeing in the community. She said in terms of contact tracing, they had had questions from the media and others about what kind of data they could provide on that. She said they had reporting limitations because of the states system they were being requested to use. She said there was some data that was just not available from that system, and there were some things that could not be queried, so they were continuing to work with the State to improve access to the data. She said since early June, they had more than 5,200 individuals with household contact reported. She said that 25% of those they did not receive any contact information for. She said in many cases, they received a first name or nothing, no telephone number or address. She said they attempted calling 100% of those that they did have information on within 24 hours. She said for those who did not answer the phone, they were called at least three times. She said that they reached about 85% of those individuals.

Ms. Harris stated that the Mecklenburg County Health Department did not currently
recommend that employees routinely require negative tests before returning to work. She said they were getting a lot of requests around that, and the CDC had clear symptoms and time-based criteria to clear an individual from isolation, which was what they were doing with those individuals, and per their request, they could provide a letter to their employer if necessary. She said there were currently limitations in testing capacity. She said some of the sites would not test people for that purpose and they were trying to maximize their ability to identify new infections and prevent further spread of the available testing. She said there were some concerns about closing the hotline on July 4th. She said that hotline was usually open and Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and they usually average 8.9 calls per weekend day. She said on the 4th, they had three calls that were voicemails and that there were four options on the hotline. She said one option was for individuals with symptoms, which would be referred immediately to one of the hospital systems. She said that would happen whether the hotline was up or not. She said the second was for clinicians, and that would go directly to the communicable disease on-call number. She said that was a 24/7 capability to all clinicians. She said the third was the general public, and that was where those three calls came in. She said the fourth was the media, which would be referred to Public Information. Ms. Harris reminded everyone of what needed to be done in the community to try to slow the spread of the infection.

Commissioner Leake remarked that the true information was tied to the facts disseminated and that it was a fact. She said to not listen to Washington D.C., because they were saying the wrong thing coming from the U.S. President.

Commissioner Jerrell requested that Ms. Harris provided information on how they needed to move and act as a community. He said he believed that her, as a Public Health Director, felt it was time for her to put her thumb on the scale to put the community on notice with where they were and really let the community understand where they were heading if the trends continued in the direction it was going in. He said the way he analyzed it was that if the trends continued, as they had no signs of it getting any better, they would be headed back to a lock down. He said he believed it was really important that the community heard the seriousness of this, for them to leverage her expertise, as she was not an elected official, where no one could question an agenda. He believed at this point that it was very critical. He requested she spoke towards the point of no return in terms of community spread, where they would start seeing the double of the cases if they stayed on the trend line.

Ms. Harris stated that unfortunately she was watching what was happening in other communities and how quickly things could change, and it concerned her greatly. She said she did not think the community was taking things as seriously as she would like them to. She said there were many doing what she was asking but many who were not. She said the testing they did the weekend before last gave them an indication, due to the large number of positives which came from the 40 and under, that there were a lot of individuals in the community who were putting themselves at risk and others at risk. She said that one thing which concerned her was more and more evidence that was coming up about the long-term impact of the COVID-19 infection. She said there was
real concerns about what it meant for that generation as they became infected. She said she thought there was reason for concern and that they had to step up as a community to really get it under control before they started looking like a Houston or San Antonio.

Commissioner Harden stated that on May 1st, the hospitalizations were around 50 and that around June 1st they were around 100, and now they were around 180. She asked what the hospitalizations would look like at the first of August.

Ms. Harris stated that at this rate, it would continue to climb unless something in the community changed but that she did not see that happening. She said there were a lot of projections out there about how many people were actually infected in the communities, and it was anywhere from 10% to 25% more than the individuals who had been tested. She said unfortunately testing was not the answer, and it just gets them answers. She said if people were not going to respond to being told they need to isolate or quarantine, and they were not even answering the phone, then they were limited with what they could do to make sure they were not continuing to be in the community infecting others. She said they had challenges on their hands with the numbers they were seeing and the direction the numbers were going in. She said she was very pleased the CDC and FEMA and others had chosen Mecklenburg County to come to. She said that some folks were hoping they wouldn’t show up for them but that they see it as an opportunity for them to learn from them and to provide them with information on what it was really like on the ground and what some of the challenges were to see what they could do to help them respond in this environment.

Commissioner Harden agreed that it was great news that the CDC was coming and spoke about her concern about so many people testing positive without health insurance.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell agreed with Commissioner Harden and raised questions around the refugee community.

Ms. Harris responded that they were working with a number of different communities and were seeing some numbers in the Bhutanese and Nepalese community and that they found some people who were willing to help with translation.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the County was relying on Non-Profits to reach the refugees and to do the translations out of their own funding or if the County was financially assisting.

Ms. Harris said she believed they had the opportunity to do that and would look into it.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked why there could only be one person in libraries and ABC stores but more in other places.
Ms. Harris responded the ABC stores were state owned and developed their own protocols. She said she believed that businesses were allowed to develop their own protocols. She said for libraries it was a decision the library system made.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions.

Commissioner Fuller said they were in trouble in this country. He said if you look at how America had approached the pandemic versus all of Europe and pretty much the rest of the World, we were failing on just about ever, single measure in dealing with the pandemic. He felt they were the frog in the boiling water and soon we would burn up if we didn’t make changes. He said just in the two days of testing you knew they were in trouble. He said they couldn’t just keep receiving the reports but that they had to do something more dramatic and that he thought about what would have happened if they did not have a governor in North Carolina who understood the threat and did not open the State too quickly and to look at what was happening in the other states that had opened. He said it was because people had been making it a political issue. He said because the issue was politicized people were dying. He said there was a president who was a literal menace to American life, because people follow what he says and due to that, people were dying faster in the United States than anywhere else in the World, and we were supposed to be the leaders. He said we were supposed to be the wealthiest, most prosperous, most powerful nation in the World, and it was as if the US had no health-care system and structure to deal with a pandemic like this. He mentioned that there may be another pandemic getting started. He asked if they were prepared to close the County down again, from a public-health perspective.

Ms. Harris responded from a public-health perspective, if they got to the point where they needed to do that, she was prepared to make the recommendation but did not have the power to do it.

Commissioner Fuller said he did not think they could keep looking at the data and watching the hospitalization dates continue to climb and just sit there to receive the information but that they needed to do something. He wanted Ms. Harris to help them figure out what it was they needed to do and at what point would things have gone too far.

Ms. Diorio responded that they had calls with the hospital systems three days a weeks and had been taking to them about capacity and surge and when they needed to be concerned. She said what they had told them every time was that even though the hospitalizations were increasing, they had learned so much more about how to treat the virus that they were able to bring people in and were not as sick as they were in the beginning, wouldn’t vent them as quickly as they use to, had more drugs available that worked, and were able to manage and send people home quicker than they could before. She said their plan was to make sure the health-care system would not get overrun and that was what they continued to have the conversation about was how close they were to getting the hospital systems overran and that they continued to tell them they had the capacity to manage it. She said until they heard something otherwise,
all they could do was encourage people to wear a mask, wait 6 feet in line, and wash your hands. She said that was the strategy they would doing at this point and they were working with the State who continued to give guidance on testing and contact tracing, which they continued to follow. She said they were not in a position currently to say they would shut the County down again.

Chair Dunlap said he was at a point now to where he felt they were at a loss when they finished these updates. He said he listened to national reports as well and it seemed they had, in some ways, missed the boat on a number of issues. He said originally, they were telling people it was minorities catching it and people other than minorities did not seem concerned. He said they then said it was seniors catching it, and people other than seniors were not concerned. He said they were now finding out anyone was susceptible to COVID-19, so the young people who thought they were invisible were now catching it. He said one report said 70% of the people who had it were under 40. He said they could not afford to shut down the community as they had before, and they did not have the resources to go back to start funding businesses again and doing some of the other things they did to get to that point. He agreed with Commissioner Fuller that Ms. Harris had a power that elected officials did not have, because she did not politicize it but just told what the facts were and based on the facts, he hoped the Board would act responsibly. He said when things were at a point where they could no longer look the other way, he hoped she would tell them, with hopes of the Board asking responsibly so that they did not make the same mistakes that a lot of other communities had made. He promoted hand washing, mask wearing, and social distancing. He brought up hearing that the virus could linger in the air.

Ms. Harris responded that there were some scientists which believed it could be an aerosolized virus, not just a droplet virus. She said that the difference was that droplets were heavy, so they did not move as far or stay in the area as long. She said aerosolized were smaller particles which could go further than the six feet they had been talking about and could hang in the area longer, which would make them potentially more infectious but that there was also a question about whether the aerosolation was enough to really cause an infection. She said there were still a lot of questions about the virus and that was one of them. She said there was a request by a good number of researchers to the WHO to ask them to declare it as aerosolized, and they have not done that yet. She said it reemphasized the need for them to wear the mask to protect each other.

Chair Dunlap asked what was being done differently now that they knew the population they had once targeted was different than the population that was currently getting the virus.

Ms. Harris stated that with the marketing that was developed through the business round table there was a good bit of information there specifically for several different populations, as well as for the younger populations. She said that hopefully that message would start resignation more with them since it was in their language and from people they trusted.
Commissioners made comments.

Commissioner Jerrell stated there was a narrative around people thinking that if they get COVID-19 once, they could not get it again. He asked if there was a reoccurrence seen of people who have had the virus twice.

Ms. Harris stated they were able to look in the system when they have new cases and the determination would be if it was lingering from the first infection or was it a new infection. She said they were not seeing that at this point, but that did not mean it would not happen. She said they were understanding that it was very likely a possibility and that if you thought about it you could even get the flu twice in the same season.

Commissioner Harden asked if the 14-day quarantine was still recommended if you had been exposed.

Ms. Harris responded yes.

Commissioner Harden asked if a student tested positive for COVID-19, if the teacher would need to miss school as well.

Ms. Harris responded that although children are typically carriers with other viruses, in this case, children did not seemed to be the carriers, and they were hoping that would help but that at the same time, the masking and social distancing would be critical in a school setting if they were to keep the virus from spreading rapidly in that setting.

Commissioners made comments.

Commissioner Scarborough recommended elected officials having a conference with pastors.

Chair Dunlap stated that he had been having conversations with the school board chair about the opening of school and have talked about a number of issues. He stated he would report to them about those a little later. He said one thing he was able to do was to put her in touch with the City, which had money to insure they had internet access throughout the City, as it would be instrumental in terms of insuring children had access for virtual school.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.*

**Update on the Coronavirus Relief Fund Spend Plan**

Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager, presented a status update on the Coronavirus Relief Fund Spend Plan. He said Mecklenburg County received $39.2 million of the $2.5 trillion passed by Congress and signed into law March 27, 2020. He said the funding plan included $24 million of illegible costs incurred as of June 16, 2020 and projected costs through December 30, 2020. He said the plan included a
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recommendation of how to invest the remaining $15.2 million in four, broad categories. He said the Board directed the Manager to begin planning the $8.1 million of initiatives that were categorized as immediate investments.

Mr. Bryant stated that of the $8.1 million in immediate investments, $1 million would support, arguably, the most vulnerable population, senior citizens. He said a $500,000 contractual agreement with Bio-One would support the sanitization of over 1,200 senior homes to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. He said South Minster would receive $250,000 to partner with a minimum of 10 community partners that would offer mental-health support to seniors and caregivers; training for professionals to improve social engagement with seniors; technology solutions so that seniors may gain access to public information; and services and counseling, in addition to coordinating wellness activities. He said also, $130,000 would support the purchase of two trucks for additional home delivery of meals by the DSS Senior Nutrition Program and $120,000 for the support of PPE for seniors specifically. He said that $300,000 would increase the number of meals provided to seniors throughout the County to support the service expansion, DSS would spend $125,000 to provide $1,000 additional home delivered meals each week to 200 new clients. He said the remaining $175,000 would support a contract with the Charlotte Community Services’ Association and Universal International Successful Aging of the Carolinas to serve nearly 30,000 additional hot meals to seniors. He said it was worth noting that the Universal International Successful Aging of the Carolinas would target the Asian-American senior population. He said that $1,000,000 was earmarked for food security, and Loaves and Fishes would receive $500,000 to purchase $1.2 million pounds of food to serve an additional $50,000 households, and Second Harvest would also receive $500,000 to purchase equipment.

Mr. Bryant stated the funding plan included a $1.5 million investment for general assistance, and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership would receive $1,000,000 to expand its rental-assistance program to the towns and incorporated areas of the County to serve an additional 1,000 households. He said also, Social Serve would receive $500,000 to provide rental assistance, hotel-stay extensions, utility payments, and onboard additional staff to support additional households.

Mr. Bryant said that free masks were now available thanks to the County’s public-private partnership with Atrium Health, the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council, and other contributing organizations. He said distribution of 2 million masks began on June 3, and 1 million of the mask were donated by Mecklenburg County and the federal government. He said an additional 1 million mask were provided by Atrium Health and the businesses affiliated with the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council. He said the Board also appropriated $1 million from the Corona Virus Relief Fund for additional face coverings, which the funding remained available to purchase more personal protection equipment as needed. He said it was important they promoted the investments to all of the residents as well as other initiatives underway in response to COVID-19. He said $500,000 was set aside to design a communication plan to heighten awareness and engage the community, and the County’s Public Information department had created a
plan that was in tandem with other efforts, such as the current business roundtable marketing strategy.

Mr. Bryant said it was imperative the message was consistent and in alignment with existing marketing campaigns. He said the plan included boots on the ground and community-outreach efforts that would include door hangers, mailings, and posters. He said the plan leverages the social media platform and consisted of targeted outreach for specific audiences. He said that interlocal and contracts totaling $2.8 million were ready to be executed with the Towns and Ada Jenkin’s, Pineville Neighbors Place, Servant’s Heart, and Matthews Help Center. He said that through those partnerships, residents throughout the entire county would receive assistance with expenses, such as their mortgage, rent, and utilities, and the Towns would receive fundings to purchase PPE, cleaning supplies, and reimbursement of COVID-19-related expenses occurred and projected through the end of the year.

Mr. Bryant said that since the last board meeting on June 16, the Manage, with support of staff had completed a review of every proposal received and they asked their selves how the investment clearly responded to COVID-19. He said they had to be 100% confident that the proposal was in alignment with the guidance, otherwise, the County was stuck with the bill. He said that every investment listed in the presentation had been properly vetted and ready to be fully executed. He stated for next steps that the Manager requested the Board to approve a resolution authorizing the execution of an interlocal agreement between the County and the Towns for the CARES Act Funding, and that immediately upon the execution of the interlocal agreement and contracts, staff would begin tracking the status of the investments provided to the community partners. He said that the County staff had developed a robust reporting and tracking mechanism for the Corona Virus Relief Fund. He spoke about reporting. He said continue to plan investments that require additional time $7 million digital divide; housing assistance; senior programs & assisted living facilities; mental health support; workforce development; and working families.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to adopt a resolution authorizing execution of an Interlocal Agreement between Mecklenburg County to include the Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill, and Pineville for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act funding. The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49 Document #20.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6271: COVID-19 Response - Face Covering Requirement

Ms. Diorio said Executive Order 147 incorporated requiring face coverings in Mecklenburg County, specifically to County facilities, County buildings, County parks,
City buildings, as they and the Town of Mathews had decided to sign on to the proclamation. She said when the Governor announced Executive Order 147 requiring face coverings, he did not require them in the facilities ran by local government in the State, despite strongly encouraging it. She said the County wanted the Board to take action to require it.

Commissioner Powell asked how it would be enforced.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney responded that the enforcement was always the challenge and basically there were limited exceptions, and the enforcement mechanism was that if someone wanted into a county property not wearing a mask and there was not an exception that was applicable, staff would try their best to handle it; there would be some alternative ways to deal with it or the person would be deemed to be a trespasser on county property.

Commissioner Powell asked if their enforcement would match the Governor's enforcement.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions, and Mr. Wade responded.

Chair Dunlap read the amendment.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated she was disappointed in the Towns who did not join the proclamation.

Commissioner Cotham asked if it was correct that a face covering only needed to be worn, under this order, if unable to socially distance.

Mr. Wade said that was correct, if they were unable to socially distance, they must wear a face covering.

Commissioner Fuller asked if it was correct that County property, despite being located in a municipality, would be covered by this order, whether or not the Towns agreed.

Mr. Wade said that was correct, because it would be County-owned property.

Commissioner Fuller asked how the decision for the Towns not to sign on to the proclamation get filtered through.

Ms. Diorio responded that she believed each Town Manager went and talked to their respective Mayor and Town Attorneys, and she believed they felt they could manage it administratively and did not need to actually do anything formally.

Commissioner Fuller stated he hoped they would reconsider, because he believed it was important that face masks were mandated.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to amend the Joint Proclamation of State of Emergency to Adopt
Provisions of Executive Order 147 to Incorporate Requiring Face Coverings in Mecklenburg County. Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49 Document #41.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6229: Selection of NCACC Annual Conference Voting Delegate

Commissioners Cotham and Rodriguez-McDowell nominated Chair Dunlap to serve as the Board’s voting delegate for the 2020 North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) 113th Annual Conference to be held by virtual platform on Thursday, August 6, 2020.

Chair Dunlap conducted a roll call vote. The vote was recorded as unanimous.

No alternate delegate was nominated or appointed.

Mr. Dunlap will serve as the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners’ voting delegate.

CONSENT ITEMS

Motion was made by Chair Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously, to approve the following Consent items:

20-6210: Budget Amendment-LUESA Auction Revenue

(A) Amend the FY2021 Budget Ordinance to appropriate $37,621.14 of General Fund (0001) balance received from the May 9, 2020 vehicle auction to the Land Use and Environmental Services Agency (LUESA) and (B) appropriate $9,529.16 of Solid Waste Management Capital Reserve Fund (8901) balance received from the May 9, 2020 vehicle auction to the Solid Waste Capital Equipment Program.

20-6216: Minutes

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: March 24, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes, April
20-6228: Sole Source Purchase - Sheriff's Office ChemImage Mail Screener

(A) Approve the purchase of the ChemImage Mail Screener without competitive bidding, as authorized by the sole source exemption of G.S. 143-129(e)(6); and (B) approve a contract with ChemImage for the purchase of the VeroVision Mail Screener from additional federal revenue approved by the Board June 2, 2020 (File ID 20-6147). (C) rescind action taken on June 2, 2020 (Agenda Item 20-6147) which approved a carry-forward and appropriation to FY 2021 of $125,000 to purchase a Mail Screener; and instead, and (D) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance for the General Fund (0001) to allow the carry-forward of unspent funds from 2019-2020 Annual Budget Ordinance for the Sheriff’s Office which remain available at June 30, 2020 up to $125,000 to purchase a mail screener.

Note: Sole sourcing is necessary because there is only one supply source. The ChemImage VeroVision Mail Screener is the only product on the market designed to detect illegal concealed chemical compounds and cutting agents contained inside of postal mail. VeroVision Mail Screener is a sole source product, manufactured, sold and distributed exclusively by ChemImage Corporation. Due to the lack of availability of other like products the VeroVision Mail Screener, ChemImage has created a portfolio of intellectual property that includes patents, trademarks and proprietary software.

20-6233: Storm Water Program - Hazard Mitigation Catawba River Floodplain Acquisition

(A) Accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Rebecca Angeles, owner of property located at 11837 Riverhaven Drive, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 031-211-15), for $349,792, (B) accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Sam Miller and Billie Hartis-Miller, owners of property located at 10615 Beagle Club Road, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 031-152-18), for $174,373.93 and (C) authorize the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police and Fire Departments to use the structures for training exercises.

Note: Since late 1999, Mecklenburg County has used storm water fee revenue to acquire flood prone property. Buyouts reduce the risk to life and property during floods, while also enhancing the natural and beneficial functions of the floodplain. During large rain events portions of the floodplain will become inundated. This natural flooding lowers the overall creek levels, slows erosive water, filters pollutants, and can reduce damage if people and property are not located in harm’s way. Mecklenburg County uses the land as open space, for expanding greenways, constructing wetlands, etc.

The Riverhaven Drive and Beagle Club Road parcels were substantially damaged in the June 9-10, 2019 flood event. Their purchase will be funded under the Quick Buy program from the Storm Water Capital Reserve allocation approved at the July 2, 2019 BOCC
20-6237: Grant Award - Community Compost and Food Waste Reduction (CCFWR) Project Award

(A) Approve submission of grant application to United States Department of Agriculture, USDA-NRCS-NHQ-CCFWR-20-NOFO0001018, for the expansion of food waste composting programs and the use of compost in schools and community gardens for grant funding up to $50,000 and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate amount awarded to the Solid Waste Grant Fund (G701) for the duration of the grant.

Note: If awarded this grant opportunity, funding would be used to accomplish the following: develop a new “Prep Area” food waste composting programs for schools, diverting food scraps from the kitchen food preparation areas only; expand the number of schools currently participating in the current food waste pilot for CMS and CPCC by 10-15 additional locations, doubling the amount of food waste diverted from landfills; develop instructional videos, educational materials and signage for all locations; supply compost to community gardens for soil quality improvement and water retention; and purchase compost applicators to apply the food waste composted by the institutions to school grounds, creating a full circle opportunity of food waste recovery to compost use.

20-6240: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $5,537.66 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $53.87 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes, and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6244: Lease Amendments - Charlotte East

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute amendments to the lease agreement between the County and CE Office, LLC for leased office space at the Charlotte East Office Complex housing several Health and Human Services Departments to allow the County to assume janitorial responsibilities and thereby reduce the County’s base rent rate.

20-6245: Lease Amendment - City of Charlotte

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a lease amendment with the City of Charlotte at the County’s LUESA facility (2145 Suttle Ave, Charlotte, NC - Tax Parcel
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067-014-08) to increase the space the City is leasing by +/- 65 square feet.

**20-6246: Easements Donation - Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project**

Accept donation of a permanent greenway access easement (+/- .203 acres) and a permanent stormwater easement (+/- .087 acres) on Tax Parcel 025-113-13 from SCG Perimeter Woods, L.P. for access and ongoing greenway and storm water maintenance from SCG Perimeter Woods, L.P.

**20-6264: Permanent Greenway and Stormwater Easements - Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project**

Accept donation of a permanent greenway access easement (+/- .203 acres) and a permanent stormwater easement (+/- .087 acres) on Tax Parcel 025-113-13 from SCG Perimeter Woods, L.P. for access and ongoing greenway and storm water maintenance from SCG Perimeter Woods, L.P.

**THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.**

**20-6212: Revised Junk and Abandoned Vehicles Ordinance**

Commissioner Cotham stated she would not support the item, as she had personally witnessed people losing their cars by the City not following all of the rules.

Commissioner Leake asked if the ordinance was talking about abandoned cars or cars which were parked illegally.

Chair Dunlap stated the ordinance spoke of abandoned or junked motor vehicles and that was a violation of the ordinance.

Mr. Wade clarified that the ordinance was for vehicles being those which did not currently have a license plate and was not being used for business or personal use.

Chair Dunlap conducted a roll call vote to adopt a revised Junk and Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as followed:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough
NO: Commissioners Cotham and Powell

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Leake, to reconsider the Revised Junk and Abandoned Vehicles Ordinance.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

A unanimous vote is required for adoption. Since there was not a unanimous vote on the first reading of this ordinance, the ordinance must be brought back to the next meeting for a second reading where it may be adopted by majority vote.

Note: The Junk and Abandoned Vehicles Ordinance has not been revised since approved in January 1997. Since this time services and verbiage has changed. This proposed revision aligns the Ordinance with Code Enforcement current standards for junk and abandoned vehicles. This change also aligns with our City of Charlotte partnership, better defines the type of vehicles and process enhancements notification to customers to better navigate the information within the ordinance.

20-6223: Budget Amendment - Criminal Justice Services, JCPC Level II Dispositional Alternatives Program (Revenue Increase)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive, and appropriate $64,732 of state funds from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS), Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant period.

Note: NCDPS and the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) has awarded Level II funding for the Youth Development Initiatives (YDI) Vocational and Career Development Academy program. The sponsoring agency is Youth Development Initiatives (YDI), which will be providing services to youth and families in Mecklenburg County through the program. The program will engage approximately 32 Level II juvenile clients, referred by juvenile court, in a 25-week vocational job training program that nurtures real world job readiness and individualized career planning skills. The agreement is entered into by and between NCDPS, Mecklenburg County, JCPC, and YDI.

20-6230: Capital Reserve Expenditure - Harry L. Jones Sr., Golf Course (Park and Recreation)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough,
and carried unanimously to appropriate $150,000 in available fund balance from the Public Golf Courses Consolidated Capital Reserve Fund (9002) for infrastructure repair.

**20-6235: Grant Application: FY2021 FTA 5307 Urban Transportation Grant – DSS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to affirm the application to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for the Federal 5307 Urban Transportation Grant for the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services for Fiscal Year 2020 through 2021 in the General Fund (0001) for up to the amount of $1,277,407.

**20-6238: Affirm Grant Award - North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm the acceptance of two grant awards from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH) Nutrition Services Branch in the amount of $226,092 and (B) amend the FY 2020-2021 annual budget ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate funds for the amount awarded to the General Fund (0001).

**20-6239: Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Huntersville**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) adopt a resolution authorizing execution of the amended Interlocal Agreement for the funding of Upper Torrence Tributary #1 Stream Restoration and (B) receive and appropriate an additional $1,900,000 from the Town of Huntersville for its share of this joint construction project.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49 Document #18.

**20-6241: DSS - Cloth Face Covering Donation**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize and receive a donation of cloth face coverings from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services.

**20-6242: Grant Application for Health Promotion/Disease Prevention**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application to the Area Agency on Aging for Health Promotion/Disease Prevention (HPDP) grant up to $3,500 and will be used to continue providing nationally recognized evidenced based HPDP classes at all three MCPR Senior Centers, some MCPR Recreation Centers and other locations in the community and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the
award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Park and Recreation Department for the duration of the grant.

**20-6249: Subcontractor Pre-qualifications Construction Manager at Risk for Northeast - Community Resource Center**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the Subcontractor Prequalification procedure provided by Vannoy/McFarland for the Northeast Community Resource Center project.

**20-6253: Transfer of Property - Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the transfer of Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department assets, including vehicles, apparatus and equipment to the Town of Mint Hill.

*NOTE: Effective 23:59 hours on June 30, 2020, the Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department will no longer provide fire services to the fire district. Mint Hill Volunteer Fire Department has requested the approval to transfer its assets, including vehicles, apparatus and equipment to the Town of Mint Hill, which upon approval of this transfer will assume the duties of fire protection for the entire district, including the existing extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).*

Agreement recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #19.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

**20-6262: Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked for a short video to be played, which was about an art piece by Richard Hunt in an homage to Bearden’s work.

Commissioner Powell spoke about the video.

Commissioner Leake stated she was with a grieving heart, because of the Beatties Ford Road shootout which happened two weeks ago. She said the public was asking her when they would get a report and how the report would be presented to the body having lost five people. She said the other part to this was what was the procedure for closing streets and who was permitted to even have that program, the event that was held for two days, Saturday and Sunday night that created the havoc for the community on the west side of town? She said she was hoping the public was listening tonight and if not, they would listen tomorrow, that they want an answer and answers right away, as soon as possible. She said they could not demand anything but were asking to at least say something about their children and if they look across the country to see the number of children killed over
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the weekend, what was happening to America with guns? She said she worried about the young people and 14-year old's who were involved and lost their life. She said she worried about the seniors who were afraid to walk the streets.

She said she would be participating Monday with a group which talked about the needs for a change on Beatties Ford Road, and as long as she had been on the Board, she had talked about that side of town and its need to be refurbished and helped in terms of providing the same type of support that there was for other parts of the community. She was begging the community to step forward and to not wait but have response to what took place. She stated she held the City accountable, especially Code Enforcement, who was not doing their job.

Commissioner Jerrell spoke about his concern for the refugee communities during the pandemic. He said on July 25, 2020 there would be a virtual town hall. He said there would be individuals sharing about available resources.

Commissioner Harden asked what meetings would look like in August and what the predictions for hospitalizations would be by August 1st, as they were currently at 80% capacity in hospitals. She asked about schools and childcare and how they would go back to schoolwork if people aren't wearing masks.

Commissioner Cotham was proud that the County adopted the ADA proclamation.

Commissioner Fuller spoke about Richard Hunt.

Commissioner Scarborough stated that the Board was doing well and to keep up the good work.

Commissioner Dunlap stated he had good discussions with the School Board Chair, and they had recommitted to the two boards working together. He said she shared her concerns about reopening schools that they may be put in a situation where they may have to decide which plan to choose. He said he would be happy to report that they did agree to pay all of their non-certified employees $15 an hour and were committed to ensuring they were translating their goals into a number so they could understand where they were in achieving their goals.

Chair Dunlap said he had received calls from CEO of Centene and they spoke about community investments. He reported while they anticipated 3,275 jobs at the time, they made their announcement, they now upped it to 6,000 jobs. He said he was informed they secured an additional 50 acres in land across the street from the original campus and now secured a temporary location that would house up to 600 employees and that hiring has started.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and
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carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:54 p.m.

______________________________  ________________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk    George Dunlap, Chair
Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER – 2:30 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely for a special meeting on Tuesday, July 28, 2020 at 2:30 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
        Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
        Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
        Commissioner Susan Harden
        Commissioner Mark Jerrell
        Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
        Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
        Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent: Commissioner Elaine Powell

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

20-6303: COVID-19 Response Update

Public Health Data and Testing Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on COVID-19 health data and testing. Ms. Harris said the Board would see that the indicators were showing some indication of stabilization, which was a good thing, but she wanted to remind everyone of the goal to continue to reduce the spread of COVID-19. She said as they did that, it was to prioritize getting the children back into school, making sure people were able to work in safe environments and also to reduce the deaths and disabilities. She said with those goals and priorities in mind, she also wanted to make the case that they had to expect COVID-19 to be around for a while, as it was not going anywhere anytime soon. She said their numbers were still high and restrictions were still much needed. She said the personal measures they had put in place had to continue to be reinforced and expected of the community. She said there were 19,388 positive COVID-19 cases in Mecklenburg County as of two days ago. She said there had been a small decline over the last couple of days, but the situation had been up and down, and some of that was an artifact of the system issues they had with the State system, and sometimes they had a delay in data coming in.

Ms. Harris said the characteristics of the cases had not changed significantly; three-fourths were still among adults ages 20 to 59, and one in three were Hispanic, which was down a bit compared to previous weeks. She said five percent had been hospitalized and over 50 percent had been released from isolation. She said one particular piece to note was that they were starting to see an increase in the percentage of cases in those less than 20 years of age.

Ms. Harris reviewed a slide of the number of lab-confirmed cases per 100,000 residents by zip code. She said the numbers had come up, but the locations and main areas affected in the community had not changed significantly. She said among the deaths, there were 194 as of the 26th and there was quite a bit of variability among deaths, but the numbers were small comparatively. She said among the deaths, 85% had been
among adults greater than 60, all with underlying conditions, and more than 50% had been individuals who had been residing in a long-term care facility, and more than 50% had been non-Hispanic white, which was probably an artifact of the number of individuals in long-term care facilities with the majority being white. She showed the percent-positive rate over the last seven days and that it had decreased slightly as they were at 10.1%. She said that was still higher than they would like it to be, but it was somewhat stable. She said they were having about 3,500 test preformed per day through the health systems and CVS. She said more than almost 250,000 tests were completed in Mecklenburg County. She said the hospitalizations had stabilized a little over the past seven days, and the number was 97 for the average daily census number in the hospitals.

Ms. Harris said COVID-19 testing obviously has been in the news at all levels and that in Mecklenburg County testing was widely available. She said they had some new retail and mobile sites, and Atrium and Novant continued to provide the majority of the testing although they were seeing quite a bit happening with CW Williams and they had testing through CVS Pharmacy, Walgreens Pharmacy, and Walmart at the moment. She said there were other smaller testing efforts in the community, but those were the main ones at this time. She said the testing systems had been strained with high turn-around times, which was starting to drop. She said currently they were seeing three to five days for turn around on testing with some of them being even less than that, recognizing the fact it would take an additional day for those tests to get into the state system that provides them with those tests results. She said they continued to see a lack of a national strategy for coordinating testing resources and capacity. She said she knew there was more capacity at least through one of their hospitals, if not both and in the community as well, but the testing resources were a challenge for them. She said this was something they continued to work with the State on for additional capacity, and that particular effort with the State was really focused on those zip codes with the highest priority populations. She said they were waiting to hear from the State on an RFP [inaudible] recently to get more testing in Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Harris said in an attempt to get more testing out there, the Health Department would hold another testing event in the coming weekend at the Valarie C. Woodard Center. She said the people they would be focused on would have symptoms of infection or had a close contact with someone who was COVID-19, had a high risk due to age or other health conditions or work environment, or recently attended mass gatherings or protests. Ms. Harris said in terms of case investigation and contact tracing, the Health Department had been operating seven days a week with case investigations, contact tracing, employer notification, data entry, long-term care facility outbreak management, and managing the COVID-19 hotline. She said they had about 160 staff who were doing a combination of case investigation and contact tracing and 15 data entry and other support staff who worked seven days a week. She said they were continuing to recruit other staff as needed, and some of the case investigators were school nurses, and she knew their time was limited as they moved into the school years. She said they were accommodating that with additional staff that they were training currently, and they were providing routine feedback and recommendations to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services regarding protocols and processes. She said what they were finding was that they were looking to the County as did CDC to be somewhat of a subject-matter expert in these areas and they were pulling on Mecklenburg County’s protocols and developing those to work for the rest of the State. She said the CDC was doing some of that with what they learned from when they were on the ground with them. She said they do find the effectiveness of the contract tracing was greatly impacted by long turn-around times for test results. She said if you were not getting test results for over five days, trying to contact someone to let them know they had been exposed and needed to isolate becomes less effective. She said they were continuing to work with the systems which were testing, as well as the laboratories to try to keep that turn-around time as low as possible.

Ms. Harris said their support for long-term care facilities included outreach to all of them, providing guidance and assistance and also for those who were experiencing outbreaks, they provide initial guidance on infection control and help coordinate testing and PPE for them with regular follow up until the outbreak ends. She said they help determine at what point the outbreak was able to end. She said the North Carolina Department of Health
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and Human Services was conducting base-line testing of all staff and residents of long-term care facilities throughout the State. She said what that meant was they were choosing 10 to 12 sites a week, not all in Mecklenburg County, to do full screenings. She said to date she believes five sites had been done in Mecklenburg County and that there was no intent to go back and test again at this point as it was just a baseline. She said there were recommendations for all staff in long-term care facilities to be tested on a regular basis once a week, and they were working with sites to do as much of that as possible but also they needed to understand the constraints of testing in Mecklenburg County and the ability of some of these sites to make that happen.

Ms. Harris said more facilities in outbreak status would be seen as they continued to do routine testing and continued to do community spread. She reviewed the known causes of COVID-19 transmitted: individual interactions without face coverings; occupational exposure; congregate living sites; private gatherings through parties and private residences and in residences; public gatherings at restaurants, bars, and public settings; churches and travel to hotspots. She said all of those provided known sources on transmission of COVID-19 in Mecklenburg County. She said what needed to be understood was the epidemiological links to specific events were hard to do due to the wide-spread community involvement that exists in Mecklenburg County. She said they could, but it was rare at this point.

Ms. Harris said she wanted to emphasize the fact of important and effective mask wearing was. She said there was as a story done by the CDC that looked at two hair stylist, both who were COVID-19 positive who spent at least 15 minutes with 139 clients. She said all of them wore face coverings and none of them were known to be infected at the time. She said not one of them got COVID-19 positive after their interaction with two COVID-19 positive individuals with mask on. She said the point here was that wearing face coverings consistently and correctly was really one of the main things that would help to slow the spread of the virus in the community. Ms. Harris said there was not consistent masking in the community at the time.

Ms. Harris said one thing they had to stay focused on as they moved forward was restricting large gatherings. She said that people were incredibly interested in getting back to normal and normal was no longer what it was before COVID-19 hit. She said that was what people were interested in and what people wanted to see, but unfortunately, that was not what they would see for some time to come now. She said large gatherings were hotspots for COVID-19 spread. She said that had been proven across the Country. She said they needed to make sure there was always social distancing and mask wearing at essential gatherings, which included weddings and ceremonies and funerals and that they needed to avoid all non-essential gatherings, if at all possible. She said the restaurants which were open, must avoid becoming fathering places, which was why they were restricting to seated service only at this point in time, no standing or bar services. She said they needed to make sure there were environmental controls for social distancing in restaurants and mask wearing should be occurring all the time with employees as well as patrons when they were not seated consuming food and beverages, and there should be no dancing or other close, personal interactions in mass gatherings.

Ms. Harris she reminded everyone of the three w’s: wash hands, wait six feet in line, and wear mask, which would make the biggest impact, including to listening to restrictions put in place by the Governor and local elected officials that would keep them at the place they were now, if not in a downward trend.

Commissioners made comments and asked clarifying questions. Ms. Harris responded. Commissioner Leake asked how the seniors were doing.

Ms. Harris responded that for people over 60, they were seeing 11.5% of those folks testing positive. She said the number was not significantly going up but that the challenge they had was that over 85% of the deaths were in that population, which was a concern.

Commissioner Cotham asked about COVID-19 being listed on a person’s death certificate when loved ones of the deceased did not believe they died from COVID-19.
Ms. Harris responded that it was challenging data to access, because as the people were in the hospital based on what their symptoms may be or whether they were going in for surgery or other things, they were being tested and if they were COVID-19 positive, that would have to be reported to the State, and if they die while in the hospital, COVID-19 ends up on the death certificate. She said COVID-19 was at least contributory if not the cause of death, and you could almost say that for anyone who had some other immune compromised or underlying health condition, so it was very difficult to tease that apart.

Commissioner Cotham requested the data on people who died from cancer or heart attacks or stroke.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked about the five-percent goal and the metrics that needed to be seen for kids to go back to schools.

Ms. Harris responded that they did not have a single number they were trying to reach and there would be several metrics needed to be seen. She said they were working with the State currently on what that would look like. She said the five percent had been a goal in many communities but the goal of five percent for schools to open had just recently been floated, that it was a new message for schools and not a consistent message. She said if you can get your community to five percent then you can get your community in much better shape moving forward. She said they were interested in moving all of their metrics in the right direction but having a specific goal had not been the focus. She said they focus had been managing what they had on their plates.

Commissioner Harden advocated for frequent testing in long-term care facilities.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what the target testing number was per day.

Ms. Harris said it kept fluctuating but that what they were hoping to see by the end of July was that 12% of the population had been tested. She said they had not looked recently to see where they were with the percentage. He asked about the 20,000 amount.

Ms. Harris responded the 20,000 was a number thrown out by the State and pulled back, so it was not a number anyone was using at the time. She said the latest they heard from the State was to try to achieve 12% of the population in the month of July.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if they were comfortable with the 3,500-average number.

Ms. Harris said no and if they were to be able to test the long-term care facilities as Commissioner Harden had mentioned, which would have been preferable- She stated no, that they were not where they needed to be.

Commissioner Jerrell asked about the high-risk occupations, wanting examples of three or four of those occupations.

Ms. Harris responded construction, restaurants, essential workers, people in grocery stores, those sorts of places and those individuals who worked in long-term care facilities or congregate as well as the first responders.

Commissioner Jerrell said it was important to think about how to get to those people. He said He said they were non-exempt employees who did not have flexible schedules like they did, and they had to find ways to delivered. She said the testing facilities number one, will need to go beyond 200 tests a day capacity, as well as they needed to change their times of delivery. He said the people were not exempt employees, so they do not have the same level of flexibility and until they started thinking outside the box and that they were not drive done the percent positives. He said they needed to look at different ways of getting the tests don’t and number up.

Ms. Harris said they meet fairly regularly with the main testers in the County, and they would have that conversation.
Commissioner Jerrell wanted the County to go test at places that they knew people were congregating at.

Commissioner Fuller said their focus should be on what they should do in response to the information. He said he had become more disheartened by the lack of specificity and planning about how to address this. He brought up the new proclamation related to alcohol sales. He asked why the Board of County Commissioners were not consulted before the proclamation was entered.

Ms. Diorio responded that the proclamation was crafted by the policy team and sent out by signatures by the respective mayors and chairman of the County Commission. She said that was the process they have used for proclamations.

Commissioner Jerrell said he believed the process was broken and they should not, as commissioners, be sitting there as bystanders asking what was going on. He said they were the policy makers, not unelected people. He said the system was broken and evidence was the questions she was hearing from commissioners today, which were questions the community was asking and there seemed to be no mechanism for accountability, but they needed to change it. He said at the next meeting, he would propose some changed to how they were operating, because he did not believe they were ripping the meat off the bones so to speak, with respect to their response. Chair Dunlap asked if sports players who were getting tested on a daily basis were paying with private dollars with private testers.

Ms. Harris said the relationships were with the hospital systems.

Hospital Update

Carl Amato, Novant Health CEO, responded they probably had private contracts and that right now they were not doing testing for those individuals and that they had provided over 170,000 tests and 95,000 were in the Charlotte area, and many were in the low-income communities. He said that they had gotten in, whether it was the Hispanic community which had a positive test rate as high as 30%, they were able to bring it down to below 10% with testing, education, and masking.

Chair Dunlap asked if anyone who wanted to get tested be tested.

Ms. Harris responded no, that they did not have the capacity to do 20,000 tests a day.

Chair Dunlap asked what it would take for everyone who wanted to be tested, to be tested.

Ms. Harris said they were not seeing a lot of people not being able to get a test when they wanted one. She said what they were not able to do currently was test all staff and long-term care facilities weekly.

Mr. Amato said they have done almost 95,000 in the Charlotte area, and the testing was pretty simply, as they had created a lot of drive-through sites to make it easy, safe, and convenient for people, and the teams were out in full PPE doing the test. He highlighted a 91% recovery rate of people who were going into the hospitals being hospitalized for COVID-19. He said that was well over 2,200 patients in Mecklenburg County that they sent home after successful treatment in the hospitals. He said the hospitals were prepared for surge capacities and they had added another 640 or 650 [inaudible] beds and double the intensive care unit capacity in preparation for the surge. He said they were managing patient volumes really well. He said they continued to be out there engaged in making sure they could encourage the community to wear a mask and they got out their early and distributed 400,000 masks, particularly in underserve communities, which had made a real difference. He said that some of the communities who had very high positive test rates had come down. He said their goal at Novant was to drive it will below 10% and to get closer to the five-percent goal, and that was really just them aggressively trying to educate and get masks into the community and help people understand the importance of social distancing.
Dr. Sid Fletcher, Novant Chief Clinical Officer said they saw their first patients March 26, 2020 in one of their acute-care facilities and that early on they did a tremendous amount of planning for surge capacity that lent itself toward over a 60% increase in their availability to beds should they be required for COVID-19 patients, and a lot of that worked look at the early modeling and they thought they would see some of the early peaks, but they had benefited from all the planning and were able to look at the early times about whether they were going to have a field hospital or not. He said they obviously had since decided that they felt very comfortable that it would not be needed. He said it looked like it would be primarily ICU type capacity that they needed to create. He said they worked with the County and Atrium Health and Ms. Harris was a part of many of those discussions to determine if they would have enough capacity.

Mr. Amato said at Novant Health they created COVID-19 units in each facility to cohort those patients. He said they limited the amount of PPE and is not cross contaminate and patients who came in the building without COVID-19. He said they were able to create physical spaces, reinforce their PPE and supply chain and reopen clinics. He said they allowed patients who needed to return for care to get that care safely. He said he had seen some return to the ER, and they were not quite at the state they were before, but those who had been putting off serious conditions were now starting to return, stroke, heart attack, etc. He said they had also reopened their non-intensive surgeries in early May, and they had been able to do that in conjunction with taking care of ongoing COVID-19 demands for service. He said they currently had ample capacity for those existing patient care needs and for the COVID-19 patients within the community. He said their clinical [inaudible] had greatly increased in terms of treatments as well as experience, and they had found that about 30% of the patients who were admitted would need the highest level ICU care, it had really been down to about 23% with that experience, which was a big deal, because that was a huge resource and more difficult to try to create extra surge capacity in that unit. He said they had also been able to shorten their length of stay, about five and a half day, and for the intensive-care unit it had been about eight.

Mr. Amato said their current market peak was on the 19th of July and sense then they had seen over the last seven days or so, an ongoing trend line for a decrease in population. He said that currently they were at about 75% of their prior high. He said they use an adaptive model as they plugged in the numbers they were seeing on the ground that related to many different factors, including length of stay and infectivity rates in the community and that their current 14-day trend showed some declining volumes from early to mid-August and they were hopeful that trend line would hold. He said they had seen a slightly higher number of people who had tested positive in the community as well, and that number had come down some into the 10% range or so within our facilities where they had been testing. He said they continually monitored inpatient census across the entire market and that with Atrium Health and the entire County. He said they were looking at the outpatient testing trends and early they met every day with Ms. Diorio and Harris and were currently connecting three times a week to keep them very clear about what they were seeing in the community to see if there were any triggers or concerns that they had. He said they would continue to monitor those and to consider if they needed to slow down or just figure out where they would do the highest level surgical, procedural work case they had to make sure they had capacity to be able to do that within their buildings and that they did not need those for COVID-19 patients.

Dr. David Priest, Novant Health Infectious Disease Specialist, said at Novant Health they had used a variety of testing platforms since the start of the pandemic and they had to utilize both in-house testing, rapid-ambulatory testing and partnering with commercial laboratories like LabCorp and at times Quest and others. He said they had done testing through mobile testing platforms and moved into underserved areas. He said they were continuously looking at a percentage of tests they were doing based on race and ethnicities so they could guarantee they had health equity and made sure they adjust as they needed to get testing into other areas. He said they had seven locations in the Charlotte area to provide testing for COVID-19, in addition to the hospitals. He said there was testing capacity on a daily basis. He said they do hear the request from the State and to think about numbers like 19,000 and 20,000 test, those numbers come out of models that have been used to try to estimate the amount of testing that needs to be done but that currently the numbers were not physically possible based on the resources the
health-care systems have. He said testing was one piece of the equation that help keep communities safe and moving the percentage of tests that were positive, down. He said the testing capacity was really a function of having the swabs they needed, testing reagents, and having the platforms to run the test.

Dr. Priest said they continue to work with the public health partners at state and local level to understand how they expand testing and where they put it. He said there are limitations on the testing supplies based on the allotment the manufacturers could send, personnel they have available, and testing turnaround times. He said they knew the longer the testing turn-around times have been frustrating for patients in the community and that it was really a national problem and spoke to the high need for testing that was out there. He said their commercial-laboratory partner, LabCorp has made great strides over the last several days in turn-around testing time and that currently just three percent of the test that they have done were pending. He said they thought some of that was from the increased capacity of LabCorp and other places, as well as having other community partners like Passport Health or Walgreens or other locations to have the ability to test as well.

Dr. Priest said over the last four or five days across their system, not just in Mecklenburg County but in Mecklenburg County included. He said hospital volumes have come down and he believed what they really saw were increases in hospital volumes usually in the two weeks after a holiday. He said they had also seen a percentage of tests which were positive decline slowly. He said they had peaks of about 12% in their system and now it was moving toward the 10% and nine percent range. He mentioned they have had great success in their clinical-research program and had entered into seven different clinical trials, utilizing several therapies for COVID-19 and in one trial they were utilizing a drug called Leronlimab and that they had enrolled more patients than anyone in the Country. He said in another trial, they were the second highest enroller in the Country. He said the hospital partners on a local level were constantly looking at better and improved ways to treat patients. He said one of the trials they really got up and running in about four days. He said they were also using Remdesivir, based on state allotment but that they had enough to treat the patients who need it. He stated some states have not had any Remdesivir.

Dr. Priest said what they had seen from an epidemiology standpoint was the average age admitted patient in the facility had gone from about 60 years old to about 53 years old. He said they have seen significant improvement in the percentage of mortality. He said in April and May they saw the rates were about 14% across the system and in July it had been about 6%. He said they had great success in making sure they had the resources, the PPE and beds they needed for care. He said testing was one piece, but data was showing over time that masking was a successful intervention to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and that was a key focus they needed to continue to push, and both healthcare systems had one a lot of work getting masks out to the community, making sure it was in all parts of the community. He said that would drive improvement as much as testing would, because he did not see, in the near future, the ability to do 20,000 tests a day locally.

Dr. Little said there were still things they were learning about the virus and they were still learning about how to respond to it appropriately, but what they did know that worked were physical distancing. He said people in close proximity, big crowds of people together, there is likely to be a spread of COVID-19, because the virus was rare in its ability to spread either before people express symptoms, or there are people who never have symptoms. He said that was very unique in these types of viruses. He said they typically could use symptom onset as when the patient became a spreader, but with COVID-19, because people could spread it before they express symptoms or may never express symptoms, it presented particular challenges to the virus. He said they knew mask help reduce the spread of the virus and great hygiene in general, specifically hand hygiene helps to prevent the spread of the virus. He stated that even with unlimited testing, they would still need to do those things to prevent the virus from spreading. He said testing would only help to target certain groups and people to isolate and quarantine themselves, but it did not get rid of the virus. He said they knew those things were really what helps to get rid of the virus.
Dr. Fletcher, said even before COVID-19, they think about surge and capacity planning on a daily basis and they had systems in place to tell them how many patience they have in beds, the types of beds they were in, and they look at it daily. He said when the pandemic occurred, they started springing into action to create excess capacity, because they saw in other regions that hospitals would be overwhelmed. He said they started preparing for the patients, and they all build capacity plans to increase capacity. He said they stopped doing elective or no-essential procedures to increase the capacity, and it helped to put the plans in place, to conserve PPE at the time. He said that gave them a cushion to really prepare for patients and to get the processes solidified. He said since then they were in a much better place and had adequate supplies of PPE to protect the teams and clinicians and employees. He spoke about the changes in patients they were seeing and said for one they were protecting the more vulnerable populations and those in nursing homes and long-term care facilities. He said they were doing weekly surveillance testing in their five nursing homes that Atrium runs. He said he was not sure where the disconnect was there, but for the five they own and run, they were doing the weekly testing on patients and staff in those nursing homes. He believed the population of who was getting COVID-19 was younger for all the reasons which had already been stated earlier, so the mortality rate has come down, the morbidity rate has come down, and fewer of the younger patients were needing ICU admission and fewer were needing to be placed on a ventilator. He said that was helpful for them, but their goal was that they wanted to help to reduce the overall number of cases in the County and even outside of Mecklenburg County. He said to people’s concerns about going back to school or getting the economy back and running that was the key. He said if they all did the right things, they would get the economy back and stimulated, and they would get kids going back to school and parents going back to work. He said they were obviously a partner with that goal. He said in terms of capacity management, they felt good where they were, but a lot of that was contingent upon them continuing as a community to do the right things and prevent the virus from spreading.

Dr. Gary Little, Atrium Health Chief Medical Officer, said with respect to testing capacity and turnaround time, it was a national issue with respect to testing. He said they had the ability to do testing in house but were limited by the same issues that had already been stated in terms of national shortages and free agents for those lab platforms, other testing equipment and things you need to do the test were already being allocated for them, so they were operating at 25% of what their actual capacity could be, due to allocations for those testing manufactures. He said they emphasize focusing on the patients and populations who really needed the testing, such as those with symptoms of COVID-19.

Mr. Little said they were in the vulnerable communities that were the hardest hit and had two roving testing sites which were open seven days a week, and they adjust the hours of them to make sure they were meeting the demand of workers who could not take a day off or hours off from work. He said they work with those communities to determine what the best hours were, and they were open seven days a week, with no appointment needed, as it was complete walk-up. He said they work with those communities to communicate when and where the roving testing sites would be, and since they had been up, they had tested nearly 16,000 in those communities. He said they were also offering wraparound services, because those same vulnerable communities were having issues with food insecurity and other health conditions, so they do a full, social-determinant screening at those testing sites. He said they had social work available and a clinical provider who was not working on COVID-19 but could address any issues they may have with diabetes, hypertension, and those kinds of things as well. He said they also did not work with sports teams or provide any testing for those kinds of situations that were mentioned earlier. He said they were focused on their patients and team and staff who needed testing occasionally and also the vulnerable communities which needed testing resources.

Mr. Little spoke about their virtual hospital that they opened near the beginning of the pandemic, and he said it had been very helpful for them to provide capacity. He said it basically gave them the ability to take care of patients with COVID-19 in their own home, and some of that was done through virtual video or telephone. He said they could also send out community paramedics to do actual in-home visits, provide treatments, therapy,
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and provide vital signs as well. He said they had treated over 3,000 patients through their virtual hospital platform, and those were patients who typically would be in the hospital, so that was also creating capacity and a model for the future for not just pandemics but other health conditions as well, and they could provide those services in the home rather than being in a hospital.

Mr. Little highlighted the mask giveaway with the County Health Department. She said Ms. Diorio had worked with their team and other private business for the million masks give away. He said the mask give-a-ways were prioritized to those communities that need it. He said they had given out close to 600,000 masks in total and about 100,000 of those had been given out in the vulnerable zip codes. He highlighted another program for the Hispanic and Latinx community, Para Tu Salud, which was really a culturally sensitive program aimed at giving health advice around COVID-19 to that population to try to meet them at their level with culturally sensitive and appropriate means by doing that.

Commissioner Cotham asked about COVID-19 deaths, as she had heard from people who had loved ones who passed away, and it was marked as COVID-19, but they did not feel their loved one had COVID-19. She said some of them had not been tested for COVID-19, and they were sure it was a stroke or heart problem.

Mr. Armato responded that they do a webcast out to 30,000 people, physicians, nurses, and support team, and they do a COVID-19 update roughly for 30 minutes then take questions for 30 minutes. He said that question came up today.

Dr. Priest responded it certainly was a national conversation and sometimes it was tinged with a little bit of gotcha that the healthcare system was exaggerating the number of cases and deaths. He said no one who dies of something else who had no proof of having COVID-19 should be labeled as having COVID-19 on their death certificate. He said that did not make sense to him and should not be happening. He said he believed where the confusion sometimes lied was where the folks get COVID-19 and have a subsequent health problem related to it. He said they saw that with influenza in particular and that sometimes when you get influenza, it would downstream problems, heart attacks, strokes, bacterial pneumonia, and ultimately lead to death. He said if the person had not gotten influenza, they would had not had a heart attack, stroke, or bacterial pneumonia leading to death, so when a death certificate was filled out, influenza was definitely a part of what caused their illness. He said he would say the same thing for COVID-19, and they did not want a situation like in Florida, where someone was in a motorcycle accident and they said it was related to COVID-19. He said that did not make much sense but that COVID-19 leads to other problems such as blood clots, stroke, and heart attacks, so COVID-19 was often part of the equation.

Dr. Fletcher said he believed it was hard to speak to individual cases, and he assured everyone that they were not trying to under or over count COVID-19 cases, as they wanted the cases to be as accurate as possible, because they realize the magnitude of the numbers and decisions that were being made as a result of the numbers. He said the clinicians were trained to be as accurate as possible.

The hospital representatives responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.


Dr. Priest said the vast majority of people would recover without any long-term problems but that there would be some who recover with long term [inaudible], and they would be looking into it.

Dr. Little responded that another difficult thing was that they did not know if those with some symptoms who did not get tested, have COVID-19 or not and that they only knew about the ones who got tested. He said that makes it even more complicated, because some people will never even know if they had COVID-19. He said they just did not know at this point what were the long-term [inaudible], who gets them and is more at risk for them and the real, true question of how many people get it was really unanswerable at this point.
Commissioner Harden requested weekly testing at long-term care facilities.

Mr. Armato said they can work with Ms. Harris and the team to come up with a plan of what might work. He said what they could do is share what they had been doing and work with Ms. Harris to see what additional resources- He said like Atrium they had mobile units and other testing capabilities they could relocate. He said he thinks he could do more and that they were trying to prioritize by zip codes but that he agreed with her. He said if they could do more they would step up and be there to help.

Dr. Little said he did not want to over emphasize the limitation in testing capacity enough but that it was severely inhibiting their ability to do large-scale testing like they would want to. He said due to that they were in a more reactive mode than a proactive mode than they would like to be. He said Atrium has partnered with the nursing homes across the area through what they have as a sniff collaborative. He said from the very beginning they had helped respond to outbreaks and converted one of the nursing homes to an all-COVID-19 facility. He said he would love to be able to provide surveillance testing to all of the sniffs in the area but that they just did not have the capacity to do it. He said they could respond to individual clusters and outbreaks but when it came to weekly testing of every, single nursing home resident and staff, that number exceeds their ability to provide those testing. He said when he had those discussions with all of the different nursing homes, they do have contracts with private labs, Lab Quest or LabCorp or others. He said the issue with the turnaround was that those labs have capacity issues as well, for the same reasons talked about. He stated they were all sort of competing for the same resources unfortunately, and it was severely inhibiting their ability to be more proactive of what she was asking.

Dr. Fletcher said they also worked hard at trying to make others who could bare resources to bare it, the State and the feds, really information in terms of resourcing. He said they were giving it their all but were struggling in multiple venues in terms of personnel and resources and testing platforms and all of the things that were components of trying to do exactly what you are asking for, which were really reasonable things to ask of how do we take care of these long-term care facilities. He said they have made HHS, CDC, FEMA, and others aware that this was a concern as well.

Commissioner Harden said she wanted to make sure the seniors and staff were getting afforded the same privilege they were affording others in the community.

Commissioner Jerrell mentioned that when he reached out to both systems about the need for testing on the east side, their community engagement teams responded and Novant helped put up a facility on Executive Center Drive and Atrium working with the mobile site and insuring there was a presence in east Charlotte, which was the most diverse district in the community.

He said COVID-19 really highlighted the disparities as it related to health care and he believed they needed to start to have conversations around the expansion of access into specific communities. He asked what their plans to access to the greater community now that they had seen this.

He said the second thing was that he wanted to lift up communities of color. He said African Americans had been disproportionately impacted and then the refugee and immigrant communities. He said at a town hall they were able to line up specific needs that go beyond the Latino community where they had the Bhutanese and Napoli, Indian, African communities, who had specific needs they would have to address as well.

He asked about trying to accommodate testing at various times for the high-risk service workers and people in these high-risk occupations. He said they had the ability to test 200 a day at the mobile sites and wanted to know how they could expand that.

Mr. Armato responded when he took over in 2012, diversity, inclusion, and health equity was on the top of his list of what they wanted to accomplish that was going to be aggressive and different. He said not only had they worked it to reflect the entire community they served but more importantly, everything they do inside of Novant, they
do a deep dive on health equity. He said they did some incredible work but that COVID-19 just highlighted more of the inequity that they needed to constantly improve on. He said the Michael Jordan Clinic was the first of many and they hoped to open a second one. He said the Community Care Cruiser was getting out and adjusting those times and locations, and they had been working with church leaders in the different markets and established business resource groups which reflect all the demographics in the community from the black and brown population to the Hispanic and Asian populations. He said they were doing out into the community to see how they could better open up assess to move healthcare closer in the communities so they do not have to search for where they would access and find the care they need and deserve. He said they had his commitment, not only on COVID-19 but every issue associated with health they would get aggressive and continue to deliver the remarkable care people need and deserve.

Dr. Little said they had their clinic in west Charlotte for some time and similar to Novant and personally for him as an African American physician, the issues were at the forefront of what he does. He said he got into that part of his career because he did see those inequities and health outcomes in different populations, including the African American population, so everything they would do, they would look through a lens of who they were not service, be it gender related, race/ethnicity related, or income. He said they were always looking for opportunities to ensure they were meeting the needs of the communities they serve. He said they also serve not only Mecklenburg County but also the rural communities, many of who may work in Mecklenburg County. He said he wanted to partner with the County to figure out what the community needs and he said as they talked about earlier, those wrap around services to meet not only the health needs but the social determinants of health, because that drives their health outcomes. He said clinical health concerns were only responsible for about 20-30% of your health outcomes but the social determinants of health such as housing, transportation, and food security, those things drive almost 70% of health-related outcomes. He said through their One Charlotte Help Alliance that they partnered with the County and Novant, they were trying to address those needs as well, because that would really help improve the outcome of those communities. He said to their point about access to testing, they would continue to push that and from their perspective, those populations were primary and would always be a focus to get that testing to.

Chair Dunlap asked what it was best for the Board to focus efforts on.

Mr. Armato said social distancing, hygiene, masking and how to help people before they get into large gatherings making sure that they have protective wear and masking on.

He said they also put together what he called a Hope Fund, for front-line healthcare workers. He said he was worried about them, so they put about $11 million in a fund and they had already paid out half of it to help with rent and utilities and transportation, as a lot of people were losing jobs in their families or having a hard time to get to work or finding childcare. He said they were also focused on caring for the people that are caring for our community.

Dr. Fletcher said in terms of masking to not let politics or pride get in the way of taking care of each other, because it is about helping the people around you in the community.

Dr. Little mentioned the mental toll it was taking on the health care workers and the communities so anything they could do to provide support for people's mental state since it was almost an unprecedented situation that is prolonged and with no true end in sight so he thought anything the Board of County Commissioners could do to provide support for people's mental health would be appreciative.

Ms. Diorio announced that the Governor just put an alcohol restriction in place, almost identical to the one that Mecklenburg County put in place. She said Mecklenburg County was leading the way for the entire State of North Carolina in terms of responding to COVID-19.

Mask Initiative and Community Outreach

Dena Diorio, County Manager, provided an update on the mask initiative and community outreach. She said it was about the Two Million Mask Initiative, which was called the Million Mask Initiative; however, it is really two million masks. She said the initiative was
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launched in late June and was a public/private partnership. She said under the leadership of Atrium Health, the masks were being donated by a number of companies at the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council and an additional one million masks were being provided by the County for distribution throughout the community. She said over a half of a million masks had been distributed to the community.

Ms. Diorio said there was a three-tier distribution strategy. She said the first, around 700,000 masks were focused on vulnerable populations; tier two was around small business reopening, and tier three would be mask distribution throughout the community to fill gaps and saturate the market. She said they were currently under the tier one distribution strategy that would run until July 31, and there were 11 subcommittees working on distribution strategies. She said the overarching strategy was three-tiered, to max out the healthcare footprint and non-profit footprint and to work with retail partners. She mentioned their one million masks would stay within the community. She said they were also doing a major focus in the public-health priority zip codes. She reviewed the pop-up events where masks had been given out. She said last Saturday there was an event targeting Hispanic small businesses and the target was to distribute 8,000 masks at the event and July 31 there would be a large, major event where they can distribute 100,000 masks to the construction industry. Ms. Diorio highlighted that Novant Health had distributed about 450,000 masks. She thanked Novant for being first in community-wide distribution of masks in the community.

Ms. Diorio said the first would be measured by key performance indicators that were still being developed and in general there were three: the rate of distribution to the community, community partners, retailers, and healthcare touch points; the second was the rate of distribution from the partners into the community; and the third was the coverage of vulnerable zip codes. She mentioned a small portion of the CELC donated funds would go to the UNCC Urban Institute and they would survey the community and assess baseline utilization of masks as well as barriers and facilitators to wearing masks. She said they would also determine whether or not being provided a mask through the effort facilitated compliance. She said they would do two rounds of community surveys with an over sampling in the public health priority areas. She said she asked the Strategic Planning and Evaluation team to do some research on how mask mandates were being enforced throughout the County. She said they looked at stated and towns and it was pretty broad in how people were doing it. She said you were seeing the strictest enforcement in places like California and Arizona, where they have the highest outbreak of cases, and one thing she found interesting, was what Las Vegas was doing. She said what they were doing was called compliance ambassadors, where they were actually deploying 100 people into the community to go into businesses to help educate them on what the requirements were in terms of masking. She said that may be something they want to consider in Mecklenburg County. She said they could continue to update the Board on how the masks were being distributed.

Ms. Diorio spoke about the Count on Me CLT public service campaign. She said it was the direct result of the work of her Business Leaders Roundtable. She said Ray Ward took the lead and engaged AC&M, a multi-cultural marketing firm, to develop messaging to specific communities in Mecklenburg County. She said there were three goals of the campaign: build broad scale awareness about safety guidelines; deliverer targeted messaging to address hotspots in impacted communities; and drive traffic to the website Countonmeclt.com which the County was going to maintain and manage going forward.

She said there were several critical segments the campaign would focus on: young adults, ages 13 to 39; Hispanics ages 13 to 59; Blacks over age 20, with a focus on ages 40 to 59; essential workers; seniors; Asians, LGBTQ community, and other at-risk populations, which were those who were strictly with underlying health conditions.

Ms. Diorio said there were a series of tactics they were going to use throughout the campaign. She said that included tv, radio, Influencers/Associations, billboards, posters, print materials, grassroots, social media/digital, memes, and TIK TOK Videos. She reviewed the paid media partners: TV: WBTV, WCCB, WCNC, WSOC; Radio: Beasley Media Group, Norsan Media; Out of Home: Adams Outdoor; Print: CBJ, Norsan Group, QNotes; Digital: Charlotte Agenda, Norsan Media, Facebook, and Twitter. She said the paid investment of $86,000 would generate $128,000 of media value and the campaign
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will run from July 21, 2020 through September 5, 2020 and at that time the County would come back behind that and continue the campaign. Awareness would be measured through delivered impressions. She showed examples of their marketing material, including to the Hispanic community.

Danny Diehl, Public Information Director, reviewed Meck Cares Grassroots Outreach, stating there were two phases: now through December 2020, to fill gaps then expand Count on Me campaign, put information directly in hands of those most affected and hardest to reach. He said a few ways they came up with to do that were print, posters, and flyers translated into multiple languages with multiple messages and distributed in neighborhoods. He said another idea was to put information directly at a person’s home with direct mail/door hangers and the info would go directly to ZIP codes with highest vulnerability for infection. He said for CATS ads, they would use existing creative for bus ads in key neighborhoods; and for banners, parking deck, street banners, and County signs. He said Mask on Meck would be on the I-277 side of the Courthouse parking deck, which gets probably 50,000 people driving by and seeing it every day. He said they also talk to Center City Partners about being able to use some of that creative for their street banners, which you could see during big events.

Mr. Diehl said for community engagement, they were trying to have at least six virtual COVID-19 community conversations starting in August. He said a couple of the topics they have thrown around that they knew were important to folks was how to overcome the digital divide, housing and homelessness support, business support, the census, and other topics they may come up with. He said they were also helping to coordinate the current and future mask distribution with Charlotte Response, Emergency Management and Atrium. He said for the communities that may not necessarily have the opportunity to get the masks are being flooded with masks right now. He said them going behind and put out more masks may not be the best use of that resource, so for phase two, which would begin in mid to late September and last through the end of the year while they could still use the CARES money, that they would sort of reset at the second phase and see where the gaps are again and fill the gaps with the masks they would have left or would have resources to purchase more of.

Vulnerable Populations

Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager, provided an update on vulnerable populations, including homelessness, status of evictions and tenant protections, rental and utility assistance funding, eviction prevention during COVID-19, and an overview of community resources. He said in terms of homelessness during COVID-19, the total estimated number of single adults, youth, veterans, chronically homeless and families with children experiencing homelessness in the community were 3,111 as of June 30, 2020. He said this did not include the number of households living week to week in hotels/motels or others at risk of homelessness. He said initial influx of public and private funding, increased unemployment benefits, and eviction moratoriums during COVID-19 appear to have temporarily slowed new entries into homelessness. He said however, once the resources and protections expire, it is likely that an increase in homelessness would occur without additional intervention. He said they were waiting to see the current number of individuals receiving benefits and the projected numbers of people who potentially loose or receive a reduced benefit this month, dependent on the congressional discussions that were currently not happening. He said once received, they would work with the partners to implement an appropriate response. He said the County funds homeless prevention and housing services provided by partner agencies. Those services include shelter diversion, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, housing placement, and case management. He said between the County programs and funding for non-profit agencies, they invest over $20 million in homeless-related services; however, in response to COVID-19, they have increased their efforts to support the homeless. He said because of the need for social distancing, Roof Above and Salvation Army were unable to offer the 100 overflow beds they normally provide. He said to address this, the County rented approximately 300 hotel rooms for shelter guest to be able to practice social distancing and isolation and quarantine. He said from April through December, their total budget for the hotels were $5.1 million, which included food, laundry, and security at the hotels. He said funding from the City paid for an additional 120 rooms for shelter guest.
Mr. Trotman said in terms of the rental and utility assistance, North Carolina Chief Justice Beasley issued initial orders delaying civil court proceedings, including evictions. Governor Cooper issued moratoriums on evictions through June 20 and utility disconnections through July 29 and pending eviction cases reduced from approximately 1,800 to approximately 1,100 before Mecklenburg County Courts resumed eviction hearings on July 20. He said the court was proactively addressing the volume of pending evictions by sending resource flyers with information on mediation, legal aid, rent relief, and mortgage assistance to all landlords and tenants involved in eviction proceedings. He mentioned the Crisis Intervention Program, Emergency Assistance and General Assistance Programs managed by Crisis Assistance Ministry, and the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, managed by DSS. He said the Crisis Intervention Program, also known as CIP, was a federally funded program which assists individuals and families who were experiencing a heating or cooling related crisis who pay their utility bills. He said the program had $3.2 million allocated for client aid in FY20 and $2.1 million was spent. He said unspent funds for the program must be returned to the State by the end of the fiscal year. He said the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, LIEA, is a federally funded seasonal program which provide families with a one-time payment to offset their winter heating costs from December 1 through March 31 each year. He said the program had $2.5 million allocated to client aid, and in FY20, they spent $2.5 million. He said the General Assistance Program, GA, provided financial assistance for senior citizens or individuals with a disability, and the Emergency Assistance program, also known as EA, provides assistance for households with children, those facing domestic violence, and families with YFS cases. He said those funds had approximately $1.8 million allocated and spent approximately $1.8 million.

Mr. Trotman said the CIP program provided up to $600 per eligible household per year, and the EA, GA, and LIEA programs provide $500 for eligible households each year, and during the COVID-19 crisis, they increase the EA and GA limits to $1,000 to help prevent evictions from occurring. He said by transitioning CIP to DSS, County customers would now be able to apply for utility assistance, CIP, GA, and LIEA, alongside food and nutrition services, Medicaid and workforce benefits. He said it was important because the many customers seeking assistance were eligible for all four programs would no longer have to travel between agencies to apply. He said it also aligned with the vision of bringing Mecklenburg County to you and the integrated service delivery model that would be housed in all five CRC’s throughout the community. He said he would promote the State’s new program eligibility mobile application and Mecklenburg County’s new supporting documentation mobile application that was implemented in June of this year for customers to apply for benefits and submit supporting documentation via a smart phone or computer. He said the transition to DSS also allows Crisis Assistance Ministry to administer EA and GA and other community funds exclusively for rental and mortgage assistance.

Mr. Trotman said that in order to quickly assist he hotel guest, Crisis Assistance Ministries, CAM, negotiated payments directly with hotels rather than using guest illegibility criteria, and because of the lack of identifying information and illegibility criteria, EA and GA funds could not be used for reimbursement. He said CAM used their private dollars to pay for the expenses. He said CAM was awarded $600,000 by the COVID-19 Response Fund, and in mid-April, CAM returned $432,000 to the United Way and the Foundation for the Carolinas, because staff did not have the social work expertise to provide case-management services that were needed for the population requesting assistance with hotel fees. He said many people calling CAM needed social work assistance instead of general emergency financial assistance. He said this decision was reached after conversation with the united way and the foundation. He said there was free mediation for landlords and tenants ran through the Community Relations Committee in order to reach as settlement over past-due rent.

Danny Diehl, Public Information Director and Mr. Trotman responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked to hear about the enforcement aspect of masks.
Deputy Chief Jeff Estes, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department wanted everybody to understand that they police by consent and that there were not enough officers to enforce it on a macro level. He said they had to have the consent of the people. He said it was extremely difficult to enforce an idea of wearing a mask. He said a lot of what they did was make sure the largest, most egregious violators they saw, they targeted and issued warnings, written warnings, citations, and made five arrests. He said he did not think that what they wanted to do, especially in this day and climate was to have officers out and about in the community stopping people to make people wear their masks all across the County. What he would like to do is make businesses where they were congregating in groups together where wearing masks were the greatest risk, to get the places where people were congregating to try to practice the safe measures.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to direct staff to come forward with an enforcement plan for the amended emergency proclamation, including mask enforcement, by the appropriate body; including the use of compliance ambassadors and other enforcement options at the August 5, 2020 meeting.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham and Dunlap

Commissioner Jerrell requested adding a refugee and immigrant subcommittee. He also recommended targeting groups like QC Metro, Charlotte Post, County News, Pride Magazine, Latino newspapers that have specific targeted groups that were also a subset of the groups that they were trying to reach.

Ms. Diorio said she would take it to the group that was managing it to see if there was someone who could staff it.

Commissioner Fuller inquired about the encampments popping up around I-277.

Liz Clasen-Kelly, Men's Shelter of Charlotte CEO, responded that encampments were always a part of the community, for the past decade. She said their point in time count generally found around 200 people sleeping outside spread through the community, and they knew that was an undercount. She said what they have seen happen since COVID-19 and the stay at home order was what she believed to be the largest encampment in the community's history. She said it was located outside the doors of their day-service center, and she did not believe that was random as that was where many go to eat, shower, and get their mail. She said what they see with the one number was not that homelessness was increasing overall, though she expected it would as they continued through the pandemic, but what they had seen at minimum was an increase of the visibility of homelessness. She said people who were in encampments off the beaten path had now self-selected to be in a different encampment. She said what then at the entrance of the shelter was less people asking for shelter beds and more people opting to be outside. She said that was not necessarily an irrational choice, given that congregate settings were among the most dangerous settings in the midst of the pandemic.

Commissioner Fuller inquired about having his questions answered.

Ms. Diorio said his first question was specifically about the emergency ordinance, which would allow the Board to do certain things like evacuation; curfew; restrictions on consumption of alcohol (beyond what's been implemented recently); restrictions as to dangerous weapons and substances; restricting access to certain areas; restrictions on movement of people; and restrictions with respect to offices and business establishments where people may congregate. She responded to his question stating they talked about that, and firstly they could not evacuate people, so you could not send them somewhere else. She said that was not really an option. She said curfew was an option for sure, and if they thought things would really go sideways and would start to escalate, that was
something they would consider, assuming they could get consensus from the Towns and City. She said the remainder of them would really require just a shutdown of the County in order for them to be effective in terms of movement and restrictions to access to certain areas.

Ms. Diorio said Commissioner Fuller’s second question was, what other options are available to us to address the rising number of cases and hospitalizations? She responded to his question stating she believed he heard pretty clearly from the hospital officials that it was all about masking, which was why they were doing a two million mask initiative in the County, and the other thing was to convince people that it would be the right thing to do, which was why they were doing a public service campaign, to get those messages out to people so they understood how important that was.

Ms. Diorio said Commissioner Fuller’s third question was, what has been done to enforce the mandates contained in the proclamation? What further can be done? She responded to his question stating she believed they had a pretty robust discussion about enforcement, and that would continue.

Ms. Diorio said Commissioner Fuller’s fourth question was what activities are people engaging in that are causing the number of infections to continue to rise? What prohibitions and restrictions are aimed at curbing such activities? She responded to his question stating that what they had been seeing was that restaurants had been turning into bars and that was one of the reasons they put the alcohol restrictions in place, to prohibit restaurants from serving food and alcohol at the bar, because Ms. Harris was adamant that this behavior did not always prevent for social distancing. She said they were getting some push back now from even some of the Towns that may want to pull back on that.

Ms. Diorio said Commissioner Fuller’s fifth question was what is our plan to control the high rate of infection in congregate living locations? What is causing the problem? What are we doing to control the outbreaks? She responded to his question stating they believed they had a pretty robust conversation again about congregate living locations and what Novant said they would try to do to help, but you also heard Atrium, which said they did not have the bandwidth to do the needed testing in order to control that. She said they needed to continue to work through that issue.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

_____________________________  _____________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk    George Dunlap, Chair
Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER – 6:00 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely in Formal Session on Wednesday, August 5, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, the invocation led by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, when a short video was played, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

20-6264: by Commissioner Leake
20-6275: by Commissioner Leake
20-6278: by Commissioner Leake
20-6280: by Commissioner Leake
20-6282: by Commissioner Leake
20-6285: by Commissioner Leake
20-6287: by Commissioner Leake
20-6290: by Commissioner Leake
20-6291: by Commissioner Leake
20-6295: by Commissioner Leake
20-6305: by Commissioner Leake

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6274: Proclamation - Child Support Awareness Month - August 2020

Commissioner Jerrell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to adopt a Proclamation declaring August 2020 Child Support Awareness Month in Mecklenburg County.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board
PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6266: Public Appearance

There were no speakers that addressed the Board of Commissioners.

APPOINTMENTS


A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to appoint Victoria Avramovic and Dr. Jerome Williams, Jr. as the two co-chairs to the COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force.

Ms. Avramovic and Dr. Williams Jr. were appointed.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-6267: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee Annual Report

Willie Ratchford, Director, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee (CRC) presented some highlights from the Committee’s annual report.

Michael Smalenberger, CRC Chairperson, presented the Community Relations Committee’s Annual Report to the Board of Commissioners. He stated that each committee member participated in at least one of six subcommittees. He said the community could receive updates on the subcommittee events and workshops being held.

He said in April 2020, the CRC performed a subcommittee reset and the subcommittees’ focus areas were realigned to work closely with the Community Relations Department, with emphasis on increased community engagement. He said the Program and Speaker subcommittee was also tasked with tracking engagement and active participation of all the subcommittees and CRC membership. He said in June 2020, the CRC recommitted to becoming more vocal and engage in activism and calls to action to ensure social and racial equity in policies in Charlotte Mecklenburg. He said despite these new efforts, they still abide by and have the same vision and mission statement. He read the vision and mission statements.

Mr. Smalenberg reviewed the CRC’s annual commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that took place in January and brought together nearly 6,000 individuals of different backgrounds to promote harmony and community building through: a parade along North Tryon St.; MLK Call to Service featuring family-friendly service projects; recognition of our communities unsung heroes; a high school basketball showcase on the campus of Johnson C. Smith University; a memorial wreath laying in Marshall Park; the National Observance and CMS Writing and Arts Contest; Ambassador Andrew Young served as the keynote speaker.

Mr. Smalenberg reviewed the Subcommittee Accomplishments. He said the Communications subcommittee developed a revamped look and format to the CRC newsletter, and relaunched in May. He said the Education and Young Leaders subcommittee held two “Dress to Impress” events at the Belmont Regional Center and the subcommittee would be working with staff to provide conflict resolution, leadership development and truancy reduction efforts with CMS students. He said the Intercultural Relations subcommittee coordinated a CRC general meeting at the Hindu Center of Charlotte. The event featured cultural education. He said they identified organizations with shared focus to participate in Roundtable Dialogues that allow the organizations to communicate with each other and achieve common goals and began a process of reviewing the City of Charlotte’s Ordinance’s to examine our local policies through an equity lens, and made recommendations to the City Council on suggested changes. He
said for programs and speakers, they focused on inward operations like membership
training and engagement for CRC members and staff, providing orientations for new
members and newly assigned leadership and collaborating with other subcommittees to
assist them with their initiatives.

Mr. Smalenberg said due to COVID-19, the signature Police Community Relations
Awards Program, led by the Police-Community Relations subcommittee, was cancelled
and that prior to COVID-19, the subcommittee had received 165 nominations from
community members to honor CMPD officers. He said there were 10 sponsors committed
for the May 2020 Police Community Relations Awards, and $11,000 was committed in
sponsorship but cancelled due to COVID-19. He stated sponsors requested the
subcommittee retain $7,400 in sponsorship funds for the 2021 Police Community
Relations Awards.

He stated the Community Relations Department serves as the lead agency for the City’s
ADA coordination and leads the ADA network team comprised of City and County
agencies. Individuals can file ADA complaints and grievances (within 60 days of the
alleged violation) to the Community Relations ADA program office at
charlotteADA@charlottenc.gov.

Mr. Smalenberg said the Community Affairs team develops, implements and supports
programs and initiatives that advance the mission of the department, and the team was
also involved in review boards, community dialogues, youth programs, peer mediation in
schools and conflict resolution training. He said for the Dispute Settlement Program, the
DSP focuses on landlord tenant, private warrant court, juvenile offender, Medicaid,
misdemeanor cases, truancy/school issues, Charlotte Housing Authority hearings,
worthless check conciliation, and 50-C No Contact cases. He said for fair housing and
public accommodations, the Fair Housing team works to ensure that equal access to
housing and public accommodation is a right and not a privilege, and staff would
document and investigate complaints and conduct standardize testing of alleged violator’s
facilities/properties within the city and county.

Mr. Smalenberg reviewed the number of citizens who used each program. He also
reviewed community initiatives, stating that they hosted COVID-19 Racial & Social
Disparities virtual town hall meetings focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on
communities of color. He said they had eviction mediation during COVID-19 and used
trained, neutral third-party mediators to work with landlords and tenants to reach an
agreement, provide access to resources for paying restitution for damages, losses or rent
as an alternative to court conviction or other court action. He said Mediation would be
available virtually or in-person. He said the Segregated by Design Community Dialogue
Provided community members the opportunity to view the video and have dialogue about
the history of how our federal, state and local governments unconstitutionally segregated
every major metropolitan area in America through law and policy.

Mr. Smalenberg stated that Community Relations developed and delivered free training
to Charlotte-Mecklenburg area neighborhood associations, civic organizations, schools
and other groups and trainings included: Conflict Resolution; Diversity; Fair Housing; and
ADA training. He stated there were annual events, such as the Police Community
Relations Awards, an annual event honoring officers who have made outstanding
contributions to neighborhoods and communities in the area; the Dr. Martin Luther King
Jr. National Holiday To reach the entire community and in recognition of the dream and
vision of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Community Relations organizes an annual
celebration during Dr. King's holiday; the MLK Medallion Award, which was a focal point
of the Dr. King celebration where individuals from all walks of life in Charlotte-
Mecklenburg are presented with the award for exemplifying the ideals of Dr. King.

Mr. Smalenberg responded to Commissioner comments.

Chair Dunlap asked about the CRC’s efforts to bring unity in the community as it related
to the protests in the community.
Mr. Ratchford said that people in the community have a right to peacefully demonstrate and the CRC works to make sure that they and the police department understand that. He said they do a lot of meetings behind the scenes where they get members of the community and police department together to talk about how demonstrations are going as they go. He said it did not always work out well, because there were some people who participate in demonstrations or protests who do not have what was best for the community at heart. He said they were there to wreak havoc and they do things that are provocative, but the vast majority of the folk that we know who attended those sessions were there for peaceful purposes to air their grievances and ensure they were seen and heard in the community.

PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:30 PM

20-6297: TEFRA Hearing- KIPP Charlotte, Inc.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to open the TEFRA public hearing and receive comments on the proposed financing by KIPP Charlotte, Inc.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and to adopt a resolution approving the issuance of not to exceed $17,000,000 of bonds to be issued by the public finance authority to finance and refinance certain costs of various projects on behalf of KIPP Charlotte, Inc.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document No. 22.

MANAGER'S REPORT

20-6301: COVID-19 Response Update

Emergency Management Overview

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said there had been questions raised about the structure they use responding to states of emergency. She said their overall authority came from NCGS § 166A 7(d)(2) North Carolina Emergency Management Act. She said the Act authorizes counties and municipalities to direct and coordinate the development of an emergency operations plan. She said the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Emergency Operations Plan was signed by Board Chair on September 4, 2019 pursuant to a unanimous vote of the Board of Commissioners. She said it was also signed by the City of Charlotte and the six towns. She said under the emergency operations team, the City of Charlotte Manager, Mecklenburg County Manager, and Town Managers within Mecklenburg County had the responsibility to plan for and direct the use of personnel, resources, and to request assistance from other organizations and necessary for the welfare and benefit of the citizens at the time of public emergency.

Ms. Diorio said in addition to the General Statute and the Emergency Operations Plan, they also had a local Mecklenburg County Emergency Management Ordinance. She said there were two important provisions in the local ordinance. She said first, the ordinance did not apply within the corporate limits of any municipality or any area of the County over which a municipality had jurisdiction to enact general police ordinances. She said the second provision was the declaration of a state of emergency pursuant to the ordinance, which would enable actively any and all local plans, mutual assistant compacts and agreements and shall also authorize the furnishing of assistance there under. She said when the state of emergency was signed March 13, 2020, the Emergency Operations Plan was activated, which rested with her the responsibility to make decisions necessary for the welfare and benefit of the citizens in the time of a public emergency.

Battalion Chief Robert Graham, Deputy Director of Emergency Management, from the Charlotte Fire Department, presented an overview of Emergency Management. He said
the Emergency Management Team had probably about 1,000 people across Mecklenburg County, including the County Commissioners, seven municipalities, Board of Education, and a whole host of different response agencies. He said the Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Management Ordinance were important for them for a number of different reasons. While they were focused on COVID-19 at this time, they had to use state of emergencies every so often. He said in the last year, they used it for flooding on Riverside Drive, the tornado in January, and civil unrest. He said they focus on all hazards, which may include large fires, explosions, natural hazards, hazardous materials, terrorism, workplace violence, pandemic diseases, critical infrastructure failures, supply-chain failures, and cyber-attacks. He said while they respect chain of commands and organizational structures, they must be able to reach across every aspect of the County to be able to manage emergencies. For COVID-19, they were supporting the County, the City, and the other six towns. He said more importantly, they created the structure that allowed Ms. Harris to maneuver through the entire event and get things like PPE and supplies for food banks. He said as they were dealing with that, they still had to deal with other emergencies, and they had seen that this spring with the civil unrest and yesterday with the hurricane response. He said they were in the very early stages of hurricane season, as it would not peak until September nor would it be out of here until December. He said they were always concerned with those things, but it would give them the flexibility to operate as necessary.

Mr. Graham stated it was not unique to Mecklenburg County, as all 100 counties were essentially set up the same. He said the City and County could not operate alone, as they were too intertwined and too many different services which relied upon each other, and the way they were set up for COVID-19, the City of Charlotte and County of Mecklenburg and six towns were all supporting each other. He said they do that through the Emergency Operation Center. He said you could not tell the difference between a city and county employee; they do it through policy meetings. He stated it was one team and one fight and that they wanted to make sure, as they still had a long way to go with COVID-19, and he said he personally was extremely happy with the way the organization and systems that the County Commissioners and City Council have put into place for operating very well.

Enforcement Strategy

Ms. Diorio stated that they were still operating under phase two and that Governor Cooper just extended phase two for another five weeks. She said under phase two, many businesses must remain closed, bars, gyms, bowling alleys, and other event venues. She said other businesses were open with restrictions, like restaurants, which should operate at 50% of capacity. She said from an enforcement perspective, when a business was closed or supposed to be closed, enforcement could be relatively straightforward, but enforcing other restrictions could be complicated. She said under Executive Order 147, the mask mandate was included. She said that prohibited the individual mask mandate from being enforced and put the responsibility on businesses. She said when they go out there and see people not wearing masks, they were not permitted to enforce individual mask mandate.

Ms. Diorio stated they then put the alcohol restrictions in place, which were pretty straightforward. She said that businesses serving alcohol must close at 11:00 p.m. for in-person dining. She said they had also restricted eating and drinking in bars and both of those were more restrictive than the Governor’s order, but CMPD and other law enforcement agencies had success in enforcing the restrictions, because they were straight forward.

Ms. Diorio stated that they had developed a two-pronged approach, with the first being a coordinated enforcement component. She said it was a task-force approach which included CMPD, the Sheriff’s office, North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement, and ABC law enforcement. She said it really focused on violations of alcohol. She said it would focus on hotspots and frequent violators. She said it was a combination of warnings and citations, but violations which were witnessed related to masks and social distancing would be referred to Public Health.
Ms. Diorio said Public Health was where the second component would come in, which was the education component. She said first, complaints from the public could be forwarded to 311 and then it would be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agency for a follow up. She said Public Health would deploy Environmental Health Inspectors to follow up with the businesses and educate them on the requirements. She said they would also be hiring ambassadors who would be trained to visit businesses and provide educational materials on the requirements. She said they had been having conversations with NCDHSS Secretary Dr. Cohen about enforcement and some of the issues they had faced. She said they had gone back and were creating guidance for law enforcement which would be deployed locally to give law enforcement some ideas of ways they could enforce this more effectively. She said they would also look at the role of Environmental Health Inspectors and see if there were some additional tools they could put in their toolboxes to help with enforcement of some of the orders.

Deputy Chief Jeff Estes, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, pointed out that they knew when the alcohol component came in that it would be straightforward. He said they already very strictly regulate alcohol violations on an ongoing and regular basis in a combined manner between their selves, Mecklenburg County, ABC, and North Carolina ALE. He said along with help from the Sheriff’s office and in conjunction and coordination with the town chiefs who they talk to regularly, they were able to compile lists, particularly of the hot spots of places they already knew would be in violation and to deploy officers there to insure compliance. He said this was different than the general phase two. He said that businesses were required to enforce the mask mandates, and as the Manager correctly pointed out, the government was wise to not authorize law enforcement officers to individually enforce the mask mandates. He believed that would be a recipe for a disaster. He said they could hold the businesses accountable.

Deputy Chief Estes said they visited up almost 290 locations, and 217 of them were ABC serving establishments; 65 of them were gaming establishments. He said in the process of looking at alcohol locations, they came across gaming locations that clearly were not supposed to be open. He said they had some violence associated with those locations and were able to ensure they were all shutdown. He said violated 20 establishments and made four referrals to the health department in relation to social distancing and mask requirements. He believed it may be important to understand that police agencies across the Country were struggling to enforce the violations just because it was an at-all responsibility for law enforcement across the nation. He said in response to the rising crime rate all across the nation, they have become very strategic and careful on how they employ their personnel. He said to give context, since Friday they had answered more than 5,000 calls from citizens for service, and 524 of them had been violent. He said more than 10 persons had been shot and they had two homicides in that same time period. He said there had been some conflicting information about alcohol violations, and they had worked those out and believed they were on better footing there. He said he was confident moving forward that they would be able to continue the COVID-19 response in an appropriate manner that was fair for all people.

Battalion Chief Graham and Deputy Chief Estes responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

Commissioner Jerrell asked how many officers were dedicated to COVID-19 enforcement.

Deputy Chief Estes responded all of the ABC folks, which would be in the dozens, and depending upon the day that he could redirect, he was using them based on a shift and their requirements in their other job. He said in other words, Thursday, Friday, Saturday nights it was very heavy, and if you used the whole taskforce model, there were over 30 some odd people who were assisting but it would change day-to-day. He said early in the week he was lighter and later on in the week and the evening hours he was heavier.

Commissioner Harden requested a comprehensive report of enforcement actions.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the public expected their elected officials to be involved in the decision-making.
Commissioner Cotham requested information on the ambassadors.

Ms. Diorio responded they would want to hire part-time people to do the work. She said they did not have the capacity to use existing employees to do the work. She said she also wanted to hire people who were bilingual and represent the communities where the businesses operate.

Commissioner Fuller said he did not like reading about policies being made for the County unbeknownst to him. He asked if they had a local mask mandate, could they enforce that, even though the Governor's executive order explicitly said no enforcement of mask mandate.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, said they could execute a more restrictive directive than the Governor’s; however, in order for it to be affective, you would need the City and six towns to agree. He said otherwise, your jurisdiction is only in the ETJ.

Chief Graham believed there was a huge misunderstanding on the Board's part. He explained how the processed worked, stating it was not unique to Mecklenburg County, as they operated under the National Incident Management System, which was a presidential directive that was adopted by the County and all of the Cities following 9/11. He said the multi-agency coordination group, which was like the policy group, meets three times a week. He went over who was in the group. He said that multi-agency coordination group was part of the Incident Management Structure of the National Incident Management System, which consists of representatives from stakeholder agencies or organizations and was established and organized to make cooperative, multi-agency decisions. He said with this having been said, when a restriction comes down, they would be signed under their ordinance which they passed in 2017 and was specific to the County and all of the towns have similar ordinances signed by the chief elected official. He said what would happen is the Managers would listen to the subject-matter experts, and they were one of them, and would say okay, what needs to be done under the direction of the elected officials. He said when they think their elected officials would agree to restriction, they take it to their chief elected official. He said if the Board was having some communication issues, Chairman Dunlap would be the one to sign for the Board of County Commissioners, so he is the representative, and no restrictions would be put in place by any officials. He said that Emergency Management does not run the policy group but was run by key decision makers, and Ms. Diorio as the County Manager was the key decision maker.

Chief Graham stated what the Emergency Operations Plan does and puts in place was that it allows Ms. Diorio to use all of her available resources in the County to deal with the emergency, in this case it was COVID-19. He said their job in Emergency Management was coordination, communication, and connecting resources and filling in gaps. He said they do a lot of things but were not in charge. He said there was only one time that Emergency Management would be in charge, and that would be if there was an emergency at McGuire Nuclear Power Plant. He said that was strictly because timeframe and things that could happen very quickly, and they spend a tremendous amount of time making sure they would be ready for that. He said elected officials were 100% the ones signing the restrictions.

Chair Dunlap highlighted that Mecklenburg County Emergency Management Ordinance was approved and adopted by this board in February 2017. He said that was their opportunity to have a say, when they adopted it. He stated the Governor had said they would not enforce masks and that they would create controversy when they try to do something differently than what the government says. He said while he understood the need, he spoke for consistency. He said that he signs the ordinances, not for himself but on behalf of the Board, and he would tell them that he had not rubber stamped everything they had asked them to do; for instance, he did not agree to bringing in the National Guard during the protests as Chief Putney requested.

Chair Dunlap asked about jail support and the damage that it was causing to county property. He noted the attitudes and behavior of the people who were clearly violating
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the law, whether it was wearing masks, defecating on public streets, cursing and intimidating people who come to the County building. He said this was not masks; these were violations of the law, mostly misdemeanors. He said what were they going to do to enforce that on the behalf of the citizens who complain? He said that he did not have a problem supporting what they initially said they would do but they did not have a right to violate the rights of other citizens.

Deputy Chief Estes said they actually had a meeting scheduled on Friday and a decision would have to be made of all parties involved so that when removal is done, it is done with full support of all local governments, including people there who could communicate the need to leave and give them opportunities to move before they were forcibly removed. He believed some of them wanted to be forcibly removed so they could share that virtually for their cause.

Public Health Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided a public health update. She said the total lab confirmed cases to date may be declining some. He said the characteristics of the cases had not changed significantly, as three in four continued to be from young adults ages 20 to 59. He said that 60% were in people below the age of 39. He said that there were some increases in cases under the age of 20, partly due to increased testing in young children and family, household spread. She said they continued to have disparities along the Latinx community with roughly about 28% of the cases being Hispanic; five percent of reported cases were hospitalized, and that declined as case volumes increased to do increased testing.

Ms. Harris shared that even among young adults some were experiencing extended recovery times; one in five were still experiencing symptoms after two to three weeks of being infected and they had received antidotal reports of lingering symptoms among cases in Mecklenburg County. She said that among 2,500 confirmed cases two in every three who were tested were already experiencing symptoms, meaning that one in three were not when they were tested. She said that one in six were tested because someone in their house was positive and seven percent due to work exposures and one percent each for travel and large gatherings and protest. She said these were all self-reported and people could give multiple responses. She said they were seeing many individuals being less than forth coming about attending gatherings and protests.

Ms. Harris reviewed the characteristics among deaths in the community, stating there were 225 deaths to date and that they had seen a slight uptick in deaths over the last couple of weeks. She said that deaths were usually a lagging indicator so as they were seeing hospital cases go up, it would usually be one to two weeks after that before they would see increases in deaths as well and that was what they were experiencing. She said they had a technical glitch with one of the hospital systems and did not have a standard process for reporting of deaths to the Health Department in North Carolina, so what they were getting were secure emails from the hospital systems and from the medical examiner of deaths that they were seeing that were related to COVID-19. She said that was just a one-time thing and not a situation they expect to happen again in the future.

Ms. Harris said that the individuals in their program who received the test from the hospital system and others, the report would go up to the State. She said the State then consolidates that data and sends it up to the federal government. She said the federal government actually determines what needs to be reported and how. She said the CDC had required the reporting of all natural deaths, so anything other than gunshots or car accidents, those sorts of things, with a COVID-19 positive test be reported as such. She said they had been doing that since the beginning. She said that other risk factors and causes of death were included on the death certificate. She said they had asked the State for a special report and typically it would take a year for them to get a consolidated report of deaths in the community but that they had asked for a special data download of last years and the first six months of this year, as they wanted to do an analysis of that to make sure they were not seeing major decreases in other deaths being reported. She
Ms. Harris said they were looking at their data on death a little bit differently, and for the last data report, they disaggregated the deaths so that they looked at the deaths from long care facility outbreaks versus community deaths. She said what that showed was that 75% of the deaths were connected to long-term care facility outbreaks and 97% were 60 years or older; 43% were male and 74% were Non-Hispanic White. She stated that among community deaths, 73% were 60 years or older; 56% were male, and 26% were Non-Hispanic White with 40% Non-Hispanic Black. She said that the disparities were largely driven by higher rates of chronic conditions that increased the risk to severe complications due to COVID-19 infection among the African American community.

Ms. Harris said they continued to do about 3,500 tests per day in Mecklenburg County. She said at this point, they were not seeing any evidence of individuals in the community who were needing testing and having difficulties getting a test. She said they were trying to reinforce to employers that they should not require retesting to return to work. She said they saw a number of people at the testing event over the weekend who were coming in for that who tested positive again, and the reason being that even though they have no symptoms and had been released from isolations based on CDC guidance, their test results take a while to become negative again. She said they could provide a letter for employers and were asking them to accept that information.

Ms. Harris said they have had conversations with Novant and were looking at ways to increase the facilities ability to test their staff regularly. The federal HHS department was going to start to provide point-of-care testing capacity to some skilled nursing facilities that meet certain requirements. She said the current state recommendation is that all staff in long-term care facilities are tested every other week currently. She said there was a group that meets weekly to support all long-term care facilities and to be an all-hands-on deck approach. Ms. Harris said the positivity rate was at 8.9% over the past week.

Ms. Harris said there was also a decline in hospitalizations and the ICUs were stable at this point. She spoke about the second testing event at the Valarie C. Woodard Center. She said they had 1,069 individuals who showed up to be tested at the event. She said that among those tested, 77% were less than age 60. She said that 44% were Non-Hispanic Black, 29% were Non-Hispanic White, and 18% were Hispanic. She said 15% of those were Non-Mecklenburg residents and there were 68 positive cases, a seven percent positivity rate.

Ms. Harris said they had several visits from their federal partners and their summary observations were as followed: highly competent team using “all-hands on deck” approach, innovative strategies, and adaptability to evolving needs; excellent understanding of epidemiologic data and demonstrate exceptional use of data for public health action; coordination between county, city, healthcare system and community leaders are robust and grounded in strong existing relationships and experience working together prior to the pandemic; extended turnaround times and limited availability of reagents is currently impacting all aspects of response in Mecklenburg County. She said they were co-authoring MMWR, CDC publication, on contact tracing assessment with CDC team.

Ms. Harris responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Commissioner Harden asked about the five-percent number and why they use it.

Ms. Harris responded that it referred to the recommended positivity level and five percent was being used because with those communities which had successfully reduced their percent positives, that five percent seems to be a cutting point of when they start to see real improvement in the community and ability to open things up more successfully.
Ms. Harris responded she was concerned but was speculating at this point with why that was the case. She said she does know that there has been a lot of mobile testing in the Hispanic community, so that may be part of it.

Commissioner Fuller stated they needed to address jail support.

Commissioner Powell requested suicide numbers from last year versus this year.

Chair Dunlap said he said in terms of long-term care facilities, ambassadors should be spot checking to ensure the facilities were enforcing the mask ordinance and to spend a lot of time. He asked what they were doing to drive people to testing sites.

Ms. Harris said they had information on the County website with an app that shows you the closest testing sites available to you. She said they were educating through employers, long-term care facilities, schools, universities, and they were putting information out on a regular basis about testing sites where people could get it.

**Coronavirus Relief Fund Spend Plan Update**

Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager, provided an update on the coronavirus relief fund spend plan. He said at the June 16, 2020 regular meeting, the Board supported a plan that consisted of proposals of how to invest the $39.2 million in Coronavirus relief funds. He said the funding plan included $24 million of eligible costs incurred as of June 16, 2020 and projected costs through December 30, 2020. He said the spend plan also supported investing the remaining $15.2 million in four broad categories: community response, continuity of operations, economic development, and emergency response. Community response would be assistance for individuals, families, and seniors impacted by COVID 19. Examples of this could be rental & mortgage assistance, food & utilities assistance, and workforce development. Continuity of Operations would be investments required to return the organization to full operations. Examples of this could be PPE, facility modifications, and technology. Economic Development would be financial support to assist businesses with recovering from COVID 19. Emergency Response would be investments to offset expenses incurred in response to COVID 19, such as salaries and communications.

Mr. Bryant said for community investments, a total of $8,123,940 would be spent as followed: $2,823,940 for nonprofits and the Towns; 1,500,000 for general assistance; $1,000,000 for food security; $1,000,000 for PPE; $1,000,000 for senior services; $500,000 for community engagement; and $300,000 for senior nutrition.

Mr. Bryant said for MeckCares, $1,856,000 would be for community partners for support for up to 2,000-3,000 individuals impacted by covid-19 referral hotline; promotion/communication plan; service intervention; and evaluation. For service intervention, services offered include: Mental health and substance abuse screenings & treatment for individuals whose use would be related to COVID; Trainings for community professionals to help address increases in behavioral health issues from the pandemic; Counseling for domestic violence survivors and witnesses; Access to behavioral health services for uninsured & unemployed individuals.

Mr. Bryant said for MeckTech, $1,750,000 would go to the public library to Provide 1,000-5,000 households “revived ready” personal computers. Targeted recipients include those impacted by the COVID-19 Crisis that consist of human services agency clients; Goodwill & Charlotte Works clients; public library customers facing workforce challenges, and Park & Recreation senior populations.

Mr. Bryant said for Mecklenburg County small business relief grants, $1,350,000 went for small businesses to up to $25,000 in grants for a minimum of 50 businesses located in the towns or unincorporated area. He said the grant program will be administered by the Centralina Council of Governments.

Mr. Bryant said childcare subsidies was an eligible expense for the Coronavirus Relief Fund and County staff would await for guidance from the State regarding childcare; identify the type of childcare assistance offered by City & CMS to ensure a coordinated
effort; pending the State guidance & childcare services offered by our partners, a provider will need to be identified to administer the County’s program; and the amount to invest will be dependent on the additional information received through the actions above. Mr. Bryant said for job training and placement $620,000 would go to Grace Mar Services for job training and placement for 1,000 individuals.

Mr. Bryant said that for criminal justice services, $70,000 would be spent on Trade School for 10, eight-hour sessions over two weeks that allow participants to try different trades and see where their interests and applied skills are best suited; 55,100 would be spent on Transitional Housing for Funding for two homes to clear the wait list by adding 12 beds over a 5 month period; 36,750 would be spent on Client Services for Purchase of computers 18 to support housing clients to remain engaged in services and 70 temporary cellphones to support remote care services; 32,400 would be spent on Single Bed Units for Contract with Hope Haven to add six single bed units to support individuals being released from jail or prison with behavioral health needs; 25,000 would be spent on Drug Testing for Due to temporary County facility closures, including the CJS drug lab, the funding will support a contract with Fastest Labs for the purchase, application & testing of transdermal drug testing patches.

Mr. Bryant reviewed how $5.8 million in of the $7.1 million would be spent on additional expenses: $1,856,000 for mental health; $1,750,000 for the digital divide; $1,350,000 for small business; $620,000 for workforce development; $219,250 for criminal justice services; and an amount to be determined for childcare.

Mr. Bryant reviewed the following next steps: receive feedback from the Board on proposed plan; finalize the Coronavirus Relief Fund spend plan; identify vendors, review proposals for alignment to guidance, and draft & execute contracts; provide status updates to the Board on specific initiatives and briefings on new guidance; continue to assess other needs and bring back proposals for spending contingency; and begin tracking status of investments with community partners.

Mr. Bryant responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Commissioner Jerrell requested more detail on how they would reach the seniors besides digital platforms. He was concerned about their visibility to what the County was offering. He asked if they had considered hot spots or partnering with AT&T or Verizon or something to help individuals. He said lastly around the marketing campaign that had been developed around the business leader’s round table. He asked as it related to marketing, had they considered running any of those ads on the Government Channel. He asked if they had any commercials to target the seniors.

Ms. Diorio responded in terms of hotspots she asked the same question and her understanding was that in the areas they would be distributing the computers, there was very low cost Wi-Fi available and they were hoping that was truly the case but they did ask that question and that was contingent on making the proposal work, so they were going to continue to follow up on that. She said in terms of the marketing, there was a component that would be targeted to seniors.

Danny Diehl, Public Information Director, responded that they could run them on the Government Channel. He said the only problem with the Government Channel was that not many people watch it, so the only way you could get any traction would be to run it over and over again, which they were capable of doing.

Commissioner Harden asked how it was working with the City and other organizations that has significant CARES funding. She wanted to know if the County could use any of their money with the tidal wave that was about to hit. She asked if they did not need the full $1 million for the PPE if they could add it for the other investments.

Mr. Bryant responded the general assistance category was the investment being made to assist residents with paying for rent and mortgage. He said $1 million was going to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership as well as $500,000 to SocialServe, that was
why you did not see it, but next month it would be consolidated so you can see how the entire amount was being spent.

Ms. Diorio said the City approved an additional $8 million for rental assistance and out of their CARES money from previously they also contributed several million dollars stepped up in a really big way and in addition to the money they gave to the nonprofits and Towns, part of it was would going to go for rental assistance and utility assistance in the Towns.

Motion was made by Commissioner Powell and seconded by Commissioner Harden to direct staff to obtain the advisory boards’ input on the Coronavirus Relief Fund Spend Plan; the advisory boards must respond by Thursday, August 13, 2020.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham and Leake

Chair Dunlap said he had received some complaints from some staff, and part of the concern was they believed there were people getting bonuses or hazard duty pay due to face-to-face time with the public but that it was not extended through all of the County staff. He said the belief was that the pay for that could be done through the funds. He wanted to ensure they did not spend all the funds until they explored that, because if there were other people who worked for the County who work face-to-face and were not receiving the additional funding other staff people were receiving, then we need to make that right. He said as he looked at all the populations the County was touching with grants, funding and programs, that the arts community had expressed that they had been overlooked.

Ms. Diorio said that in terms of the arts that they did an increase of a half a million dollars to the arts community as a part of their FY21 budget and in addition to that, the City also appropriated an access of a million of their CARES money to the arts community. She said the City received $150 million in CARES money. She said they could take a look at that. She spoke about the special duty pay and stated they had used it in very discrete circumstances so it would not be for every employee who would be working with the public who gets it. She said there had to be a very high level of support for people to get it. She said it was evaluated and vetted carefully before being approved and that she approves all of it.

20-6298: Restricted Contingency: $15 Hourly Wage for CMS Non-Certified Staff

This item was been pulled from the agenda and will be brought back to future meeting.

20-6306: Financial Update

Sarah Cunningham, Chief Financial Officer, provided an update on the County’s financial status. She said ultimately, the path of COVID-19 would dictate the shape and timing of the economic recovery, and for the nation to address the economic issues, the public health emergency needs to be addressed. She stated the Coronavirus outbreak dealt a swift shock to the global economy, as last quarter, the United States’ GDP fell nearly 33% on an annualized basis, and this was the nation’s steepest ever recession, though it was also anticipated to be the shortest. She said economic indicators through June were overall in line or better than those behind the forecast that we presented to the board in the spring to support the Recommended Budget, and overall financial performance was also in line with our forecast; however, uncertainty remains.

Ms. Cunningham said in looking at some of our key economic drivers: County unemployment was looking up coming in at 8.6% relative to 13.2% in May, and they anticipate that July unemployment data would continue to decline but at a slower pace.
She said national retail sales in May and June were showing significant improvements over April, and based on the national data, they anticipated similar improvements in County sales tax collections. She said interest rates and inflation were expected to remain low, and this helped keep borrowing costs low, though it also lowered investment income. She said the housing market was strong, with average prices up 6% over last year. She stated the County had a historically low number of homes for sale, and the homes that were on the market were selling quickly. She stated that federal stimulus had bolstered the economy, though the $600/week unemployment benefit ended in July, and currently Congress and the White House were negotiating another round.

Chair Dunlap left the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Ms. Cunningham said in looking at unemployment trends, assuming no resurgence of COVID-19 that leads to a renewed stay-at-home order, unemployment was expected to continue to decline. She stated that the US unemployment rate hit a high of 14.4% in April, and fell to 11.2% in June and Mecklenburg County at 8.6% unemployment in June had fared better than the national average, due in large part to the renewed outbreaks of COVID-19 in Florida, Texas, and California that increased the US unemployment rate.

Ms. Cunningham said the housing market in Mecklenburg County had been strong during the recession, as homes were selling fast, home prices were increasing, and inventory remains near historically low levels. She said the median home price was up 7.9%, and the average was up 6.0% from a year ago. She stated that according to Fannie Mae, mortgage rates were expected to reach as low as 2.9% in 2021. She said low inventory, low interest rates, and slowing construction growth were all expected to support increasing home values. She stated while home prices have increased, rents had fallen since the onset of COVID-19, as the average rent for a 2-bedroom apartment in Charlotte was $1139. She said the rental rate growth was at 2.5% at the start of the pandemic, and was now slightly down, at negative 0.4%, and the slight decline in average rent in the Charlotte area was much lower than other urban areas like San Francisco due to lower rental supply, and other factors. She said non-residential property represents about 40% of the assessed value base and while they were experiencing strong growth of construction in the pipeline, they were expecting growth to slow based on architecture billings. She said they expected growth to slow starting next summer, and slower growth to persist for up to two years as commercial construction recovery tends to lag overall recovery following a recession.

Ms. Cunningham said in terms of the County’s financial status, overall performance for fiscal year 2020 was stronger than the COVID-Base Case they presented to you in April, despite some challenges. She said registered Motor Vehicle/Tag and Tax collections slowed over the last quarter of the fiscal year below projections, due to the state extending the due date for these taxes; however, they expect to collect these amounts in fiscal year 21, when the State’s extension had ended. She said the County experienced strong sales tax performance prior to COVID. She said strong retail sales in March and April were still down from the prior year but better than projected, helping to offset COVID-19 impacts. She said while on the whole sales tax collections were trending better than expected, there was still risk of that sales tax refunds could drive net sales tax collections down. She said the COVID-19 impacts to travel, tourism, events, and restaurants were still expected to hit hard in the last quarter of FY20; sales tax revenues for May and June were projected to be 20% below last year. She stated that General Fund revenues overall were estimated to be about $1.37 billion, $15 million over the adopted budget, and about $4 million over the COVID-base case forecast from April. She said that property tax for FY20 came in within $1 million of our COVID-base case forecast, and $8.2 million better than the adopted budget. She stated that sales tax was expected to fall about $11.8 million below the adopted budget, but their forecast was slightly improved from our COVID-base case, due to better than expected collections in March and April. She stated they expected that online sales taxes have helped, but data was not available to confirm. She said investment income turned out lower than our April forecast, but still was nearly $6 million over the adopted budget. She said intergovernmental revenues reflected $14.4 million in increased Federal and state funding over the adopted budget, and no change from our April forecast. She stated that other revenues were in line with their April COVID-base case forecast, and $5.5 million below the adopted budget, driven by lower revenues from room occupancy and vehicle rental taxes.
Ms. Cunningham stated that in looking at the totals for County dollars—they expected the General Fund revenues to be $2.3 million over budget, and in line with our April COVID-base case forecast. She said fiscal year 2020 expenditures were expected to be lower overall, with reduced personnel costs due to vacancies, and slower spending, and FY20 Salaries and benefits costs were expected to be about $30 million below budget, relative to about $11 million for fiscal year 19. She said the Debt service Fund Revenues for FY20 were expected to be about $2 million lower than the adopted budget, and $1.1 million lower than our April COVID base case forecast. She said investment income was lower than forecast, with lower than expected end of year balances, which resulted in more investment income allocated to the General Fund vs. the Debt Service fund. She said debt service fund expenditures were in line with the April forecast, and lower than budget due to favorable market conditions with the September 2019 Bond Sale.

Ms. Cunningham stated that in looking at the combined fund balance, they expected to end FY20 at about $714 million, or $17.6 million lower than the combined fund balance for FY2019. She said their current estimate of $714 million was an improvement of about $9 million over the April forecast, mostly attributed to the General fund, coming in $9.7 million better. She said not all the Fund balance was available for spending. She said in terms of fund balance available for spending, relative to the forecast that OMB presented back in May currently estimate about $242 million in “rainy day funds” available reflecting the unassigned General Fund balances available for appropriation, down $17 million from last year. She said that according to the fund balance policy, they needed to maintain “cash on hand” of 28% of General fund revenues from the prior year, or about $384 million, to avoid triggering the “payback” requirement. She said they currently estimate that the County had about $66 million of rainy-day funds available to cover unexpected needs before triggering the payback requirement, compared to $50 million estimated back in May.

Ms. Cunningham stated that overall the County’s financial performance to date was in line, and slightly better than our April CVOI base case estimate, and FY20 General Fund County revenues were within 2 basis points of the COVID-19 forecast, and sales taxes were performing slightly better than expected. FY20 expenses were lower than forecast, with slower spending. She said together, they had about $16 million in additional “rainy day funds” available to cover unexpected costs. She said given the trends, they currently expect FY2021 performance to remain in line with our FY21 budget forecast, and revenues would start to return to normal in the second half of the fiscal year, though still subject to significant uncertainty, and assumes no return to a “stay at home” order due to COVID-19. She said they were monitoring economic and other indicators closely, as well as tracking actual revenues and expenses, working closely with OMB and County Departments.

Chair Dunlap returned to the meeting at 9:51 p.m.

Ms. Cunningham responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

20-6302: Interlocal Agreement with the City of Charlotte - Pearl Park Redevelopment

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director, provided an overview of the Pearl Park redevelopment plan and interlocal agreement with the City of Charlotte for the Pearl Park Redevelopment. He reviewed the project background. He stated that Pearl Street Park was largely underdeveloped and not in great condition. He said that the 2016 agreement was a collaboration of multiple parties, the Charlotte Regional Realtors Association; Pappas Properties and Terwilliger Pappas; Inlivian, formerly Charlotte Housing Authority; City of Charlotte; and Mecklenburg County.

Mr. Zeiler said the 2016 Development Program consisted of new street connection between Kenilworth and McDowell; park improvements, including multi-use greenway path and play areas; new CRRA Offices, 36,000 square feet; 195 Residential units hotel, 150 rooms; Retail, 25,000 square feet; Office building, 168,000 square feet; and Parking deck, 1,250 spaces. He said there were public benefits for Mecklenburg County, which
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Included funding for park improvements, not currently in Capital Improvement Plan, which would be $1.2 million in land sale proceeds. He said there would be an enlarged park with additional amenities and improved youth athletics fields at park and improved water quality and storm runoff management. He said the City of Charlotte would see the creation of critical street connectivity not currently in capital plan and the advancement of urban infill and character called for in Midtown/Morehead/Cherry-Area Plan. He said that benefits through Inlivian would be disposal of land unsuited for residential development and acquisition of new land to expand housing availability.

Mr. Zeiler said for the 2012 Midtown Morehead Cherry Area Plan, it specifically called out the Pearl Park Way extension and Berkeley Avenue connections are enumerated improvements to be pursued in future redevelopment, and the plan called for corrective rezonings for higher density commercial and office uses along Harding Place and Greenwood Cliff, which were completed.

He said during the 2016 economic development grant agreement, there were numerous public meetings with the Board of Public Commissioners, and at those there was no opposition at to the nature or scale of development, thought there was input received concerned the impact to youth soccer and baseball; the short-term impacts to playing seasons and schedules were mitigated by County Park and Recreation staff working to provide alternative sights. He said that long-term impacts on parking access was mitigated as the Development Team had made free parking available. No rezoning hearings would be needed for the 2020 amended development program.

Mr. Zeiler said there was an affordable housing partnership that was a component of this, and the County and Inlivian executed a value swap for topographically challenged land in Baxter Street Park. He said that Inlivian transferred 2 acres of undeveloped land to County, and the County to transferred 1.88 acres of Baxter Street Park to Inlivian. He stated that Inlivian purchased the remaining 0.94 acres of Baxter Street Park for approximately $2,010,000, and the remaining proceeds of the Baxter Park sale allocated to Pearl Street Park.

Mr. Zeiler reviewed the conditions of Pearl Street Park. He said the plan moving forward showed the improved Pearl Street Park and that the construction had begun. He said that the Pearl Street Park extension to Baxter Street was expected to be completed within the next week or so. He said that Canopy had built its new headquarters and that Atrium Health and the Sanger, the new heart clinic had built a new facility along with a parking deck. He said the developer wished to expand the current development program to include 215,000 square feet across two new office buildings and the construction of 320 multi-family units. He said they wished to connect two, new street connections, widen and improve and existing street and intersection to provide congestion relief, and in order to fund the expanded infrastructure elements, expand the tax increment capture geography to include new development blocks. Lastly, amend the agreement with the City to accommodate expanded infrastructure scope with increased cap and final payment date.

Mr. Zeiler said there would be a new connector street just north of the Canopy building, connecting Pearl Street Parkway to Harding Place, and Berkley Avenue would extend across from Green Briar Clift to Harden Place, and in Harden Place, there would be a new turn lane and signalization at Kenilworth. He spoke on the budget for the amended plan, grant-cap increase. He said the Harden Place right-of-way acquisition was more than $500,000; to design and construct Harden Place was more than $288,000, and the Berkley construction was $559,000. He pointed out that there was no right-of-way acquisition cost for the County on the Berkley Avenue extension. He said that money was going to be on the City side of the ledger for this project. He said the connector design and construction was $442,000 and that there were a number of statutory scope increasers that were put on the original 2016 project that mostly were around new pedestrian amenities and storm water mitigation. He said that brought the total increase in the project cost that was eligible for a share of County reimbursement to $2.1 million.

Mr. Zeiler said that in 2016, the total combined grant was $4.4 million and in 2020 the new expanded grant would be $7.1 million for a difference of $2.7 million. He said the County eligible cap in 2016 was still $4.4 million, but in 2020 it was $6.5 million for an
increase of $2,165. He said that the County’s share of the grant in 2016 was $2,783 million and in 2020 it would be $4,169 million, for an increase of $1,385 million. She said the 10-year County net revenue from the project, after all new incremental taxes were realized, all payments were made, over a 10-year span in 2016 was estimated to be $11.1 million. He said that in 2020 it was estimated to be $12.68 million, for a total increase of $1.5 million. He said while the County would pay an additional $1.3 million in the project, it would also retain a net $1.5 million. Mr. Ziegler said that simply chose, the estimated payouts for the project over a 10-year span. He said that the County payments will only track for seven years.

Commissioner Fuller stated this went to the Economic Development Committee twice and was a project that has been with them for several years. He said it turned out that on the Economic Development Committee he was the only one who was on the Board when the project first came to them. He said the Committee had a very robust discussion, and he believed the Committee members were able to ask questions of the developers. He stated after the discussion, their vote was split 2 to 2. He said they do not come from the Economic Development Committee with a recommendation, but there was robust conversation about it, so they put it before the Board to consider the matter.

Peter Pappas, Developer, stated their request was simple. He said he was fortunate to have Atrium to bring the Sanger Heart and Vascular Institute to the City and in the process of that move of Atrium to their site, they needed to acquire some additional land so Atrium could expand on their site. He said they acquired the land, and that would allow them to accommodate the expansion by Atrium, and with their expansion they need to complete the infrastructure work that was called out in the Morehead/Cherry/Midtown area plan, which was to extent Berkley Avenue and connect it to Harden and Greenwood Clift, build a new connector road to Pearl Parkway and make some additional intersection improvements to Harden and Kenilworth. He said they were before the Board with Atrium to complete the vision and work they set out to do with the County from 2016 and were very excited about how the project was moving forward. He said that they were contributing more to the project with improvements in the area and were glad to do so that they could continue to see well-balanced growth and accommodate their largest employer in the County as they expand their facilities in Charlotte.

Steve Garrett, Atrium Health, stated they view this as a very natural expansion of the original TIG and appreciate the support that they received from the City and County on the original TIG. He stated if they had known then what they knew now where they own the land at Berkley, they certainly would have included that in the original TIG. He believed it was very well received by both City and County officials. He believed it still remained a very modest, big request as far as TIGs go in the development world.

Commissioner Harden said her reason for opposing the TIG stemmed from the fact that what they knew now was that they had an incredible affordable-housing crisis in the community, and the project had 320 units of market-rate housing with no affordable housing. She believed the Board was on asking the development community to step up when possible to make contributions to affordable housing in the community. She stated that was not included in this project. She said if asking for public dollars there has to be public good. She stated she was still thinking about the MWSBE study report from Economic Development Committee was that Mecklenburg County had severe marketplace disparities, such as contractors who experience discrimination, bid submissions that were lower, they submit bids and were not accepted and denied loans. She said there was kind of a good ol’ boy network, less contracts awarded because of a legacy affect. She believed the Board was asking for a new vision on what development looked like in the community, a vision grounded in public dollars for public good and social justice. She stated her message to the development community was that they needed to see those types of efforts made in those projects and that was their need in the community right now.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated that Commissioner Harden stated it very well. She said one of the things that was said was if the piece had been available in the original deal, it would have been included. She believed that was a fair statement and compared it to missing the boat. She believed that happened a lot to regular people, stating they
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miss the boat on stuff a lot and do not often get a second chance to go back to the well for more. She did not see additional benefit to the County from the original proposal to now. She said it was said to be a modest request and that a million dollars may sound modest to some but to her and those in the tent cities, a million dollars was not a modest request. She said she did not feel they needed the County’s assistance in that since they would be leased at market rate and the developer would be getting market rate from the very huge coffers of Atrium Health and the Sanger Heart Institute. She did not believe it was a wise use of their funds.

Commissioner Jerrell stated they saw this a couple of times in committee and one thing he mentioned was that he believed a lot of their discomfort came with the framework and structure that they operate under and he believed there would need to be some heavy lifting to change the structure, but he took into consideration what his colleagues were saying. He took the opportunity to speak with other board members who had been around for a while gave him some visibility on how some of the past deals had been done and what they thought when it first came about. He said they were not surprised about the change or ask. He said he spoke to community members for their take and input. He said everything he got from the community was positive relating to the developer in particular. He said he had to factor in the revenue they would receive as a county. He stated he felt comfortable that the community would get back all of the dollars they were investing plus some.

Commissioner Fuller said he did see a public benefit and they needed to look at getting more public benefit. He did not think it was right to close it on this particular deal, because the incremental increase he did not think would bear the different conversation they were having today than what they had in 2016 when the project started. He said if they were concerned the whole project, they would be in a different kind of conversation.

**Commissioner Powell left the meeting at 10:25 p.m. and returned at 10:31 p.m.**

Commissioner Cotham expressed support and enthusiasm for the project.

Commissioner Powell said it had nothing to do with the developer but in her view, they were elected to represent the people and they identified that reducing racial disparities was their number-one priority. She stated if they were going to move the needle on economic mobility and reducing racial disparities, they could not continue to approve those kinds of incentives. She stated she could not support it.

Commissioner Leake said she was there before it was an all-black community and in comes a young man who came in to say they could make the living community better than what it was. She said that what worried her about decisions that some make when talking about racial disparities, some had been there a long time, and some are just getting here. She said she was not criticizing them for just getting there, but they fought to get elected by the people as anyone else and they do represent people they had been voted into office by, and they trust them. She said she could not accept not supporting a process by which she had seen the growth from nothing to something.

Chair Dunlap said if people knew the history of what they had to go to in order to get this project to the point they were okay with it, they would understand why they still support it. He said Atrium Health had a great benefit to the community. He agreed with what Commissioner Harden and Rodriguez-McDowell said that they couldn’t continue to do what they had always done; however, they had to view the project differently as it started long before the affordable housing process, and there were a lot of people put together to make it work. He said the disparities that were brought up were things many of them had known for a long time, and they did not have to do a disparity study to know there were disparities.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Leake to (A) adopt a Resolution approving an amendment to the Pearl Park Way Infrastructure Reimbursement Interlocal Agreement between Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte for the reimbursement of public improvements to be constructed by a private developer in support of new economic development opportunities and (B) authorize the**
County Manager to execute an amendment to the Pearl Park Way Infrastructure Reimbursement Interlocal Agreement, with any necessary or helpful nonmaterial changes.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Harden, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document No. 23.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to approve the following Consent items, including a correction to Minutes:

20-6268: Minutes

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: May 12, 2020 Budget/ Public Policy Meeting; May 13, 2020 Special Meeting; May 13, 2020 Budget Public Hearing; and May 26-27, 2020 Straw Votes.

The minutes will reflect the following correction: Commissioner Powell was in attendance at the beginning of the May 27, 2020 Straw Votes Meeting.

20-6279: General Fund Balance Appropriation - Census Outreach

(A) Amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue of $175,564 from NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DPH) in the general fund (0001) and (B) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue of $310,415 from NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DPH) in the general fund (0001).

Note: (A) The US Census Bureau extended the 2020 Census operations until October 31, 2020, due to COVID-19. It was imperative to get a complete and accurate count of people living in Mecklenburg County, because census results would be used in many ways that affect our daily lives and work from political representation to the distribution of government resources, such as school supplies, public transportation, Medicaid funds, and Section 8 housing vouchers. This action would appropriate funds available as of June 30, 2020 to be used in FY21, to fund the development of census outreach materials and resources for the community.

20-6284: Construction Contract - Stream Restoration of Upper Torrence Tributary #1

Authorize the County Manger to execute a construction contract with J.D. Goodrum Company, Inc. in the amount of $1,907,920.01.
Note: An interlocal agreement between the Town of Huntersville and Mecklenburg County for funding the design of the Upper Torrence Tributary stream restoration project was approved on June 5, 2017 and amended for construction on July 7, 2020. The County is managing the design and construction of 6,133 feet of stream restoration along Torrence Tributary #1 from North Mecklenburg Park to Interstate 77. The Town will fund work on 4,567 feet of stream in their jurisdiction (minor system), and the County will fund 1,566 feet of restoration in the mapped floodplain (major system). The project will improve water quality and wildlife habitat.

20-6289: Tax Collector's Annual Settlement for Fiscal Year 2020

Receive and Enter into the Record the Tax Collector's Settlement.

Pursuant to the provisions of N.C.G.S. § 105-373, this memorandum is the Tax Collector's report of settlement to the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners for Fiscal Year 2020 (tax year 2019).

The total FY2020 Real Estate, Personal Property, and Registered Motor Vehicle Tax charged to the Tax Collector for collection was $1,117,537,864.29.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net Levy</th>
<th>Collected</th>
<th>Uncollected</th>
<th>Pct. Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1,117,537,864.29</td>
<td>$1,106,571,930.57</td>
<td>$12,564,426.55</td>
<td>99.02%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of FY 2020 there were 143 tax bills totaling $1,614,967.82 under formal appeal with the Board of Equalization and Review or the Property Tax Commission; consequently, the Tax Collector was barred from pursuing collection for these tax bills. In addition, the Tax Collector was barred by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court from collecting 312 real estate, personal property, and registered motor vehicle tax bills totaling $179,740.36. Since the above totals were barred from collection, it is important to note that when these totals are removed from the net levy calculation, the collection percentage increases to 99.18%.

Reference is hereby made to reports in the Office of the Tax Collector that list the persons owning real property and personal property whose taxes for the preceding fiscal year remain unpaid and the principal amount owed by each person. These reports are available for inspection and review upon request. The Tax Collector has made diligent efforts to collect the taxes due from the persons listed by utilizing the remedies available to him for collection.

**Prior Year Collections**

**Real Estate and Personal Property Tax:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Year</th>
<th>Net Levy</th>
<th>Collected in FY2020</th>
<th>Uncollected</th>
<th>Pct. Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$800,103,004.78</td>
<td>$112,360.67</td>
<td>$1,366,539.48</td>
<td>99.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$813,423,129.05</td>
<td>$193,263.96</td>
<td>$3,888,104.93</td>
<td>99.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$865,657,943.80</td>
<td>$184,160.71</td>
<td>$1,259,036.80</td>
<td>99.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$850,928,354.89</td>
<td>$222,373.59</td>
<td>$1,175,748.74</td>
<td>99.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$895,254,065.37</td>
<td>$210,315.10</td>
<td>$1,338,349.29</td>
<td>99.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>$901,109,595.64</td>
<td>$248,545.74</td>
<td>$1,240,745.53</td>
<td>99.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>$950,081,933.66</td>
<td>$296,802.73</td>
<td>$1,247,759.88</td>
<td>99.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$959,286,471.44</td>
<td>$536,907.49</td>
<td>$2,783,031.48</td>
<td>99.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$985,957,115.61</td>
<td>$652,599.13</td>
<td>$2,020,480.85</td>
<td>99.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$1,020,987,711.61</td>
<td>$2,377,329.52</td>
<td>$2,908,832.17</td>
<td>99.72%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Registered Motor Vehicle Tax:**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Tax Year</th>
<th>Net Levy</th>
<th>Collected in FY2020</th>
<th>Uncollected</th>
<th>Pct. Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>$1,065.96</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$819.54</td>
<td>23.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$261.35</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$64.44</td>
<td>75.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$604.20</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
<td>$66.15</td>
<td>89.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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North Carolina General Statute 105-373(3) requires that this settlement be submitted to the governing board. The settlement shall be entered into the minutes of the governing body.

Note: The Tax Collector's Settlement is submitted to the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with North Carolina General Statute § 105-373(3). The Settlement is to be entered into the records of the Board of County Commissioners as directed by statute.

Settlement recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document No. 27.

20-6292: Land Donation - McMullen Creek

Accept donation of Tax Parcel 209-262-07 (+/- 1.683 acres), owned by Terri L. and Stephen P. McGirt for the McMullen Creek Greenway.

Note: Property owners, Terri and Stephen McGirt, agreed to donate Tax Parcel 209-262-07 (+/- 1.683 acres) within the Carmel Acres subdivision, to the County for the future McMullen Creek Greenway. This parcel also offers the County an opportunity to provide a neighborhood access trail to the Carmel Acres subdivision. Acquisition of this property advances the County's efforts to acquire land holdings for future greenway development and the preservation of land within the floodplain.

20-6293: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $2,742.77 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $5,918.41 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6294: Retire Canine Officers Bandit and Nilz - Sheriff's Office

Retire and approve the donation of two retired Canine Officers to Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office Deputy Sheriffs.

20-6296: Easement Donation - Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project

Accept donation of a permanent greenway access easement (+/- .088 acres) on Tax Parcel 025-221-09 from Pivotal 650 California St., L.L.C.

Note: The Long Creek Greenway and Stream Restoration Project is included in the County’s current Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and is a joint project between Park and Recreation and Stormwater Services. The project is in the Northlake area of Charlotte and construction is anticipated to begin summer/early fall 2020. To complete the project, an access easement on tax parcel 025-221-09 is necessary. The owner of the parcel, Pivotal 650 California St., L.L.C., has agreed to donate the necessary easement. Acquisition of property interests for greenway purposes is supported by the County’s adopted Park and Recreation Master Plan.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT
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20-6264: Budget Amendment - Department of Social Services Special Adoption Promotion Funds

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in State Adoption Promotion funding in the amount of $8,995 to the General Grants Fund (G001) within the Department of Social Services for the duration of the funding period.

20-6275: Revised Junk and Abandoned Vehicles Ordinance (Second Reading)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to adopt revised Junk and Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham

Ordinance recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document No. 24.

Note: The Junk and Abandoned Vehicles Ordinance has not been revised since approved in January 1997. Since this time services and verbiage has changed. This proposed revision aligns the Ordinance with Code Enforcement current standards for junk and abandoned vehicles. This change also aligns with our City of Charlotte partnership, better defines the type of vehicles and process enhancements including clarification of vehicle recovery and appeal processes.

20-6278: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue of $175,564 from NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DPH) in the general fund (0001) and (B) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue of $310,415 from NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DPH) in the general fund (0001).

20-6280: Transfer of Land Development Bonds to Town of Huntersville

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to Assign Land Development Bonds Secured by Cash regarding Tanners Creek Subdivision to the Town of Huntersville and to transfer the related Cash Security to the Town of Huntersville in accordance with June 2019 Amendment to Land Development Services Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with the Town of Huntersville.

Document recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document No. 25.

20-6282: Involuntary Commitment Transportation Agreement

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adopt a Resolution approving the Involuntary Commitment Transportation Agreement between Mecklenburg County, Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office, Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department, Cardinal Innovations, Novant Health, Atrium Health, and the Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthew, Mint Hill, and Pineville, to provide transportation for individuals who have been involuntarily committed for impatient treatment.
Note: NCGS 122C-251 (a) requires cities and counties to provide transportation through its law enforcement officers, for individuals who are respondents in involuntary commitment proceedings. Section 122C-251(g) authorizes the Board of Commissioners to approve a plan to provide transportation of respondents in these proceedings. Pursuant to NCGS 122C-251 the various system participants have jointly worked together to develop a transportation plan to more efficiently provide transportation for individuals who have been involuntarily committed to a treating facility. Due to the needs in the community, this plan is more expansive and more inclusive than previous plans adopted by the Board.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document No. 26.

20-6285: Construction Contract - Pearl Street Park Renovations

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to award a construction contract to Sossamon Construction Co., Inc. in the amount of $2,043,500 for the construction of Pearl Street Park Renovations.

Commissioner Fuller asked if they had a breakdown of the MWSBE utilization for general contractor versus subcontractor.

Commissioner Powell stated she also has a question about Storm Water Management and if Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water was going to be doing the stream improvement.

Lee Jones, Park and Recreation Director said they were not actually doing the stream restoration but improving the stream; that was part of the project scope. He said when they first did an analysis of the stream with the core of engineers and North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, it determined the stream was in superior condition. He said what they decided to do based on that information was to add appropriate plants and move invasive species and create access to the stream to make it accessible, which will insure the integrity of the stream and manage the water storage and allow for access to the creek for patrons.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell

20-6287: Construction Contract - Historic Stewart Creek Stream Enhancement Project-Phase II

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to execute a construction contract with Blythe Development Company in the amount of $4,175,861.80.

Commissioner Fuller requested information on the MWSBE goals.

20-6290: Order of Collection - 2020 Ad Valorem Taxes

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the Tax Collector to collect 2020 ad valorem taxes.

Order of Collection

NORTH CAROLINA, MECKLENBURG
TO THE TAX COLLECTOR OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY
GENERAL STATUTE 105-321(b)
You are hereby authorized, empowered, and commanded to collect the taxes set forth in the tax records, filed in the Office of the Tax Assessor and the tax receipts herewith delivered to you, in the amounts and from the taxpayers likewise therein set forth. Such taxes are hereby declared to be first lien upon all real property of the respective taxpayers in Mecklenburg and this order shall be a full and sufficient authority to direct, require and enable you to levy on and sell any real and personal property of such taxpayers, for and on account thereof, in accordance with law.

Note: Requirement of North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) 105-321(b) NCGS 105-321(b) states: "Before delivering the tax receipts to the tax collector in any year, the board of county commissioners or municipal governing body shall adopt and enter into its minutes an order directing the tax collector to collect the taxes charged in the tax records and receipts. A copy of this order shall be delivered to the tax collector at the time the tax receipts are delivered to him, but the failure to do so, shall not affect the tax collector's rights and duties to employ the means of collecting taxes provided by this subchapter. The order of collection shall have the force and effect of a judgement and execution against the taxpayers' real and personal property."

Order recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document No. 28.

20-6291: Grant Application - North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Solution Grant – Coronavirus

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm the submission of a grant application in the amount of up to $85,000 to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to expand Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) capacity for data needs related to COVID-19 and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue up to $85,000 in the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

20-6295: Budget Amendment - Department of Social Services (Revenue Increase)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) recognize, receive, and appropriate $1,020,518 from the Coronavirus Aide, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) to the General Grants Fund (G001) within the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services for the duration of the award and (B) recognize, receive, and appropriate $134,652 from the Coronavirus Aide, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation Department for the duration of the award.

20-6305: DSS Energy Programs Outreach Plan

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the DSS Energy Programs Outreach Plan for FY2021.

Note: Annually, the Department of Social Services (DSS) submits for Board approval the Energy Business Plan. The funding plan specifies the services that are provided with this grant such as: Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) and the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). These funds are included in the FY21 approved budget.

The Plan is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

20-6300: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Leake spoke about racial disparities.
Commissioner Jerrell stated COVID-19 enforcement was key in the efforts.

Commissioner Harden spoke of her concern about the decision to open Meck Pre-K to in-person only instruction and illuminating the need-based income requirement.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell spoke about Meck Pre-K opening in-person only being a recipe for disaster. She wanted to know what the County could do in terms of jail support.

Commissioner Cotham gave a shout out to volunteers.

Commissioner Fuller spoke about the childcare issue.

Commissioner Powell asked why income requirements were waived for Meck Pre-K.

Ms. Diorio responded they wanted to make sure they could fill all of their spots but that low-income families still receive priority.

Chair Dunlap stated the NCAA convention was still going on and that people could still register for free. He stated the census would be ended a month early.

Ms. Diorio stated they would try to do things virtually and that they have done census parades and other outreach activities and would continue doing so.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:34 p.m.
SPECIAL MEETING

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER – 1:30 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely for a Special Meeting on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

20-6325: Jail Support

Sheriff Garry L. McFadden provided a report to the Board regarding Jail Support and the encampment on Fourth Street adjacent to the Mecklenburg County Detention Center. He said he was in support of the concept of what jail support started out with and what he believed jail support was. He said he supported the reentry and people who were leaving the detention center. He said he supported the concept of jail support but not what jail support had been turned into now and hijacked to be. He showed a photo of how jail support was how he believed to now be viewed as each and every day. He said that was not what he believed the people in jail support originally started. He said that was not what he was supporting. He said jail support came about due to the protestors and rioters in Charlotte back in May with George Floyd. He said he spoke with the people who were there and supported them. He told them what they could do and how they could help. He said he checked on them in the mornings and said if they needed things taken care of, that they would take care of them. He said during the initial weeks, he believed they had a great relationship and they saw what he wanted, and he saw what they wanted. He said they had conversations but at some point, the actual concept was hijacked and taken away from who he believed still had a part of supporting those leaving Mecklenburg Detention Center. He said he marched into the demonstrations with people with signs and said he supported Black Lives Matters and marched with the people in supporting what he believed was the murder of Mr. Floyd.

Sheriff McFadden said that he had created things that supported people who were leaving the detention center: the barber school, the culinary school, the digital literacy and entrepreneurship. He said they were also still supporting those, the barber school, the culinary school, the digital literacy. He said he wanted to make sure that people who left the detention center left better than they came. He said he would love to see the digital literacy, as supporting someone leaving the Mecklenburg County Detention Center who could not read or write is supporting someone. He shared a letter from someone who was at the detention center. He said the man said he went there as a 33-year old criminal and spent 2.5 of the best years of his life there. He said he left with a GED and a partial, college education and better sound in mind. Sheriff McFadden stated the believed that was supporting the concept of jail support. He said for entrepreneurship, he had a young man to come talk about it. He said people were leaving with barber licenses when they take the test, so supporting people leaving was all what they were about. He said in supporting them he created a haberdashery and now his community engagement went to the community and obtained clothing from dry cleaners and anyone who wanted to have them. He said when people leave his facility, they could wear a suit if they choose to. He said the shelves that they see stocked were created by them a couple of months
ago. He said that the ladies decided they did not have enough shampoo and soap, so supporting them after they left, this was what the faith community provided to them.

Sheriff McFadden stated he supported the jail support but not what it had turned into, not into people blocking the sidewalk and each and every morning his staff and himself being harassed. He said that was a simple form of bullying. He said imagine every morning as he walked across the street, he knew he would be yelled at and when he left he would get it also. He said they also had a to deal with the smell and presence of human feces every morning. He said he had been sent photos of how things look over the weekend when he was not there. He said on the courthouse property they use the electricity, pull chairs up, and create a barbershop. He said although he was for the barber school and shop, he did not believe it needed to be held in the public like that. He said when they start to talk about how much activity was occurring on the property or near or around them, that they were having sex acts committed while they were not there afterhours and that believe it or not, he could send the Board the videos. He said before the meeting, he was informed of another sex act that had happened. He said there were people complaining about the bathing in the pool at Marshal Park and that there were various places with trash and feces every day and inviting conflict with law enforcement officers. He said what he meant was “I hope that you die,” “If you did not have your gun, I have my AK-47 in the bushes.” He said he allowed them to have the dogs the very first couple of weeks to work with jail support but that it got out of hand. He said they had several different breeds of dogs staying overnight and that this morning two pit bulls were having a fight, chained to the trees outside of what was classified as jail support.

Sheriff McFadden said what was very disturbing was that there were men and women who wanted to come to get services and that he was told by a victim of domestic violence, who was going to seek help, was in fear of going because of what she saw. He said that she said when she got there her fear went through, as she was confronted, was in fear, and whether it was intentional or not, this was a victim seeking services and still had to be confronted with some forms of violence. He said in July they started taking started taking reports when everyone said that was not what was happening and that they were not doing that. He said as of today, there were about 40, documented incidents and he said that was not a complete listing. He said he had a staff member who was confronted, when going to lunch, by someone in jail. He said she took those comments to the magistrate and the magistrate found probable cause and the man was arrested. He said after being arrested, he got out of jail and remained across the street to still taunt her. He said that should be unacceptable by many people.

Sheriff McFadden asked the Board where they stood, if they thought that was okay. He said it was not jail concept, as it had all been hijacked by various people and organizations with various agendas. He said he had to ask over and over where they stood together. HE said it was growing and was now simply and encampment or temporary shelter. He said that each morning they could go by and see homeless people. He stated that yes, they had a homeless problem and a housing problem. He said they needed to be addressed. He said he would stand by anyone who wanted to address his residents on the streets about homelessness. He said he was for helping people to find a home. He said temporarily erecting what he had shown the Board was not acceptable.

Sheriff McFadden showed what they would see very morning and told the Board to imagine they were doing an interview and a citizen in a wheelchair went to him and was going to deal with some business at the Mecklenburg-County Sheriff’s Office or the City and County facilities. He said this was coming across the street and she could not come down the ramp. He said they deal with damage to property and that in supporting it, jail support would take them across the street. He said no one was arrested even though they had filmed it. He showed that they had thrown paint on the building, only because they had believed, taking false information, as though someone in the detention center was killed. He said the taxpayers were paying for the cleanup and repair of the building.

Sheriff McFadden said they could not do their business inside, because usually at night they would have to come out to make sure there was no damage to the building. He said he will accept what they say about the Sheriff but that for him to have his men and women coming out away from their duties each and every night to secure the building or fend off
protesters should not be acceptable. He again asked where he stood on the matter. He said they were also subjected about a thousand sheets of paper that they kill. He said they understood protesting but that they person who takes care of the lobby in the mornings was an 88-year old gentleman and he took care of the lobby very well. He said this was the task he had to do in the morning and that misinformed information and emotions, and misguidance causes that at the facility for them to deal with.

Sherriff McFadden stated that this was a constant thing on the weekends when they were not there. He said if they noticed the people there banging on the windows and asking for things, it was constant and that they almost knew them by name. He said that prior to that, he allowed his staff to allow people into the bathroom. He said they would come in, get a wrist band, temperature checked, and were allowed to use the bathroom. He said that had stopped. He said human feces, blood, and body fluids were smeared over the counters, walls, and products, which he did not care to discuss, were also put on the counter. He said an 88-year old gentleman was now being subjected to that, despite never being subjected to it before.

Sherriff McFadden said in the beginning, after the incident of mass arrest that everyone had talked about, that night he offered that space inside the Mecklenburg-County Detention Center if they truly wanted the concept of jail support. He said that was never the case. He asked the Board again where they stood with this and if it was acceptable of what they were allowing the citizens to see every day when trying to conduct business. He did he could not accept it, despite being in support of the concept of jail support. He said if anyone wanted to challenge him to go to him and they could still talk about it. He said he spoke about it on the news and newspaper and no one came. He said they did not go looking for these things but that they saw it daily without looking for it, just as the citizens were seeing it daily without looking for it. He said he was sure everyone knew about it and were seeing it. He said if the Board stood there on the other side of not standing with them, that he needed to know that also. He requested they let the public know where he stood. He said if they supported jail support, he did not believe they supported what was happening outside of the building now.

Chair Dunlap stated that he knew the Board had a lot to say about it but that he was empowered to enforce the law and that he hoped that was what he would do.

Commissioner Cotham stated she knew it had been painful since what started as a good idea had evolved into something that had not been helpful and had caused a lot of concern for him and many in the community and elected bodies of government. She said that she did not realize the handicap ramps were being affected like that. She believed people who were coming out of a detention center deserved to have help and that there were also many non-profits which already were helping many of them and that they were doing a great job. She said she hope that they could get back to the concept that was from the beginning, which would have been a positive thing. She asked when things started to change.

Sherriff McFadden responded about three weeks into the protests when the protest was dying down. He said about three weeks there was loud music saying F the police by NWA playing loud on the property and that people were laying on the sidewalk.

Commissioner Cotham mentioned the cards along the side which were impeding traffic

Sherriff McFadden stated that they also worked with them on the car issue and told them from five to seven to not have the cars out there due to the bus lane. He said they even offered them the space where you drive into the courthouse, for unloading. He said they even offered storage inside the building for overnight.

Commissioner Fuller said he had hoped to hear from someone who had been out where the activities were occuring or who could speak in favor of it remaining the way it was. He said he was finding it hard to think of reasons of why they should allow the situation to continue. He said that he supported jail support for those coming out of the detention center but that it had to be done in order. He said that was public property which belonged to everybody, and you just could not claim public property because of having a good
motivation, to the exclusion of everybody else. He stated he would love to be able to speak to someone who could speak for the folks who were out there to see what kind of solutions they could come up with. He asked who was in charge.

Commissioner Powell stated she agreed with a lot of what Commissioner Fuller said and that she supported the concept of jail support, believing it all started with good intentions. She said the graffiti and things that were happening when the Sherriff was allowing them to use the restroom was hateful and she did not support hate nor lawlessness. She said she would like to be part of finding a solution for doing jail support so that they captured the good energy and helped people so that they supported the mission of jail support.

Commissioner Leake stated she was applauded that the community had come to that point in the history of Mecklenburg County and that all of them knew they had in some ways supported people who had been released from jail. She said that the people who used the bathrooms daily could not accept the cleanliness and health problems it was producing because of what was going on downtown. She said they wanted a clean city and supported jail support, if it was operated in an appropriate manner and not just camped out anywhere during anything. She was in agreement with them making some decisions. She said to the people out there that that was not what Mecklenburg County was about.

Commissioner Jerrell said he wanted to support the folks at jail support conceptually and the valued add they brought to the community but that he wanted to be unequivocal about his support for the Sherriff and his staff. He said they things that he had witnessed himself were transformational elements that they could not disregard. He asked what the responsibility of the Sherriff’s Department was for those people being released. He asked for visibility into the conversations he had with individuals in jail support and if there were any leaders and solutions offered around that. He also asked if there was a way to continue jail support and under what specific parameters would it be appropriate.

Sherriff McFadden responded that they would provide anyone with clothes, shoes, underwear, briefcase, even a laptop, as it all came out of the program they had there. He said he did not want anyone to leave the Mecklenburg County Detention Center unclothed but that he had to understand that sometimes people still had hate for where they were leaving and did not see the concept of what they were trying to do. He said that some people did not want help, because they still wanted to have the barrier between them. Sherriff McFadden stated that in terms of solutions, he had tried everything he possibly could, such as a space, storage, parking, and it was all rejected. He said there was no true leader to jail support concept and that he had attempted to find one to talk to one. HE said that may be by design. He said they needed to understand that some people did not want resolution, but instead they wanted conflict, disruption, and a platform to continue to do what they were doing, because it was the only platform they had, interruption of government services, criminal justice system, and having conflicts with the locals. He said that most of the people in the community were in fear of making a solid-ground statement, out of fear of retaliation. He stated he still had to make a decision for each and every citizen in the County, whether they wear a blue, red, white, or any flag. He said he was simply asking where they stood and was the Board okay with what was being seen. He said he heard they were saying they were not and asked what they would do about it and how long they would wait, as well as what would happen in the part of the waiting. He said once it happened, they would not have conversations but action and then retaliations. He said that was where they were and believed that everyone knew and felt that. He said it was a delicate road that he could not walk on anymore, not could his staff.

Commissioner Harden asked why it would fall into their bucket to enforce and not CMPD.

Sherriff McFadden responded that he believed it was the job of every single person on the phone call. He said they were making it seem like it was the Sherriff’s decision and problem but that it was not. He said they were turning a blind eye to something due to a political cover for it.

Commissioner Harden asked what would happen if the Board supported removal.
Sherriff McFadden said that he could not tell them on a law enforcement operation that he could not tell them what would happen or what they would do next but that they were simply allowing them all to understand. He said it was not something they had to decide and that they would go along with it. He said they were making the Board fully aware. He stated they were not asking for advice or waiting for them to have a decision or would wait for a task force. He said the last time someone said they would help with it had been four-weeks ago. He stated he was simply informing them of what they had going on, on 4th Street downtown Charlotte in front of the government buildings. He said he just wanted to make them fully aware of what was going on.

Commissioner Harden asked people were forcefully removed and they set up again how it would be handled.

Sherriff McFadden said by having what they had now. He said he did not have the solution to it.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked about the slogan of “this jail kills,” including how many lives had been lost at the jail. She said she was told the sheriffs were intimidating, had institutional power that they were using against protestors, were not using masks when going near protestors in order to be threatening. She mentioned that people were being turned out and asked if people were turned out in the night if they received less services.

Sherriff McFadden responded that “this jail kills” was something that was brought about to bring disruption and that they had to think the previous Sherriff had five people to die in their facility and had no protest like this. He said all of his deaths were not murders, none of them had been. He said the murders were on Beatties Ford Road and the 75 people who were killed. He said when someone died in the jail, they had an investigation and none of them had anything to do with another person, he said that natural cause and overdoses coming in. He stated they used that to create the fear and communication so you could have this platform of audience.

Sherriff McFadden stated in response to the Sherriff’s being intimidating that this was a great time to say that in law enforcement and that everyone accepted that because that was what they needed accept to be accepted in the communities and by the people in the community. He said he was also a citizen who felt intimidated when he stops as the store and sees something in the parking lot or because he went into a neighborhood that had four murders there. He said they would always be intimidating in the mind said and that it was easy to say but that he did not accept it one bit.

Sherriff McFadden stated they wore mask more than anyone else. He said if they were doing an arrest and the mask came off, sure. He said it was great to have all of the small things to shed the light on the law enforcement community and jail and detention center and Sherriff. He stated it was easy. He said in terms of clothing that many were arrested running from the police with no shirt or shoes on or that the items were taken for evidence. He said they would provide anything that was needed when leaving the detention center if accepted. He said there was an issue in America against citizens and law enforcement and it being magnified through these events and conversations.

Chair Dunlap said it was really unfortunate because when jail support was first announced, he saw people going to jail to offer bail to those who could not afford it. He said he gladly supported that. He said the unfortunate part was that there were a lot of people in the community who were providing support for jail support but did not have a clue of the kinds of things that were doing on at the area with those people who claimed to be a part of jail support. He said he supported them but could not support the lawlessness. He said the Sherriff was empowered to enforce the law and to disregard this particular group of people when if it were someone else doing the same thing in some other part of town would be wrong, and it was unfair. He said they should say to the Sherriff that they should tell him that they supported him and for him to do his job. He asked as it related to solutions, what was jail support offering that the Sherriff’s Department was not.
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Sherrif McFadden responded absolutely nothing and that they said they offered water and a phone call but that they offered much more than that.

Chair Dunlap stated if there were things which needed to be offered to those being released, they could talk about what they needed to offer in terms of support but that the lawlessness should not continue in their city. He said when the RNC comes people will say they were moved due to the RNC. He said this had been going on for some period of time.

Kevin Tully, Public Defender, provided a brief report regarding Jail Support. He said he was not a spokesperson for or on behalf of jail support but wanted to make comments. He stated they had a meeting before the current one, where some of the issues were discussed and one things, as an attorney, that he could be bothered by was the concept of due process. He said he was involved a lot in criminal-court reform. He spoke on the absence of anyone from jail support being at the meetings, and he was troubled by that. He said there was a great amount of continuity in terms of what individuals were saying, which was that the mission of jail support was consistent with their own values. He stated the Sherrif did a great deal to prepare people but once they walk out the door, he was unable to provide those services on a continuing basis. He stated the County recognized the need for a holistic approach in terms of addressing people who were criminally charged and there was great recognition by the Board and support to the concept that there were a lot of things in the community that if they were more properly addressed, it would reduce the amount of crime they had. He said that far too often, a simple referral on the way out of the jail would not work, because the clients were living in poverty and extremely challenged to access the services and engage and manage the transportation and application process. He stated there were a number of things that jail support provided such as making sure they had their medication, getting them money to afford the medication, getting people rides so people can safely get home, providing access to other service providers. He stated the applauded them for it and that they had been doing it with their own money.

Mr. Tully stated there was a core group of people who were extremely interested in providing the services out of love and compassion and working really hard to do that and everyone seemed to support it. He stated there was a group of people who were not at all providing services, not directly involved in what jail support would define as jail support, who may be engaging in some of the activities that you heard about and to attribute to those individual’s actions to the group of people who were desperately trying to provide needed services was painted with too broad a brush. He said they did have leaders and believed there were a core group of people within the organization who were desperate to continue being able to provide the citizens with desperately needed services. He stated he did not know but that it seemed to him that any large-scale policy action to clear that space out would be fighting fire with gasoline, further inflaming people who were not even really involved in providing jail-support services and were only there with a different agenda. He asked that any law enforcement action be narrowly tailored to individuals and individual acts as opposed to the group and that the Board invite the organization to sit down and talk about a resolution for the services that ought to be provided, to continue to be provided.

Chair Dunlap asked what Mr. Tully has done to bring things to a resolution and that obviously not a lot had been done since it was going on for a while. He asked for Mr. Tully, Sherriff McFadden, and the Criminal Justice Services Division to get together to see what kind of resolutions they may be able to come to. He said it was not for the County Commissioners to decide and he believed the Sherriff made that clear up front. He stated that the Sherrif had enforcement powers and that the Board could not dictate to him when he may use those powers. He said it had been brought to the community’s attention as what he saw as being an issue.

Note: This item was pertaining to the encampment on Fourth Street adjacent to the Mecklenburg County Detention Center of the group that identify themselves as “Jail Support.” The Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office has received multiple complaints concerning those encamped on 4th Street to include harassment, threats, damage to property, public sex acts and other misdeeds. Sheriff McFadden has made it known...
publicly that he wholeheartedly supports the concept of jail support and helping those released from our detention center to successfully reintegrate into our community. The growing concerns and failed attempts to find an amicable solution to the issues with Jail Support leadership has MCSO even more concerned about public safety and the unobstructed access of the public to County and City buildings located around this encampment.

20-6333: Emergency Assistance and COVID-19 Response Fund Update

Mortgage, Rent and Utility Assistance

Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager, provided an update on emergency assistance resources for mortgage, rent and utility relief that are available to the community. Mr. Trotman reviewed the total City/County Funds for Mortgage, Rent and Utility Assistance and stated that $10.4 Million was from the County and $11.4 Million from the City, which made a combined $21.8 million in City/County funds.

Mr. Trotman said the Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) was a Federally funded program that assists families with a heating or cooling related crisis and was administered by Crisis Assistance Ministry projected to transition to DSS this Fiscal Year. He said the funds were for $600 per household per year and that there was $3.4 in client aid during FY21. He said the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) was a federally funded seasonal program (Dec 1-March 31) that provides a one-time payment to offset their winter heating costs which provided Utility Assistance only (excludes Water) and was administered by DSS. He said the funds were for $500 per household per year and that there was $37 million in client aid during FY21.

Mr. Trotman reviewed the general assistance was a County-funded program that provides assistance to seniors and individuals with a disability which provided rent and utility assistance and was administered by Crisis Assistance Ministries. He said the funds were for $500 per household per year and that there was $500,000 in client aid during FY21. He said the emergency assistance was a County-funded program that assists households with children, families with YFS involvement and those fleeing DV situations, which provided rent or utility assistance and was administered by Crisis Assistance Ministry. He said the funds were for $500 per household per year and that there was $1.3 million in client aid during FY21.

Mr. Trotman reviewed city funding for mortgage, rent, and deposit assistance, as well as rent and mortgage assistance. He said for Rent and Mortgage Assistance $10.2 million was in Rental and Mortgage Assistance and that it includes $8 million from Coronavirus Relief Funds and $2.2 million from the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). He said they had donated $1.5 million from the CARES Act Funding to mortgage, rent, and utility assistance. He said that $1 million went to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and $500,000 was directed to Socialserve. He stated the amount of funding available per household depended on each family’s level of need. He said that funds were administered by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and Socialserve. He said it was available for residents 80% AMI and below who were impacted by COVID-19, due to job lost, wage reduction, illness age, etc. He said that a portion of the funding was dedicated for the County’s unincorporated areas and the Towns.

While he reviewed resource connections for the unemployed, he stated people receiving unemployment benefits were required to register with the NC Works System which connects them to Career Centers operated locally by Charlotte Works. He said 43,686 people accessed Charlotte Works Services through their NC Works Career Centers during Fiscal Year 2020 and that 41% (18,289 people) accessed these services between March 1, 2020 and June 30, 2020. He said that Charlotte Works received direct referrals from the Housing Partnership and Crisis Assistance Ministry for those in need of employment assistance. He stated that the partnership was being expanded for Charlotte Works to refer people experiencing unemployment directly to the Housing Partnership, Socialserve and Crisis Assistance Ministry for rent and utility assistance. He said in terms
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of Deposit Assistance, $1.2 million would be in Deposit Assistance, which includes Security, Utility and First Month’s Rent and excludes Water. He said the funding came from the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). He stated these were available for residents 80% AMI and below, impacted by COVID 19 due to job loss, wage reduction, illness and/or childcare challenges beginning in April 2020. He said that they sat up the partnership, because they do not receive detailed data on individuals receiving unemployment benefits from the State, as requested by the Board. The partnership would ensure that residents experiencing unemployment’s would have access to those vital resources. He said that in closing, Housing Partnership and Socialserve were operating the Rent CLT program which provided resources for utility, rent, mortgage, and hotel relief for residents impacted by COVID-19.

He said that regarding evictions in the community, Mecklenburg County Court reopened on July 20, 2020, and the Sherriff’s Office began serving eviction writ of possession on July 23, 2020. He said since that date, the Sherriff’s Office had received 472 eviction writs of possession and executed 172 evictions. He said that 100 of the writs of possession were scheduled yesterday. He stated that for the 200 which were not executed, it could be due to households leaving the property, the landlord and tenant settling the case, or Legal Aid filing against the writ of possession. He stated they would continue to work with partners to provide the appropriate support to reduce the impact of evictions on individuals, families, and children in the community. He said residents concerned about evictions could call Legal Aid or the City’s Community Relation’s Dispute Settlement Program for help with landlord and tenant mediation.

Crisis Assistance Ministry County Update

Carol Hardison, Crisis Assistance Ministry, presented an update on the services provided by the organization. Ms. Hardison wanted to discuss what the best model was for people in Mecklenburg County who found themselves in a financial crisis. She said she would speak about the approach the community adopted many years ago, which was a best practice according to piers across the state and nationally. She said the approach had three prongs. She said first, what the community has at Crisis Assistance was a customer centric way of prevention of eviction and utility disconnection. She said what they meant was that the model would put the neighborhoods in the middle and the system of support would go together so they would just go one place. She said all the special, financial related expertise was concentrated so that moms and dads and grandparents and even great grandparents in crisis could be the sole focus. She said that simply put, they were a one-stop shop so that people could go one place and be confident that they would be able to access all possible community resources in a financial crisis.

Ms. Hardison said that the model the community had created an incredible multiplier impact, enhancing the government dollars by supplementing them with donations from the community, because the government dollars just fell short of meeting the whole need 50% of the time. She said that they believed that Crisis Assistance Ministry had a responsibility to go above and beyond, providing just a financial payment. She said they stood in the financial gap time and time again when there was no entity to meet an unexpected crisis. She said Crisis Assistance Ministries had been the community safety net for 45 years. She said they were one of the many one-stop shops and that they had the Children and Family Services Center and the Goodwill Opportunity Campus, the Valarie Woodard Center, to name a few. She said they each served a unique and specific purpose. She said that Crisis Assistance Ministry was the unique and specific purpose for people facing evictions and utility disconnection that it was Mecklenburg County’s financial emergency room but that they did not stop there, as they took a holistic approach. She said they offered budget counseling and coaching and almost everyone would receive a targeted referral to another community resources. She said while being served there, people may shop for free clothes, furniture, and appliances. She said they also offered an economic mobility program, which helped individuals, as it would help individuals address the underlying reason for the crisis. She said that it would help them to achieve greater housing stability and that in the program, they would offer financial coaching and counseling pared with a short-term rental subsidy. She stated that the results had been amazing. She said that the agencies third program was a civil-
engagement program, where they educated the community about the reasons that so many people needed their services, speaking about systemic racism.

Ms. Hardison said you needed at least a past due notice in order to receive funds. She said over 20,000 families per year had services provided for them. She reviewed the steps in receiving services under a customer-centric model: customer funds; CIP; Share the Warmth; private funds; material goods; and good help. She said there were other agency locations throughout where they could receive assistance through Crisis Assistance. She spoke about the multiplier effect, stating that $4.6 million in County aid was distributed in FY19 to 8,827 households, with an average of $526 County aid. She said that 54% also received non-County financial aid at an average of $1,046 to resolve the emergency. She said that did not even factor in the financial coaching, counseling, and services which would come from their rental subsidy program.

Ms. Hardison spoke on the safety net role in community crisis. Housing First was sought out by the project team to close the gap in move-in costs and support, providing 597 formerly homeless households with $257,000 in security deposits and utility reconnects, plus moving day volunteer coordination and free furniture and appliances. She stated that LIEAP responded to urgent call from DSS and dedicated staff for two months to reconcile data for 742 households and administer $290,000 in federal energy dollars. Ms. Hardison reviewed how things were done as of today with COVID-19. She said they were using the curbside process.

Deronda Metz, Salvation Army spoke very briefly about them having been on the ground with essential workers since COVID-19.

Erin Barbie, Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership briefly shared about the emergency rent assistance and mortgage program that they had been offering since April 2020. He said it was virtually based for COVID-19. She stated that everyone had an opportunity to speak with a counselor and to receive a budget session to help them prioritize their spending.

Commissioner Cotham spoke about the contrast between what Ms. Hardison and Mr. Trotman said.

Commissioner Fuller spoke about the ending of the partnership with Crisis Assistance Ministries and did not understand the efficiency of doing it. He asked what was causing the proposal to be made at that time in the middle of a pandemic. He asked how bringing the services into the County were justified under the circumstances.

Mr. Trotman responded they were not talking about ending the partnership but that about two years ago they approached Crisis Assistance Ministries about combining the CIP and LIEAP program and were told they were not interested. He said the State made some policy and technology changes. He said they were aggressively trying to be efficient and effective for the customers, because the complaints they received were that they did not have time to sit in the lobby all day. He said they wanted to continue the relationship and focus on the EA and GA fund.

Commissioner Scarborough thought they were on the right track.

Commissioner Powell stated she agreed with a lot that Commissioners Cotham and Fuller said. She said she felt as though there had been a fracture with their relationship and Crisis Assistance Ministry and that they had not been included and that they would have been a provider for LEIAP if they were. She stated the multiplier effect of marrying the public and private dollars was important. She asked what they had approved on the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Trotman responded they had approved the Community Outreach Plan for energy assistance.

Commissioner Powell stated she did not want to change this, especially not in the middle of a pandemic.
Commissioner Leake said she had a concern about not using motels or hotels and that they had to do a better job with housing. She said they had never had enough social workers and asked how much they paid CAM to run the program for the County.

Ms. Barbie responded $1.7 million.

Commissioner Leake asked about renovation for more housing.

Ms. Metz responded yes that they had some staff from the Atlanta office coming up and renovation was being done at the shelter along with looking at a warehouse or new building.

Commissioner Jerrell stated that the rent and mortgage assistance was really important. He asked what Ms. Hardison’s response was around the efficiencies that Mr. Trotman spoke about.

Ms. Hardison said there were two different one-stop shops and that there were efficiencies in any, one-stop shop model, and the ones that were gained by having the person go only one place to access those dollars would be so lost by the funds being split apart.

Commissioner Jerrell stated another concern of his was around the staff, particularly around the pandemic in terms of the absorption of them into other rolls. He said it was probably not a great time for people to transition.

Commissioner Harden said she heard the voices of the supporters. She said that her district wanted the partnership with CAM to stay. She asked why they would walk away from an organization that was matching the contribution they made. She said it made no sense to her.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the conversation got muddy and wished it was not getting conflated. She could not understand why they would want to cut it out and take it away. She said it did not make any sense. She asked how DSS and CAM partnered. Ms. Hardison responded that anyone who wanted into DSS had assistance the minute they walked in the door.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated she appreciated the work and wanted to continue it. He said what he heard was that the County was now saying since the State had the mandates, it was a good time to combine the two programs and put them under the County. He said that would not be severing ties with CAM. He reminded the Board that they set policy and the operationalizing of policy was up to the County Manager.

Chair Dunlap stated no one had said anything about severing the relationship between the County and CAM. He said they needed some answers on what Mecklenburg County would be responsible for, what the State would be holding them accountable for, and how the dollars would be allocated.

Ms. Hardison said every dollar they were talking about moving would be 100% available at all of the agencies. She said due to the partnerships, every other dollar would be available. She Said the $281,00 a year would be what the Mecklenburg County caseworker asked for money. She said there was $728,000 that they had no idea where it came from when they already had $3.2 million for the fiscal year and were not able to spend all the dollars that they did not know was coming or asked for. She said her belief was that wherever they came from they were not. She said that funds had been given to others when the Rent and Utilities Assessment Program was not available.

Mr. Trotman said the Community Resource Center was important and unlike other services, you could get all of the services there. He stated that it was not only them who considered it a s best practice and national model but that they had been told that by many national associations.
A motion was made by Commissioner Cotham and seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to make Crisis Assistance Ministry the lead agency for rent and utility aid and to make no changes to the County’s existing emergency financial assistance at this time.

Chair Dunlap asked if that was up for consideration.

Dena Diorio, County Manager said she was not sure that she understood what was meant by lead agency. She said they had invested money with the Housing Partnership, which was also doing rent and mortgage assistance. She said she wanted to make sure they were clear about what they were talking about and she would rather have time to work through it than for a motion to be made; she thought there were a lot of things that needed to be worked through with CAM and believed that there were ways to improve the relationship and accountability. She believed there were ways to improve the transparency.

Commissioner Harden stated she had a friendly amendment that CAM continue to administer the $3.4 million CIP program through the end of the fiscal year, which would give the County and CAM a chance to work through the issues that the County Manager just mentioned. She said it would give a chance for Crisis Assistance Ministry’s Board and their Board to work together in thinking about the total needs for serving people in poverty. She said it would give them a chance to really think through if they wanted to leave all of the private dollars on the table that it leveraged.

Commissioner Powell seconded the amendment.

Chair Dunlap asked when Crisis Assistance Ministries diverted its attention to do hotels, the money was then diverted to Housing First and Socialserve. He asked where the money was currently and if it was not there, if it was being asked to be moved back.

Mr. Trotman responded there were two pots of money that he may be referring to and that the first was the CIP, which was a use or loose. He said they had no opportunity to recoup that money. He said the other funding stream was the private dollars invested and there was $600,000 received from the United Way and the Foundation of the Carolinas to manage the hotels and motels. He stated there was some portion of the money used and the remaining was sent back to the United Way and Foundation of the Carolinas. He said that money was then given to Socialserve to continue to manage the dollars. He said they used the County’s social workers to work with the population that CAM began to work with initially because of the multiple issues. He stated that because of Socialserve and their social workers, they stepped in to fill the gap.

Chair Dunlap asked if Commissioner Harden’s motion would be appropriate since the money from this fiscal year had already been moved.

Mr. Trotman said no, this fiscal year the County had already received a new allocation from the State, which was the $3.4 million in CIP fund and $1.8 million in emergency and general assistance. He said they allocated both to CAM.

Chair Dunlap said the motion was to have the funds remain through crisis for this FY and during the course of the year to figure out more about the relationship between the two organizations.

Commissioner Harden stated if she understood Mr. Trotman’s plan, they were going to remove the CIP from CAM in December. She stated she was asking that the decision be put off the table and that CAM continued to allocate the CIP through June 30, 2021 and during this year the two boards would work together to figure out how they wanted to- He said pulling $3.5 million from CAM in the middle of the year seemed unconscionable to me, especially when being leveraged so successfully.

Commissioner Cotham requested no timeline given the uncertain world they were in now.

Ms. Diorio said she was not sure if you could combine over multiple fiscal years.
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Tyrone Wade, County Attorney responded that it was correct and had to be limited to this fiscal year.

Chair Dunlap said that would mean that Commissioner Harden’s substitute was correct, that it would have to go through the fiscal year.

Commissioner Cotham asked if it were correct that any board could change anything from a previous board, asking if it mattered.

Mr. Wade responded yes, it did.

Mr. Fuller said his initial understanding was not happening today but in December 2020.

Chair Dunlap said he believed that was the proposal, but the substitute take it to the end of the year.

Mr. Trotman said the original plan was four months; however, Carol communicated there were a number of risks in moving the program in December. He stated his response was that he did not want to cause harm to the customers or community and that they should sit down to talk about it. He said the date was on the table.

Mr. Fuller said if what was currently on the table then it was that the change would be done in 2020.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to table the motion and amendment until the Board got clarity and the Manager has selected her cohorts. He believed the concern was that unless the motion makers withdrew the motions, they would have to vote on them. He stated he was concerned as it may have been premature.

Chair Dunlap asked Ms. Diorio if she could ensure the Board that her decisions would not be affected until the next calendar year, because then they would know she took the time to fully vet any possible decisions that she would make and to workout whatever differences there may be between the County and CAM.

Ms. Diorio responded absolutely.

Commissioner Fuller said his motion to table would be to the December 1, 2020 meeting.

Commissioner Harden said she thought she heard Ms. Diorio say she agreed to postponing the funds removing the funds until the end of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Fuller stated they needed to deal with the pending motions, because unless the motions were withdrawn, they would have to deal with them.

Chair Dunlap stated that to get them where they needed to get, if Ms. Diorio would do that, if Commissioner Harden and Commissioner Cotham would rescind their motion or remove their motion, they would be back to where they were with Ms. Diorio taking the time to develop a relationship with Crisis Assistance Ministry and that everything would remain the same throughout the fiscal year.

Commissioner Harden said she was comfortable rescinding the motion so long as the minutes reflected that decision by the County Manager.

Commissioner Cotham stated she would rescind her motion.

COVID-19 Response Fund

Michael Marsicano and Brian Collier, both with Foundation for The Carolinas, and Laura Yates-Clark with United Way, provided a joint presentation regarding their COVID-19 update.
Response Fund, for partnership with County, City, corporations, foundations, individuals, houses of faith & others, fundraising and grant-making was administered by Foundation for The Carolinas & United Way of Central Carolinas. The fund had focused on meeting basic needs, while also attending to emerging needs, and funding had been provided to mix of institutional partners, grassroots and neighborhood-based organizations. The total contributed to date $19,516,755 from 1,050 over donors.

Board of Investors, for oversight provide strategic direction and oversight; assists with fundraising; sets funding guidelines; ensures program accountability. Grants Committee: monitors community needs; reviews proposals; makes grant decisions; and monitors impact & recommends strategy changes. FFTC & UWCC - Administration: UWCC distributes funds/ensures financial compliance; FFTC and UWCC regularly assess needs, utilization, impact; and Interfaces with organizations. The Board of Investors and Grants Committee was listed. The total awarded to date was $14,889,688

CharMeck COVID Fund, key facts were reviewed, such as over 700 applications reviewed since March; 254 grants awarded to 203 agencies; mix of “directed” and open/competitive grants; grants to orgs in every city & town in Mecklenburg; City of Charlotte; Towns of Matthews, Mint Hill, Pineville, Davidson, Huntersville, Cornelius; one or two remaining rounds in August the second to be determined. The balance remaining was Balance Remaining $4,464,000. For the Grantmaking Broad Stroke Priority “Evolution” for March to mid-May: food; shelter and emergency financial assistance and for May to July: summer recreational & educational programs for kids; workforce development & business support; and health care & mental health.

For highlighted grants, examples of largest grants: Second Harvest: $1,900,000; Socialserve: $900,000; Salvation Army: $738,000; Men’s Shelter: $595,000; YMCA: $500,000; Loaves & Fishes: $460,000; Reopening Business Awareness Campaign: $200,000; Smallest, often more flexible & impactful at grassroots level; and Liberian Assoc., Vietnamese Assoc., Charlotte Village Network, which served seniors Mr. Marsicano went over the current community needs, emphasizing on basic needs services, but that nuances have emerged: telehealth limitations; reduction in shelter capacity; financial counseling needs to be provided with emergency financial assistance; and growing mental health concerns, both for clients and staff.

For emerging & escalating needs: education, particularly related to virtual school environment, for Childcare/supervision Child welfare & Domestic Violence Legal Advocacy Unemployment, for Non-profit challenges are ongoing, including staff wellness, loss of revenue, & concerns about reopening, and during the amount granted for shelter and rental assistance: $3,931,696.

For grants awarded/supported: reduction in shelter census to allow for social distancing; case management services for those moved to the county-leased healthy hotel; rapid rehousing residents to remain stably housed; rent and mortgage payments to renters and homeowners who lost jobs/income through larger institutions and grassroots organizations. Outcomes to-date, which were partial results as the grant terms were not complete: 1,213 individuals remained safely sheltered; 96 individuals have exited shelter to housing and received assistance with up-front costs; 634 households that receive rapid rehousing subsidies retained housing despite loss of income/jobs; and 1,217 households remained current with their rent/mortgage.

Ms. Yates-Clark responded to Commissioners’ questions and comments.

20-6334: COVID-19 Education Plan for Youth and Families - Department of Social Services (DSS)

Jacqueline O. McKnight PhD., MSW, Deputy Director of Mecklenburg County Child and Family Services and Aalece Pugh-Lilly, PhD, Division Director of Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services reviewed the following PowerPoint, which provided an
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Overview of a strategy addressing the educational needs of DSS-involved children and families during COVID-19.

Youth & Family Services for Children with Educational Needs served by DSS: currently, there are 324 school age children/youth in Mecklenburg County custody; 64 children/youth (Cabarrus, Gaston and Residential Treatment); 39 children enrolled in Meck Pre-K; Children served through YFS Family In-Home Services. In terms of Economic Services for Children with Educational Needs served by DSS, 81 children identified with educational needs in the Work First public assistance program. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) Plan C: Full remote, under the decision made by Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) The Board of Education on July 30, 2020, all CMS students would begin the school year remotely. Board could revert to Plan B, combination of remote and in-person, at any point during the school year Child/Youth Resources for Children in Custody, YMCA had 131 children in custody enrolled in In-Person School Program. For addressing Children’s Educational Needs During a Pandemic, small groupings of children learning in a shared space would be made. Marginalized and lower income students may not be included in such arrangements, exacerbating inequities and furthering the racial and educational divide. Department of Social Services aspires to equal the playing field for children in need of educational support. Many of the families did not have resources or adequate supports to create pods. Resources were extended to include other families from the Youth and Family Services Division and the Economic Services Division, including those in the Work First Program. For addressing the Educational Needs of DSS-Involved Children & Families, SYDKIMYL created a unique educational ecosystem that affords children the opportunity to learn from college students who were closer to their age, full of personality and who make teaching fun.

The next steps were as followed: Educate: educate targeted populations about services and resources available; Ensure: ensure that children/youth who need supplemental support are identified & prioritized; Move forward: move forward with defined supplemental services; and Continue: continue to monitor CMS & supplemental services to support as required.

Commissioner Cotham expressed her dislike for the use of the word pods when talking about children.

Ms. McKnight and Ms. Pugh-Lilly responded to Commissioners questions and comments.

20-6310: COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Public Health Director, provided an update on COVID-19 data and the public health response to COVID-19 in Mecklenburg County. Ms. Harris did not go over the full data report but would highlight certain points. She stated that the number of cases had been dropping since the later part of July. There was not reduction in testing. She said they were hoping to be able to finalize that in the next week or two. She spoke about the saliva test, saying it had the potential to be helpful and easier for individuals to access and use as it became more available. She would keep the Board posted.

Ms. Harris updated the Board on how things were with the long-term care facilities. She stated they had reached out to all 30 nursing homes to review the current testing requirements and guidance that they were receiving from the State. She said that was testing their staff bi-weekly on a regular basis. They successfully communicated with all but one facility. Most had said they had started the staffing testing, and some were doing it weekly. The ones in outbreak status were testing their staff and residents at least weekly, which was the current guidance, and they would go back to biweekly once they go back to outbreak status. She said they would continue to work with all facilities to reinforce the guidance and provide resources as needed. 21 facilities had received the antigen testing from the government. They were good for one round of testing for staff and residents. After that, they were responsive for many factors. You have to purchase a printer from the manufacturer to see the results. She said it would give results in about 15 minutes but that it has a higher number of false negatives. She said they were working with them on specific guidance for their instruments and reporting the results. She
reminded the Board that most results came from the laboratory straight to the State and would need to be reported directly to the County, so that was something they were working with the facilities on that.

She reviewed the positive-test characteristics. She said they had not really changed. She said the majority, almost 60% were in individuals less than 40-years old at this point. She said they were used to the map, and they were starting to look at it for hotspots on a regular basis to see where they may need more testing. She said there were a few minor changes in total cases. She said a point of good news was their positivity rate; over the last 14 days, it had dropped to 6.7%. She stated they would continue to track it and hope it would continue trending in that direction. She showed a graph which showed the number of positives getting smaller and that the total numbers were decreasing as well. For hospital data, a major metric they were watching, there was a show decrease there. She said social distancing was holding its own despite having less. She said the seven-day average, changes occurred with the changes in guidance and the NC mask mandate came into effect. She said you could see the fact that they were at a precarious state with the ability to go in the right direction, where they were headed, or they could go in the wrong direction. She said they were working with the individuals who were providing services through schools and working with them on their plans and doing a lot of plan review. This includes pre-k, public schools, childcare settings, private schools, charter schools, universities and colleges. It was work that would continue to happen. They continued working with UNC Charlotte and Davidson, looking to move students back in. Johnson and Wales had a solid plans in place. She made concerns that as the numbers went down, she was uncomfortable putting anything in the environment which could create a significant new risk. She said it was imperative to provide for significant management and mitigation of risks. They were continuing to watch what was happening in other environments. She knew that UNC Charlotte was part of the UNC system, which was the final decisions, but she appreciated their relationship and would continue the work moving forward to strengthen their plans.

Ms. Harris said that they had looked at some emergency room visits to determine things better. There was talk about unintentional health consequences from not social distancing, as well as health consequences triggered by social isolation, which is what they were trying to look at. They had been looking at NC Detect, which was a statewide emergency department data base they had access to in order to see if the use frequency had changed with the different orders and mandates in the City and State. She said there was a lip in mid-March which went down during the stay-at-home orders and went up again after. She said in terms of suicidal ideations, the numbers had not rebounded to where they were in the early part of the year, but they were watching the numbers because there was more concern of suicide in the community and across the country. Depression, as seen through the emergency department, did not have significant changes. There was a reduction during the stay-at-home order. Assault related injuries dropped down during the stay-at-home orders but bounced back up after. They need to prioritize what they open, with an emphasis on schools and getting parents back into the workforce.

Commissioner Fuller said it was good to see that they were moving some trends in the right direction. He hoped colleges were looking at it and thinking long and hard on if they should put kids at risk like that. He said right now they did not need to be pushing it when they see the things they had put in place were starting to take effect.

Commissioner Leake stated they sometimes had to make unpopular decisions.

Commissioner Jerrell mentioned that it was important to measure the impact of COVID in lots of different ways, such as with suicides, depression, and assaults.

Commissioner Harden asked if they should hone in on other populations, such as the jail and others.

Ms. Harris responded that they were having those conversations and looking at data in different ways.
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Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thought slide 14 that showed the suicidal ideation was helpful. She seemed that one and the depression one seemed lower than inspected.

Ms. Harris responded that it was true for those going into the ER. She was not sure if there was additional data that could be added and would be willing to add data from other entities.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell mentioned doubling down on prevention efforts and commend the community on the downward trend.

Chair Dunlap said he was thinking that the numbers of people getting tests had slowed down; he said he then got the answer to that, as when people get tested, they were told to go home and wait for the results. People won't get tested if not getting results for days. He did not believe it mattered where the tests were done at, because the people can go anywhere. He asked about a woman on the news claiming that the County gave her bad information.

Ms. Harris responded it had come up again from tests from the same location. There were still entities which did not submit results to the State. She said what they call people with were with the test results from the State system. She said that was all they could report, what came from the State, and they were trying to figure out where the glitch in the system was.

Chair Dunlap wanted to make sure that the media understood that Mecklenburg County does not test, that they only report the results from the State of North Carolina.

Ms. Harris stated they did not ask her; that was the problem.

Commissioner Powell asked for guidance on the metrics for returning in person, stating that as the virus rate went down and hopefully stayed down, the public would need a number.

Ms. Harris stated they were considering that but that it was difficult to come up with a single one number.

Commissioner Powell said she knew it had to be more than one metric but believed that rolling it out in advance would help people be less fearful.

20-6288: Appointments - Planning Commission

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

The Board considered two appointments to three-year terms expiring June 30, 2023; one appointment was a Board of Education slot.

Commissioner Cotham reported the outcome of the Ad Hoc Interview Committee. She said the Committee interviewed candidates on July 16, 2020. The Ad Hoc Committee made no recommendation for either position.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, to appoint Astrid Chirinos to the Board of Education slot and to conduct nominations for the remaining appointment.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as followed:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Cotham

The following nominations were made:
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− Robert Aulebach, nominated by Commissioner Harden
− Sarah Haley, nominated by Commissioner Harden
− Courtney Rhodes, nominated by Commissioners Leake

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to close the nominations.

This advisory board requires an interview process that is conducted by an ad hoc committee of the Board. The remaining appointment will be brought back to a future meeting for Board consideration.

20-6283: Nominations/Appointments

Alcoholic Beverage Control Board

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023.

The following nominations were made:

− Aleshia Carr, nominated by Commissioner Leake
− Abel Massalee, nominated by Commissioner Powell

This advisory board requires an interview process that is conducted by an ad hoc committee of the Board.

This appointment will be brought back to a future meeting for Board consideration.

Building Development Commission

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring July 31, 2023 in the Professional Engineers of North Carolina (PENC) slot.

The PENC recommended Evelyn Bowden for appointment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Evelyn Bowden.

Ms. Bowden was appointed.

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring July 31, 2023 in the Home Builders Association category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Brian Pace.

Mr. Pace was appointed.

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring July 31, 2023 in the American Society of Landscape Architects.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Elizabeth Frere.

Ms. Frere was reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring July 31, 2023 in the General Public slot.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Sharon Yoxsimer.

Ms. Yoxsimer was appointed.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee
The Board considered seven appointments to three-year terms expiring July 31, 2023.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Alicia Benjamin, Sonya Black, Emmitt Butts, Vanessa Clarke, Bonnie Foster, Joseph Raines, and Erinn Rochelle.

Ms. Benjamin, Ms. Black, Mr. Butts, Ms. Clarke, Ms. Foster, Mr. Raines, and Ms. Rochelle were reappointed.
The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring July 31, 2023.
The following nominations were made:
- Jennifer Boyce, nominated by Commissioner Harden
- Jeronica Cain, nominated by Chair Dunlap
- Ryan Lyttle, nominated by Commissioner Powell
This appointment will be brought back to the September 1, 2020 regular meeting for Board consideration

Citizens Capital Budget Advisory Committee
The Board considered one appointment to a one three-year term expiring July 31, 2023.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Corey Crawford.

Mr. Crawford was reappointed.

Historic Landmarks Commission
The Board considered two appointments to three-year terms expiring July 31, 2023.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Diane Althouse and Brian Clarke.

Ms. Althouse and Mr. Clarke were reappointed.
The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring July 31, 2023.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Elizabeth Luke.

Ms. Luke was appointed.

Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee
The Board considered two appointments to three-year terms expiring July 31, 2023.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Charles McCrory and Carmen Shaw.
Mr. McCrory and Ms. Shaw were reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment to a one-year term expiring July 31, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to appoint Laura Peters.

Ms. Peters was appointed.

Region F Aging Advisory Committee

The Board considered one appointment to a one-year term expiring June 30, 2021 in the Alternate slot.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Corsha Caughman to the Alternate slot.

Ms. Caughman was appointed.

Women's Advisory Board

The Board considered one unexpired term expiring November 30, 2021.

The following nominations were made:

- Kimberly Nelson, nominated by Commissioner Leake
- Lilly Raymond, nominated by Commissioner Powell
- Deborah Saunders, nominated by Commissioner Leake
- Shekeria Smith-Barnes, nominated by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell
- Nitra Word, nominated Commissioner Powell

This appointment will be brought back to the September 1, 2020 regular meeting for Board consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

_____________________________   _____________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk    George Dunlap, Chair
Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2020

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, convened in Formal Session on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent until Noted: Commissioner Vilma D. Leake

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Commissioner Scarborough led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

20-6261: Commissioner Leake
20-6308: Commissioner Leake
20-6313: Commissioner Leake
20-6317: Commissioner Leake
20-6322: Commissioner Leake
20-6324: Commissioner Leake
20-6326: Commissioner Leake
20-6327: Commissioner Leake
20-6332: Commissioner Leake

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to moved Item No. 20-6344: Meck Pre-K Services forward in the agenda since there were speakers.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6337: Proclamation - Mother Hester McCardell Ford Day

Chair Dunlap read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring September 1, 2020 as Mother Hester McCardell Ford Day.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
Commissioner Harden read Nancy Wiggins’s biography and recommended Nancy Wiggins for membership in the Order of the Hornet.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to induct Nancy Wiggins into the Mecklenburg County Order of the Hornet.

Ms. Wiggins made thanked the Board and made remarks.

Note: The Order of the Hornet was established in 1972. It is bestowed by the Board of County Commissioners on persons who have displayed valor or high order of service uniquely and specifically to the citizens of Mecklenburg County. This is the highest honor bestowed by the Board. The Order of the Hornet was founded in the spirit of the early Mecklenburg patriots who signed the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775 and proclaimed the County’s freedom from Britain more than a year before the U.S. Declaration of Independence was signed. Those early patriots valiantly fought for their independence during the Revolution and gave Lord Cornwallis such difficulties during his occupation of Charlotte that he termed the town a “hornet’s nest” of rebellion. Because Nancy Wiggins reflects the honor, strength, and fierce American patriotism that so stung Lord Cornwallis, she is being recommended for membership in the Order of the Hornet.

Nancy Bowen Wiggins is a dedicated public servant with more than 35 years of community service to Mecklenburg County. Nancy just completed her tenth and final year on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission (CMPC). Nancy served two terms, each as an appointee of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners. In her first term from 1994-1999, Nancy served as the Vice Chair of the Zoning Committee and led the Transportation Committee which was significantly involved with the design of the Blue Line. During this time, Nancy also served as an appointee on the Solid Waste Management Board and led the citizen subcommittee of the Recycling Committee which halted the construction of a commercial incinerator. Nancy was nominated to the CMPC again in 2014 and has served faithfully through June 2020. During her second term, Nancy noticed that Mecklenburg County had an alarming number of pedestrian deaths and consequently led the effort for the CMPC to adopt the Vision Zero Action Plan guidance which sets as a community goal “zero” transportation deaths. Nancy also led the CMPD Transportation Policy Initiative that culminated in an adopted resolution on June 20, 2020 to support transportation focused planning and zoning which is multi-modal, connected, safe, environmentally sensitive, and customer focused.

In service to the community, Nancy brought a deep knowledge of real estate and a passion for addressing transportation and affordable housing affordable housing. CEO and Founder of Nancy Wiggins Commercial Real Estate firm, Nancy has a very successful career with certifications in commercial investment, international property, and appraisal. Nancy has also served as a trustee for the Global Housing Foundation, a non-profit organization that works with the United Nations and Habitat for Humanity to combat the proliferation of slums throughout the world by providing innovative solutions for workforce housing.

Nancy generously shares her knowledge with others. Nancy has a long history as adjunct professor in our community having taught courses in urban development, public policy, and political science at Johnson C. Smith University, UNC Charlotte, Queens University, Winthrop University, and Wingate University.

Nancy is highly engaged in the political life of Mecklenburg County. Nancy is a long-time member of Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County. Nancy ran for County Commission in 1988 and City Council in 2011.

Nancy has more accomplishments, too many to mention here. Nancy’s colleagues say that she will be remembered for her dedication, concern for others, historical knowledge and experience, courage to shake things up, commitment to inclusive planning, and as a
leader for integrating transportation in our planning processes. We are grateful for Nancy’s service.

A copy of the Order of the Hornet is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6312: Public Appearance

There were no speakers that addressed the Board during Public Appearance.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND REQUESTS

20-6344: Meck Pre-K Services

Commissioner Harden introduced the item.

The following speakers addressed the Board regarding this agenda item:

- Janet Singerman
- Banu Valladares
- Amanda Thompson
- Yomara Roseboro
- Debra Clark
- Dr. Devonya Govan-Hunt
- Bill Geiger
- Jan Neitzel
- Sadae Sutton
- Dionne Kenan
- Jennifer Harper
- Jared Keaton
- Kimberly Follis
- Latoya Scott
- Amanda Blanton
- Gillian Britt
- Christina Smith
- Justin Perry

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated the creation and implementation of the Meck Pre-K Program was one of the things she was most proud of as County Manager; she said children with the opportunity to participate in a high-quality pre-k experience would reap the benefit of that experience over their lifetime. She said Meck Pre-K was designed to be a 6.5 hour, 36-week, in-person, learning experience. She said the curriculum had five domains: approaches to play and learning; emotional and social development; health and physical development; language development and communication; and cognitive development. She stated there was a study done by Duke University on NC Pre-K and remote learning services during COVID-19. She said that lead teachers and assistant teachers were surveyed about the efficacy of remote-learning strategies. She said there were several findings. First, only 33% of children receive remote learning services on a daily basis; 58% receive remote learning services on a weekly basis. Secondly, the most frequent methods for delivering remote services were [inaudible] text, learning activity packets and email. She said that none of that could take the place of an in-person instruction. She said the teachers felt that while they could provide remote learning in those respective domains, there were two exceptions: emotional/social development and approaches to play and learning. That was because those two required interactions with other children to be meaningful. She said they identified time to engage your remote
learning and access to technology were the two biggest barriers in remote learning. She said another study from the National Institution for Early Education research study related to public, pre-k students this spring found that only 23% of children previously served in public, pre-k programs continued to receive meals and nutritious snacks, and the same study found that ¼ of public pre-k students with disability received no support and about 40% of pre-k students with disabilities received only partial support. She said based on the study results, remote learning for four-year old children was not high-quality pre-k.

Ms. Diorio said it was designed to be a multi-generational strategy to improve economic mobility and opportunity. First, was to provide a quality educational experience to four-year old’s, and second was to provide a safe place for families to place their children when they go to work. She stated that many of the families received before and aftercare that the County paid for so parents could work their full-time jobs. She said the third part of the strategy was to provide professional opportunities and career pathways for those working in childcare centers. She said as the program expanded, they had created opportunities for childcare workers to move up the economic ladder by becoming assistant and lead teachers in the program. She said none of it was impacted by COVID-19; children still need a quality, in-person pre-k experience. Families still need to work and have a place to put their children, and this year, 20 new classrooms were added, which provided professional development opportunities for the workers.

She said they needed to look at the entire pre-k landscape, not just Meck Pre-K; providers in the NC Pre-K program had been given the option to provide in person or virtual instruction. She said the NC Pre-K in CMS classrooms would be virtual in light of the decision of CMS to close its facilities. Currently, the NC Pre-K program had 986 open slots. She said CMS’s Pre-K program was operating virtually and as of yesterday still had 927 open slots. She stated it should also be noted that $10 million of county funds appropriated to CMS each year were directed to support the bright beginnings program and that by virtue of that appropriation. They were funding and supporting a virtual pre-k option for families who want it, as they should not try to be all things to all people and operate the program by exception. She said it was unclear to her the problem they were trying to solve and that there was choice for families in the pre-k ecosystem.

She said the Meck Pre-K program operated out of licensed childcare centers that were operating successfully during the pandemic, and the centers provided quality childcare for families of essential workers and others and will continue to do so. She said they had more demand for their slots then there is supply, which demonstrates that there was a need and desire for the program. She said the children would only be four once and would not get the time back. She stated they were doing a tremendous disservice to the children to place them in a virtual program to which the effectiveness had not been proven when a high-quality, in-person option was available. She said that in FY21, the Board of County Commissioners not only appropriated $21 million for the Meck Pre-K program but also appropriated $20 million to fund subsidies to eliminate the childcare subsidy wait list. She said since childcare and Meck Pre-K were provided at the same facilities by the same providers, it was not clear to her why they were only concerned about four-year old children and not childcare in general. In fact, a request had been received from one Boardmember to explore the possibility of allocating some of the federal cares funding to expand childcare opportunities for working families. She asked why it was safe to send a child to childcare but not to pre-k when housed in the same facility. She said that based on the emails she has received, it seemed as though some may be placing a higher value on the safety and well being on teachers than childcare workers.

Trinisha Dean, Smart Start of Mecklenburg County, said they started by giving a quality, pre-k experience to those who had a greater need in order to be better prepared for kindergarten. She said when looking at spring of 2020, they had converted to virtual instruction due to COVID-19, and during that time, they received feedback from families and providers that it was not working, as the families did not have the technology skills in order to support their children virtually. She said that when they converted to virtual instruction in March, by spring break in April, families started to fade away; they no longer participated. She said when a decision was made by CMS to close or no longer open schools for the remainder of the year, families did not participate. She said it was discouraging to the teachers who provided live recordings for the families, and they were
not actively participating. They had two or three children who were on, which was not the purpose [inaudible]. She said to speak with the contracts with providers, as they contracted with providers to administer the pre-k program, of licensed childcare facilities. She said the teachers were employed by the childcare providers.

Ms. Dean spoke to the safety of the children, saying that during the stay-at-home there was physical and sexual abuse that took place in some of the homes for families who did not have an option. It was reported that there was a family with a father who shot the mother during that time, and the child was removed from the home. She said they knew the support was not there for families, and they were better off being in an environment where they were loved, nurtured, and able to have those developmental screenings provided by their classroom teachers. She spoke on reduced capacity, stating they made the decision to have up to nine children in the classrooms and they brought in the Public Health Director and two licensing supervisors for the Department of Health and Human Services to provide Q & A sessions for the families. She said there has been an opportunity for the teachers to ask COVID-19 related questions. She stated that she knew the support was not there and in order for the families to have and maintain a job, they needed a place to put their kids in a safe environment.

Ms. Dean and Ms. Diorio responded to Commissioners’ questions and comments.

Commissioner Harden stated what parents and teachers were asking for is choices and this would add that option. She said there was a reason for all the open slots in pre-k and that was because parents were scared to send their children back. She said they needed to serve the children, with compromised healthcare situations, who were in home. She read that kids were super spreaders and that it was a reasonable concern.

Commissioner Jerrell said there were circumstances where he did not subscribe to a all or none proposition. He did not believe their job was to pick winners and losers; he believed it was an issue where they did not have to accept one proposition over the other. He believed they all could concede the fact that in person was the most ideal setting for the children and when they were talking about their learning environments. He said he knew many families needed an in-person option, and they were providing that. He stated that he supported providing options for residents of Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said one thing she heard in the whole discussion was a fight for children to have in-person learning and she believed that no one was advocating for anything other than that. She believed that some were advocating for not leaving out the children who could not come back in person, whose families were living in fear, and she did not believe the fear should be discounted, as it was not unreasonable. She wanted to know if it was a cost issue. She wanted to know if it was, what the price tag was. She asked why they would not open it up to children who need the learning.

Ms. Diorio responded that today was the first day of school and what they were seeing was not atypical of what they see for the last two years in Meck Pre-K, that not every seat is full on the first day of school but that they knew as they would move forward and continue to keep enrollment open, that they would fill 801 slots with in-person learning. She said if there were children in slots in person and the center decides they wanted to go virtual, those kids would get kicked out of school. She said there were issues around who would get to make that decision and how it would get made. She said the NC Pre-K guidance was very clear, that remote learning was the choice of last resort. She argued that they should provide a service to the people who wanted in person and the people who wanted virtual have the ability to do that, and they would be supporting that through $10 million appropriation they give to CMS. She did not believe it should be discounted. She stated there were 927 slots of virtual pre-k available today for parents who wanted it; she asked why they wouldn’t encourage them to take advantage of the virtual pre-k options and reserve their 801 slots for in-person pre-k, because that was what the centers and families say they want.
Commissioner Powell requested more details from Ms. Diorio on how difficult it was for the different centers. She found it troubling when people want to get their way and say things that were not true. She said Ms. Diorio had been a champion for Meck Pre-K every step of the way, so when people criticize and villainize her, she found it troubling. She said they wanted to give them opportunities to get ahead and knew the best way to do that was in person; she stated remote was the last resort. She felt it was important to consider options since they were in COVID-19.

Ms. Diorio responded that they were one pre-k program in Mecklenburg County and that there were three: Meck Pre-K, NC Pre-K, and Bright Beginnings. She said they were the ones who had chosen to go with 50% capacity and that NC Pre-K was still doing 18 kids per class. She said they had a unique opportunity to provide a quality, in-person pre-k program and taking extra steps to keep kids safe. She said if there were families who did not want in person, there were many other options they could take advantage of, but to take away their in-person, high-quality pre-k seats to virtual would do a disservice to kids in the community.

Commissioner Cotham stated she was puzzled on why they were even having the discussion. She said that she did not have even one person talk to her about the need to go remote but that suddenly it came up. She stated she was supporting in person.

Commissioner Leake said she did not know that they would have a problem in terms of how and what they would do but that as a working mother herself, she had thought about having to get up and making sure they had somewhere for her son to be. She said they had options and if it was not for the options, she would say no to the process, but that she was appalled that all of a sudden, this had become a major issue for some of the Boardmember. She stated that she supported it 100% and that District 2 was supporting it through her surveys with people.

Commissioner Fuller stated that he was the one who championed universal pre-k in Mecklenburg County and that he did it leading the County to provide the guarantee for all of the people. He stated it was Mecklenburg County’s guarantee of universal pre-k, not NC Pre-K or Bright Beginnings. He said that he did not understand that argument, as no one was arguing that they should not do in person for the kids. He said that all they were saying was that they wanted to have more options for people who did not want to have their kids in a in-person environment that they nevertheless would have through the Mecklenburg universal guarantee would have another option. He said it seemed as though they had space to do that. He said the school system was fully remote currently and that meant that there were families who had their children at home. He asked if they were saying to every family that they must make a choice for one or two of their kids being in a in-person environment, when their other children in CMS were not in the same environment? He said he did not believe that families should have to make that choice and did not believe choices needed to be taken away from any family. He said he wanted to provide options and that in their case they were saying that they had to do in person, and he did not think it was right. HE said it was about choice and access, whatever their situation. He said they were in a global pandemic, and it was not business as usual and that they should reflect those circumstances.

Ms. Diorio stated the cost did not change because they were at 50% capacity, that it would cost the same amount of money to serve 800 as it did to serve 1,600. He said if they allowed centers to do that, potentially they would be throwing kids out of an in-person option and wanted that to be clear there was not extra money hanging around to pay for virtual pre-k.

Commissioner Fuller asked why more could not be spent for virtual.

Ms. Diorio responded that it was not what was on the table.

Commissioner Scarborough said they must have pre-k, because if children did not receive learning early, they would tend to lose their ability to want to read in school.
Chair Dunlap said that they were trying to solve a problem that did not exist, as people had an option. He said secondly, they were trying to dictate to the business community of how they should operate, and it was not the role of government to tell privately-owned pre-k programs what they must offer.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to authorize Meck Pre-K services to be provided through both in-person, hybrid, or full remote classrooms.

Commissioner Fuller asked to make a friendly amendment that the centers which choose virtual classrooms, that the Meck Pre-K program would fund whatever expenses above what they currently fund for in person, to address the County Manager’s concern that they would have to turn families away if they chose virtual.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to authorize Meck Pre-K services to be provided through both in-person, hybrid, or full remote classrooms and for Mecklenburg County to provide funding for those centers that choose to offer virtual classrooms, the programs must demonstrate valuable and rigorous instruction outlined in the NC Pre-K guidance.

No vote was taken on this motion due to a subsequent substitute motion that was approved.

Ms. Diorio stated they did not administer the program but that Smart Start administers it. So, when they made the motion that Mecklenburg County would verify the program, that was not what they do. She said Smart Start had to be able take on the responsibility to manage the virtual classrooms. She said they would need an appropriation of funds to fund the excess costs and that currently they did not have that appropriation, so they would not be able to do that unless there was an appropriation of funds, which was not what they were talking about tonight. She said he was talking about an expansion of current services above and beyond the 800 kids they were currently serving.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Cotham and seconded by Commissioner Leake to table this agenda item to a future meeting.

Commissioner Fuller expressed the desire for the item to not be tabled for too long.

The County Manager was directed to contact Smart Start and obtain a time frame of when they could do an assessment regarding the administration and cost of a virtual program and bring back a recommendation at the next meeting.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Harden and Jerrell

PUBLIC HEARING

20-6320: Business Investment Grant - Centene Management Company LLC

Peter Zieler gave a brief presentation. He stated Centene was a Fortune 500 company with $74 billion in revenue and that they were the largest provider of government-sponsored healthcare. They currently have 501 state employees with 158 employees in Mecklenburg County. He mentioned they value diversity, stating that 70% of their supervisory positions were held by women and that 50% of the employees were people of color. He said the company embraces multi-modal connectivity, which had attracted them to the market, especially to the University City Area, which is adjacent to greenways and the Lynx Blue Line extension. The project would have over 3,200 new positions, with over 1,000 being in operations, with an average wage of $63,000. He stated the majority
of those positions were available to folks with a bachelors or equivalent. He said this project was a little different than their typical business-investment program grant, as it would be done in four phases, and as each phase would be completed, it would kick off a 10-year grant that was tied to that phase. He said at the end of 10 years of phase one payments would cease on that, and while there may be payments going for the 10 years on each of phase two, three, and four. He stated there was a minimum assessed evaluation that would need to be created, of $662,572.

Mr. Zieler said there were competitive options for the project; York County, South Carolina offered a $930 million grant, which included over $447 million in fee in lieu of property taxes, and another site was considered in Tampa, Florida. He said it was with an offer of $48 million; however, Florida had no payable income tax, and the tax avoidance in that situation was more than $550 million over a four-year timeframe. He said that the project would have a significant spinoff effect, as within 10 years of creating the project, it will have ramped up to 3,237 jobs, with an additional 2,250 jobs created as secondary jobs. He said by year 10 of the project, the total estimated tax revenue from the project of associated development was at $13.1 million. He said the estimated fiscal impacts were significant, with the cumulative net over the 20-year lifespan of the project would be more than $100 million to the County. He said by year 2024, they would expect to be averaging $1.97 million revenue to the County, and by year 2029, $4.38 million. He said in the final year of the grant, the County would be netting $8.9 million of new revenue.

Mr. Zieler stated that in July 2020, the Commissioners approved in close session the Notice of Intent to Approve a grant ranging from $19.1 million to $26 million, and the City of Charlotte approved in open session a 12-year grant and that the total incentives between the City, State, and County would be between $435 million and $450 million. He reviewed the action before the Board. He said the action was to adopt a resolution approving a business investment program grant to Centene Management Company LLC. for not to exceed the amount of $26,023,933 and to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute the same. He introduced the Thomas Irwin, the Senior Vice President of Regional Development and Political Affairs for Centene Corporation.

Thomas J. Irwin, Senior Vice President for Regional Development and Political Affairs, Centene Corporation, made remarks.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing to receive comments on a proposed Business Investment Program grant to Centene Management Company LLC (Centene).

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to close the public hearing and to adopt a resolution approving a Business Investment Program grant to Centene for an amount not to exceed $26,023,933 and authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute the terms and conditions of the contract.

Commissioner Powell said that in the middle of a global pandemic they were talking about adopting an investment grant of $26 million County dollars, which she believed Mecklenburg County needed to do important work. She said $26 million to a corporation, which was number 42 of the wealthiest Fortune 500 corporations in the United States. She said the corporation brought in $74 billion in 2019. She believed they needed to be investing in small businesses and asked how they would ever move the needle on economic mobility if they were helping to preserve and protect the wealth of the wealthiest, perpetuated inequities, and she could not support it. She asked Centene to reconsider and reject the $26 million County dollar business grant.

Chair Dunlap said that was $26 million they did not have if they were not located here. He wanted the public to understand how investment grants worked, and that was when companies locate, they rebate them a portion of the County tax dollars they provided to the community for education, parks and recreation, and all of the other things. He stated after they had been rebated those dollars, the dollars they continued generating in tax dollars, because they were located here, and because they were building an entire campus which would general tax dollars.
Commissioner Jerrell said one thing important to the Board was diversity and inclusion and racial equity and after doing his research with the company was that 75% of employees were women; 64% were in advisory positions; 50% identify as people of color, and when you look at their Board, 17% were made up of women, 25% people of color, and when you add them together, you have 42%. He felt the company reflected the values of the Board and what they had been trying to accomplish. He said that he was not trying to make a case for them but felt it was important to point those aspects out.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she struggled with this one. She said the County’s portion was the smallest between the three that were investing in it. She wanted the community to be aware that the company was the nation’s largest provider of government sponsor healthcare. She felt that getting that business investment grant was taking the tax dollars again; she did not like the system and believed it was screwed up. She did not believe they should be paying a company that kind of tax incentive grant when their CEO in 2019 made the equivalent of what their portion of the grant would be. She said she would vote for it, because it was their structure, and she believed it was how the structure worked. She said until they could change the way the structure was, she felt it was a game they had to play.

Commissioners made remarks in support of the business investment grant for Centene.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Lyles, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 29.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**20-6343: Appointments**

**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee**

The Board considered one three-year term expiring July 31, 2023.

The Commissioners cast votes for those candidates that were nominated at the August 18, 2020 meeting, the results are as follows:

- Jennifer Boyce, 1 vote by Commissioner Harden
- Jeronica Cain, 5 votes by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough
- Ryan Lyttle, 2 votes by Commissioners Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell

Ms. Cain was appointed.

**Women’s Advisory Committee**

The Board considered one unexpired term expiring November 30, 2021.

The Commissioners cast votes for those candidates that were nominated at the August 18, 2020 meeting, the results are as follows:

- Lilly Raymond, 1 vote by Commissioner Powell
- Deborah Saunders, 1 vote by Commissioner Leake
Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2020

- Shekeria Smith-Barnes, 7 votes by Commissioners by Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Rodriguez-McDowell and Scarborough

Ms. Smith-Barnes was appointed.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE

MANAGER’S REPORT

20-6357: Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) Pilot Project

Dena Diorio, County Manager introduced Mark Ethridge and stated no action would be taken for the Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Pilot Project tonight, the item was for information only.

Mark Ethridge, Ascent Real Estate Capital, provided a presentation for a rental subsidy proposal for Archdale Multi-Family Property. He said the company was a real estate investment company based in Charlotte, and they had been involved in naturally occurring affordable housing preservation for the last few years. He said they had acquired two naturally occurring affordable housing projects in Charlotte in the last 18 months and that they were now partnering with a new endeavor, the Housing Impact Fund. He said their goal was to acquire over 1,200 units and deed restrict the portfolio to set aside 30% of units at 30% of AMI, 50% of units at 60% of AMI and 20% of units at 80% of AMI. He said their Board of Advisors would govern wrap around services which would be implemented with the portfolios to insure they were providing tenants with health and wellness education, technology and career readiness, job readiness, in addition to other services.

Mr. Ethridge said the projects had been the largest well of affordable housing in the community over the years but that over the next 10 years they had become extremely popular with the customers for a variety of reasons. Fortunately, the multitude of those reasons were gentrifying and displacing folks and making it less affordable for folks at 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, and 80% of AMI. He stated that NOAH preservation meant putting long-term deed restrictions on the properties and making sure residents met income qualifications as they moved in in the future. He gave an example of how NOAH preservation had been done in Charlotte in the last few years. He said there had been three NOAH deals executed with the use of private-sector capital and participation with Charlotte’s Housing Trust Fund. He said they could buy at a price much cheaper than new construction, so they could reach lower AMI than they could with new construction.

Mr. Ethridge said in terms of County participation, they had not come to them before for the NOAH preservation deals, as they typically would ask the City for Housing Trust Fund money. He said the reason the group was going in front of the Board for the program was because when it was assembled and they started talking to their decision makers and stakeholders on the effort, they wanted to make a dedicated effort to expand access to 30% AMI households in a way that most folks had not done before. He said it was easier for them to do it in NOAH than it would new construction and certainly a better investment in the County’s dollars. He said they could think about the money in a creative way since it was there and two, because they were expecting the City to participate in a parallel manner, their cost per unit, per year, on the households was a fraction of what it would be if they were asking to take on the full burden.

Mr. Ethridge responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6354: Grier Heights Economic Foundation Rental Subsidy Program

Willie Jones, Grier Heights Economic Foundation, provided a presentation for a rental subsidy proposal. Mr. Jones gave background information on the Grier Heights Economic
Foundation. He said that they owned the land under the property and would have a right of first refusal at the end of 15 years. He said the project was a 72-unit project with 34 one bedrooms and 19 two-bedroom units which currently had two tiers, a less than 50% AMI and a less than 60% AMI tier. He stated that in the less than 50% AMI tier, the rents were $580 per unit and for 60% AMI for $715 and $815. He said the target of the proposal was to take four, one-bedroom units at 60% AMI and make them available to households making 30% AMI. He stated that the problem they ran into was that many long-term Grier Heights’ residents, who were seniors, did not qualify for the property due to their low incomes. He said the property closed in 2018 and had been in construction since then and was now fully rented with the exception of the four units set aside for the program. He said the monthly rent for a $580 was more than some of those residents could afford. He stated there were a flood of applications due to the shortage of housing. He stated they received the applications before realizing the problem of the seniors not being able to afford to live there. He said it was then that they needed to intervein in someway on the behalf of some of those residents, which was when they contacted Commissioner Jerrell’s office in July 2020.

Mr. Jones stated the goal was to provide the four units at 30% AMI as opposed to not being able to respond to any of those needs; the eligibility would be that all members of the household must be at least 55 years, a single or two person house hold, minimum of 75% of the annual income much come from retirement or social security, supplemental security, disability, or VA benefits, and there must be a minimum of $300 a month in household income. He stated they must reside in the Grier Heights Neighborhood. He stated it already had an existing regulator structure, which was approved in the closing documents, with the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. He stated they included stipulations that the residents could not pay more than 30% of their household income towards the rent and when they looked at the residents who were unable to afford $225-$300 per month, depending on where their income came from, they tried to take an average of all of the subsidy from all of the senior programs and got a rough average. He stated on balance, most households in the 30% band could afford about $262.50 a month, meaning they were roughly $45.50 a month beneath what was needed to rent the unit.

Mr. Jones stated they were asking the County to subsidize four of those units down to 30% AMI which would $21,700 a year for 15 years, which would be adjusted by up to two percent per year for inflation. He said for the total appropriation for 15 years would be $325,800. He said in terms of the program mechanics, that they were trying to mirror the existing rent and management structure. He said the award would be given to the Grier Heights Economic Foundation for the purpose of providing the rental subsidy for the four units. He said they were proposing that the County enters into a grant agreement and the grant defunds to Grier Heights Economic Foundation, and there would be an annual amount of $21,700, dispersed quarterly. He said a report would be included with the amount spent on each unit and at the end of the year, the developer’s annual audit would include a none referencing the amounts funded by the program to the development. He said in terms of timing, there would be a little more construction work to be done and a few more pertinent approvals needing to be issues before people would move into the property.

Mr. Jones responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Chair Dunlap made a request for staff to bring back to the Board the total impact the current County Commissioners had on affordable housing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adopt the resolution authorizing the County Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Grier Heights Economic Foundation and to develop terms and conditions under which the County would allocate a total of $325,800 over a 15-year period.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 30.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
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20-6339: Restricted Contingency: $15 hourly wage for CMS non-certified staff

Earnest Winston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent, said they were there tonight because the Board of Education had passed a motion which instructed him to implement the $15 an hour minimum for non-exempt staff serving in fulltime positions at such time, they can get the $11 million in contingency released. He believed it met the Board’s requirement and requested the funds to be released. He stated they would also make it retroactive to July 1.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Powell to release $11 million appropriated for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools from restricted contingency being held until Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools provided a $15 per hour minimum wage to all non-certified staff.

Mr. Winston responded to Commissioner’s comments and questions.

Commissioner Leake asked how many people would now earn $15 an hour.

Mr. Winston responded just over 2,100 employees.

Commissioner Fuller asked if they fired anyone because of this.

Mr. Winston responded that CMS have not and do not anticipate having to initiate a reduction in force.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, stated that for the sake of transparency, as part of the appropriation to CMS for FY21, the appropriated money for psychologists, social workers, and guidance counselors funds would be used to fund the $15 an hour increase for non-certified staff, and those positions would not be hired. She wanted to make sure that was clear for when they came back next year, for the budget process so the Board would understand why the positions were not filled.

Commissioner Fuller asked for clarification on the Board appropriating money, in the current fiscal year budget, for psychologists and counselors. He asked if it would not be used for them because of the $15 funding they had just spoken about.

Ms. Diorio responded yes, that it was how the superintendent explained it to her, that he would use those funds to fund the $15 an hour increase and that he would not be able to hire psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors that the County had appropriated in the budget. She wanted to make sure the Board was aware since it did not come up in the conversation.

Commissioner Fuller stated that the Board did not intend to pit some employees against the other.

Chair Dunlap stated when they adopt an overall budget, the school board would have the right to move those dollars as long as a certain percent of the overall dollars were not moved. He said they were within their right to do that, because the Board did not stipulate that the dollars, which were supposedly allocated for that purpose, must be used for that purpose.

20-6304: Update on Charlotte Moves Task Force

Taiwo Jaiyeoba, Assistant City Manager for the City of Charlotte and Director of the Planning, Design & Development Department, provided an update on Mayor Lyles Charlotte Moves Task Force. Mr. Jaiyeoba said that mobility that was integrated that they invest in as a system was really the solution to connecting all the things together. He mentioned that the task force started to meet back in May due to Corona Virus. He said
in December 2020 they intended to delivery to Charlotte City Council and the community what would pinaudible transformation of mobility network, which would be submitted to the public at some point for a vote or decision in terms of how we improve mobility in the region.

Mr. Jaiyeoba explained what the transportation and mobility network was. He said that the network did not focus on one mode movement, as it is an integrated mode of transit. He said it was about six different buckets when you think about it. He said it was an investment in rail, roadways, and pedestrian accessibility. He said the plan was to meet again with the Commissioners September 17 to look at where they were in regard to the six buckets, and when they meet next time, they plan to identify different things with the task force, such as how other communities had funded this. He stated that in October they would be looking at what it would cost and how they would pay for it. He said in December they would present the Transformation and Mobility Network to the community. He said somewhere in November, they would present to them before going to Council and would share the information with the County Manager and Executive Team before going in front of the Commissioners. He said that a few weeks ago, they shared the same thing with the House Delegation of 17 member to let them know where they were headed with the vision.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6356: Taxpayer Assistance Program

Neal Dixon, Tax Collector, provided a presentation regarding Mecklenburg County's Taxpayer Assistance Program. Mr. Dixon said affordable housing solutions were a priority for Mecklenburg County government, and the Taxpayer Assistance Program was developed to be a component of the County’s overall strategy for affordable housing. The creation and development of this program was a collaborative process between the County Manager, Assistant County Manager Bryant, Office of the Tax Collector, the County’s Assessor’s Office, Financial Services Department, Legal Department, and Office of Management and Budget.

Mr. Dixon reviewed program objectives and eligibility criteria, stating it was to assist qualifying Mecklenburg County residential, homeowners to retain their homes by providing financial assistance. He stated the primary qualification was that applicants must meet income requirements as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He said the program’s funding source was $250,000, which was in the FY21 restricted contingency budget. He said the request was to release the funds for the program. He said that the County’s Assessor’s Office would receive and review the applications, and for those who qualify, the office would notify the Financial Services Department to disperse the approved grant funds to the Office of the Tax Collector. After this, the grants would be posted to the taxpayer's bill.

Mr. Dixon said for the eligibility criteria, applicants must live in Mecklenburg County; residents of Charlotte and the other municipalities within the County [inaudible] ineligible to apply. They must be owners of residential property or possess the property through a qualified life estate. It must be their primary residence and they must have occupied it as their primary residence at least three consecutive years. He stated there was no age requirement and that the grant recipient may remain in the program for up to 10 years. He said that residents with a limited tax delinquency may apply and may have one delinquent bill in the last three years that remains unpaid at the time of application. Should funds be granted to a resident with a delinquent bill, the granted funds would be posted to the current year, 2020 bill. If the 2020 bill was already paid or had a balance less than the grant amount, the remaining grant funds would be posted to the prior-year bill. He stated that residents with one or more delinquent bills which were three or more years old would not qualify this year. He said that in those instances, they would work with them to determine available options to satisfy the delinquency so they could be considered for the program in the future. He stated being in the program would not relieve the tax pay from
their obligation to pay taxes nor does it exempt them from collection actions if that became necessary. He stated in terms of household income that it could not exceed 50% of area median income and that applicants would be required to indicate the number of people living in the house, providing their proof of income. He reviewed the exclusions that would make homeowners ineligible for the program.

Ken Joyner, Tax Assessor, discussed the census median value and sales data information, grant amount calculation, application procedures, and the communication and outreach plan. Mr. Joyner and Mr. Dixon answered Commissioner’s questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Harden asked if it was one-time money or reoccurring. Dena Diorio, County Manager responded it was one-time money.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he understood before that they could not abate people’s taxes.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, responded that it was one of the components that they were still looking at, as they were trying to structure the program looking at each component. He stated they could clearly assist those that, from a public-benefit perspective, were [inaudible], but they were trying to balance it between whether it would be viewed as an abatement or if there was a way for the County to benefit on the back end. He said they were still assessing as they processed it.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if they were at least at a comfort level to approve this item with confidence. Ms. Diorio responded that she thought they were. Mr. Wade said yes.

Chair Dunlap asked how they could ensure those with greater need were the ones who were served first. Mr. Dixon responded that the best thing they could do would be outreach and work in the community to reach that group.

Mr. Joyner stated they were also looking at a 10-year cap so that new people could be brought in.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to approve the Taxpayer Assistance Program and release restricted contingency funds to be expended for the program.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6336: COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on the COVID-19 response. Ms. Harris stated she had new information. She stated that to date, Mecklenburg County had 25,773 cases and that over the past week or, so they had been averaging about 115 to 150 cases a day, which was stabilized for them. She said that to date they had 300 deaths and half were related to long-term care facility outbreaks. There were currently 30 outbreaks in long-term care facilities that they were tracking and four clusters in childcare settings or schools. She said that included what they saw at UNC Charlotte and Davidson College. The numbers had not changed significantly, thought they have seen an uptick in the number of cases in younger adults over the past several weeks and in addition to that, there had been a decline in the percentage of cases among Hispanics, which is now at
about 25%. She said that number was still high compared to the number of Hispanics in
the community. They were continuing to watch that.

Ms. Harris said in terms of the daily hospital census, it continued to decline slowly, and
the hospitals report they were stable currently and continue reporting that they have both
ICU and regular beds and plenty of ventilators. She stated the daily positivity rate had
slowly declined and remained under 1%. She said that number was still high compared to the
number of Hispanics in the community. They were continuing to watch that.

Ms. Harris stated that testing was widely available in Mecklenburg County and the
turnaround times had stabilized a bit. In most cases, test results were coming back in 24
to 48 hours. She stated that they had a new partnership in working with the NC Division
of Health and Human Services and Starmount Healthcare. She stated they would be
providing additional drive through mobile testing in the community. She said that the
demand for testing continued to be down a bit but that they still were averaging about
3,100 tests per day.

Ms. Harris stated that new State reporting has given the ability to look at testing and
positivity rates across various sub groups as well as zip codes and that they were working
to validate the data but that they had looked at it over the past few weeks and the
map showed the per-capital testing rate by zip code but that it would really help. She said
there had been a lot of testing over the past week at the National and State level as well
as some at a local level. She said the testing guidance had not been modified. She said
their current community spread indicated that they needed to continue to test as much as
possible and that maximizing their testing availability really helped with contact tracing as
they work to control the spread of the virus.

Ms. Harris stated that they were also working with the State with a contractor to implement
some community health worker support in the community to address the needs of COVID-
10 positive individuals and that they would be providing more information about that as it
moved along. She gave an update on the ambassador program, stating they received 62
applications, interviewed 10 candidates and selected seven. She stated six accepted
positions. She said the experience of the individuals would help, as some had worked
with refugee populations, experience with communication and de-escalation training,
knowledge of community resources, experience in community outreach, and some speak
multiple languages. She said half would start this week with training and the other half
would start the next week. She stated they would be housed in the environmental health
program. Ms. Harris said the work they would be doing was visiting establishments and
business to educate and assess compliance with the State and Local guidance and that
they would work closely with lawn enforcement, especially around those facilities that had
proven to be non-compliant. They would engage with universities, colleges, citizens,
community groups, and businesses to educate, responding to questions, providing
strategies, and reinforce prevention messages.

Ms. Harris said they were still awaiting the death certificate data from the State Center of
Health Statistics that was requested to understand deaths seen in the community. She
said there were fewer visits to the Emergency Department but that it appeared to have
returned to baseline. She stated they were seeing a similar pattern with depression and
assault related injuries. She said they had not seen much difference with medication and
drug overdoses. She said with alcohol use and dependence that they were seeing fewer
visits for 2020 at this point. She said there was a fairly dramatic difference with motor
vehicle injuries during the stay at home orders with fewer cars on the road, and the
numbers have not caught back up to baseline at this point.

Ms. Harris said there were a lot of people making masks these days and that there were
a lot of questions from the community about what kind of mask they should wear, and
they want members of the community to choose a mask that are two or more layers of
washable, breathable fabric that completely covers the nose and mask. She said they
needed to fit snugly. She said they were continuing to reserve the N95 masks for
healthcare providers and first responders.
Ms. Harris said in terms of gaiters and face shields, the evaluation continued on those and that they were unsure of their effectiveness at this point. Most gaiters were one ply and have a hard time staying up. She said the special situations were with the children; if at all possible, people should find masks specifically made for children or to try to find a mask that would fit the child fairly snugly and not putting masks on those two and younger.

Ms. Harris stated that flu season would be here pretty soon and that they were working on an awareness campaign, as well as planning with their community partners to ensure the flu vaccine was readily available in the community. She said they were working with NCDHSS to acquire additional vaccine for uninsured adults. She said they increased their flu vaccine order for their department to have additional available.

Ms. Harris said the Governor put out phase 2.5, which would go into effect Friday, September 4, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. and would stay in effect until October 2, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. She said a few key points to the version was that it had increased the mass gathering limits to 25 indoors and 50 outdoors. Gyms and exercise facilities can open at 30% capacity, and there was some specific guidance on the things they need to do within their walls. She said museums and aquariums were able to open at 50%; playgrounds could open, but bars were still closed, including night clubs, theaters, amusement parks, and other entertainment venues. She said that large venues remain subject to the mass gathering limits. She said the alcohol curfew would still be in place. She said everyone needed to double down on things that they knew worked, in order for places to remain open.

Ms. Harris responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Commissioner Powell asked for an update on school nurses.

Ms. Harris responded that this was an on-going issue since the County competes for nurses with the hospitals. She said the County has hired 12 nurses since early August although there were several retirements; currently, there were 38 vacancies.

Commissioner Harden asked with the positivity rate hovering around 6% to 7% and the Governor easing up what she thought would happen to the positivity rate.

Ms. Harris stated it depended on what preventive measures were taken.

Commissioner Harden asked what would keep the rate going down.

Ms. Harris responded that unfortunately there was not a vaccine nor herd immunity so wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands.

Commissioner Harden asked if there was more that could be done with the five outbreaks in facilities.

Ms. Harris responded that they have worked with them to increase testing.

Commissioner Harden asked if anything was being done to make sure front-line workers and childcare workers could get free flu shots.

Ms. Harris said they were still developing their plans and were going to do everything they could to get people vaccinated and for free.

Chair Dunlap mentioned that anything that could speed up the test results could be beneficial.

Ms. Harris responded there were a number of rapid tests being evaluated with results in 15 to 20 minutes.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE
STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6349: Absentee Voter Ballot Postcards

Michael Dickerson, Director of Board of Elections, provided an update and explanation on voter options for casting ballots in the upcoming 2020 elections in light of COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Fuller stated his proposal was based on a few things. He said COVID-19 had changed everyone’s world, and it was the public health responsibility to make sure their people were protected from becoming infected by COVID-19. He said nationally, they had lost over 170,000 Americans because of COVID-19. He said one thing that people were concerned about, particularly the seniors, was in-person voting and the health risks posed due to it. He said he wanted to make sure there were no barriers as much as possible for people to vote. He stated that there were so many people talking about absentee ballots that they needed to have an authoritative voice and he believed the County voice was an authoritative voice to alert people to the availability to absentee voting. In other words, you could vote by mail. He said he was proposing that the message was sent to all registered voters in Mecklenburg County, by postcard.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Harden to, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, authorize and direct County staff to immediately prepare and send a postcard to every registered voter or every household in Mecklenburg County informing residents that voting by absentee ballot is a safe alternative to the potential health risks posed by in-person voting, and clearly explaining the process for doing so in North Carolina, in advance of the upcoming November 3, 2020 election.

Michael Dickerson said he believed the more knowledge they could have out there for the voters the better off they were and that he was a firm believer they should give voters a choice, making sure they knew they could vote early, by mail, and on election day. He stated they had already had a huge response to absentee by mail process. He said the NC State Board of Elections just launched their online absentee portal.

Mr. Dickerson responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Mr. Dickerson stated that he did not see the benefit of this action since the State would already be sending a notice out and that he would rather spend the money elsewhere.

Commissioner Leake stated her concerns were with incapacitated seniors.

Mr. Dickerson said they were currently looking at multi-partisan assistance teams where they could go out to the senior centers, that they couldn’t currently go to because of COVID-19, and that they sent letters out to the sites and help them with asking for an absentee ballot by mail.

Commissioner Jerrell thanked Commissioner Fuller for being forward thinking and concerned about voter suppression. He asked Commissioner Fuller to respond to comments by Mr. Dickerson.

Commissioner Harden stated she was for a second postcard.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated one thing they needed to recognize was that NC was a swing state and that she received two absentee ballots via mail and did not trust them, so she thought the idea of the County being an authoritative voice was important.

Commissioner Cotham asked if the State was going to do it why didn’t they let them pay for it.
Commissioner Fuller responded he did not think it was an either/or situation and that they could do more than one postcard.

Chair Dunlap stated he did not question the value but did have some concerns as he did not think this was the role of government. He stated that another concern he had was when the Chairman of the Board of Elections tells me he already had 80,000 requests, that was indicative of the fact that the word has already gotten out. He said when the Panthers, Hornets, and churches were sending out this information, it was indicative that the word got out. He asked why the County should spend potentially $500,000 for the initiative. He said he would not typically pit one against the other but if he had a half million to spare, he would be doing something about tent city or the arts community, which was the one group of people the had not done anything for during the pandemic.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, stated Mr. Fuller’s motion did not include the second part, to also appropriate $500K. He said that secondly, he wanted to make the Board aware that listening to the Director of the Board of Elections and the comments from the Board, he would want to think carefully about what the County staff is being asked to do. He said the subject-matter experts here would be the staff of the Board of Elections, and he was not sure who the County Manager would designate to prepare the card, what information would be contained on that card, [inaudible], because County staff would not have the [inaudible] of the rules of the election, where and how and all of the circumstances, and if wrong information would be provided, it could be an issue for the County.

Ms. Diorio stated the way the action was crafted was that Commissioner Fuller was directing County staff. She stated she was not comfortable with County staff getting involved in election matters as it was not our role or responsibility. He said if Michael Dickerson agreed that was something his staff wanted to do, that would be fine, but that she was not okay having County staff prepare the postcards and sending them out. She did not believe that was appropriate.

Commissioner Fuller requested to amend his motion to appropriate the funding for this mailing. He believed there would be no reason why County staff couldn’t collaborate with Board of Elections; the reason he mentioned County staff was because they could not direct the Board of Elections to do anything. He stated it was not his intention to exclude them but just trying to keep cognizant of who they could direct to do anything.

Ms. Diorio stated she would recommend that he change his motion as the record would reflect the direction was to County staff. She suggested that he amend the motion to make sure that it was the Board of Elections which would provide the County with the information that we need.

Commissioner Fuller stated that was what he just said.

Commissioner Harden stated she was okay with the amendment.

Ms. Diorio requested that Commissioner Fuller restate his motion as it was not a collaboration, and the County would take direction from the Board of Elections on the language that would be on the postcard but that it was not a collaboration.

Commissioner Fuller said if she was comfortable that they could direct the Board of Election’s staff, he was fine to amend the motion that way.

Ms. Diorio stated she was not sure that he could but that she was not comfortable with County staff engaging in the activity with the Board of Elections not being the lead and giving them direction.

Commissioner Fuller inquired about the language for the postcards.

Mr. Dickerson responded that as far as the language went, he understood the County Manager’s concerns completely. He said they try to stay out of elections too except for
administration of it. He said his goal was that he never wants to put anything into question after the election was done. He stated that was why they stick strictly by the book with everything they do. He said they would put together the language of here is what the election is, election date, early voting, absentee by mail portal, but that was all stuff that would come out in a State release in the next couple of weeks anyway.

Commissioner Harden stated the County publishes that information on the website.

Chair Dunlap said it would direct people to the Board of Election’s website.

Commissioner Harden asked if they put the information on the County’s website, what was the difference between that and putting it on a postcard.

Chair Dunlap stated that every time they had a bond initiative, they had restrictions for what they could share which was why they hired someone else to run the bond. He said it could perfectly be legal but that he did not believe it was the role of government and he did understand the concerns. County Manager has indicated that she did not want staff involved. He asked if he had alternate staff. He said that he could hire contractors and that Mr. Dickerson essentially said the same thing, that he did not want to get involved, because in the end-

Commissioner Fuller said the problem he was having was he said that he wanted to stay out of the election but that the County provided election information all the time. He said he was not advocating that they do anything partisan or advocate for anything. He stated he just wanted people to have the information. He said if they want to contract out, that it would not bother him, as he just wanted the postcard to be sent.

Chair Dunlap asked Ms. Diorio who would do the language for the postcard.

Ms. Diorio stated she would just suggest that they ask Board of Elections staff to take responsibility for doing that, and if Mr. Dickerson was willing to take that on, she would appreciate him doing that, as they understood elections better than the County and that the County does not create the language for the Board of Election’s website.

Chair Dunlap asked if Mr. Dickerson was agreeing about creating the language.

Mr. Dickerson said they certainly we could create that language and they would duplicate the language the State sends out if that was the direction of the Board. He stated it would simply be put in as an educational piece for the voters of the County, not necessarily an administrative mailing. He said in his business, when sending out mailing to all voters, it would become an administrative mailing, and if you were list maintenance procedures, that mailing now kicks back another mailing that would have to go out if the card comes back. He said that unfortunately he was in a 90-day deadline, so he could not do some of his list maintenance with this, so that it would not be able to do anything for him except for be an announcement. He said he was hesitant because he already had 80,000, and by the time it got done, he would be up to 100,000/110,000 people. He asked how he would handle those 110,000 people who had already requested an absentee ballot by mail. He asked if he would throw them off the list or kick them out and do not tell them that they also have the option of voting by mail, early, or on election day. He said this was where he started to get concerned. He said to face it that they would get maybe 500,000/520,000 people show up for the election and probably 25% of those people will vote via mail and the rest of them will vote in early voting at one of the 33, early-voting sites and then they will have a smaller number the election day itself because everyone was so keenly aware of early voting and absentee voting.

Chair Dunlap said they were still trying to find a resolution to this issue.

Commissioner Jerrell asked, with respect to what Mr. Dickerson just said, if Mr. Fuller could clarify exactly what he was proposing to be on the postcard so Mr. Dickerson could carve out the folks who had already requested the absentee ballot.

Commissioner Fuller said he was hoping that they wouldn’t have to do all that work, that all they would do would be sending a simple post card to all voters. He said even if
duplicate or not, they were sending it to all voters, so everybody gets it. He said all it would say was that they have the option to vote by absentee ballot in this election: this is how you do it; you could do it online or in the mail. That’s it. He said the language should be language that the Board of Elections was comfortable with. He recommended the Board hand it to Mr. Dickerson and pay for it.

Chair Dunlap stated the concern was that Fuller still did not have the information to make his motion effective.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake to end the debate and vote on the matter.

With no second the motion failed.

Commission Fuller asked if it would be better if they said something more general, such as that the County authorized the sending of a postcard to every registered voter with this information, then County staff and the Board of Elections can manage how that is done.

Ms. Diorio said he can authorize it, and they would have to figure out the best way to get it done. She said it was not something they have done before, and she was concerned about potential blow back on the County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Harden to (A) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, authorize and direct county staff to immediately prepare and send a postcard to every registered voter or every household in Mecklenburg County informing residents that voting by absentee ballot is a safe alternative to the potential health risks posed by in-person voting, and clearly explaining the process for doing so in North Carolina, in advance of the upcoming November 3, 2020 election and (B) appropriate General Fund (0001) balance appropriation up to $500,000 to sufficiently fund this mailing and any suggestions made by Director Dickerson.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Fuller, Harden, and Jerrell

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously, to approve the following consent agenda items:

20-6270: Minutes


20-6314: Public Auction for Disposal of Surplus Equipment

Adopt a resolution authorizing sale of surplus personal property by public auction on September 19, 2020.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 31.

20-6321: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $15,051.70 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $13,672.50 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.
Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes, and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6328: Retire Canine Officer Carlos - Sheriff's Office

Retire and approve the donation of a retired Canine Officer to a Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office Retired Major.

THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

20-6261: Budget Amendment - Reduce FY2021 Budget Items Associated with The Republican National Convention

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance to decrease revenue of $682,635 from Federal Revenue to the General Fund (0001) within the Sheriff's Office and decrease expenses in the same amount for operating costs for the Republican National Convention and (B) amend the 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance to decrease General Fund (0001) balance appropriation by $50,000 within Non-departmental for the cost associated with contracted IT security consulting during the Republican National Convention.

Note: The FY2021 Budget includes funding for two items related to the 2020 Republican National Convention. Funding for operating costs in the Sheriff's Office of $682,635 was expected to be reimbursed from the Federal Government. Funding for additional IT security consulting in the amount of $50,000 was included as a restricted contingency pending confirmation that the convention would be held in Charlotte. A large-scale Republican National Convention did not occur in Mecklenburg County. As such, expenses and revenues included in the FY2021 Operating Budget will not be required.

20-6308: Set Public Hearing - Grant Application: FY2021 FTA 5307 Urban Area Transportation Grant Application – DSS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) schedule a public hearing on September 15, 2020 to receive comments on the application for FY2021 FTA 5307 Urban Area Transportation Grant for Fiscal year 2020-2021 and (B) authorize the Clerk to the Board to publish Notice of Intent to hold a public hearing.

20-6313: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase/Decrease)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $164,859 in State revenue from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH) in the General Fund (0001), (B) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to approve a decrease of $205,861 in Federal revenue from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH) in the General Fund (0001), (C) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $14,920 in revenue from the Ryan White Program in the General Fund (0001), and (D) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $1,242,342 in Federal revenue from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH) for the Epidemiology/Communicable Disease Branch in the General Fund (0001).
20-6317: Capital Reserve Expenditure - Cadillac Golf Ranch Driving Range (Park and Recreation)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appropriate $200,000 from the Public Golf Courses Consolidated Capital Reserve Fund (9002) for Infrastructure Repair.

20-6322: Construction Contract - Security Cameras for Park and Recreation Facilities

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to award a Contract to Security 101 in the amount of $501,022.75 for installation of new security cameras at Park and Recreation facilities.

20-6324: Health Department Amended Fee Schedule

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the new fees for Children's Developmental Service Agency - CDSA and Community Alternatives Programs (CAP) due to COVID-19 and (B) approve the new fees for Community Alternatives Programs (CAP).

20-6326: Resilience in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCast)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the creation of a part-time position funded by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) grant. The position is a Health Program Coordinator/Supervisor and is being funded by grant funds already approved.

Note: The Board of County Commissioners approved the Department to submit a grant application to SAMHSA at the May 2, 2017 meeting. SAMHSA awarded the Department $5,006,376 over a 5-year period. The funds are being used within the ReCast program to work with community partners to increase community resilience, improve behavioral health, empower residents and reduce trauma. This position will coordinate project management activities, resources, and information related to community engagement for ReCast training and pilot activities and events and will work with individuals and organizations to assist in navigating community systems and engaging in support services. The Health Program Coordinator/Supervisor will perform research related to broad dissemination and communication of trauma informed and resilience approaches.

20-6327: Budget Amendment - Sheriff's Office - U.S. Department of Justice – 2019 Justice Assistance Grant - Revenue Decrease

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to rescind October 15, 2019 Board Action (Agenda Item #19-5720) to recognize, receive and appropriate $141,069 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) that originally increased the Sheriff's Office revenues and expenses in the General Grant Fund (G001).

20-6332: Budget Amendment - Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (Revenue and Expense Increase)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate $4,238.52 from seized assets to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521) within the Sheriff's Office.
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COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

20-6335: Commissioner Reports

Commissioners shared information with the Board.

Commissioner Jerrell said he wanted to acknowledge Commissioner Leake and Chair Dunlap regarding their work on the $15 per hour minimum for CMS workers.

Commissioner Harden asked the community to be vigilant with mask wearing and hand washing. She was concerned about the community during the reopening.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell made note that September was National Suicide Awareness Month and Recovery Month. She asked to be aware of those things and to realize they were things the community was struggling with and things that coincide with the County and services the County offers.

Chair Dunlap stated they could not overlook the good that had been done with so many positive things and that the Board was to be commended for supporting those things. He stated that the hospitals would create some new strategies to go where the problems were.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:39 a.m.

_________________________  ________________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk    George Dunlap, Chair
BUDGET/ PUBLIC POLICY MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget/Public Policy meeting on Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 2:38 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Vice Chair Powell presiding.

Present: Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent until Noted: Chair Dunlap

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Vice Chair Powell called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

20-6369: COVID-19 Update: A report on the health, social and economic related factors

Dr. Monica R. Allen, Strategic Planning & Evaluation Director, provided a presentation that focused on the economic, health and social implications of the COVID-19 global health crisis along with the cross-cutting issue of racial disparities. Each section included the most recent data available, along with information related to the BOCC areas of interest and any emerging issues. She shared information at the National, State and local level to educate and inform.

Chair Dunlap arrived at 2:43 p.m.

Ms. Allen said since September 3, 2020, the number of insurance claims was about 1.3 million in North Carolina, from about 24 weeks of the pandemic. She said for Mecklenburg County, in terms of unemployment, there were three top industries which had been hit the highest during these three months at the local level: leisure and hospitality; transportation and utilities; and educational and health services. She said that unemployment claims had resulted in loss of income that was more widespread than the pandemic itself, affecting minority populations the hardest. She said when the crisis hit in March, the total number of claims for blacks was 35% and 46% for whites. For the white population it has decreased and increased for the black population. She said in April was when they saw the largest number of claims at about 60,000 for Mecklenburg County. The June numbers were about 20,000. She said that there were new numbers that income and equality would rise for years to come.

Ms. Allen said there was some developing plans to account for the pandemic’s disproportionate effects on communities of color. She said such actions could include focusing on housing programs workforce development programs, access to food ad childcare providers. She said they were able to raise about $19.5 million and get into the community about $14.9 million. The Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy’s unemployment assurance project was also something that was being done in the community in terms of helping people understand how to access unemployment insurance benefits and also remaining financially stable. She said while they could not complete the forms, they could advise and give guidance.
Ms. Allen said in terms of housing, one piece of data they found nationwide was that three out of 10 Americans missed their housing payment in July. Some research showed there may be a surge in homelessness by as much as 40% to 45% at the end of 2020. She said based on a July 2020 US Census pulse survey, 20% of North Carolinians reported they did not have confidence that they would be able to pay their mortgage in the next month or that someone would offer them a deferred payment.

Ms. Allen stated one suggestion from HUD was to plan for what was called a housing surge, to quickly move people into housing during a pandemic. She said the approach was used after Hurricane Florence in 2018. She said that Mecklenburg County had leased hotels for 359 homeless individuals with COVID-19 systems who needed to be isolated and as it related to CARES Funding, they were able to provide, along with the City, funds for mortgage and rent relief to residents. She said the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership expanded its rental assistance program and Social Serve will provide rental assistance, hotel stay extensions, utility payments, and staffing to support additional households.

Ms. Allen noted that there was often not enough food that they had in the past week. She said the food insecurity rate in 2020 were projected to be about 20% and that they were the sixth lowest out of all NC counties. She said when you layer food insecurity with digital divide, one thing the research revealed was that with digital divide impacting minority and elderly communities, it may be more difficult to promote food assistance programs to the public. She said that the University of New Hampshire suggested that entities develop model-emergency, food responses and there was some work around mobile food pantries and some other initiatives which related to the money they had put into the budget around addressing the food desert issue. She stated that Mecklenburg County was participating in a pilot program which would allow food nutrition services or SNAP recipients to purchase groceries online via Amazon and Walmart. She said Loaves and Fishes and Second Harvest Food Bank were providing extra food in the community as well.

Ms. Allen said small businesses were the backbone in the community and provided a strong infrastructure for individuals to thrive in the community. She said certain sectors tend to be more affected by the pandemic and have a higher financial risk in three areas: vulnerability around profitability; credit risk; and propensity to use retained earnings as a primary resource of funding. She said that in looking at minority small businesses, the numbers were worse for two of the sectors: accommodation and food services and transportation and the housing sector. She said it was thought that minority small businesses may see higher impact of COVID-19 on those operations. She said that one suggestion was to survey and the other was to provide businesses with critical information and technical assistance. She said that there was the creation of the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Fund, Local Fund, a business roundtable that was used to advise the County about reopening and small business relief grants had been issued. Ms. Allen said half of U.S. residents lived in a childcare desert and if childcare facilities close because of COVID-19 there would be long-term implications to working parents. She said the numbers of uninsured were likely to increase and that the percent of uninsured in Mecklenburg County was 16%. She said they were in September and did not have 2019 data and she believed it was due to the methodology change but that the question was what the uninsured members would look like in 2020 and 2021. She said one idea to consider was around Healthy People 2030, an initiative highlighting three critical components, taking a holistic approach to doing things, focusing on: increasing health insurance coverage; services that support individuals and families; identifying regular and ongoing sources of care; and timeliness in providing healthcare quickly. She said the State was working to deploy 100 community healthcare workers in the community, of which 26 workers and two supervisors would be deployed to Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Allen said approximately half responded to a survey that they or someone in their family delayed care. She said the CDC recommended expanding access to telemedicine to provide essential medical services. She said there was an increasing number of individuals nationwide who say COVID-19 was affecting their health. She said that 23% of North Carolina households indicated they had experienced symptoms of depression in
the last seven days and that number was higher for the Hispanic and white populations. She said the effects of COVID-19 on mental health was significant but not fully understood. She said that in terms of local response efforts, Cardinal Innovations had made a multitude of resources available to the public via its website and the County would put funds towards a COVID-19 behavioral health initiative, with projective funding support of about $1.8 million to support about 3,000 individuals impacted by COVID-19.

Ms. Allen answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

20-6379: COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on the COVID-19 response. Ms. Harris stated there was a data report which went out yesterday and cumulative cases were 26,631, with a total of 323 deaths. She said that there were 31 congregate living sites in outbreak status and three childcare settings in cluster status. She said the positivity rate had dropped to 6.2%. She said there was a total of 91 lab-confirmed infections over the last week, which was an average. She said the number of cases had decreased and the hospitalizations were stable, and the social distancing was fairly stable. She said with the holiday weekend just ending, they expected to see spikes in cases as they saw over the last two holiday weekends. She said the behavior they saw over the past holiday weekend was probably more significant than what they saw over the last two holiday weekends. She said there was also a reopening of some businesses over the weekend and universities. She said all of these indicate that there will be an increase in the numbers. She said they just needed to be prepared for that. She said with the additional activity of larger gatherings, those were the things that were really going to cause problems. She said they continued working with ALE and the ABC Board, and unfortunately, they were not able to be as responsive as she had liked them to be. She said if she had the wand, she would be a more aggressive than they were able to be under the law, but some of the videos over the stuff that had happened over the weekend was really terribly unfortunate. She said that in addition they were seeing was terribly unfortunate. Ms. Harris stated that in addition to that, they were seeing some illegal and impromptu, large gatherings popping up, because the crack down on some of the legal businesses. She said she appreciated what they were doing in the community but just knew what the outcome of those types of activities would be.

Ms. Harris said that the first group of COVID-19 Ambassadors would be hitting the ground and have another set which would be trained and ready go next week. She said they were starting with a priority list, which was based on referrals from law enforcement as well as complaining about businesses and restaurants which were not doing what they needed to do in terms of masking and social distancing. She said for all of those attending the large gatherings, they need to be tested. She said they were enforcing that over and over again and would be working with some of their new testing partners to create testing venues in some of the parts of the County where they were seeing more of those activities.

Ms. Harris stated they were doing a lot of work with CMS, as they were trying to determine when and how to reopen schools. She stated there had been a lot of discussion with metrics and that there were a combination of things that they needed to look at and part of it was looking at what they saw in the community and if they were having it within the school system, as well as their capacity with teachers, staff, and equipment. She said all of those benchmarks were being looked at and that they were working with them on that and a meeting would be had with the School Board next week.

Ms. Harris reviewed national metrics, with the number of cases per hundred thousand, stating that nationally, it was less than 10 per 100,000. She said the second was the percent positivity rate, which they were looking at less than five percent in the community. She wanted to be clear that the metrics alone would not be able to indicate to them when it was right to pen things and that there were other things that needed to be considered in the conversation but that it would give them a baseline. She said that they also needed to understand that every time they open something in the community, it would change the dynamics in the community and that shift would result in new cases as they adjust to
it and adapt to it. She said they also needed to understand when they saw the shifts and looked at the metrics, they would be having to look at a three-week period to see improvements before they could say they were moving in the right direction again.

Ms. Harris stated that the biggest challenge was in continuing the efforts which had allowed them to reduce the numbers thus far. She said the things that they knew they had going at them were the holiday experience that she had mentioned, flu season, increased activity, increased openings, and some of the frustration, which would lead in decreases in people implementing the prevention measures which they knew made a difference. She said it was up to them as a community, not an individual thing but something they would have to do together. She said they needed to continue to protect the vulnerable in the community.

Commissioner McDowell asked how they would know who the Ambassadors were.

Ms. Harris responded that they would look a lot like the Environmental Health staff with a shirt saying Environmental Health, a badge, and educational material.

Commissioner McDowell asked about testing.

Ms. Harris said they were doing about 3,100 tests a day in Mecklenburg County, which was a slight drop from their 3,500 a day but that they had increased capacity that was not necessarily being used. She said that people who test positive needed to be isolated. She stated that in some cases it was quicker than quarantine, which still sat at 14 days. She said they were increasing the ability to provide supports to people in isolation and quarantine, some of which was coming from the State and some within the County, to ensure their needs were being met while being asked to isolate in quarantine.

Commissioner Harden asked if they could have daily tests here for teachers, childcare workers, and frontline workers.

Ms. Harris responded that testing daily was more useful in surveillance than in necessarily detecting an infection and that it would eventually catch an infect but that testing someone daily, what you would really end up with was a lot of negatives. She said what they wanted to do was make sure they were getting testing to those who needed it the most and that they were really focused on the long-term care facilities, which were struggling and that for those in outbreak status, all of their residents were being tested two to three times a week, as well as those who were not in outbreak status, staff was being tested once a week. She said a lot of that depended on the positivity rate in the county based on recommendations from federal government. She said what they needed was access to rapid testing, as their turnaround time was between 24 to 72 hours at the outside right now.

Commissioner Harden asked why 37.6% was not reported.

Ms. Harris responded that it was an issue they hoped the State had fixed, because the reports would come in from the labs which collect the test results: the State required that demographic from the labs but the labs. She said in following up with the positives they would try to collect that information so they could add it to what they had from the labs. She said some people just would not report it.

Commissioner Leake asked if they were testing people at Jail Support.

Ms. Harris responded that they had offered but could not require them to be tested.

Commissioner Leake mentioned that a window of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center was broken out an would cost over $1,000 or more.

Dena Diorio, County Manager responded that she did not think that anyone was arrested for that.
Commissioner Leake stated they knew who did it and asked why they were being softly with them.

Ms. Diorio responded that they were not walking softly but that the City was the one which managed the building and that it was the Sheriff Office stage that were accosted by those individuals, so it would be really up to the Sheriff and/or CMPD do follow-up enforcement. She said it would not be up to the County to do that.

Commissioner Leake asked how to cut the money off.

Ms. Diorio said during the next budget cycle if that was something she wanted to support with her colleagues.

Commissioner Fuller asked about the plan with CMS which was being vetted.

Ms. Harris responded that they had met with CMS almost weekly for several months having conversation about their plans but that she had not seen a written plan. She said they had a lot of conversation with them about what might be in the plan. She said that as of late the conversations had focused on what type of metrics they may be able to use to help make decisions and their Board to make decisions about when they may be able to open and whether to do it fully at one time or with different age groups.

Commissioner Fuller said that concerned him that there was not more collaboration with the Health Department when he saw in the news that about the school system, which was responsible for 147,000 children and 19,000, at least, staff members. He said he hoped the School Board would be more assiduous in getting the Health Director's input when it came to the health of the children.

Ms. Harris responded that they had had numerous conversations about specific issues and things they needed to consider but that she had just not seen a written plan.

Commissioner Powell asked where they were with school nurses and custodian training for the health and safety of students. She asked how to respond to negative remarks about shutting down.

Ms. Harris responded that she recognized that the impact of the pandemic was broad and also about economics, mental health, and anything and everything that had to do with the community. She said it was not how they function but that in the community, one death was too many and there were 332 deaths so far. She said whatever they needed to do to prevent that from happening and the support had given to try to help folks to mitigate the other impacts that they were feeling from COVID-19 had been pretty amazing. She said she was not sure that they could ever be able to meet the needs of everyone. She said that if they did not take care of the health of the community, they wouldn’t care of the wealth of the community and that they needed to continue doing the things that would take care of the virus.

Commissioner Cotham said she did not have people complaining to her about large crowds. She requested to view the videos.

Ms. Harris described what was shown in the videos. She said that they had reports from CMPD about people renting out Air B&Bs and having parties. She said that she believed as they were cracking down on businesses, people were finding other ways to have events and that they were seeing more house parties and that unfortunately everyone in the house was becoming infected.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what it meant to be a super spreader and asked about the risk of the flu season paired with COVID-19.

Ms. Harris responded that schools were like petri dishes, and in the schools, they spread things like crazy and that children were super spreaders when it came to the flu. She said they knew children spread it easily and that they were watching COVID-19. She said they knew children could spread it and were less likely to show significant symptoms. She said
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that children have been kept in the home for months, so she was unsure what would happen when they get back out there. She stated that the CDC wanted everyone to have their flu shot by Halloween.

Chair Dunlap stated he had lost faith in the CDC as it appeared, they were not operating based on politics. He asked how they would respond to what may happen in CMS or UNC Charlotte.

Ms. Harris responded that there was only so much control that they had over the situation and were doing their best to put systems in place so that when there is an outbreak at UNC Charlotte, they would have conversations with them, finding out at what point they would shut back down. She said they were currently having those conversations. She said when they do not report cases, all she could do was fuss at them, as it was up to them to continue working with the County.

Chair Dunlap asked what they needed to do to get daily testing and the 15-minute, rapid test.

Ms. Harris responded that there were some 15-minute, rapid tests in Mecklenburg County but how accurate they were- She said that some people would get a positive on the test and go somewhere else the next day and get a negative. She said that UNC and the Panthers have the money to spend on the testing they were currently doing, and that part of it was having the money to bring that level of testing into the community until the State and federal government would be willing to support them in that.

20-6380: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Leake said that Beatties Ford Road was being cleaned with a street sweeper and spoke about the trash and beds not being picked up at Lincoln Heights and La Salle. She stated she did not want the community forgetting about the young people who were lost and what the cause was of the loss of life. She did not want the parents to think that those young people who lost their lives were not valued. She is hoping that someone will come forth and talk about it. She mentioned that only 36% of black boys in Mecklenburg County could read, yet they were forced to support an education system with money that was not educating the children. She said that CMS would say the County needed to give them more money but did not want to be held accountable.

Commissioner Harden stated that the long-term care facilities were struggling and that it was important to figure out ways in the community to look at the tragedy and to call it out for the tragedy that it was. She said they had to take responsibility for the fact they were not where they needed to be in terms of protecting the lives of the residents in long-term care facilities against COVID-19. She said they needed to look at it and talk about it every week and set goals for what they wanted.

She mentioned the revitalization in District Five’s Pine Valley and said that Mecklenburg County did a great job of putting a neighborhood park in Pine Valley and that there was a beautiful, new community garden in the neighborhood park that has done very well, bringing the community together. She said that James Williams was the Mecklenburg County Planner from Park and Recreation who did a fantastic job.

Commissioner Jerrell stated that Novant made the decision to consolidate their sites, so they would no longer have the Albemarle Road site. He said they were able to serve 76,000 people out of that site. He publicly thanked those at Novant, particularly Dr. Jerome Williams and Rocky McGregor for when the community said a site on the east side was needed. He also lifted up Jason Tuttle who owned the site. He stated the applications for Mecklenburg County CARES Funding would come out Monday and thanked Dr. Johnson and Ms. Diorio for their leadership around small business. Commissioner Jerrell announced that the County now livestreams in Spanish.

Chair Dunlap shared that he would bring forth a resolution on behalf of Sarah Stevenson at the next Board Meeting. He stated he had been in contact with CMS on a number of
occasions because they still wanted to have a joint meeting between both Boards. He said they felt like they needed a facilitator, because no one had confidence in the two Chair’s ability to control the Board. Chair Dunlap asked that Ms. Diorio offered them a facilitator or worked with them to get a facilitator so that the meeting would be facilitator. He said that September 10, 2020 there would be a groundbreaking for the Caine Center in Cornelius. Chair Dunlap wanted to know how they could change the perception with TIG, as some believed if you had money you would get a TIG, and if you did not you couldn’t get one. Chair Dunlap asked what their response was with tent city. He said they needed to be doing more than what they were doing. He requested that the County develop a response to tent city. He said most of the tents were located where the services were, and the only way they would move is if the services were moved. He stated they needed to be in conversation with the people at A Roof Above to develop a response.

Ms. Diorio said they had been working with the people at A Roof Above and that they had been trying to move them into housing and that they would work with them to provide additional support but that they rely on their non-profit providers who had outreach workers and the ability to connect them with resources to help facilitate them into housing. She said they would go back and have additional conversations with them about what they may need to be able to do more of what they were doing.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.
CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Formal Session on Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner George Dunlap
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent until Noted: Commissioners Trever M. Fuller and Ella B. Scarborough

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order and led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Fuller arrived at 6:01 p.m.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

- 20-6345: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6346: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6350: by Commissioners Leake and Powell
- 20-6353: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6358: by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell
- 20-6362: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6363: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6364: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6373: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6374: by Commissioner Leake
- 20-6383: by Commissioner Leake and Rodriguez-McDowell

AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS

20-6348: Proclamation - National Kinship Care Month

Commissioner Powell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation designating September 2020 as “National Kinship Care Month” in Mecklenburg County.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6365: Joint Proclamation - Hispanic Heritage Month

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation in English.

Wendy Mateo-Pascual read the proclamation in Spanish.
A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring September 15 through October 15 as Hispanic Heritage Month in the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Commissioner Scarborough arrived at 6:18 p.m.

20-6392: Proclamation - Sarah Mingo Stevenson Day

Chair George Dunlap read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Chairman Dunlap and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to adopt a proclamation declaring September 15, 2020 as Sarah Mingo Stevenson Day. Commissioners shared comments about Ms. Stevenson. A vote was taken on the motion and recorded unanimously. The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6351: Public Appearance

There were no speakers that addressed the Board of Commissioners.

APPOINTMENTS

20-6385: Appointments

Alcohol Beverage Control Board

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023. This Board requires that nominees be interviewed. The Ad Hoc Committee conducted interviews on September 3, 2020. Commissioner Jerrell, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, announced that the Committee made no endorsement of either nominee and recommended that the Clerk continue to receive applications through September 30, 2020 and bring back applications for nominations on October 6, 2020.

The recommendation carried unanimously.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023. This Board requires that nominees be interviewed. The Ad Hoc Committee conducted interviews on September 3, 2020. Commissioner Jerrell, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, announced that the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Courtney Rhodes.

The recommendation carried unanimously.

Ms. Rhodes was appointed.
Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring July 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Jeremy Arey.

Mr. Arey was reappointed.

Air Quality Commission

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring August 31, 2023 in the Health Professional slot.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Aaron Levy.

Mr. Levy was reappointed.

Groundwater Advisory Committee

The Board considered one appointment of an Environmental Consultant Representative to a three-year term expiring July 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to reappoint David Hanley.

Commissioner Jerrell stated they needed a process to incorporate more women into some of the specific boards. He said he knew some of them were specific skill sets but that when looking at the demographics, they needed to do a better job of trying to broaden it out to incorporate more women and women of color into the process.

Chair Dunlap directed the Clerk to correspond with trade organizations in an effort to increase diversity on committees.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

Mr. Hanley was reappointed.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term expiring June 30, 2021 in the Juvenile Defense Attorney category.

Commissioner Cotham stated that one of the two applicants did not live in Mecklenburg County, and the Board should table this appointment until the next meeting to see if any other candidates submit an application.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cotham and seconded by Commissioner Leake to table the appointment to the next meeting.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that she would not support the motion because Heather Johnson was an excellent candidate and that she was planning to nominate and request an appointment for her.

Commissioner Fuller said this particular slot was for a juvenile defense attorney, and he was also going to support Heather Johnson, who was the head of the Children's Defense Unit at the Counsel for Children's Rights. He said it was not a very large group of juvenile defense
attorneys anyway and he believed they would do well to appoint Ms. Johnson. He said the Counsel for Children's Rights attorneys had served in that roll, so it seemed most appropriate that Ms. Johnson would serve there.

Chair Dunlap stated he did not think that Commissioner Cotham wanted to get into it but believed there were other concerns.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Fuller, Harden, and Rodriguez-McDowell

The Board considered two unexpired terms expiring June 30, 2021 in the Youth category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Jalen Adams and Yosan Zerai.

Ms. Adams and Ms. Zerai were appointed.

Waste Management Advisory Board

The Board considered the request of the Waste Management Advisory Board to extend Ismael Sanchez' second term by one year allowing him to continue to serve on the Board as a member and as chair for one additional year expiring August 31, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to extend Mr. Sanchez' second term and role as Chair for one year.

Mr. Sanchez was reappointed to serve as a member and Chair of the Board until August 31, 2021.

PUBLIC HEARING

20-6381: Public Hearing - Grant Application: FY2021 FTA 5307 Urban Area Transportation Grant Application

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing.

Commissioner Fuller asked for more information regarding minority contractors.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to close the Public Hearing and adopt the resolution authorizing the County Manager to submit a grant application to the North Carolina Department of Transportation's 5307 Urban Transportation Grant program for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 (C) Recognize, receive and appropriate grant funds as indicated, if awarded.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 32.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS - NONE
MANAGER’S REPORT

20-6391: Proposed Amendments to Sick Leave Policy

Kiesha Scott, Deputy Human Resources Director presented temporary amendments to the current leave policy. She stated they had been looking for additional ways to continue to support employees due to the school closures as it was a challenging time for parents with children in the home trying to balance work and their school. She stated they had come up with some options for the Board to consider in support of the employees, keeping in mind that they need to still balance out the needs of Mecklenburg County, as they still have services which needed to be provided to the community as well.

She stated that the first temporary amendment to the sick policy would be for employees to be able to use sick leave to care for the child(ren) due to school closures or place of care that is closed due to COVID-19. She stated the policy currently did not allow that, as it was just for medical purposes. She said if it was approved, documentations of the school closure would be required, just like they currently do for federal FLMA due to school closures. She said the same process which was already in place would be followed.

Chair Dunlap asked if that was temporary or a permanent change.

Ms. Scott responded it was temporary during the State of Emergency.

Chair Dunlap asked if someone would let them know when the it ends if approved.

Ms. Scott responded absolutely.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney said that it would end when the State of Emergency is withdrawn from Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Cotham asked how employees would know three-days ahead of time that the child would need leave.

Joe Myers, Senior Associate Human Resources Attorney responded that it would only be for school closures, so they would have to give three-days’ notice and provide the documentation so they could verify the school was closed or working remotely only.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adopt a Resolution to Amend the Temporary Sick Leave Policy to Address those Employees with Child(ren) and Childcare Needs; this amendment would temporarily amend the Sick Leave policy to allow employees to use sick leave to care for their child or children because their school or place of care is “closed” due to Covid-19.

Ms. Scott stated the second amendment that they wanted to propose would allow for the employees who were now taking sick leave due to childcare issues to receive donation of sick time from other employees if they run out days from their own sick bucket. She said they would follow the same rules as the current policy donation of sick time, and the only difference they were recommending now was that they had approved that the employees could use sick leave for childcare purposes, they could now receive donation of sick leave from other employees to help supplement any time they did not have.

Commissioner Leake asked how many days.

Ms. Scott stated the max was 160 hours in one-calendar year. She said for the employee to donate the time to someone requesting it, they must have 240 hours in their bucket before they could donate that to an employee, and the minimum amount of time they could donate was four hours per-pay-period and the max-per-pay period was 20 hours.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to adopt a Resolution to Amend the Temporary Sick Leave Policy to Address those Employees with Child(ren) and Childcare Needs; this amendment would temporarily amend
the Donation of Sick Leave policy to allow employees who are using sick leave for childcare purposes to request and receive donated sick time for leave.

Commissioner Fuller asked with this policy what could they do that they could not already do.

Ms. Scott responded is that it could now be used for childcare purposes.

Commissioner Jerrell asked how they came to those recommendations.

Ms. Scott responded they put it together based on what they received from employees when they called the Employee Services Center or Human Resources Business Partners in the departments as far as concerns on how the County could come along beside them to help them more. She said if you look at what they currently had; they came up with that option.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

Ms. Scott stated that the final temporary amendment to the leave policy would be to allow for employees to go out on unpaid leave or leave of absence if they were out of vacation, sick, accrued holiday time, to care for a child or children due to school-care closures.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adopt a Resolution to Amend the Temporary Sick Leave Policy to Address those Employees with Child(ren) and Childcare Needs; this amendment would temporarily amend the Leaves of Absence policy to allow employees to take an unpaid leave of absence when they are unable to work because they are caring for a child(ren) whose school or place of care is closed; called “Extended Leave Childcare.”

Commissioner Harden asked if the changes were being matched on the City level or any other levels of government that they knew of.

Ms. Scott stated not that she knew of and that she stayed in close contact with the City as they get things approved but that she was not aware of them amending any sick policies right now.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 32.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6387: Meck Pre-K Remote Learning

Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager, provided information about the steps and timeframe that would be needed to do an assessment about whether Smart Start could successfully administer a virtual pre-k program that demonstrated “valuable and rigorous” instruction and what cost would be involved.

Mr. Trotman stated that in response to the Chairman’s request at the September 1, 2020 Board meeting, they asked Smart Start to provide a timeframe for when they could conduct an assessment and recommendation on whether their program could be administered virtually, while demonstrating valuable and rigorous instruction.

Mr. Trotman stated they gave parameters to Smart Start for providing high-quality, virtual instruction. He said Smart Start would take steps to fulfill the County’s inquiry. He said that Smart Start would determine the price of their needs and requirements to sufficiently administer a high-quality, MECK Pre-K Program, including costs associated with teacher instructional materials; cost of having two teachers to exclusively serve each virtual classroom; a Virtual Success Coach; and the cost of technology for families. He stated that Smart Start planned to complete their assessment and cost estimate for administrating a virtual MECK Pre-K Program by Tuesday, October 6, 2020.

Commissioner Fuller stated that he did not have a problem with the process and that his support of the original motion was to do exactly that, but the idea was to allow options. He
stated that he was not aiming to require anyone to do anything but just wanted them to have the option that a center could, if they met the requirements, to have the option.

Mr. Trotman responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

20-6372: COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director stated that the average case count continued to decline and that they were currently at an 80 case-per-day average, which was the lowest since May. She said there were 340 deaths and they continued to have 33 outbreaks among the long-term care facilities. She said one of the facilities, which had the highest number of deaths and biggest challenge pulling out of this, came out of outbreak status today. She said there was one cluster from a childcare setting currently. She read over a report from the CDC, which looked at the impact of the spread among young people, especially college aged, non-Hispanic whites. She stated it was more pronounced with the opening of colleges and that most were asymptomatic or without severe illness, which did not mean they were not posing a threat to their family or friends and something they needed to continue to be aware of. She stated that unfortunately much of the increase from 18 to 22-year old, white community, and a lot of it was from large gatherings.

Ms. Harris said that the daily hospitalizations continued to decline and that they were stable, with a report of adequate hospital beds and ventilators. She said the non-COVID hospital beds had returned to baseline. She said in terms of the positivity rate, over the last week, it had dropped to 5.7 percent and they continued to be on a slow decline with that. She said that any increases they see with colleges opening or Labor Day weekend would be continued to be seen over the next two to three weeks.

Ms. Harris stated they had been working closely with CMS on their metrics and that they were having their meeting September 16, 2020 to make decisions about school openings. She said they worked with them on a dashboard which gave a very general framework to help them make decisions about opening and at what level and all of those sorts of things. She said they wanted to insure it was about a general framework for decision making and recommendations. She said it did not include all datapoints or additional factors which may have to be considered in a particular situation, and they knew there would be more variables and factors that would need to be considered moving forward. She said it may be updated due to new guidance as well as current operational status of CMS and other considerations. She said the dashboard looked at a number of different things. She said August 9, 2020, they dropped into the yellow zone and on September 13, 2020 they were right at about 50 cases-per-100,000 in Mecklenburg County. She said July 26, 2020 they dropped into the yellow zone for the positivity rate. She said the 13th of September they were at 5.8%. She said if they were watching the metrics, before they would actually make a change, as they would want to see a shift in both of the metrics over a 14-day period of time. Ms. Harris reviewed the remainder of the metrics: school-level, case monitoring with cases, clusters, and active quarantines. She said they were also looking at district-level case monitoring. She stated they were also looking at district-operational metrics, including child nutrition, transportation, and making sure there would be custodial staffing and all the supplies needed to keep the places clean. She stated they would also look at school-readiness metrics, which would look at teachers, facilities, and the training available to teachers. She said the metrics would help the County in terms of making decisions in the community around how to open other things.

Ms. Harris said that testing was down, as seen across the Country and that the County was averaging about 2,900 tests a day. She said that CVS was providing five additional testing sites in the county and that they were also opening up to provide testing for minors 12 and older. She stated they were looking for additional testing sites. She stated 43% of people who tested positive got tested because they experienced symptoms. She said if anyone had a close contact with someone who was COVID-19 positive, with or without symptoms, get tested. She said if you were at higher risk due to age or other health conditions or work environment, you should get tested. She said if you had been to any gathering, you should get tested. She spoke about the challenges and importance of contact tracing. She said that most of the positives were coming from individuals who had attended family and non-family gatherings, typically private, or had been spending time at restaurants or breweries.
Ms. Harris stated they learned very early Friday morning that a number of people were receiving messages that were erroneous and the County very quickly got in touch with Health Space, the software provider of the program, and they were able to stop the messages going out. She said the message was not created by the Health Department but came out of their system saying they tested positive. She said that would never be a message they would give, negative or positive, over the phone or text messages or email. She said they quickly let the public know through social media and through Health Space. She said it came as a result of a regular maintenance they did, where there was a glitch in the system, which created this and populated. She stated it has been fixed and with no information compromised. She said all information from a survey link in the text message has been discarded.

Ms. Harris stated that since March 2020, they had social workers providing short-term case management and linkage to resources for people who were COVID-19 positive. She said to date, they had served about 3,000 residents and their families. She said they had provided food, cleaning supplies, personal-health items, and clothing and linked them up with financial assistance. She said there was a new, State-implemented program with financial support available through community-health workers. She stated they were working with the State on that with one-time funding.

Ms. Harris said the ambassador program kicked off last week and that five ambassadors had been hired and trained and that they were working to fill two vacancies. She stated they had visited 78 establishments: restaurants, gyms, and one bowling alley that they knew was getting ready to open up full blast. She said their most common concerns they had seen thus far was lack of appropriate masking, some issues with social distancing, and some occupancy limits. She said the overall response from the businesses they had gone to had been very positive. She said there were a couple that were not doing what they needed to do, and the ambassadors will go back for another visit this week to ensure they were doing as needed. She said the priority list for visits were coming from CMPD, hotline, and contact tracers. She said they had also been doing a lot of work with entities in the community, around: safer, reopening plans, including review and approving the plans; providing guidance and data to organizations; as well as conducting some site visits and doing quite a few hosting of virtual townhalls to make sure people were educated and folks know what they need to be doing.

Ms. Harris reminded everyone that it was flu season again and that the vaccines were available. She said most of the pharmacies and retail providers had them available and that the Health Department had some. She said they were recommending that everyone gets their flu shot by Halloween.

Ms. Harris responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Commissioner Harden said a lot of people were wanting to have Halloween. She requested guidance to be put out early on Halloween as communities were already with plans in the works. She asked if things had been put into place so there would no longer be erroneous texts messages sent out about individuals testing positive.

Ms. Harris responded they had been reassured by Health Space, an international company. She said what they said was it came from an extra comma or missing comma in a string of information and that was what flipped it.

Commissioner Fuller spoke about his concern with numbers going up for young white people.

Commissioner Powell expressed her skepticism on the cause Health Space gave the County regarding an extra or missing comma.

Commissioner Cotham expressed her anger towards the situation with Health Space and wanted Health Space to be present in order to address the Board. She wanted to know where the company came from, how they were selected, and if they had ever had the problem before. She wanted to know if Health Space offered to pay for any remedial costs.
Ms. Harris responded that they had not offered to pay for any of the remedial costs but that they would continue to work with the County to try to ensure they were comfortable with the work they were doing now.

Commissioner Cotham expressed her discomfort.

Commissioner Jerrell wanted to go on record to say they were nowhere near out of the woods. He hoped staff would have testing locations put on the website and said there would need to be a plan due to fears surrounding individuals getting vaccinated.

Chair Dunlap requested that the County identifies the locations of the rapid tests to the public.

Ms. Harris responded that there were not a lot of locations but that they would put out the locations of the ones that did.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the County Attorney could find out the parameters around Health Space and what the contract was and if it was possible to look for another provider should they feel the need to make a change.

Ms. Harris responded that they could look at the contract and that Health Space was working within a lot of different venues within the health system. She said the County was using them for environmental health but that she was more than willing to take a look to see what other options there may be, as well as having more conversation with them and expecting more of an explanation from them and even some communication with the Board from them.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6355: Center City Vision Plan

Clay Armbrister, President of Johnson C. Smith University, Center City 2040 Vision Plan Co-Chair said the effort would establish a comprehensive, strategic plan that would provide a “big picture” shared vision for Center City recommending projects, programs and policies that will help shape how our urban core grows, develops and improves the quality of life for future generations. It was important to note that the plan was not just about bricks and mortar but about supporting their people and how they could provide ways for more of our community to be able to share in our city’s success.

Mr. Armbrister said over the past two decades a lot had changed in the community, and it was a different place than it was back then, as tens of thousands of new people had made the County their home and brought new ideas and perspectives. He said they now had different priorities and challenges, such as equity and economic opportunity, which were issues that have recently risen even more to the forefront. He stated it was also a unique time in our history when they have an unprecedented opportunity to coordinate with and support multiple planning projects including the Parks & Recreation Master plan, the City’s Comprehensive Plan, and the Silver Line light rail planning work. Similar to previous planning efforts, the project study area includes Uptown and the immediately adjacent neighborhoods.

Mr. Armbrister said that from the beginning, they wanted to make sure they were engaged with folks from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. He reviewed the community’s priorities, including, better public transit; more public space; affordable housing options; greater variety in shopping; and more family-friendly events and activities.
Mr. Armbrister stated that heading into the spring they were making great progress when the world changed around everyone. He said they were all struck by the health and economic crises wrought by COVID and following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many others they recognized that it was imperative to determine how the plan could help address the realities presented by the pandemic and the current struggle to eradicate systemic racism and injustice. Mr. Armbrister said initially, the planning process was to be conducted within an 18-month timeline, with the intention of having a draft plan ready to share with the community by late summer but that given the events of spring, they knew it was important to pause and suspend what they were working on. He said they decided to re-engage with the community, to listen and to have conversations about the huge issues they were all dealing with while still looking toward the future and to continue to build a better Center City for generations to come.

Mr. Armbrister stated that over the past months, they had been hosting focus groups to hear more about the community’s vision for their Center City, to have frank discussions related to social injustice, the pandemic, and also how they could make actionable recommendations within the plan to address these challenges…

Karen Weston-Chien, PLA, Project Manager, Asset and Facility Management, presented an update on the planning process that began in August 2019. Ms. Weston-Chien said relative to equity & inclusion, participants told them that there was a need for more public investment in under-invested neighborhoods, particularly north and west of Uptown and that Uptown needed to better reflect the County’s cultural and socio-economic diversity, as well as serious effort to combat homelessness and the accelerating gentrification of Center City neighborhoods. She stated they were continuing to have the conversations as they further develop the plan and its recommendations.

Ms. Weston-Chien said they had developed a project framework to help organize the plan. She shared a few examples of what the recommendations would be like. She said the vision would be based on what the community had told them about the kind of place they wanted Center City to become over the next 20 years and that the place must be more inclusive than it has ever been before.

Ms. Weston-Chien stated they identified plan goals that would be critical to making the vision become a reality. She said that they wanted complete, affordable neighborhood, education, care, and enrichment for all and a more equitable, inclusive economy and that there would be physical planning recommendations for specific “focus areas” around Center City. She said they wanted several of them to address and break out of the 277 loop that had long been a physical and psychological barrier, dividing our center city, and its people from one another. She said they would present the preliminary recommendations to the community in an Online Workshop and would ask for their feedback and continue to solicit opinions through surveys on the website & social media, in addition to online notifications, they were distributing yard signs throughout the study area and will mail postcards in advance of the workshop. She stated they aimed to present a full draft plan to the community before moving into the formal adoption process in the first quarter of 2021. She asked Commissioners to take a look at the website at allin2040.com for more detailed information about the plan.

Commissioner Powell stated that she hoped they would take the voice of the public forward, because there were too many people with disproportionate sway who had turned Center City into what they wanted, and this was what the people wanted.

Mr. Armbrister and Ms. Weston-Chien responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

Commissioner Cotham stated she worried about commercial developers. She said she always thought Charlotte would continue to grow uptown but would it as the behavior was changing. She wanted to know if they were at the beginning of an area of decline for the City. She stated the homeless population was growing and mentioned there were more families. She hoped that in the final report, they would include the differences between what people were talking about after COVID, because she was hearing different conversations about the future of Charlotte now than what they heard earlier.
Ms. Weston-Chien stated they were fortunate they were not further in on the process wrapping it up before this happened so that they could go back and recalibrate and reconsider and have more conversations.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6367: Grant Additional Benefit Days for Mecklenburg County Staff

Commissioner Jerrell believed it was incumbent upon them to insure they acknowledged the work staff had been doing. He said it was easy when thinking about the community to not think of staff as part of the community and being impacted why what was happening. He stated that staff had been working hard over the course of while they had been impacted by COVID-19.

Chair Dunlap stated that this would not impact the budget.

Commissioners made comments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell and seconded by Commissioner Leake to adopt a Resolution Amending Mecklenburg County Human Resources Policy and Procedures to Add Two (2) Additional Personal Days for Staff for FY2021 only.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Lyles, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 34.

20-6375: Defining a Regulatory Definition of Transportation Resolution

Commissioner Jerrell read the resolution:

RESOLUTION OF THE MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS COMMITTING TO WORK TOGETHER WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO DEVELOP A REGULATORY DEFINITION OF MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE STRATEGIC MOBILITY PLAN THAT WILL INCLUDE VARIOUS FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION IN SUPPORT OF THE CHARLOTTE FUTURE 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO) AND THE MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK AND RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE PARK MASTER PLAN (MECKPLAYBOOK)

WHEREAS a safe, accessible and strategically planned transportation system provides connectivity through multi-modal transportation to all Charlotte-Mecklenburg communities.

WHEREAS a multi-modal transportation system includes a network such as shared use paths, greenways, trails, protected bike and pedestrian lanes, sidewalks and public transit.

WHEREAS a multi-modal transportation network that includes shared use paths, greenways, trails, protected bike and pedestrian lanes, sidewalks and public transit represents alternative modes of transportation and serves as an important connection to public transportation in our rapidly growing Charlotte-Mecklenburg metro area.

WHEREAS such a multi-modal transportation network promotes equitable transportation alternatives for individuals who do not wish to – or cannot - travel by automobile.

WHEREAS the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) is currently developing a strategic mobility plan in support of the City of Charlotte’s Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), and at the same time, the Mecklenburg
County Park and Recreation Department is preparing a new comprehensive park Master Plan, the MeckPlaybook, which includes a greenway master plan update.

**WHEREAS** these three planning and policy documents reflect an opportunity for transformative change in the land use and development patterns throughout all of Charlotte-Mecklenburg for years to come.

**WHEREAS** the City of Charlotte is responsible for transportation and land use planning and development and Mecklenburg County is responsible for planning, design and development of parks, greenways and trails; it is necessary for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to coordinate policies to effectuate an active transportation network that includes shared use paths, greenways, trails, protected bike and pedestrian lanes, sidewalks and public transit.

**WHEREAS** the Intergovernmental Relations Committees reflect shared representation from the Charlotte City Council and Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners and therefore serves as a unique opportunity to work together to support the development of a strategic transportation mobility system for Charlotte and Mecklenburg County that includes a multi-modal transportation network such as shared use paths, greenways, trails, protected bike and pedestrian lanes, sidewalks and public transit.

**WHEREAS** the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners recognizes that transportation includes all forms of mobility, and that a connected multi-modal transportation network would be a valuable and equitable asset for its residents.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners agrees to commit to work together to develop a regulatory definition of transportation that includes a multi-modal transportation network such as shared use paths, greenways, trails, protected bike and pedestrian lanes, sidewalks and public transit.

**AND, BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED** the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners agrees to commit to define a set of guiding principles and action items that establish the pathway for including this regulatory definition of transportation and action items into the strategic mobility plan in support of the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation comprehensive park Master Plan, the MeckPlaybook, which includes a greenway master plan update.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to adopt a resolution committing to work with other governmental entities and community partners to draft a working definition of multi-modal transportation that includes a network such as shared use paths, greenways, trails, protected bike and pedestrian lanes, sidewalks and public transit and acknowledge the need for all governmental entities to work together on plans related to transportation.

Commissioner Powell offered a friendly amendment to add the Mecklenburg County Environmental Leadership Policy to the resolution.

Changes would be reflected in paragraph 5 and the final paragraph as noted below.

**WHEREAS** the Charlotte Department of Transportation (CDOT) is currently developing a strategic mobility plan in support of the City of Charlotte’s Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan and the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), and at the same time, our BOCC Environmental Stewardship Committee is updating the Mecklenburg County Environmental Leadership Policy & Action Plan, and the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department is preparing a new comprehensive park Master Plan, the MeckPlaybook, which includes a greenway master plan update.

**AND, BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED** the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners agrees to commit to define a set of guiding principles and action items that establish the pathway for including this regulatory definition of transportation and action items into the strategic mobility plan in support of the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation comprehensive park Master Plan, the MeckPlaybook, which includes a greenway master plan update.
Plan, the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), the updated Mecklenburg County Environmental Leadership Policy & Action Plan, and the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation comprehensive park Master Plan, the MeckPlaybook, which includes a greenway master plan update.

Commissioner Jerrell accepted the friendly amendment.

A vote was taken on the motion, as amended, and recorded as follows:

Yes: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Powell, Harden, Rodriguez-McDowell, Scarborough

No: Commissioners Cotham and Leake

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 35.


Matt Olin, local artist, said they worked hard daily to develop resources, funding advocacy and promotion for the creative sector and artists and innovators and entrepreneurs in the creative community. He stated the creative sector was most at risk from COVID-19 crisis. He stated many were the first to be affected and many would be the last to return to work. He said it was estimated that the Charlotte-Metro area losses would be almost 21,000 in jobs and almost $1 billion in sales lost. He said that was the biggest downturn in the Country plus the fact that many of them are not qualified for existing COVID relief funds and were really faced with an urgent need, so now more than ever the creative community needed funds to help persevere through the crisis. He said that they were really one of the strongest resources in attracting and attaining talent and business to Mecklenburg County. He said they were needed on the other side of the crisis but to get them there, they needed them.

Mr. Olin said they were before the Board with a powerful opportunity for a public/private partnership to address part of the need with CARES Act Funds. He said that while Mecklenburg County, City of Charlotte, and private donations had acted quickly to bolster small business and some of the larger non-profits and organizations to employee creatives, there were organizations and individuals that did not easily meet the criteria for many of the available funds and grants and were in need of their help, so they really focused their efforts there. He said that they were focusing the funding on three specific groups, firstly, individual artists and creative workers, such as freelances and members of the gig economy. He said the second group would be the small and mid-size, non-profit organizations which do creative work in the county and the third would be large ones in the greater County. He said the suggested allocations would be a half of a million dollars laid out to the individual artists and creative workers from across the County. $300,000 to small or mid-size, non-profits, and $200,000 to the large-arts cultural non-profits.

David Dae-Lae Arrington, Hugh House Co-Founder, said they focus on equitable support for the communities of black and brown creatives and appreciated them making space to collectively increase visibility of the positive impact of Charlotte’s creative class has on the County and to advocate for the support of its more than 27,000 independent artists, creatives, and entrepreneurs. He said that his hope was that they not only hear their voice but would understand their value to invest in individuals who would plan an irreplaceable role of restoring the life blood to the County. He stated that artists and creatives were going through the same thing that a lot of the other citizens were going through. They were not different or separate but part of the County and hopes that they would support and advocate with them for those in need.

Chair Dunlap said that the City donated $1,000,000 from the CARES Act and that they had been asked to match theirs and the expectation was that they would get another $1,000,000 from private sector. He stated that a significant amount would go to the artists and creative workers.
Meeting Minutes  
September 15, 2020  

A motion was made by Commissioner Dunlap and seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to appropriate $1,000,000 of federal Coronavirus Relief Funds to Foundation for the Carolinas to support a public/private partnership for relief to individual artists and arts organizations negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Commissioner Leake asked if the Arts and Science Council would give any money to help.

Mr. Dae-Lae Arrington said they were part of the team that would allocate the funds to the large institutions.

Commissioner Leake asked if they would go into their budget to provide some money.

Mr. Dae-Lae Arrington stated that was not in the plan.

Chair Dunlap stated they had already done that.

Jeep Bryant, Arts and Science Council President stated that there would be no administrative fee and that they were providing their infrastructure to support Hugh House. Charlotte is Creative would help with convening the community panels to make decisions on where the money would go. He said they did support artists directly through existing grant programs that would be a special effort through CARE Act Funds to engage a diverse representation of panel and reviewers to make decisions to help artists and also small, non-profit organizations as well, which did not have to be organizations currently supported by ASC. He said the primary mission was in arts, science, history, non-profits could apply for the relief.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions and made comments.

Commissioner Powell asked if the money would be only to those who had not received funding yet.

Michael Marcicano, Foundation of the Carolinas responded that they would have three groups, large institutions, mid-size and small institutions, and individual artists. He stated he believed they did get a small amount of money through the COVID Response Fund, maybe $50,000 to two groups to give to individual artists.

Commissioner Powell stated she just want to make sure those that need it most received it.

Mr. Dae-Lae Arrington responded that they were only $500 grants, a drop in the bucket.

Commissioner Powell stated that it was extremely important to her that she saw more science and more elementary education of arts and science and programming towards youth.

Commissioner Cotham requested criteria for the allocation of funds. She said in respect to full transparency, the document did not list what federal dollars were received by the Ballet, Blumenthal, Symphony, Mint Museum or WFAE. She said the public deserves to know. In addition, she said she struggled with the amount they were being asked for. She said the City of Charlotte received $360 million in CARES funding while the County only received $39 million, yet they were both being asked to contribute the same amount.

Mr. Marsicano responded that he did not have the criteria for her but that it would be in development.

Starla Tanner, Assistant County Attorney stated that the funds must be spent by December 30, 2020.

Chair Dunlap asked that they wouldn’t even be considering it unless it met the criteria of the CARES.

Ms. Tanner responded correct.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

A copy of the handout is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
COMMISSIONER REPORTS

20-6378: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Harden stated that since September 11, 2020, they lost nine people in long-term care facilities in District 5 and stated that a heavy price was being paid for not following guidelines.

Commissioner Leake stated that she grieved for the 20 people who were killed in District 2 and asked those in her district to please temper their selves and value one another.

Commissioner Cotham gave a shout out to the Cain Center for the Arts and Woody Washam, Mayor of Cornelius.

Chair Dunlap said he received a phone call from new President of the NCACC, who appointed him to the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, one of the big seven and to let the Board know that police reform was one of the items they would be addressing in the upcoming year.

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously, to approve the following consent agenda items:

20-6316: Register of Deeds Automation Enhancement and Preservation Special Revenue Fund

Amend the Register of Deeds Automation Enhancement and Preservation Special Revenue Fund (8528) to recognize and appropriate $500,000 in fee revenue for automation and enhancements.

20-6341: Budget Amendment - LUESA Fund Balance Appropriation

Amend the FY20-21 Budget Ordinance to appropriate the transfer of $336,336 from the Code Enforcement General Fund (0001) Balance Reserve to the Technology Reserve Fund (9009) for the Electronic Plans Management and Electronic Plan Review System replacement project.

20-6352: Minutes

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: August 18, 2020 Special Meeting.

20-6360: Storm Water Program - Hazard Mitigation Catawba River Floodplain Acquisition

Accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from William D Luckey, trustee for the William D Luckey Revocable Trust, owner of property located at 1008 Riverside Drive, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 031-151-12), for $39,100.

20-6366: Decline Right of First Refusal - Hickory Grove Annex

Decline the County's statutory right of first refusal to a portion of Tax Parcel 108-013-24 (Hickory Grove Annex) that is owned by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education ("CMBE") to permit CMBE to enter into a lease with Charlotte Bilingual Preschool.

20-6371: Tax Refunds

Approve tax refunds in the amount of $13,362.95 as statutorily required to be paid, as requested by the County Assessor.
THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

20-6345: Budget Amendment - Community Support Services - Revenue Increase

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate funds up to $190,000 from Duke University as a sub-recipient of a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant to the General Grants Fund (G001) for year four of a five-year grant within Community Support Services.

20-6346: Budget Amendment - Community Support Services - Revenue Increase

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate funds up to $132,725 from Duke University as a sub-recipient of a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant to the General Grants Fund (G001) for year 2 of a three-year grant to expand substance abuse services within Community Support Services.

20-6350: Set Public Hearing - Preliminary Street Lighting Assessments

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously, to adopt Preliminary Assessment Roll Resolutions for the operating cost of streetlights in the Capps Hollow, Cardinal Woods and Cardinal Woods Estate, Hearthstone, McGinnis Village, Mountain Point, Mountain Point Estates, Royal Oaks and Spicewood subdivisions and set a public hearing on October 20, 2020 on the preliminary assessment rolls.

Resolutions recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document Nos. 36-43.

20-6353: Grant Application - Near Road Monitoring Grant – LUESA

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the submission of a grant application to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for up to $250,000 for the purpose of establishing a second “Near Road” air quality monitoring station and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the awarded amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Land Use and Environmental Services for the duration of the grant.

20-6358: Development and Lease Agreement - Pineville Library

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to (A) adopt a resolution titled "Resolution approving a Project Development Agreement by and between Mecklenburg County, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, and the Town of Pineville for construction, build-out, and lease agreement of the Pineville Branch Library within the new Pineville Town Hall"; (B) authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a Project Development Agreement between the County, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library, and the Town of Pineville and all related documents necessary for the design, construction, and lease agreement of a branch library within the future Pineville Town Hall to be located at 315 Jack Hughes Lane in Pineville (Tax Parcel 221-051-15); and (C) amend FY2018 Authorization Library Facilities Main and Spirit Square Ordinance for $1.8 million for furnishings, fixtures, and equipment.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document Nos. 44-45.

20-6362: Grant Application - North Carolina Senior Center General Purpose- Eastway Senior Center

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm submission of a grant application to Area Agency on Aging for North Carolina Senior Center General Purpose grant funding up to $15,000 to be used to
continue existing programming at Eastway Senior Center and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Park and Recreation for the duration of the grant.

**20-6363: Grant Application - North Carolina Senior Center General Purpose- North Meck Senior Center**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm submission of a grant application for North Carolina Senior Center General Purpose grant funding up to $5,000 to continue existing programming at North Meck Senior Center within Waymer Recreation Center and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Park and Recreation Department for the duration of the grant.

**20-6364: Grant Application - North Carolina Senior Center General Purpose- Tyvola Senior Center**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm submission of a grant application to the Area Agency on Aging for North Carolina Senior Center General Purpose grant funding up to $15,000 to be used to continue existing programming at Tyvola Senior Center and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within the Park and Recreation Department for the duration of the grant.

**20-6373: Budget Amendment - Rural Operating Assistance Program Grant Reduction – DSS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance to decrease revenue and expense in the amount of $651,636 from the NC State Rural Operating Assistance Program Grant in the General Fund (0001) within the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services.

**20-6374: Memorandum of Understanding with the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts for partial use of the Courthouse as Business Court offices.

**20-6383: Budget Amendment - Board of Elections - 2020 CARES Act Grant, 2020 HAVA Grant via the NC State Board of Elections**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate up to $1,114,579 to the General Grants Fund (G001) from the CARES Act and HAVA for the duration of the awards.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:49 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

BUDGET/PUBLIC POLICY MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely for a Budget/Public Policy Meeting on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 2:30 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Tribute to Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Chair Dunlap read the following statement by Houston, Texas Commissioner Rodney Ellis: This weekend we were hit with the news that Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had passed away at 87-years old. He said that Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was small in stature, but she was a titan for justice, and her powerful supreme court descent and decisions, which provided a strong supportive voice for gender equality and civil rights, would loom large in the history of our country. RBG, as she was known in recent years, dedicated her life to ensuring the Country’s constitution provide equal rights to all, regardless of their gender. From graduating at the top of her class in high school, to heading up the ACLU’s Woman’s Rights Project to arguing several cases on gender equality at the supreme court. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had already made extraordinary gains for women’s rights when she became only the second woman in history appointed to the Supreme Court. On the Court she became a symbol of defiance for her dissenting opinions, raising her voice when she felt the Supreme Court was not on the side of justice. When the Supreme Court struck down a key provision of the voters rights act, Ruth Bader Ginsburg issued a forceful decent against the majority; she knew that this decision would have serious consequences recognizing the Country had not eliminated all discrimination against the exercise of the franchise by the minority citizens. Justice Ginsburg fought discrimination in the court, but she knew the wide-spread impact that discrimination could have at the voting booth. Although she would soon be lay to rest, our hope is that her spirit would remain with us as this election season she raised her voice to speak for equity and justice, and this November is our turn.

20-6340: Elder Response Initiative - Critical Home Repair Program

Alesha Brown, Executive Director of For The Struggle, Inc., provided a presentation regarding their Elder Response Initiative Critical Home Repair Program that focuses specifically on making repairs to senior citizens’ homes in historically black communities. For The Struggle was a local 501c-3 non-profit organization, operated out of her home. The mission of For The Struggle was to use various outlets, including community outreach, policy reform, and legal action to advocate with and on behalf of communities to fight system issues of racial and social injustice. She stated there were three primary programs: community-response team; youth-impact project; and focusing on folks who were formerly incarcerated.
Ms. Brown gave the Board background information on For The Struggle’s elder-response initiative. She said that For The Struggle identifies the needs of seniors, via canvassing, in the communities they serve and that they have specialized attorneys to individually assist them. She said that their first canvassing event in January in the University Park neighborhood, and one of the main concerns the seniors had was the need for critical home repairs. She said some expressed distrust but that nevertheless they were still able to form a relationship with Rebuilding Charlotte and a new partnership with Habitat with Humanity to try to get the seniors some critical home repairs. Ms. Brown read positive reviews written by seniors.

Ms. Brown stated the critical home repair program would specifically focus on seniors living in historically and predominately black communities, because it was necessary to achieve equity and economic mobility for the communities that had been disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of gentrification, displacement, redlining, and more. She said that they were currently serving the Beatties Ford corridor. She said there were seniors from many other neighborhoods contacting them for services. Ms. Brown believed they would be able to assist seniors more effectively and expeditiously. She said while performing the program, they wanted to make sure they hired black-owned businesses and contractors to perform repairs, in order to provide opportunities to underutilized, black-owned businesses and contractors.

Ms. Brown stated they would contract with a general contractor to perform the critical home repairs and they had over 70 seniors signed up for service currently. She said when it came to the needed home repairs it was roofing, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, flooring, insulation, door/window, railing and handicap accessibility, and ceiling repairs and replacements were some of the reoccurring issues that seniors were having. She stated they started out with 38 seniors, not considering having a number of neighborhoods on the Beatties Ford Road corridor. Ms. Brown reviewed processes, requirements, and COVID-19 protocol. She stated the average repair cost would be $229,001, which would cover 100 homes. She said that they would not be able to do the program without being able to hire someone to help implement the program and handle the day-to-day.

Ms. Brown responded to Commissioners’ questions and comments.

Commissioner Cotham asked if proof of ownership would be shown when applying.

Ms. Brown stated they would check for proof of ownership with the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds.

Commissioner Fuller said he supported the effort.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how they picked the focus areas and if they were soliciting or receiving calls for help.

Ms. Brown responded that when they say Beatties Ford Road is a focus area it is because they actually canvass in that area, but they receive calls in other neighborhoods, and they never turn a senior away from prominently black or historic neighborhood. She said they were currently launching a food program.

Commissioner Harden expressed her love of the program. She asked if they did a $1,000,000 contract with Habitat for Humanity.

Dena Diorio, County Manager responded that they would suggest they use money from other housing sources.

Commissioner Harden believed the staff support for this was absolutely critical.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he was a huge proponent for going out into the community.

Commissioner Leake stated she still had seniors who had yet to hear from Habitat from Humanity. She stated there was not a fee, but there is a fee from Habitat.
Chair Dunlap asked why the County should pay the $120,000 in overhead costs, as other organizations did not have that expense. He wanted to know who the funders were. Chair Dunlap mentioned the average cost for repairs was $2,100 and stated that somethings may not be able to be repaired but may need to be replaced.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**20-6377: Mecklenburg County - Charlotte Works Workforce Development Partnership Update**

Danielle Frazier, President and CEO of Charlotte Works, provided an overview of Charlotte Works programs and services and demonstrated how $2 million allocated for workforce development will be used to enhance services to better meet the needs of targeted job-seekers. The presentation highlighted traditional roadblocks for job-seekers and illustrated how the funding will be used to tailor service delivery to help families earn living wages through education and training in high-demand fields.

Mr. Frazier reviewed Charlotte Works’ background information, stating that Charlotte Works was a 501c-3. She stated that NC Commerce was the oversight and governing body for the State of North Carolina under WIOA. Mission: Leading the development of a skilled, in-demand workforce by engaging businesses, aligning community partners, empowering and connecting job seekers to meaningful employment, and fostering inclusive economic growth. Vision: The Charlotte region is home to a thriving workforce system generating economic prosperity for all.

Ms. Frazier said there were three priority areas. Connect & Convene, served as designated arm of the Federal workforce system. We convene local partners to align initiatives and programs around workforce development. Inform & Influence, Charlotte Works champions workforce investments that lead to the development of a skilled, in-demand workforce that generates economic prosperity for all. Design & Impact, with a pulse on the current Labor Market Charlotte Works helps lead the development of an accessible and inclusive workforce ecosystem that promotes equity. She said that their strategic plan was different than any other they had in past year as it focused on the collective workforce system as opposed to just them as CharlotteWorks. They ensure their workforce system was effective by creating more alignment and collaboration among partners to increase capacity as well as connection for job seekers and businesses and to insure they lead with data, as well as connecting job seekers to the right opportunities and programs that will help lead to sustainable employment. Lastly, they want to ensure their system is accessible and inclusive on the services side and individuals obtaining employment.

Ms. Frazier stated that there were four programs provided under their umbrella: Youth Seekers; Adult Job Seekers; Labor Market Data; and Business Engagement. She reviewed a snapshot of NCWorks Career Center Services, stating that a total of 43,688* adults, with 12,456 on-air, had been served; 280 training scholarships had been provided; 143 training-related employment was obtained. Ms. Frazier reviewed a snapshot of the NextGen Youth and Young Adult Programs for ages 16 to 24, stating that 638 had been served, training scholarships were provided to 161; and that there were a total of 174 paid internships. She said that there were comprehensive wraparound services for individuals with significant barriers to education & employment. She stated that Charlotte Works champions workforce investments that lead to the development of a skilled, in-demand workforce that generates economic prosperity for all.

Ms. Frazier said they were predominantly funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and that they do receive a few private-sector grants and some additional state grants; 28% of funding goes to youth programs; 40% for NCWorks services out of the career centers as well as the partner organizations; and 32% for their expenses to operate and administer direct services.

Ms. Frazier said the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Workforce Development Providers Council (WPC) is comprised of 15 organizations that serve jobseekers and businesses in the
Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. The WPC is an advisory committee to the Charlotte Works Workforce Development Board that provides leadership for local workforce development efforts and collaborates to develop talent, respond to business needs and ultimately increase economic opportunity.

Ms. Frazier reviewed statistics for people drawing unemployment, stating that as of July 2020, there were 69,420 receiving unemployment, about 11.5% of the workforce. She said the hardest hit industries were trade, transportation, hospitality, and professional services. She said women, young adults, and communities of color were the most disproportionately impacted. Ms. Frazier reviewed the process of obtaining services. She stated that the average cost per participant was $10,000; however, they anticipate serving more individuals because not everyone would need training or a stipend or supportive services.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked what the $2,000,000 would do that it did not already do.

Ms. Frazier responded that one was training stipends, because they currently did not provide those. She said with this program they would be intentional with these career advisors.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if it was heavy on the administration side. She asked if she thought the funds going for participants was as high as it could be.

Ms. Frazier responded that with the $76,000, it was about 4% of the budget. She said they had an admin of 10%, and that was significantly lower than what the admin is even for the federal dollars. She believed as it was calculated and saw it was sufficient and a number of people at CharlotteWorks would be touching the grant, it would help the infrastructure costs to help support the program.

Commissioner Harden said it was not $2 million in one-time funding but in reallocated funding so it may be time to look at long-term evaluation. She suggested having a 10-year study done on some of the participants to see how the program impacted their lives.

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated she believed that was a great point and suggested hiring a third party.

Commissioner Leake asked where they place their people for education training. Ms. Frazier responded that Central Piedmont had developed a curriculum.

Commissioner Cotham asked how much money was currently received from the federal government.

Ms. Frazier responded a little over $7,000,000.

Chair Dunlap asked if there were any prohibitions against those that have low paying jobs wanting to move into higher paying jobs.

Ms. Frazier said no, none at all and that they target them. Chair Dunlap asked if the City participated.

Ms. Frazier responded that the City was not participating per se in this particular project but in other initiatives.

Chair Dunlap asked if there were any particular emphasis on the formerly incarcerated and those with disabilities.

Ms. Frazier responded that those individuals were part of personas of individuals around untapped talent. They were two populations they had really concentrated to ensure the talent does not go untapped.

Chair Dunlap asked if they had considered offering a child-care subsidy for those with children that would like to enter into the workforce.
Ms. Frazier responded that there was a line item for supportive services that childcare could fall under and the also had community partners through the County and others providing childcare that they would tap.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6389: Budget Public Engagement

Adrian Cox, Acting Budget Director, provided a presentation on the public engagement strategy for the FY2022 Budget. Public engagement has become a fundamental feature of the County’s budget process; this includes an additional budget public hearing, advisory boards input, a residential budget priority survey, added community workshops, an online budget simulator, and greater outreach to the community. The purpose would be to administer year two of the County’s budget public engagement process to gather feedback through the resident budget priority survey, Meck budget simulator, community workshops, and public hearings. The results from these engagement activities would be communicated to the board and assist with the development of the FY2022 recommended budget. He stated that their budget public engagement consisted of five different elements: resident survey, Meck budget simulator, community budget workshops, advisory board feedback, and public hearings. Mr. Cox reviewed objectives for the resident survey, stating that it would be to equitably engage residents in the community where they live, learn, work, and recreate to receive feedback on budget priorities and increase participation percentages for hard to reach populations including people of color and other community organizations. The Meck Budget Simulator would be to increase the number of persons completing the Meck-budget simulator exercise and to engage with CMS and CPCC to provide opportunities for students to complete the Meck budget simulator exercise. The community budget workshops were to engage residents virtually and in person within their communities and increase engagement numbers for the community budget workshops. Mr. Cox spoke about outreach.

Mr. Cox reviewed residential feedback demographics. He said that arts were mentioned frequently, and mental health was mentioned to be underfunded. The Sheriff’s Office received $1.3M to improve services in detention facilities; $350,000 was provided to expand therapeutic services for Raise the Age Youth. He stated that Mental Health of America received $180K through the Community Service Grant process for social and emotional learning initiatives. The County allocated a total of $2.6 million for the Arts & Science Council, including $500,000 in new funding to support the arts community with operational grants and $1,000,000 to support the construction of the Cain Center for the Arts. Education remained the highest resident budget priority. The County appropriated $727,000,000 or 51% of county revenue to Education through CMS, CPCC, and Early Childhood Education programs. Affordable housing and health and human services remained high priorities. Affordable Housing investments included $4.1 million in new funding for rental subsidies and critical home repairs, and Health and Human Services received $11.4 million in new funding, which included the food desert initiative as well as new investments in Public Health and Social Services.

Mr. Cox reviewed a community budget workshop flowchart and stated that some may be in person, virtual, or a combination. In terms of community breakout, there were two options they were testing: Option A would be broken out by area, zip code, and Option B would be broken out at random. Mr. Cox reviewed the calendar of activities which they would be responsible for over the next months.

Mr. Cox said that the following would be next steps: develop budget engagement survey, simulator, promotional material, and virtual workshops; set-up “text-to” service to help promote survey for mobile users; begin community outreach; kick-off Resident Budget Priority Survey in December; and hold budget workshops in February 2021.

Mr. Cox answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.
Commissioner Harden stated that if he wanted people to participate, people needed to be able to believe their voice was something to take action on and that their feedback would really be listened to.

Commissioner Jerrell said For The Struggle is using canvassing as an engagement tool, he wanted staff to consider dropping off surveys or a third-party, tele-marketing firm that could conduct surveys. He also recommended a number, with an IVR response system, being provided for people to call to broaden the outreach and engagement.

Commissioner Leake stated that it was important for the budget to be understandable and what the purpose of the budget was, as well as what the County would do with the funds.

Commissioner Powell stated that she believed in participatory government. She said it was important for citizenry to understand responsibilities of government and that they would have to have balance.

Commissioner Cotham asked him to consider having one in every district.

Commissioner Fuller stated that he wanted him to focus on was actually happening in the engagement sessions and if people were feeling like they have meaningfully engaged.

Mr. Cox responded that they tried to structure workshops to be 20% education and 80% opportunity for engagement.

Chair Dunlap supported the idea of virtual workshops.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6394: COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on COVID-19 data and the response to the pandemic in Mecklenburg County. Ms. Harris stated they were at 27,962 cases; 348 deaths; and a total of 33 outbreaks. She said the average testing continued to be less than 3,000 per day, which was a drop that they continued to watch. She said the average positives were around 74 per seven-day-period, which was a decrease over the last two weeks. She said the average hospitalizations were at 100 over a seven-day-period, which was a decrease over the past two weeks, and the percentage of positivity was at 5.4% over seven days, which was a decrease over the past 14 days. She stated this was all good news.

Ms. Harris stated the ambassadors had been busy over the past week, having visited 197 facilities. She said they were working flexible hours to insure they could address the businesses during the week and weekend, and the places they had been visiting were: 38 tattoo establishments; 106 restaurants; 47 fitness and gyms; and six others from CMPD referrals. She spoke about visiting the wine festival. She said there was a new app that had been implemented by the State called Slow COVID North Carolina. She stated it uses Bluetooth through your phone to allow users to know if they may have been exposed to a COVID-19 case, by tracking interactions of others who have the app. She said it was another contact tracing tool but that it did have some limitations as it did not take into account the infectivity period for the positive person nor the prevention measures which may had been in place when close to the person. She said that would not mean they were not exposed nor did it replace the need of avoiding close contact with others. She said it also did not replace the Health Department’s contact tracing.

Ms. Harris stated they were having nearly daily conversations with CMS as they were looking at moving towards opening up for certain populations. She said they were currently working with their Exceptional Children’s Program. She said there had been information that come out about UNC Charlotte’s reopening plans, which would include some limited classroom activity, a decision to not bring students back after Thanksgiving, as well as requiring all students to be vaccinated for the flu. She stated they did a lot of
work for the court systems as they were considering what they needed to do around jury trials. She said with the Panthers and others who had looked to the Governor’s decision to allow seven percent occupancy for outdoor venues, they were working with all of them to see what that may look like for them and what they need to make sure they had in place.

Ms. Harris stated there were four testing events scheduled on the September 26th, September 29th, October 3, and October 4th. She stated that they were beginning their work on vaccine planning and working with the State to understand what their planning process would be. She said the vaccine that would be available would come down through the State and they currently did not know which vaccine it may be nor when it would be.

Commissioner Harden asked what percentage of Mecklenburg County seniors receive flu vaccinations.

Ms. Harris responded that they did not have a specific number.

Commissioner Harden requested a plan to get up to 75% of the community vaccinated against the flu.

Ms. Harris responded that she would love to shoot for 75%

Commissioner Jerrell asked if the testing events coming up would have limited capacity. He also asked what the coordination and conversations with CMS had been relative to their new plans and if they would be doing anything to provide a mass-testing event for students and staff prior to the return to school.

Ms. Harris responded that all of the events are two-hour events. She stated she believed it would be a 200-capacity limit. Ms. Harris responded that they had some conversations around the possibility of doing that but that there were no plans to do it as of yet. She said she was sure the conversation would continue to happen and if they got to the place where they believed it was a good idea, they could have the ability to provide some access. She said that was an ongoing conversation with the school system.

Commissioner Powell asked where they were with school nurses.

Ms. Harris responded based on the schools which would open first, they were able to cover those schools and were continuing to recruit and in addition to that they have an agreement with a couple of nursing programs which could provide nurses if they would like to have nurses to be available in the isolation rooms, especially if they did not have a nurse on site. She stated they were looking at a number of different opportunities to insure the needed nurses would be available but that currently with the phased-in approach they were in good shape.

Commissioner Cotham asked in terms of UNC Charlotte if she felt concerned or less concerned or excited when she hears about openings.

Ms. Harris responded that she had been very involved with UNCC as they fought through this, so she was not surprised where they landed based on what they were seeing in the community. She stated that obviously she believed it was important for them to be able to open as much as they could in the community and that the students needed to be in schools, and people needed to be working. She said parents needed some stability in their lives but that they also needed to be cautious and needed people to continue practicing safety and prevention measures that they knew worked in the community and had gotten them where they were right now, which was a much better place than they were a couple of months ago.

Commissioner Fuller asked who created and who was controlling and managing the data.

Ms. Harris responded the State had been working with the systems within the phones at the State level to create the app, so it has the ability to work across states; it is not just a North Carolina app but it could in other places as well. She said evidently they had some
rotating numbers which collects data in a way that would keep it from being identifiable and other than a connection to your phone so that if something were to show up in the system that you were close to someone who put in the system that they had a positive test it would notify you directly through your phone. She said you obviously had to give it permission to do that and understand it would only keep this information for 14 days.

Commissioner Rodríguez-McDowell supported the idea of an aggressive plan for the flu vaccine. She asked in a regular year how utilize with flu vaccines were in the community.

Ms. Harris responded that she would bring that information back to her.

Commissioner Rodríguez-McDowell asked if she had an expectation of a spike in positive rates relative to Labor Day or if she was breathing easier. Ms. Harris responded the numbers had not gone up and right now it appeared that things will continue to move in the right direction. She stated she was cautiously optimistic.

Chair Dunlap there was concern expressed about having a particular location [inaudible] with educational institutions to specifically target teachers who took the test prior to going back to school. He asked if that was something they may be able to do.

Ms. Harris responded they could consider that and had a conversation with the school system to see if they could facilitate something, especially if they knew teachers were interested.

Chair Dunlap said he was always concerned about what he sees about North Carolina when watching national news compared to what he would hear from Ms. Harris. He stated the two did not jive and asked if there was a lag somewhere.

Ms. Harris responded that North Carolina was showing as being stable, which was where Mecklenburg County was. She said that now, in terms of red states, it was in the mid-west and western part of the Country.

20-6393: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Jerrell thanked Project Bolt and the Charlotte Hornets for going to Albemarle Road and Farm Pond where the team delivered 500 snack bags.

Commissioner Leake spoke about Lakewood park and school there, which was used for children with physical and mental impairments, that just closed. They spoke about reuse of that facility for the community. October 3, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. there would be a prayer vigil at Marshal Park.

Commissioner Powell asked a clarifying question about public hearing law.

Tyrone Wade, County Manager responded that under the new law the comment period could extend up to 24 hours after the hearing closed, meaning they typically would not execute a document for 24 hours.

Commissioner Powell stated that the previous night rezoning petition 2020-049 for 156 acres in the ETJ at the Catawba River, Lake Wylie protected area came before City Council. She stated that as far as she knew, the County Commission had not been asked for any input and that it was concerning to her that they could have a rezoning petition before them with no input from the County Commission. She said it was not consistent with Dixie-Berry Area Plan in that area. She said there would be a huge impact on environment, and there were residents who wanted to speak, and their native language was not Spanish or English. She said a lot of areas in the ETJ which had not been developed due to environmental concerns now had decisions made for them by City Council and she found it to be troubling.
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Commissioner Cotham said Friday would be the National Day of Remembrance for Homicide Victims. She gave credit to CMPD for each year they hosted an event for families who had suffered a homicide. She said that Friday it would be remotely.

Commissioner Fuller gave reverence to Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a pillar in the legal community and in our constitutional form of government. He said a quite a bit had been lost upon her death. As an officer of the Court and only lawyer on the Board, he would say how sad he was today, the pain he felt of what they had lost and regret he feels rising in him about what would happen, a political process he feared would besmirch the credibility of the Supreme Court of the United States. He offered a prayer for the nation to survive the loss and political macerations and that somehow people would come out and speak on November 3, 2020.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated she had conversation with Michael Dickerson, Director of Board of Elections, because of the map of early voting locations. She stated that it looked as though Mint Hill did not have an early voting location this year. She wanted people to know that Independence High School would be the location that would probably serve most of Mint Hill.

Commissioner Harden paid remembrance to Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She stated that mask wearing was critical and the lack of wearing one disproportionally impacted those people living in long-term care and congregate facilities, people over 65, and communities of color, so everyone must remain vigilant. She stated we must all resist and push back against anyone who foolishly believed it was a good idea to not wear a mask in a large gathering.

Chair Dunlap stated that losing Justice Ginsberg was a tremendous loss to our community and that her death was mourned. He double down on Harden’s information about continuing to wash your hands, wear your mask, and social distancing. He said they did not get the progress they had seen without doing that and that they could not stop doing that.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Harden to adjourn the meeting.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Leake

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.
MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 5:10 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present:
Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan B. Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, the invocation, led by Chair Dunlap, and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

20-6382: Commissioner Leake
20-6384: Commissioner Leake
20-6396: Commissioner Leake
20-6397: Commissioner Leake
20-6407: Commissioner Leake
20-6408: Commissioner Leake
20-6409: Commissioner Leake
20-6410: Commissioner Leake

OTHER BUSINESS

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to move the proclamations to the Awards/Recognition section of the agenda.

STAFF BRIEFINGS – NONE

CLOSED SESSION

20-6402: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to discuss land acquisitions and to consult with the County Attorney.
RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:16 p.m. to go into closed session in Room 267.

FORMAL SESSION

The meeting reconvened in open session at 6:04 p.m. in Room 267 for the Board of County Commissioners' Formal Session.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6420: Proclamation - Fire Prevention Week
Commissioner Powell read the proclamation and made comments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation designating October 4-10, 2020, as Fire Prevention Week in Mecklenburg County.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk’s Office.

20-6416: Joint Proclamation - Domestic Violence Awareness Month & Domestic Violence Survivors Day

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to adopt a joint proclamation with the City of Charlotte to recognize and declare October 2020 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month and October 15, 2020 as Domestic Violence Survivors Day in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Commissioners made comments.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

Taneshia Patterson-Powe, Chair of the Domestic Violence Advisory Board accepted the proclamation and made brief comments.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk’s Office.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6404: Public Appearance

No speakers addressed the Board of Commissioners.

APPOINTMENTS

20-6405: Nominations/Appointments

Alcoholic Beverage Control Board

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023. The following candidates were nominated:
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- Jordan Boyd by Commissioner Leake  
- Jerry Neal, Jr., by Commissioner Powell  
- Wilhelmenia Rembert, by Chair Dunlap  
- Kalif Rhodes, by Chair Dunlap  

This is one of several advisory boards that require an interview process conducted by an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board.  

The Ad Hoc Committee was appointed by Chair Dunlap and will consist of Commissioners Fuller (Chair), Cotham, Harden and Jerrell.  

This appointment will be brought back to the October 20, 2020 regular meeting for consideration.  

Arts and Science Council  

The Board considered one appointment to a two-year term expiring June 30, 2022 for the Southeast-District 6 position.  

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to appoint Debbie Baynard.  

Debbie Baynard was appointed.  

Building Development Commission  

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring September 30, 2023 recommended by the Associated Builder and Contractors Carolina Chapter.  

The Associated Builders and Contractors Carolina Chapter recommended Todd Brown.  

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to appoint Todd Brown.  

Todd Brown was appointed.  

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee  

The Board considered six appointments to three-year terms expiring September 30, 2023.  

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to reappoint Kelvin Brim, George Dortche, Eboni Lewis, Adrienne Martinez and Micha Simmons.  

Kelvin Brim, George Dortche, Eboni Lewis, Adrienne Martinez and Micha Simmons were reappointed.  

The following nominations for the final position were made:  

- Jennifer Boyce, by Commissioner Powell  
- Lorie Brown, by Commissioner Harden  
- Kerstan Ryan Pickell, by Chair Dunlap  
- Jacqueline Yelverton, by Commissioner Jerrell  

The final appointment will be brought back to the October 20, 2020 regular meeting for consideration.
Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term expiring June 30, 2021 in the Juvenile Defense Attorney category.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to appoint Tomas Larry.

Tomas Larry was appointed.

Lake Wylie Marine Commission

The Board considered two appointments to three-year terms expiring September 30, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to reappoint Daniel Mullane and C. Hunter Wilson.

Daniel Mullane and C. Hunter Wilson were reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring September 30, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to appoint Spencer Sam Perkins.

Spencer Sam Perkins was appointed.

Park and Recreation Committee

The Board considered one At-Large appointment to an unexpired term expiring June 30, 2021.

The following nominations were made:
- Srividya Ganesan, by Commissioner Powell
- Megan Gregory, by Chair Dunlap

This appointment will be brought back to the October 20, 2020 regular meeting for consideration.

PUBLIC HEARING

20-6399: TEFRA Hearing- Socrates Academy Foundation

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to open the TEFRA public hearing and receive comments on the proposed financing by Socrates Academy.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to close and adopt a resolution approving the Issuance by the Public Finance Authority of Wisconsin of its Charter School Revenue Bonds (Socrates Academy) Series 2020 in an Aggregate Principal Amount not to Exceed $28,000,000.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #46.
ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-6331: Library Board of Trustees Annual Report

Joe Helweg, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees, presented the Library Board of Trustees Annual Report. He spoke about the libraries outreach program, which goes out to schools and prisons; digital offerings; and mobile library, which will be coming in April of 2021. He stated they continued to work in support of their mission: to improve lives and build a stronger community.

Mr. Helweg said that strategic plan goals and operating priorities continued to focus and guide their efforts and investments. Their goals were: increasing access; improving educational outcomes; establishing the library and public commons; and increasing organizational capacity, excellence, and sustainability. He said the operating priority that sat under these were service delivery and digital. He stated that in the future, they wanted a service-delivery model where the teammates could be out interacting with patrons and being proactive about ways, they could make digital capabilities come alive. He said service design and investing in employees were big priorities and that the most important was with equity. He stated they were focused on promoting equity in everything they did. He stated they had named an Equity Initiative Leader, Pamala McCarter. Their Diversity and Equity Action Team, which also houses the Culture Team, was led by her, and they were assessing and developing the Equity Action Plan for the organization. Mr. Helweg stated that Lee Kiesler mentioned the creation of a new Racial Equity Taskforce, and internal and external participants were in the process of being located. He said the expectation was for the group to come back by May 2021 and to have specific action item recommendations.

Mr. Helweg reviewed where they have been and where they currently were on their re-opening plan. Recently, they made enhancements moving from phase one to phase two. He recognized the success of the team, stating they had zero COVID-19 cases. He stated they had a couple of areas they would emphasize, first, improving educational outcomes. He said they were adding virtual capabilities to provide additional education access and resources. He said they were excited to be moving to phase two, staying in sync with the County and following the distancing guidance.

Mr. Helweg read two letters received from CMS schools.

Mr. Helweg said they were using technology and innovation to improve access. He spoke about three of them. One was the Meck Tech kits; utilizing CARES funding, libraries partnering with minority businesses to refurbish and provide. He said right now it was 1,400, but they believed it would ramp up to 5,000 computers. He said the second one was the Institute of Museum and Library Services which made almost a half of a million-dollar grant to create a neighborhood wireless service provider in the West Boulevard corridor. The third one is laptop lending. He said five branches: Alegra Westbrooks; West Boulevard; Sugar Creek; Main; and Hickory Grove were all doing the laptop lending.

Mr. Helweg stated he was in the middle of a CEO search, as Lee Kiesler announced his intent to retire in March 2021. He said they formed a search committee and now had the position description live online. He stated they were currently at 70% of the overall goal. They received a lead gift of $10 million from the Knight Foundation and lead public investment is from Mecklenburg County, so they have $32 million committed and $45-$50 million in donor activity. They feel they can close the remaining gap.

Mr. Helweg reviewed some real estate highlights:

Support Services Center
- Construction costs were lower than anticipated.
- Kimbrell’s negotiations were progressing.
- Environmental work would start in September 2020.
- Construction completion would be expected in August 2021.
- Employees would occupy in October 2021.
South County Regional
- Construction was progressing.
- FF&E was ordered.
- Employees are to occupy in December 2020.
- Soft opening would be in January 2021.
- Grand re-opening would be in February 2021.

Main Library
- Architects were working on design development drawings.
- Projected completion date would be for mid-2024.

Other Projects
- Mobile Library was scheduled for April 2020.
- Pineville Library was scheduled for October 2022.
- University City Regional Library was scheduled for October 2022.

Mr. Helweg answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Chair Dunlap stated he received an email requesting that the Board considered adding to the CARES funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services. He said he did not know what the needs were but that he would forward the email to the County Manager to let her evaluate it and bring back a recommendation to the Board.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

LAND ACQUISITIONS

20-6402: Closed Session - Land Acquisition – Stewart Creek Greenway

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcel 071-122-06 (+/- 0.164 acres) from CSX Transportation, Inc. for construction of the Stewart Creek Greenway project for a purchase price of $60,000.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Lyles, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Cotham

20-6402: Closed Session - Land Acquisition – Northeast Area Park

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of a portion of Tax Parcel 047-112-01 totaling +/- 58.05 acres in the City of Charlotte from International Business Machines Corporation for a purchase price of $1,500,000.

20-6402: Closed Session - Land Acquisition – Durable Woods Solid Waste Site

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for a lease and eventual purchase of Tax Parcel 108-031-30 (+/- 11.92 acres) in the City of Charlotte from Durable Wood Preserves, Inc for Solid Waste purposes.
MANAGER’S REPORT

20-6413: Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) Pilot Project

Dena Diorio, County Manager, spoke about a proposal for the County to participate in the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing. This was a project with Lake Mist apartments, and Assent Housing brought forth a proposal allowing the County to use the property taxes paid as a way to provide rental subsidies for 30% AMI units over a 20-year period. They had to identify a non-profit organization that would administer the rental-subsidy program, and they have now identified Social Serve as that organization.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to (A) adopt a resolution authorizing the County Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with Archdale NOAH, LLC, and develop terms and conditions under which Mecklenburg County would allocate a total of $2,104,737 over a 20-year period to cover twenty (20) years of rental income subsidy for twenty-two (22) affordable rental units; (B) authorize the County Manager to develop terms and conditions and execute an agreement with Socialserve that will administer the rental subsidy program and (C) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to appropriate $105,237 from available General Fund (0001) balance to the Non-departmental Budget to provide the first year subsidy.

Commissioner Leake asked what they would do better to provide strong management, along with the encouragement of taking care of property. She asked how they hold people accountable to value the property that they live in.

Mark Ethridge, Assent Housing responded that the program at Archdale NOAH and subsequent NOAH properties that the group would require was emblematic of a private/public partnership, and they would be bringing over $5.5 million of private equity into the group in partnership with the City’s loan, year contribution in the form of rental subsidies and a $12.5 million bank loan; they would have a vested interest in insuring the success of the property and program for the residents. He said the capital they were raising for it holds them accountable to be active managers and owners to ensure they were preserving the property.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #47.

20-6419: Meck Pre-K Remote Learning - Assessment Update

Jake House, Smart Start, provided an update on the MECK Pre-K remote learning assessment. He stated the County requested that Smart Start assess whether or not it would be able to administer a valuable and rigorous, virtual, pre-K program. He explained what Smart Start was and reviewed Smart Start’s Parameters For High Quality Instruction:

- Separate classroom(s) for virtual instruction
- Ability to enroll 18 children per virtual classroom (full enrollment)
- Parental or caregiver participation in virtual classrooms and other educational support
- Teachers ability to provide technical resources and support to families to participate in virtual learning
- Two new and separate teachers per classroom operating virtual instruction from the classroom
- Development of curriculum that will be delivered virtually must be 5 days/week, 6.5 hours/day with fidelity to the existing MECK Pre-K curriculum with accommodations made for screen time
- Lead teacher and assistant teacher training on “Teaching Strategies Distance Learning Solutions” prior to commencing virtual instruction
- Development of tracking and reporting systems of child and parent/caregiver participation

Mr. House said the steps the took that were inline with what they were asking them to do was:
- Survey Centers (assess demand, ability to meet parameters, ability to pivot and convert virtual to in-person)
- Price out the needs/requirements to sufficiently administer a high-quality, rigorous MECK Pre-K virtual program.
- Assess its capacity and bandwidth to successfully administer both virtual and in-person programs simultaneously and to ensure the fidelity of the MECK Pre-K program is not compromised.

Mr. House stated that based on the survey results, 75% of the centers either did not meet the parameters required for a virtual program or did not want to administer a virtual pre-k program for Meck Pre-K. He said only 28 of the 40 centers actually responded with interests in completing a survey about virtual instruction.

Remarks from those in support:
- It would give them the ability to hire more teachers.
- They were already doing it (mostly NC Pre-K)
- They had a willingness to “make it work.”

Remarks from those not in support:
- In-person Pre-K was what’s needed. Teachers have adapted to the reduced class size
- They were already running virtual classes for NC Pre-K students.
- There was difficulty finding more teachers.
- There was no space in the centers.
- There would be a challenge of ensuring caregivers could give the time at home (cannot just be when caregivers want to log in to lessons).

Mr. House reviewed the needs/requirements price estimate. If required to do so, Smart Start could administer a virtual program to complement its in-person program, but it was neither a fiscally nor an operationally prudent move at this time given the supply and demand of virtual Pre-K in the County.

He said the recommendations go in three areas:
- Continue with the model that we know works - in-person Pre-K
  - Virtual Pre-K was always an option of last resort. MECK Pre-K has been successfully implemented in as safe a way as possible in childcare centers. In addition, centers cannot execute a high-quality, rigorous program at scale.
- Connect families who want/require virtual options to NC Pre-K
  - Thousands of virtual slots remain open (under 50% enrollment) even with NC Pre-K and Bright Beginnings returning to in-person learning on October 12th. They had the mechanism to support families through our application and communication process (MECK Pre-K application, newsletter and coordination with CMS NC Pre-K team).
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- Purchase the creative curriculum bundle for all classrooms
  - The online resources/curriculum complements their in-person instruction and could be used as a suitable and consistent go-to solution in the event of a COVID emergency shut-down. In addition, in a normal state of affairs (non-COVID), this solution could greatly assist families seeking to complement the in-person experience for their children. $800/classroom (3-year commitment) was justifiable and recommended.

Ms. Diorio, Mr. House and Trinisha Dean, Smart Start, answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6370: Update on the FY2021 BOCC Added Initiatives

Adrian Cox, Acting Budget Manager and Dr. Monica Allen, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Director, provided a presentation to update the Board on the new initiatives the Board approved during the FY2021 Budget process; including, but not limited to, food deserts, gun violence, reducing health disparities, My Brother’s Keeper, etc. Since the adoption of the budget, County staff have been working to effectuate the new initiatives and identify solutions that align with the funding.

Mr. Cox reviewed one-time investments:

My Brother’s Keeper - $50,000
Since July 2020, County staff begin meeting with the My Brother’s Keeper staff to discuss measures of success. After several meetings, County staff and MBK staff agreed to a set of performance measures. Contract language was developed, and contract would be executed in October.

Small Business Consortium - $50,000
The Office of Economic Development has collaborated with the Small Business Consortium to identify activities to educate and empower small businesses so they can maintain and/or grow operations and participate in County contractual opportunities.

Child Fatality Prevention Study - $75,000
The study is being conducted by UNCC, and once the contract is finalized, the University will begin taking steps forward to begin the study. UNCC is also identifying additional research assistance to join the project director and two lead facility members (primary investigators) team. Contract negotiations are underway and should be finalized soon.

Youth Conservation Corps Summer Program - $75,000
The plan is for a day crew(s) to be deployed in Spring 2021. The team will work seven hours a day (Mon -Fri) for at least eight weeks. Work will include, but not limited to, clearing brush, mulching, trail maintenance, and removing invasive species.

Park Investments in Underserved Communities - $2,000,000
Park and Recreation leadership solicited feedback from the Park and Recreation Commission on strategy for investments. The Meck Playbook (2020 Master Plan) inventory assessment is guiding the selection of projects. Resident input will inform improvements to be made at neighboring parks. Work is anticipated to commence prior to the end of the calendar year.

Food Desert Initiative - $3,000,000
The County Manager met with major companies in the area. OMB and Public Health have begun researching viable options to address food deserts in the
Cross-agency teams have been brainstorming potential solutions. Discussion with other organizations: Minneapolis (The Food Group); Louisville (Dare to Care); Charlotte (Loaves and Fishes). Completed site visit of One-Charlotte Food Pharmacy.

Mr. Cox reviewed one-time investments:

Roof Above Program with Men’s Shelter - $82,000
The contract with Roof Above has been fully executed. The contract for Hill Rock Estates committed the County to the following funding: 2021 – $82,133 for 2 Case Managers; 2022 – $246,400 for 4 Case Managers; 2023– $286,600 for 4 Case Managers.

Sustainability Director - $100,000
Staff have begun work to develop the job description for the position. The position, to be housed in the County Manager’s Office, would be posted in October with the goal to hire before end of calendar year.

HOMES (Helping Out Mecklenburg’s Homeowners with Economic Support) - $250,000
The Board received an update on September 1st and released funding from restricted contingency. Materials including the Frequently Asked Questions Document (FAQ) are complete. The FAQ document was shared with the BOCC, $320 staff, 311, and made available to the public. Promoted through a news release, web story, social media, and shared with towns and non-profits. Future outreach is planned. Outreach to 500+ homeowners with denied homestead applications was completed by the County Assessor’s Office. The Office of the Tax Collector is searching for potential qualified candidates who have struggled to pay taxes in the past. The new program HOMES (Helping Out Mecklenburg’s Homeowners with Economic Support) was up and running and 10 applications totaling $3,005 have been approved to date.

Gun Violence Prevention (Restricted Contingency) – $320,000
Public Health was creating an Office of Violence Prevention to provide leadership to violence prevention planning and efforts throughout the County. To hire a Violence Prevention Coordinator. Partnering with City of Charlotte to launch violence interruption initiative using Cure Violence model (contributing $250k of the $500k cost for year 1).

Reducing Racial Disparities in Health Care - $2,000,000
Public Health would implement multiple strategies to address disparities in access to health care and health resources: Continue efforts to embed additional public health staff in the community in alignment Novant and Atrium efforts to address health disparities and ensure access to healthcare services and social services. Expand Public Health capacity to improve maternal health and reduce infant mortality. Request proposals from community organizations to address the needs of pregnant women and new mothers in the public health priority zip codes. Continue expansion of the Village HeartBEAT initiative with additional “faith-based hubs” focused on community-determined health priorities.

Meck Works - $2,000,000
A proposal was developed between the County and Charlotte Works to create job training and career pathways for residents; the proposal includes partnerships with Novant and Atrium. The Board of County Commissioners received an update on the initiative during the September 22 meeting. A contract between Charlotte Works and the County for the Meck Works Initiatives has been fully executed.

Dr. Monica Allen spoke about performance tracking and evaluation for the BOCC Initiatives; the following types of performance metrics will be created and tracked: Output measures (short-term); Outcome measures (long-term); Impact measures (long-term). Ongoing report out by initiative owners, directors and community partners to the County Manager, Executive Team and staff. Information would be tracked by Strategic Planning & Evaluation and incorporated into the Budget team’s quarterly reports to the BOCC.
For strategic plan alignment, Strategic Planning & Evaluation partnership with County departments to integrate BOCCT initiative strategies, actions and tactics into FY2020-FY2022 departmental strategic business plans and into department directors’ annual work plans. County Manager’s Office staff would have ongoing participation in initiative meetings to ensure alignment to County and department short-term and long-term strategies.

Commissioner Fuller requested The Brown’s Superstore be looked into. He wanted to know how Village Heartbeat could be taken from a pilot to a program.

Ms. Dioro responded that she could look at Philadelphia and that they were in talks with Village Heartbeat.

Commissioner Harden wanted to know for racial disparities, out of the $2,000,000, how many dollars would be going into each category. She wanted to know if the requests for proposals were already out in the community for lowering infant mortality and where the proposals could be found. She wanted to see an actual plan with details on each bullet point with dollar amounts allocated to each initiative.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Leake to bring to the Board of County Commissioners a detailed presentation about the challenges of food deserts and possible solutions by October 20, 2020, including estimates and scale of problem.

Commissioner Cotham stated it seemed kind of rushed and that she was not comfortable with it. She would like the County to have a whole lot more time.

Commissioner Powell asked Ms. Diorio if two weeks was enough time to prepare the report.

Ms. Diorio responded that it was not enough time.

Chair Dunlap stated that Commissioner Leake had spoken about this before Commissioner Harden got on the Board. He stated coming up with a hard date would not make it happen.

Commissioner Harden stated they owed it to the community to be talking about it at the meetings and presenting the challenges and wrestling with it.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she would like to see the process they were going through. She felt it was information they had already seen before and would like to see behind the curtain who was working on it, how many people, and what the timeline was. She requested a meaningful presentation.

Ms. Diorio stated she talked to CEOs of grocery stores and let the Board know they were invited September 1, 2020, but they didn’t accept. She said if they would like a laundry list she could give it to them. She said for her to say she had not heard anything would not be an accurate statement. She stated the problem was that the economics did not work. She said if a food company could make money in a low-income neighborhood, they would do it. She said she could not change the economics. She said they were exploring other options, such as a mobile food store.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated hearing that made her feel better already.

Ms. Diorio stated that was the work but that the ideas were not baked.

Commissioner Fuller stated they wanted to talk about the challenges and possibilities.

Ms. Diorio stated if they had some meaningful ideas, they would bring it to the Board.

Chair Dunlap recommended that they schedule a Budget/Public Policy workshop.
designated for the purpose of food deserts.

Commissioner Harden stated upon that recommendation, she was willing to withdraw my motion.

Commissioner Leake stated the problem she had was that it was a form of segregation and they were talking about integration and changing the lifestyle of people that are black and the longevity to live. She said it disturbed her that the grocery stores would go to the heart of the black community. She said they could still discuss this is a form of discrimination and not justify why it was not being done.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if they had a grocery store plop down on West Blvd if it would that solve the food desert issue.

Ms. Diorio responded no, because there was more than one food desert in Mecklenburg County. She said they could not solve it with brick and mortar as that was not the solution.

Commissioner Jerrell stated it would be helpful for the Board to be reminded of the scale of the issue.

Ms. Diorio wanted to be clear it had never been her practice to throw money at problems. They would spend the money in the highest and best use to get the outcomes they achieve. To focus on the money was ill-advised. They need to think of the solutions, then the money would find its way where to go.

Commissioner Jerrell relative reducing racial disparities, he believed that there were things they were doing as a county, other than health care, that were interconnected, that caused disparity, be it racism, poverty, food insecurity and all those other things. He said he would like to see that they were addressing it in other ways that effect health. He said they could have a much longer list of what we are doing to tackle this problem from a comprehensive perspective.

Dr. Allen responded that it was a great point and that they had the ability to take multiple data and look at the relationships and correlations. She said they would do a review for the Board.

Commissioner Jerrell asked about the Homes Program asking if there was anything they could do as a Board to support it with the deadline looming. Mr. Cox said for them to most importantly share the information with their contacts; all the information was available at this link MeckNC.gov/taxes.

Fuller stated he had no problem naming names of companies they had asked to help with the problems in the community who said no.

Chair Dunlap stated that has it related to health disparities it ought to be clear why there should be Medicare expansion. He said it was never clearer, in terms of people who could not take care of their health issues, because they did not have the resources. He said one thing they may have to consider was to help people pay for their health needs as a way to help reduce those disparities. He said the only reason why that bothered him was because he understood the hospital system. If they knew there was money to be had, they will get them. He mentioned how Mecklenburg County spent $40,000,000 per year for healthcare for the indigent, then they realized no one else was paying into it other than Mecklenburg County. He said they went to court to get out from under it, because there was an obligation for the health care providers to provide the care anyway. He said they needed to address the issue of disparities as it related to health so that people could get their physical and mental needs addressed.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
Meeting Minutes  
October 6, 2020

20-6433: Restricted Contingency: Gun Violence Prevention

Ms. Diorio reviewed the request to release $320,250 in restricted contingency for gun violence prevention, stating that they had worked with the City for several months on gun violence, and the County was working with them on the implementation of something called Cure Violence, which was a violence interrupter program. She said they would be paying for half the cost of that.

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director said on October 13, 2020 they would come back with a full report. She said they stood up a violence prevention office within the Department of Public Health and finished interviews for a coordinator. She said they were meeting regularly with the City. She said a Violence Interrupter Program needed to happen. She said for Cure Violence part of it would be coming in and doing an analysis and assessment in the community; they were in the process of getting that started. She said they agreed to support half of the costs for the coming ear for that effort.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Leake to release $320,250 appropriated for Gun Violence Prevention from restricted contingency. A full presentation regarding the Gun Violence Prevention Plan will be presented at the October 13, 2020 Budget/Public Policy meeting.

Ms. Harris answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

20-6388: COVID-19 Response Update

COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Department Director, provided an update on COVID-19 data and the response to it in Mecklenburg County. She reviewed flu planning, stating their focus for planning around flu was to get as many residence as possible vaccinated, especially those in high-risk groups. They had been having conversations with the State and what they had found was that much of the available vaccine had been bought by the federal government. She stated they ordered vaccine early, as well as everyone else in the Country who ordered vaccine early. She said they had received some of it but not received as much as they had wanted. She said they placed another order, but it was fairly expensive, and it was limited amount available. She said they heard the federal government would be pushing it down to the State and to the Counties but that they did not know when that would come or how much it would be. She said the reality was that the availability of vaccine and ability to address the issue in the community could not just be a Mecklenburg County initiative.

Ms. Diorio said they had engaged their hospital systems and other providers in the community to work with them on that, and they were looking at the possibility of large drive-through sites. She said they were also looking at the possibility of combining flu vaccine with Covid testing in some of the high-risk communities. She said they were working with Public Information and some media folks in the community on a campaign to remind people it was time to get vaccinated and provide information on where and how. She said the State provided them with some dollars to address the issue of flu, but they could not be used to purchase vaccine.

Ms. Harris said they had almost a total of 29,600 cases in Mecklenburg County. She stated that the daily case volume had decreed a bit over the last two weeks, which was about an average of 90 cases a day. She said as of today that there had been 365 deaths due to COVID-19 in Mecklenburg County. She said they currently had 26 congregate living facilities in outbreak status, which was the lowest number they have had since July 12. She said they were seeing an uptick in their 20-39-year-old, white community, especially males and one out of four for Hispanic. She said that was not a disparity and that there had been a decrease in cases among the Hispanic community. She said for
hospitalizations that there was a slight decline and the hospitals were stateable and reporting that they had sufficient beds, ICU beds, Ventilators to meet the current need.

Ms. Harris said they had an issue with access to negative test results, and why that was important, they could not give a positivity rate if they did not have the negative test results, as they were both needed to come up with that rate. She said they had been using a subset of testing providers in the County who had been making the test negative test results available for us to come up with their positivity rating.

She said there was a caveat; these were PCR test, the molecular test. She said they could do a positivity rate specific to Mecklenburg County residents. She said Mecklenburg County had about a 5.5% positivity rate and that they would be using the State’s electronic reporting system going forward to put the percent positives out.

Ms. Harris said there was a recent increase in the demand for testing; they were averaging about 2,300 PCR tests, not including the antigen test. They were doing well with their testing availability and the turn-around times were great at 24-48 hours with an average of 1.3 days. She said they were updating their testing strategies, bringing in additional resources that the State was making available to them. There would now be mobile testing sites, mass testing sites, and rapid testing capacities increased. Most of these are short-term resources and based on how the tests were being used across the State. It would be a first-come, first-served situation. She said they were looking at targeting the testing at special populations: high-risk adults, hardest hit communities, and some testing with CMS staff and teachers, as well as some mass testing with college students going home over Thanksgiving. She said they still had the ability to host some drive-through sites at different places throughout the community. If there were groups willing to participate with the County in that, they just need to let the County know. She said they did not have to do much at all, as the County would have the capacity to go in and do it. The County just needs the sites.

Ms. Harris said that testing guidance had not changed: anyone with symptoms, anyone who has had close contact with someone who was COVID-19, anyone high risk, and anyone who had been to any gathering should consider getting tested.

Ms. Harris stated that there was an event at Olde Mecklenburg Brewery called Mecktober Fest from September 25 to September 27. She said they were starting to see cases coming from the vent. She said they were not yet at cluster status, but she wanted to get the message out to all who attended the event to get tested. Ms. Harris gave an update on the Ambassador Program, stating that 269 compliance inspections had been completed. She said they did some weekend surveillance at a couple of events, fall festivals, restaurants, Panthers’ game, and tailgating.

Ms. Harris gave statistics on other communicable diseases, foodborne illnesses and tuberculosis cases.

Ms. Harris said the first six months of 2020, the total deaths among residents increased by 13%. Half of the 13% were COVID deaths. A good chunk of the other half could be related to the pandemic, such as not going to the emergency room and from the uptick in homicides. She said the data was preliminary. She said that COVID-19 was on track to be the third leading cause of death in Mecklenburg County in 2020.

Ms. Harris stated the CDC put out broad guidelines and risk factors and so had the State. The County came up with some do’s and don’ts.

Commissioner Cotham inquired about statistics on suicide.

Ms. Harris responded that suicides had a mild uptick this year, and because of COVID popping in there, it fell out of the top 10 causes of death.

Commissioner Cotham asked what number 12 was.

Ms. Harris said she would get that information.
Commissioner Harden asked if there was a spike in cases from Labor Day.

Ms. Harris responded that there was not one like they originally thought there would have been.

Commissioner Harden asked why she thought that was.

Ms. Harris responded that she would like to believed it was because the community was being safe, doing what they were supposed to do.

Ms. Harris answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Presentation is on file with the Clerk’s Office.

**CARES Funding Update**

Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager, provided an update on the Coronavirus Relief Fund Spend Plan. The update began with a refresher of the investments recommended by staff and supported by the Board. Next, he would provide a summary, by category, of the investments in the Corona Virus Relief Spend Plan. He would then brief the Board on the feedback received by the advisory boards in response to a request from Vice Chair Powell to get input from the committees. He said they would then pause for policy discussion for personnel costs associated with responding to COVID-19.

Chair Dunlap asked how the $9,000,000 would affected the current budget?

Ms. Diorio responded that these were dollars already included in the budget, so it would not impact the budget negatively.

Mr. Bryant said they were salaries.

Chair Dunlap asked if there were additional needs in the areas where they had already allocated dollars and should they apply to be reimbursed $9.6M by CARES for personnel costs (specific to emergency response) or use money for aiding the community.

Ms. Diorio responded that they could not use it for revenue loss but for expenses incurred. She mentioned utility assistance and rental assistance and stated yes, there were additional needs in the community that she believed could be met if they were to appropriate those dollars to the community.

Commissioner Leake recommended looking at it from that perspective that if there were still great needs out there, they should respond to the needs.

Ms. Diorio and Mr. Bryant answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell felt strongly that they should use it in the community. She asked if they could put it in restricted contingency to help people. She did not want it to get lost in fund balance.

Chair Dunlap stated if they reimbursed their selves, they could use it for whatever they want to and would not have to follow the strict guidelines.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reimburse the County for $9.6 million in qualifying personnel costs with Coronavirus Relief Fund dollars and that the County may distribute any savings from the General Fund to the community as necessary.

**COVID 19 Response Fund**

Mr. Bryant reviewed the request for board action, stating that it was to appropriate $2,000,000 of the relief fund to the United Way and Foundation for the Carolinas to support the non-profit sector, specifically the funds will be used to provide general operating support to organizations with missions focused on health and human services, education, the environment, and civic engagement.
Ms. Diorio gave a little context, stating one thing they noticed while doing the appropriation of CARES funding they had helped small businesses and arts and cultural organizations. The City stepped up in a big way doing hospitality, hotels, and small businesses. She stated the one sector that had not benefited at all from the CARE funding was human service organizations or non-profits for operating expenses. She said they gave them money to provide assistance to people in the community but that these were organizations that run very lean. She said one thing they started to find was that a lot of the non-profits were struggling just to keep the lights on, because they also lost revenue.

Brian Collier, Foundation for the Carolinas, provided a presentation on the COVID-19 Response Fund. He stated they had raised $19.5 million and distributed just shy of $18,000,000. He said they had reviewed 850 to 1,000 applications that had been made over the rounds since March. He said they had made 323 grants to well over 200 agencies. He said their investor board gave guidance to focus the grants in the following areas: housing and evictions; childcare; mental health; and education. He said they were seeing continued child-welfare concerns, dealing with ambiguity in remote learning sites, mental health, evictions and foreclosures. He said Charlotte Water had at least $17,000 accounts in arrears; Duke Energy had a 70% increase in delinquencies. He said that there were huge increase needs that non-profits were facing, but they were seeing cutbacks in funding. He reminded the Board that they had rewarded $17.9 million and that they only had a $1.5 million left to meet the needs. He said of the $19,000,000 raised, 88% of that came from the private sector. He mentioned the County put up $1.3 million and the City put up $1,000,000.

Laura Yates Clark, United Way of Central Carolinas, provided a presentation on the COVID-19 Response Fund. She said the non-profit sector was strained, and the community needs remained at unprecedented levels, and non-profits represent 10% of the workforce. They have been meeting increase demand for months and were really starting to feel the pain of it. Many have had to cut staff and expenses, further weakening and already fragile system. She said they have had minimal operational support, as most of the funding has been programmatic cause. She reminded the Board that the community was depending on the non-profits to continue to serve during the time of great need. She believed the non-profits needed an infusion of general operating support to maintain the social and civic fabric of the community as they go through the recovery. She said they request $2,000,000 in CARES Act Funding to provide general operating support to the non-profit sector. She said more specifically, the $2,000,000 would be provided for the operating support, 75% dedicated to organizations with budgets over $250,000 a year, and 25% of it would be directed towards organizations with budgets between $50,000 and $249,000 a year. She said they were being very intentional to target sectors who may have not received meaningful funding, especially operating funding through other platforms. She reviewed the eligible sectors as mentioned earlier. She said they would have to display that they have had COVID-related financial losses that had not been covered by other programs, such as the COVID-19 Response Fund or PPP loans. She said the City also approved $2,000,000 for a similar program. She reviewed eligibility requirements.

Ms. Clark answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how they knew that $2,000,000 was the right number.

Ms. Clark responded it depended on how you count non-profits in the community you get either hundreds or thousands. The sector is large in this community, and they knew from the COVID-19 Response Fund applications, as well as the United Way funding applications that were coming in, that the financial impact on the organizations were significant. She said they were having to answer questions on every application.

Mr. Collier responded that if they were to approve the $2,000,000, coupled with the $2,000,000 from the City, so there would be $4,000,000 to meet some of the needs. He said they were trying to be careful with how much they asked, because he knew there were a lot of other needs in the community, so they were trying to be reasonable in saying...
the need is really $100,000,000 but that they could not do that. He stated they looked at a reasonable amount based on what the County and City had left.

Commissioner Harden asked how they could be sure there would be an equity lens put on it.

Ms. Clark responded that there was an equity lens put on all decisions they made, largely by ensuring they were supporting organizations that were minority lead, grassroots, neighborhood based.

Commissioner Fuller wanted to know where things were with the COVID-19 Task Force.

Ms. Diorio responded that they had two meetings, one on health, one on economic development, and one on public and government services sub-committees. She said they were now just getting organized and were not ready to engage. She said they also created an ad hoc committee which would be having their first meeting tomorrow to talk about what the quick wins may be.

Commissioner Fuller asked how they direct their resources. He said you have 75% over $250,000 and only 25% for entities $50,000 to $249,000. He had always been under the view that they want the money to go as far as they could get it and to reduce the ability of larger organizations to use up the majority of funding.

Mr. Collier responded that when they looked at all of the received applications for the COVID fund there were very few organizations there were in-

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to appropriate $2,000,000 of the Coronavirus Relief Fund to the United Way and Foundation For the Carolinas to support the non-profit sector. Specifically, funds would be used to provide general operating support to organizations with missions focused on health and human services, education, the environment, and civic engagement.

The presentations are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS

20-6418: Department Management Monthly Reports

Monthly department management reports for September 2020 were included in the agenda for information.

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

20-6398: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase)

(A) Amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $1,207,750 in Federal revenue from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH), Administrative, Local, and Community Support/Local Technical Assistance and Training (LTAT) branch in the General Fund (0001) and (B) recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $25,000 in Federal revenue for the Resilience in Communities After Stress and Trauma
(RECAST) grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

**20-6400: Easement Donation - Creek Bend**

Accept donation of a permanent greenway easement (+/- 0.184 acres) on Tax Parcel 193-162-30 from Creek Bend Partners, LLC.

**20-6401: Minutes**

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: September 1, 2020 Regular Meeting, September 9, 2020 Budget/Public Policy Meeting, September 15, 2020 Regular Meeting and September 22, 2020 Budget/Public Policy Meeting.

**20-6406: Tax Refunds**

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $8,996.18 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $141,457.56 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

**20-6412: Budget Amendment - Department of Social Services (Revenue Increase)**

Amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in federal revenue of $875,227 from the North Carolina Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services in the General Fund (0001).

**THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT**

**20-6382: Budget Amendment: Department of Social Services (Revenue Increase)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the FY2020-2021 Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in State revenue of $16,179 from the Family Caregiver Support Program Grant to the General Fund (0001) in the Department of Social Services and (B) amend the FY2020-2021 Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in Federal revenue of $18,179 from the Division of Child Development and Early Education to the General Fund (0001) in the Department of Social Services.

**20-6384: Budget Amendment - Land Use & Environmental Services Agency - Revenue Increase**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $60,000 from the State Air Quality Gasoline Tax to the General Fund (0001) within the Land Use and Environmental Services Agency and (B) increase the Land Use & Environmental Services Agency position count by one position in the General Fund (0001).

**20-6396: Grant Application - Ryan White Part A**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the submission of a grant application up to $6,635,596 in Ryan White Part A funds covering the period of March 1, 2021 through February 28, 2022 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) under the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Treatment Extension Act of 2009. Application is due October 7, 2020; (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate awarded funds to the General Grants Fund (G001); and (C) approve the
allocation process involving regional participation in accordance with HRSA of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines.

20-6397: Grant Application - Food and Drug Administration - Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the submittal of a grant application totaling $3,000 for a one-year period (January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021) to the Food and Drug Administration - AFDO to support training and maintenance of standardization as part of the Retail Standards Program. The grant application is due October 13, 2020 and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate awarded funds to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

20-6407: Intent to Lease - Pence Road Site

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for the lease with an option to purchase of Tax Parcels 108-031-30 (+/- 11.92 acres) with Durable Wood Preserves Inc., for Solid Waste purposes.

20-6408: Grant Application - Medicare Improvement for Patients & Providers Act (MIPPA) Grant

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of an application to the North Carolina Department of Insurance for a Medicare Improvement for Patients & Providers Act (MIPPA) grant for up to $11,000 to be used to expand Medicare and Low-Income Subsidy Education, Counseling, and Enrollment Services and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate to the General Grant Fund (G001) within Park and Recreation for the duration of the grant.

20-6409: Grant Application - Seniors’ Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of an application to the North Carolina Department of Insurance for a Seniors’ Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) grant for up to $13,500 to be used to continue existing Medicare Education and Counseling Services and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate to the General Grant Fund (G001) within the Park and Recreation for the duration of the grant.

20-6410: Budget Amendment - Mooresville to Charlotte Trail Donations

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate donations from various jurisdictions totaling $6,500 to the General Fund (Fund 0001).

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

20-6411: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Harden made notice to her wearing a pride scarf in support of the Supreme Court declaring that same-sex couples have the constitutional right to marry under the 14th amendment giving equal protection under the law. She stated she was proud that in Mecklenburg County they recognize that love is love. She reminded people to vote.

Commissioner Leake thanked those who attended Lift Up Charlotte stating the next would be 1st Saturday in November on Beatties Ford at 11:00 a.m. Commissioner Leake paid respect to Mary Turner, who became Mary Hopper, one of the founders of the African American Culture Center passed on Sunday.
Commissioner Powell asked how about rezoning. The City has the authority to do rezoning in the ETJ, but it has to be made better so that the Board of County Commissioners were part of the conversation. She said there was a reason why the parcels in the ETJ are not developed.

Commissioner Cotham stated she got her flu shot and want to encourage everyone to get a flu shot.

Commissioner Jerrell mentioned Lift Up Charlotte and said the County Manager spoke at an event to do with the Green Light Fund, and he wanted to make sure everyone understood the County’s commitment to the former inmates. He said they employee the formerly incarcerated, and when they give access to employment, it really reduces recidivism. He reminded everyone about the Homes Program, stating the deadline was October 19.

Chair Dunlap mate note of a joint meeting with CMS schedule December 10th. He shared concerns with the Mayor, such as that the County felt left out of a lot of things that the City does, yet the City comes to the County for a lot of support. She said they spoke about transportation, and he made it clear that the ¼ cent sales tax belonging to the County was off the table.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:37 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk
George Dunlap, Chair
BUDGET/ PUBLIC POLICY MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget/Public Policy meeting in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 at 2:32 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioners Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

20-6368: BILLINGSLEY MIXED-INCOME HOUSING

Jacqueline McNeil, Real Estate Manager, Asset and Facility Management, provided an update on the Billingsley Mixed-Income Housing Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the financing, construction, and long-term property management of County-owned property in the Grier Heights neighborhood. She stated the County was proposing redeveloping approximately 14 acres of County-owned property in the Grier Heights Neighborhood. She said the County’s framework for the project included a two-phase selection process in which the County released a request for qualifications. Ms. McNeil stated that the site the County was repurposing was a portion of the Billingsley Campus.

Ms. McNeil stated that staff conducted research with local affordable housing developers as well as residents of the Grier Heights Neighborhood. Several things emerged from the meetings. She said there was general agreement with the mixed-income housing approach; residents wanted to see a good balance of incomes and several housing types, from apartments to for-sale units. Residents said community engagement was important, and there was a desire to provide home-ownership readiness information so neighbors could be prepared for the opportunity to buy for-sale units. Community residents also requested a meeting space for the neighborhood within the development, as part of apartment amenities. She said there was also a desire to ensure the new development was sensitive to the history of Grier Heights. She said there was also concern about keeping the new development properly maintained overtime.

Ms. McNeil stated based on that input they created several key-project deliverables: the land where the rental units would be placed would be subjected to a long-term ground lease, and the land where the for-sale units would be placed would be sold as part of the process. She said the County wanted to see as much tree canopy and local biodiversity as possible maintained and wanted to see the path maintained. She said the County wanted proposals for the use of quality materials and overall design that would be integrated into the neighborhood and appropriate in scale and density. They also wanted to see the site developed with varying housing types from multi-family rentals to for-sale housing that includes single-family homes and townhomes. They would need to be available to a broad mix of income and provide long-term affordability. She said that the County requested a viable plan for long-term property management and maintenance of the development. The request was that the developer provided funding for the design,
Ms. McNeil reviewed income targets; 20-25% of all units at or below 30% AMI, and another 20-25% of all units at 31-80% AMI. She said another 25-30% at 81-120% AMI, and 25% of the units available at market rate. She said that regarding affordable for-sale units, there was a requirement that the units be House Charlotte eligible, having a maximum purchase price of $230,000 at the time of the RFP release. She reviewed House Charlotte program’s eligibility requirements. She said that regarding long-term affordability, they were placing a 30-year affordability term on the rental unit and a 15-year affordability requirement on the resale of the for-sale units. She said four respondents responded for the RFQ and the invited two to submit for the RFP. She said they were Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and Community Housing Partners. She reviewed the submittals by both Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership and Community Housing Partners. She said that it would be a total of 285 units, which would be broken into 155 multi-family, 80 senior units and 50 for sale. She said the proposal called for a total of six multi-story, property buildings, including a senior apartment building, a community center, and several parks and gathering areas throughout the community. CMHP proposed a 99-year, ground lease at one dollar per year with the apartments and for-sale site being sold at a minimum amount allowed by law. She said that CMHP proposed utilizing several sources of funding, including low income tax credits from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and other sources of funding as listed before you. She said that CMHP proposed having 66% of the units at 60% AMI or below. She said that CHP proposed having 20% of the rental units at 30% AMI; 30% at 80% AMI; and the remaining 50% split between 120% AMI and unrestricted.

Ms. McNeil stated that the County would begin working on steps leading to the execution of a development agreement with CMHP, including working on a term sheet and to socialize the plan with the community. She said they would bring it back to the Board with the term sheet, eventually leading to approval of the development agreement.

Commissioner Jerrell requested a breakdown of CMHP’s MWSBE track record. He asked for information on the breakdown of units for CMHP.

Ms. McNeil responded that they had not broken it down as of yet.

Commissioner Cotham asked when the 15 years of affordability would start.

Ms. McNeil responded those were things that still needed to be worked out but that their vision was that it would be 15 years from the time you take possession of that home or that it is old to an owner, that it must remain affordable for that 15-year period.

Commissioner Cotham was concerned about the lack of generational wealth among African American community. She felt it was being prolonged by doing that. She said if someone lived there and was trying to build equity and others who stayed longer would build much more equity and when the original person has to sale it for some unknown reasons, she really would not have the equity to pass down to generations.

Ms. McNeil responded that they recognized that it was a difficult position and a struggle for them as well. She said in an ideal world they would have both affordability and recognize the need for there to be generational wealth. She said it would keep it affordable for some period of time if you choose to sell and new buyers come along, so that they could realize the benefits of House Charlotte and homeownership, the same as the original owner did, but they did not want it to be such a long period of time that it would not necessarily be realized in the end.
Commissioner Cotham asked if the 15 years would start again with homeowner number two.

Ms. McNeil responded no; it would be for a period of 15 years.

Commissioner Cotham stated the second family could potentially get the equity that was paid in by the first family.

Ms. McNeil responded that they had not crafted it and that there was still worked to do with the attorneys around how exactly to draft that, but this was the vision, that it would be affordable for that 15-year period.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney stated some of it was because of using public funds for private benefit, and the statute required some restrictions on how long the units must remain affordable.

Commissioner Powell asked if it was standard to have a 99-year lease on land.

Ms. McNeil responded yes, for affordable housing projects you would want to see a lease that would be of a significant period of time for the developer to be able to secure financing.

Commissioner Powell felt that the leases were sometimes done for too long and that they did not have any resources, so she wondered about 60 or 75 years, as she would be pushing for fewer than 99 years. She inquired on why it had to be rezoned.

Ms. McNeil responded that the property needed to be rezoning in order for them to get the number of units that they were proposing.

Commissioner Powell told her that greenspace mattered and that meeting requirements was not good enough.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the land value would be contributed to the developer in order to make the financing work.

Ms. McNeil responded that the developer was not paying for the rental portion. She said that one dollar per year greatly offsets the cost of land. If they had to pay for the land that would result in a higher cost to deliver the project. She said they were putting restrictions on the affordability of the land for sale so that in essence decreases the market value of delivering that land as well, making it more affordable for that homeowner in the end to purchase the home.

Commissioner Fuller asked what the County’s role was at that point.

Ms. McNeil responded that the County would oversee the management of the agreement with the developer, make sure they were adhering to intentions that the property was well ran, that the property management was taking place as expected, and there would be a compliance component.

Ms. McNeil and Ms. Diorio answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Leake asked if the City would also be a part of this financially.

Dena Diorio, County Manager responded that it was primarily County but that there would be some City dollars that would go in to help close the gap in financing.

Commissioner Leake stated her concern was Brookhill, as it was also with a 99-year lease. She said it was said that they could not do anything with it; the City said no about rebuilding/refurbishing that area. She had a concern about two areas, as in one area they were doing two sets of building. To her, that was not fair to the rest of the County.
Ms. Diorio responded that they were in conversation with the group of folds from Brookhill about some potential opportunity to do some rental subsidies to those units, in addition to what those needs are that they needed from the City and the CHOIF. She said their gap was $13 million.

Commissioner Leake wanted to know if the City had been quoted.

Ms. Diorio responded not yet but that they planned to.

Commissioner Harden asked why they were using a Norfolk-based property management company.

Ms. McNeil responded that was the company that CMHP invited to be on their team; they had a long history with them, over 20 years or so and have been pleased with their service.

Commissioner Harden expressed that she believed for this project that they should be using Mecklenburg County companies. She also suggested that there be a high MWSBE threshold as well. She asked what step could be taken to fix that.

Ms. McNeil responded that they could have conversations with the team about their thoughts on that.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if this may be an opportunity for the County to utilize things like silver panels or make this an example of a really sustainable development from the ground since they would be able to start from scratch.

Ms. McNeil responded that the Commissioner’s point was well taken but that their proposal did include the very measures she was speaking of.

Chair Dunlap said they should make sure that the idea of remaining affordable meant if the first owner stayed 15 years, it would not be a problem.

Ms. McNeil responded that was their envision of how that would work, and there were additional conversations that they would need to have.

Chair Dunlap reiterated that there would be no problem with having to pay anyone back; you leave after 15 years and get that plus the equity. He asked when the lease would be reverted, the land would go back to the owner, which would mean Mecklenburg County would remain the owner of the property after the lease expired, but it could be renewed.

Ms. McNeil responded that Mecklenburg County would remain with the property the entire time. She said it was a lease, and they would not be giving up ownership.

Chair Dunlap said there would be additional costs for amenities, which would add cost to the housing, which would increase the cost that people would have to pay in order to get into it.

Ms. McNeil said yes sir.

Chair Dunlap stated they had never entertained a proposal where they accept someone’s proposal then tell them to separate their business.

Ms. McNeil responded that it was not in her experience that a company’s business was dictated.

Chair Dunlap said the County should either higher the company with what they propose or find another company which had what they were asking.

Ms. McNeil responded yes sir, if they meet the requirements and believe they would be the best team, that would be the group that they would typically go with.
Commissioner Jerrell said the real need in affordable housing tends to be 30% AMI and below and certainly between 30% and 60%. He said the under 60% only amounted to 25%. He said it was okay but not really getting at where the affordability need was. He thought they were trying to get to more in the 30% category than what was represented there.

Ms. McNeil responded that when it came to affordable housing, it would always be possible to get more, but it would just be a matter of who would pay for that. She said there would be a gap in funding if the County requested more than that. She said she was sure CMHP would be open to that conversation and that the County would have to decide what they were prepared to do to make that happen.

Commissioner Jerrell said the whole point of what they were trying to accomplish was to guard against gentrification, and he wanted to give additional clarification around how they were doing that. He said that east Charlotte took the brunt of affordable housing units relative to the community when you look at it on a cumulative basis. He said this was exactly what the community was asking for, not an over-abundance but an equitable and fair mix.

20-6443: VIOLENCE PREVENTION UPDATE

Gibbie Harris, Health Director Deputy introduced Raynard Washington, the new Deputy Health as of March 16, 2020. She said he was dropped into the fray of COVID-19, but he was still with the County, which was a good sign. She said he came from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health where he was their Chief Epidemiology and Deputy Commissioner. She said while he was there, he was able to make significant progress in expanding their data systems and public health reporting. He led the development of the City’s violence prevention strategy and championed the role of public health in local government with a focus on achieving health equity, all things that Mecklenburg County was trying to move forward with. She said prior to Philadelphia, he spent about five years in Washington D.C. where he worked at the HHS Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality on various health policies and analysis and evaluation. She said he was a native of Richmond, Virginia and completed his undergraduate and graduate training at the University of Pittsburg.

Raynard Washington, PhD, MPH, Deputy Health Director provided information and an update on Violence Prevention efforts in the County. Mr. Washington said he was sure that everyone woke up to the news that there were three shootings overnight here in Mecklenburg County. He believed it was a sober reminder for every one of the urgency of the issue and its importance and impact it has on the community. He said that violence increased across the Country and that it was not just a Mecklenburg County issue. He said they had seen a number of homicides and gun-related assaults in the County increase over the last year. He said they were on track for the number to exceed last year’s as they were now up to 94 homicides that were being investigated in Mecklenburg County for this year. He said the County and City had taken a step back to think about how they could address violence as a public health issue, because it was a public health issue, as anything that impacted the health of people in communities would be one. He said the first process for them in public health was to understand what the problem was, to define the issue, define who it impacted, what were the risk factors for the issue, what were the protective factors that they may be able to increase in the communities, and once they learn and understand more about what was causing the problem, they would work to then try to develop strategies to stop it or prevent it. He said the framework would allow them to then take those things they identify that work and scale them up larger and replicate them in other communities. He said they needed to look at who was impacted, what neighborhoods and communities, what people were impacted and try to find ways to prevent it at the root causes.

Mr. Washington said that last year, the Health Department, County, and City convened a group of stakeholders, Board of Commissioners, some city councilmembers, and community members to really start the discussion of how to actually put some framework to address violence in the community. He said it would follow a continuum between policy
initiatives, programs, as well as core practice. He said there were five buckets. The first was intergovernmental collaboration. He would talk about how they set up structure around collaboration across the governments, as well as community engagement. He said this was really focused on mobilizing communities to be a part of this process and to also be champions for themselves when it came to making headway in not just violence but also economic opportunity and being a healthier, more resilient community. He said in the center of it is really using data and evidence, as they do not want to make investments and initiatives and programs which would not be effective, and they want to insure they understood what the root causes were and not throwing money at things that would not have an impact. He said they needed to make the investments based on the data and had to do it in the community. He said they had to make investments in community initiatives that really work toward imploring as well as having folks in the community lead the efforts. He said it could not be them going into the community trying to set up their own operations but that they need folks who were in the community, because they had the solutions and answers in many cases. He said the last of these is that they had to do whatever they could to interrupt violence, including both actions on the prevention side and also know the law enforcement side to insure they were doing everything possible to disrupt violence which may be occurring in the communities.

Mr. Washington wanted to be laser focused in terms of where violence was happening to ensure the investments were going in the areas where violence was occurring. He said they had already identified four priority areas that have the largest rates of violent crimes in terms of homicides and shootings. He said the areas were: I-85 and Sugar Creek; Beatties Ford and LaSalle area corridor; Nations Ford and Arrowood area; and the Central Avenue and Sharron Amity Road. He said the areas had been prioritized already in conversations, not just with this Board but also the City Council and law enforcement and community members and leaders. He stated part of the equation for them was making sure they kept all the partners together in a way that made sense, in a structure that was sustainable and not just temporary. He said a lot of times they have task forces and committees and things that come and go, but they really want to institutionalize the structure as a part of just county and City operations as well as engagements with the community.

Mr. Washington said the organizational scheme gave them a sense of their thinking around how things may be structured. At the top would be residents, because at the heart of all the work done in violence prevention, are the members of the community and the folks who live in the communities are impacted by violence, so their input, guidance, effort, and work were critical to the operation and making impact. He said they had formed a steering team, led by the City and County Managers, and they were currently meeting on at least a monthly basis for conversations on the various initiatives that would be pursued together. He said the team was meant to serve as the clue for the efforts. He said the group reports to the City Council and Board of County Commissioners, and both of the bodies have subcommittees with direct relevance to the work that is being talked about with violence prevention. He said they had also separately convened a group of stakeholders, which would really help shape the work that would take place. He said they had reconvened earlier this summer after a COVID-19 delay and they would convene at least quarterly to give updates and to learn more about what could and should be done to address the issue. He said they hoped the structure would be sustainable so it could be a part of what they do on a routine basis. He said the team was made up of folks from the Health Department, Police Department, Sherriff’s Office, Criminal Justice Services and represents a full complement of the partners needed to make this happen.

Mr. Washington said they were also establishing the Mecklenburg County Public Health Office of Violence Prevention as a home for violent prevention initiatives within the County infrastructure. He said this would also create a sustainable home for gun violence prevention initiatives in the County infrastructure. He stated that they were currently recruiting a Senior Health Manager to be the leader of this office, and the individual would hopefully be on board very soon. He stated they were happy to report that they were interviewing candidates for the last two weeks and have identified a finalist for the position. He said there were representatives from both the County and the City on the interview panel and there was also a separate community panel with individuals from the stakeholder group which interviewed candidates and provided direct input to ensure they
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were engaging folks at every level of the process. He said the vision for the office was that it would serve as the glue for these initiatives across the County so that the individual and the City and other stakeholder groups to try to work in the community on a regular basis to move the initiatives forward. He said they also provide staff support to the Intergovernmental Steering Team as well as work to implement initiatives directly to prevent violence in the community and overseeing the investments that the Board allocated for this fiscal year and beyond. He said that they launched the violence prevention data collaborative last fall. He said it was meant to be an inter-agency working group among public health staff, City staff, staff from the Criminal Justice Program, hospitals, and schools to be a data source. He said the group met regularly and were conducting a number of analysis and he was hopeful that they would start to see more reporting coming from the group in the months and days to come. He said they were also serving as a technical-expert panel for any community groups working in the violence prevention space. He said that often times they would have folks in the community doing really great work to prevent violence, but they would need technical assistance, especially with demonstrating how effective their programs would be. He said the group would serve as a think tank of experts who would be able to provide evaluation support to the various initiatives in the County. He said they also recently published the violence prevention dashboard, which at this point only included information from the law enforcement side of the house, but they were working very ambitiously and aggressively to get more data from Trump Public Health, the hospital systems, and other data on social determinants of health in the communities impacted by violence so that folks could make those parallels a little more obvious. He said it was meant to be an interactive dashboard.

Mr. Washington told the Board about the violence interruption initiative, stating that the goal of an interruption was to interrupt the transition of violence, so to stop people who may potentially commit a violent act for some reason, be it retaliatory, or some other reason. He said they also work to try to reduce the number of individuals who have a propensity of violence by working closely with them as outreach workers to folks who may be at higher risk in the communities, to really work with individuals who may have had small interactions with law enforcement or some other issues to help guide and mentor them. He said these individuals would very often be from the neighborhoods in which they work. Many of them have had lived experience with either criminal justice or some other kind of challenges in life, and they were trusted messengers. He said they were able to go out into the streets in the City and talk to folks daily, work with them closely and build report or already have it and take advantage of it to be able to have a positive impact in the community.

Mr. Washington spoke about CURE Violence, stating it was a global model that had been used in a lot of cities and jurisdictions. He said they basically provide technical support, and their role in the process is to essentially give guidance, training materials, and provide trainings. He said they do not come set up shop in Mecklenburg County. He said the County would identify one or multiple community organizations that were already in the County to actually make the investment of the dollars proposed for the initiative. He said the idea would be that they would then provide all the technical training and guidance to that organization, who would then hire people from the community, and an initial pallet was proposed to be at the Beatties Ford and LaSalle corridor, so hiring folks from the neighborhood and employing them with a livable wage to be able to work all day to prevent violence in their communities.

Mr. Washington stated they were estimating the initial cost for the pilot to be about $500,000. He said they had talked with the City, and they were willing to pay half of that cost, and the County would be potentially willing to put up the other half as well. He spoke about resiliency and the impact of trauma and stress that it has on the community and people, as well as those on the periphery. They see the lights and watch the news. He said they had the Recast Initiative?, which was funded by SAMSA; it's a program within the Health Department that really works to provide trauma informed and resilience training to organizations, and the individuals who complete this training are able to take that information and teach it to others in the community. He said even throughout COVID-19 they have continued training individuals through schools, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, and rec centers. He said it is also training for law enforcement officers and others in other organizations across the County. He said even
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during COVID-19 they were able to provide training to over 600 individuals in the community.

Mr. Washington said the team expanded training to include focus on stress and anxiety. He said everyone knew the pressures of COVID-19 have caused everyone some level of distress. He said this has been a critical part of their work, and they really targeted the training at individuals who work in COVID-19 response or retail locations during the pandemic. He said they were also partnering with CMS to expand the number of teachers who have also received this training, which was relevant to the work but also relevant as they work with folks in the community every day, and working to increase the number of teachers who have completed the training, up to 400 from 200. He said they also have eight organizations who were going through a year-long, trauma-informed, learning community, and the organizations are much more intensive than the actual initial training, but they were going through a comprehensive, trauma-informed training over the last year. He said they were currently looking for organizations to participate in that process in 2021.

Mr. Washington said they also launched six, faith-healing hubs with their faith-based partners, which allows folks to come together and have a safe space to talk and exchange ideas in a productive way. He said they were launched in September and had staff navigators to help support those residents who were engaged in those facilities.

Commissioner Harden asked if community violence was concentrated in certain areas.

Mr. Washington responded of course, it is concentrated in the neighborhoods that experience a number of other challenges, which was part of the reason they were eager to have information on the dashboard around the social determinacy health in terms of the level of poverty in neighborhoods, the level of educational attainment in those neighborhoods, because they same neighborhoods have the same challenges when it came to over-all opportunity. He said it was not just the violence issue they had to think about economic mobility, development invested in those communities, and you cannot do one without the other, because you will not have one without the other.

Commissioner Harden stated that many on the Board made public commitments to work to increase emphasis on gun violence. She felt it was a problem that did not impact communities all in the same way, and that was why she brought up the motion last week about getting a detailed plan for food deserts, because it was all connected. She said she knew she would never be safe, healthy, and educated until everyone was safe, healthy, and educated and that long-term security must be seen collectively, because they in fact hold each other up. She said when she pushes from the dais it is because she knew the institutions created the world that they had. She believed the institutions could not change from within, but that the change had to be- These problems persist because of structural problems within institutions.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated she was excited about the idea of the City and County working together and believed the partnerships were what were needed. She asked where the funding would come from.

Mr. Washington responded that it was fully a partnership between the County and City and the position for this particular office would be from the Health Department’s funding from the County and the Board made an investment of $325,000 for violence prevention activities, and those funds would be administered by that office and the individual in the position.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the work of this would be more than just that.

Mr. Washington said absolutely, this was not a short-term job but a long-term effort, so they did hope to expand the work of the office, but initially they will serve as the glue to all of the players in this space and to keep things moving, because as of now it was only Ms. Harris and him in the department. He said they need a champion within the County structure to be able to pull together community with county, with city and the other county offices, with CMPD, with other law enforcement, and community members.
Commissioner Jerrell believed that data was important, and one thing he struggled with was that the data did not necessarily provide recommendations. He guessed it would lead to strategies, but he wanted to know when measurables would be seen around some of the strategies that would be put into place.

Mr. Washington responded not immediately in terms of the effectiveness of anything they do. He said they would have to do and give it time to work and measure it. He said they would not wait five years to measure the effectiveness of any program. He said in looking at the Violence Interruption Initiative data would be built into the infrastructure of the program from day one with tracking information about services provided and try to connect their work to outcomes from the very first time they put boots on the ground in the communities. He said they would do intermittent review processes with those individuals, probably have folks auditing their records to insure they were maintaining the validity of the work that was supposed to be happening, and they would see some initial findings after some period of time. He said maybe six months, but he was unsure of how long. He said it would take some time to get the program launched. He said in terms of when the effectiveness will be seen, he believed they needed a little bit of time, but he believed there would be some results in the first year.

Commissioner Jerrell was glad to see intergovernmental collaboration and believed it was critical. He believed there had to be a quarterback calling the plays and doing the implementation. He asked what the collaboration looked like relative to the intergovernmental collaboration. He asked if there would be one-point person with full program control.

Mr. Washington stated he would not say control, but he believed the decision making would lie with that group, so the County and City Managers represent both of those bodies. He said the Senior Health Manager would be the glue to ensure the decisions made in the group were implemented in a daily basis and in between meetings the work was getting done. He said that person could be the go-to for violence prevention. That person would be the face of the work and be able to articulate what was happening on the ground to the Board and others who would be a part of the process.

Commissioner Cotham said in 2016 or 2017 the Health Department proclaimed violence as the number one health issue, and she wondered if he looked at that to use it as a starting point.

Mr. Washington responded he personally did not review any materials from 2016 or 2017, but he knew that he had reviewed materials in the framework- folks who reviewed those documents and started the draft of the framework would use that to help form those actions. He said he would be happy to take a read.

Commissioner Cotham requested that he shared the people with whom he was speaking within the community, in the event there was a group missed that the Board could connect him to.

Mr. Washington responded absolutely. He said many of the folks who sit on the community leader group that he spoke about came from recommendations from the Board.

Commissioner Powell asked him to define the scope of violence that he would be looking at.

Mr. Washington responded that the expectation when the individual first comes in, they would be doing a lot of focus on community violence, but they still had work to do in the domestic violence space and partnership with colleagues on the other side of HHS. He said there were all kinds of violence, and the goal was not to narrowly focus on gun violence but that they certainly had an urgent need to have some initiatives where they had gaps in terms of what was being done in the community in that space. He said the scope would be all violence.
Commissioner Powell said she believed that was important to talk about since there were so many different kinds of violence.

Commissioner Fuller said in the aftermath of the horrible events at UNC Charlotte, that they did commit their selves to addressing gun violence in particular but violence in general, and he was glad they were getting along that road to fulfilling that promise that he believed was really important. He suggested that the examination of addressing violence, social determinant of health, and the County’s Village Heartbeat Program, which he believed was also a template for addressing social determinants of health, be used as a template for how they address public health in Mecklenburg County. He said they could use that model to address not only diabetes, hypertension, weight, heart disease and also violence. He asked if that was something that may have some legs.

Mr. Washington cautioned them to think of it as an infrastructure as opposed to a model for the purposes of violence, because right now it was designed specifically to address challenges around chronic illnesses and management of healthy lifestyle overall. He believed there were some components of the violence spectrum that may be well addressed in that type of model, but he believed they had to be a little bit practical in terms of how they thought about it thought in terms of who was involved in violence in the community as victims and perpetrators. He said they would have to figure out how to do that in a way that would be effective for the issue they were trying to solve. He said he believed partnering with Village Heartbeat as an infrastructure, as an organization, as an entity, was important and could help compliment some of the other initiatives, but he did not know that he would jump in and say that they should replicate that model for violence, because there were limitations for how it may work for the target population.

Commissioner Fuller he said if they were already going to be engaging with faith-based organizations anyway, should they do it in an integrated way, rather than talk to people one day about violence and another day about Village Heartbeat.

Mr. Washington responded that it was a fair point and that was one of the nice things about having this housed within the Health Department. He said he believed there would definitely be a role for faith-based organizations in this work. He just believed they needed to be coordinated and what they were doing was reaching the targeted population they were trying to reach.

Commissioner Leake thanked the County Manager and Ms. Hart for affording the Board to meet with given individuals within the confines of certain communities within Direct 2.

Chair Dunlap said when looking at the four communities he was targeting, anyone who knows Charlotte, knows they are all very similar in nature. He said you will see prostitution, transient communities, and this adds to the violence that occurs in the community, because no one calls it home. He said what he did not see in the training that he hoped was there was gun-safety training. He said to not forget the old organizations like “Stop the Killing,” and “Mothers of Murdered Offspring,” who’s founder just passed yesterday, and these were organizations that were really instrumental long before these initiatives that they are doing now.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**20-6438: COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE**

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director, provided an update on COVID-19 health data and trends and the County's response to the pandemic. Ms. Harris said there were 30,567 cases reported since March, which was a slight increase. She said they were averaging about 99 cases a day over the past seven days. She said they had 374 deaths, six of which came in today. She said that there were 23 outbreaks and one cluster. She said they were continuing to manage them fairly well, and she was glad the numbers were down some with the number of outbreaks. She said that average testing was still a little less than three thousand a day. She said the average positives were around 99 per day and average hospitalizations were around 84 over the past seven days, which was a fairly
Ms. Harris stated she was seeing some slight increases in the number of cases, but some of the other metrics were fairly stable, which was great news. She said unfortunately, they were not seeing the same things in some of the surrounding counties. She said that several counties reported that over the past 30 days they had seen over a 200% increase in cases. She said they have seen Gaston who has seen a tripling in the number of hospitalizations that they have had in the last 30 days. He said she was hearing that the hospitals in the western part of the State were overwhelmed and diverting patience to the Charlotte and Winston Salem area. She said when looking at data at the State level, numbers were going up. She said they had talked about the need to be vigilant and do the things they knew would help but recognizing the fact that they were seeing the increases all around, they need to anticipate what may happen in Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Harris gave an update on the ambassadors, saying that they made 183 visits over the past week. She said what they were seeing was 90% compliance with masking; 91% compliance with occupancy guidelines; and 90% compliance with social distancing. She said that was all great. She said there were some places that were continuing to not comply, such as a bar over the weekend which let everyone inside when it began to rain. She said they were continuing to see those sorts of issues and trying to work through them.

Ms. Harris said they had their testing event on Saturday with the Olde Mecklenburg Brewery. She said they tested 137 individuals and have received two positives from those tests, which was not huge but now meant they had a total of five positives from that event. She said what that told her was that there were a large number, they were saying 1,000 or more, who participated in that event over three days, with five positives and only testing 135, the expectation would be that there are more positives from that whether people were just not letting them know that was where they were or they were asymptomatic and not being tested.

Ms. Harris said they had been operating the isolation and quarantine hotel since March 20, 2020 and have served 454 individuals. She said these were individuals who needed to be isolated or quarantined or were waiting for their test results who had no other place to be, whether they are homeless and cannot go back to a homeless shelter until they come out of isolation or quarantine or whether they live in a multi-generational household and do not want to take it back to their families. She said they were averaging about 10-20 people per night. She said they have had as many as 60 in the hotel and as few as two. She said they were able to develop a very solid relationship with Atrium, who had their virtual hospital. She said they had individuals who could address issues outside of the hospital setting for people who need additional help but did not need to be hospitalized. She said they visit the high-risk patients in that facility daily. She said they would come into the facility, make visits with those who need that support, and it would allow them to stay in the hotel and not take up hospital beds. She said that was a great partnership. She said they had the ability to provide some mental-health support to individuals in the hotel and were able to do some on-site counseling and virtual as well. She said the hotels worked fairly well, and they were handling the hotel mostly through temps. She said at one point, they were using staff both from Community Support Services. She said they had social workers who were helping staff, as well as her staff, as they moved back into providing more services, they went to mostly temps. She said they continued to have a public health manager who checks in every morning, addresses any issues, and is on call their 24-hour shift to insure they were able to address any issues. She said they were going to continue to support that hotel as long as it may be needed. She said to date they were able to cover the costs of it with FEMA dollars.

Ms. Harris said they were having conversations with their specific partners about what vaccine plan would look like in Mecklenburg County. She said they were waiting for the State to put their plan out, which was due sometime later in October. She said they did not want to get too far ahead with the planning if it would not be consistent with the State plans, so they were having conversations and not putting a lot to paper at this point until they get the State plan. She said they had some specific ideas from the federal
government about where they were with the priorities that would be in place when the vaccine is available and how that would come to them and how they would administer. She said when they have more specifics from the State they would nail things down a little bit more. She said they were continuing to work to get children immunized for school. She said what they find annually is the impetus to get your children immunized is the fact that school is getting ready to open, but school has not opened, so it has been hard to get people to bring their kids in. She said the reality was that the State decided regardless of whether schools were opened or not, children needed to be immunized. Ms. Harris said the State did push the date out some. She said they had a number of Saturday clinics scheduled in October and were doing extended hours at both Northwest and Southeast. She said they were going to have some additional clinics at Southeast over this month and into November as kids were starting to go back to school. She said most of this was being done by appointment, so it would allow for social distancing. She said that they were also scheduling some flu clinics. She said they had a Meck-Pre-K Flu Shot event October 19, specifically for teachers, which would be held at Southeast. She said they were working with Novant on immunizing at some of the shelters, and they had a number of drive thru clinics that they were setting up over October and into November and December as they get more vaccine from the State. She said they would be at a number of locations, including Southeast, Northwest, DCW, and some other places in the community.

Commissioner Leake asked if she was saying the numbers were going up.

Ms. Harris responded that the numbers were slowly increasing.

Commissioner Leake asked what would be contributed to those numbers going up.

Ms. Harris believed there were a number of things contributing to that, one being that they went into phase three, which opened more opportunities for people to be in the community. She said they were seeing more large gatherings of individuals, and they knew that was one of the ways this spreads. She said that one thing that concerns her is going into colder weather, people will be going indoors, and more people would be exposed that way as well. She said the concern was although they were opening things up, which was great for the economy and people had more flexibility to be out in the community, they still needed to be wearing masks and socially distancing, and they were seeing a number of cases where that was not happening.

Commissioner Leake said it was not just wearing masks, but they must wear mask. She said it was still the coming together as groups of people at funerals, parties, yard affairs and what have you. She said that was contributing to it, and the governors trying to tell us that we still need to stay separated in some form or fashion, along with the mask. She said she was not sure that young people were getting that information from the community as they should or from their parents as they should. She said that was a problem she was having and what she was seeing on television.

Ms. Harris said she was on a state call this morning and they were talking about that and how it could be communicated in a way that the younger people could really hear it. She said you have to consider the other people you may potentially be exposing; it could be your grandmother, grandfather, or brother and sister. She said there were some who do listen to this, and there were some who were trying to talk to their peers about this, but it was a challenge, and when you are that age, you are not terribly worried about these sorts of issues.

Commissioner Leake stated there had to be a new way of saying to the young people the danger of what to anticipate.

Commissioner Fuller read a quote from the Secretary of Health and Human Services in North Carolina, Dr. Mandy Cohen, who was a true gem for North Carolina. He stated that she said today, “Right now, like much of the County in the world, our trends were moving in the wrong direction. We need to do all we can to turn those trends around. We do not want to have to go backwards.” He asked if they were seeing the second wave or if they
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were not even finished with the first wave and were about to experience another wave. He said it felt like something was coming, and he asked if he was right in that.

Ms. Harris responded that most of the scientific and medical experts were extremely concerned about this winter. She said she believed as they moved into the new year, they were going to start seeing some vaccines available, and the expectation was that things would get better, but this winter could be very difficult. She said there were any number of reasons for that. She said they had already talked about a few of them. She believed they were not moving in the right direction. She said if they looked at what was happening across the Country, the majority was in red now. She said that doesn’t necessarily mean the number of cases they have, but it was just that things were moving in the wrong direction in all of those places. She said there were only a few places in the Country that were not moving in that direction. She believed they were fortunate in Mecklenburg County recently with the stable numbers that had been seen, which was impressive compared to the fact that they were leading the pack for the majority of the year. She said if you look at the spikes that had been had, there was only one big one in July into August. She said there have been a couple of bumps along the way, but this winter had the potential of being another large spike.

Commissioner Fuller stated that people get weary and say they have been dealing with it for six or seven months, and people get tired of constraining themselves. He said it was so important to remain vigilant, and it was difficult when we see photos of people flagrantly, deliberately, and belligerently, not wearing masks and congregating together as if it was some sort of a personal badge of honor to not wear a mask. He said they accept all kinds of restrictions on their lives, but for the mask to be something you oppose when it helps to save peoples’ lives, he believed it was incredibly reckless and irresponsible. He said it was done by some of the highest officials in the Country and was a travesty. He asked if they would need to have another 100,000 people die or another 200,000 until people got the point. He said voting mattered. Who was making decisions mattered, and if people in the County were concerned about not being last in the developed World with dealing with COVID-19 where America should be, which was at the top leading the pack, then it mattered who was leading us. He said who was leading us had made it a political issue when it should have never been a political issue, never. He said to hear people on the street say that they did not want to wear a mask because it was their personal choice, what kind of since did it make, none.

Commissioner Powell asked the current positivity rate.

Ms. Harris responded 4.5% over the past seven days.

Commissioner Powell she thanked Ms. Harris for speaking about the concern around Mecklenburg County and stated Mecklenburg County was a regional healthcare provider. She believed a lot of times that people forget that and that believe there were so many empty hospital beds, and as a regional healthcare provider county, the beds will fill up quickly. She said when people show up for appointments for immunizations, if they did not have a scheduled appointment, could they still be seen?

Ms. Harris responded yes, no one would be turned away.

Commissioner Powell asked where things were with school nurse.

Ms. Harris stated they were continuing to recruit and hire but that she did not have current numbers at that time. She said they had sufficient nurses to cover all of the schools that would have children in them once they got into the K-5 group. She said once they got past that they run into some challenges with having a nurse in every school, every day.

Commissioner Powell asked because of COVID-19 if they could hire nurses with associate degree.

Ms. Harris said they had not done that at this point and were having discussions. She said they had a fairly large number of school nurses who were on the extended FMLA, because they have children who were not in school. She said they were not necessarily
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working fulltime, if at all in the schools, because of that. She said that was another issue they had. She said they had nurses who were not able to work at this time.

Commissioner Powell believed they needed to keep options open and not limit their selves since nursing was so important right now. She said it was their responsibility to provide school nurses for the schools. She said she was getting calls about air quality concerns at Cornelius Elementary. She said her understanding was that it was not their authority and that it was up to the school board or superintendent to manage the air quality in the schools. She asked if that was correct.

Ms. Harris responded that it was correct.

Commissioner Powell said she knew they were working on air quality issues but that it was a big concern in Cornelius. She said it was important to wear a mask.

Commissioner Cotham asked if Ms. Harris was worried about the number of ICU and hospital beds since other neighboring counties were coming to Mecklenburg County since we had big hospitals.

Ms. Harris responded yes, at times. She said they had models that were being put out at the National level that showed what the potential need for beds and ICU beds were moving into the winter.

She said that was a concern and that they were working with their hospital systems to ensure they had the resources they needed, and they were tracking the numbers on a regular basis to stay on top of that. She said at this point they were in better shape than they were in July with hospital beds in Mecklenburg County but that they also knew from what they had seen across the Country that it could change quickly.

Commissioner Cotham asked if the hospitals had ever mentioned that they may be worried about this or talk about it as they did in the beginning about a field hospital.

Ms. Harris said it had not come up since the initial conversations.

Commissioner Cotham said the flu had not even started yet. She asked if Ms. Harris could give an update on flu shots. She asked if they could have a potential spike in the flu.

Ms. Harris said they did not receive information on how many flu shots were given. She said they watch what was happening and that the flu season would start in Australia and move across. She said they watch it to see what happens and to see what strains and whether the vaccine they have is well suited to the strains that had been seen. She said what they had seen so far was a very mild flu season. She said the other thing they needed to understand though was that places like Australia and New Zealand had done a better job of wearing masks than others and to not be complacent. She told people to continue to get their flu shots.

Commissioner Jerrell stated that the percent positive was good news since their goal was five percent and to be below it was good news. She echoed concerns that were heard by Commissioner Fuller as it related to what Dr. Cohen said. He said when it was taken into the context of what was said about the surrounding area, what was seen since the beginning of this thing was that the handwriting had been on the wall. He said they knew exactly what was going to happen, and he said that to say he really wanted the County to be proactive around what was potentially coming. He said he knew testing was what helped get them through it, so to be able to understand mass testing very quickly and as they were going through those plans he would like to see the testing spread out. He said he believed with everything he was hearing relatively to the flu that it would be really hard to distinguish between COVID-19 and the flu would create a lot more complications around what they were seeing. He asked about proactive measures that would be taken if they were to hit the worse-case scenario.

Ms. Harris responded that they had worked with the State to build capacity to do more testing in the County, and they were starting to slowly expand within the constraints of what they had made available. She said they had the ability to do testing in a number of
parts in the County currently on almost a daily basis as long as they have places that were willing to host a site. She said they were interested if folks would like to have a site, they could bring the testing in, but she was just not hearing from people and would have to go out and beat the bushes a little bit to find those locations. He said early on, there were a lot of people who wanted sites, but they were just not hearing on this end. She said the other options that they had, at least through the first of December was for some other larger testing sites, and they were looking for options with that as well. She said they would be announcing some of that probably later this week or early next week. She believed they would see people tested for COVID-19 and flu if they were sick enough to be in the hospital or maybe even in the doctors’ office, but in most places, COVID-19 would be tested for. She said if it was not COVID-19 it would be assumed you probably have the flu. She said there would probably not be enough flu testing to go around and not worth bringing people into a doctors’ office to be tested for a flu. She said in many cases, if it was not COVID-19 and you have the symptoms and the expectation is that you have the flu, then you still need to stay at home. She said most people with the flu are sick enough that they do not want to be out and about.

Commissioner Harden asked the demographics of people who use the clinics.

Ms. Harris stated it varied between Northwest and Southeast. She said in Southeast they had a much larger Latino population there, and in Northwest there was a larger African American population.

Commissioner Harden asked if it was predominately women.

Ms. Harris said it depended on the service they were going in for. She said for the STD clinics, it was a good mix and for family planning it predominately women.

Commissioner Harden asked when they would open the Southeast clinic.

Ms. Harris responded that they were looking at that right now. She said there were a couple of constraints that they had and were trying to mitigate. She said one was they had vacancies, and the County was not advertising for a little while when COVID-19 first started. She said they were working on filling them. She said the other challenge due to staffing were the staff who were out, because they had children at home and trying to do homeschooling.

Commissioner Harden asked where else would they go if not to the clinics.

Ms. Harris said they were not opening the clinics wide open as they needed to be able to do social distancing, so they were looking at appointments. She said there was no way they would be able to probably ever be able to during this time, to take care of this many because of that.

Commissioner Harden said she understood and that taxpayers were paying for those services and there is a large outbreak in STDs. She understood there was the STD clinic, but that if they did not provide the services it would snowball and not go away. She said the County could not let its problems of staffing- She said they had to realize that they had to be open for those services. She said it had impact on women and children, and she was pushing because she thought it was important.

Ms. Harris said a couple of things she would say was that she agreed that they needed to make services as readily available as they could considering the situations they were in, because if they put their staff at risk, they ended up with staff who had COVID and they would be out, which would not help. She said if they put the clients at risk for COVID, that was not a good thing either, so they would need to ensure they were balancing that. She said that the other thing to understand was that they had not been sitting back doing nothing but that they had been serving people in a lot of different ways that were not necessarily shown in statistics. She said they were in the process and had been in the process of implementing telehealth. She said they were doing that with family planning services. She said with STD services, based on guidance from federal and state government they had been treating some people without having to be seen, based on
their circumstances. She said those do not necessarily show up in the numbers. She said with family planning they were mailing out prescriptions to ensure people were staying on their medication. She said they have received some waivers from state and federal government on how frequently they had to be seen to get those medications. She said for those who needed an IUD or different type of procedure, they had been seen in the clinic. She said it was not like they had not been seeing patients. She said the other thing that needed to be understood was that the demand was not as great, and people were not demanding service. She did not know if it was due to people being afraid to go in or what, but they understood it was part of the issue as well, especially if they could get the service a different way.

Commissioner Harden said the community voice that she was trying to provide to the issue was to tell Ms. Harris that if they wanted pre-k teachers to be there and expect doctors and hospitals to be there, the public health clinics should be open, and they had snowballing implications, and she believed that access was important. She told her she would be hearing about it from her, especially when they were in the middle of an STD outbreak and children were not being immunized as they should. She believed access was important and knew Ms. Harris thought so to.

Chair Dunlap requested that the County made a public statement about two things. He said that weather was not an excuse for overcrowding in a bar or a club. He said they needed to state that people had been tested who went to Olde Mecklenburg Brewery and that they had five positives, and if five were positive, chances were that there were more who were actually positive. He said they may not feel the symptoms, as they may be asymptomatic, but they still need to be tested. He asked how long COVID-19 would affect a person. He asked if a negative test would be needed.

Ms. Harris responded that one of the challenges with the negative test was that almost all individuals would test positive for two to three months after they had the original test, which would not mean they were infectious for two to three months but that they would still have enough antibody on board that they were testing positive. She said they would use CDC and state guidance that says after a certain period of time, without symptoms, including no fever, then they would be released from isolation. She said they would have had to have a certain number of days from the day of the first symptom or test and without symptoms to be released. She said what they were seeing was that people were safe from being re-infected for about that three month and that there were some people who had been re-infected after three months.

Chair Dunlap said so after the first initial waiting period, they were no longer infectious even though they may test positive.

Ms. Harris responded yes.

20-6437: COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Jerrell offered his condolences to the family of co-founder of Mothers of Murdered Offspring, Ms. Judy Howard Williams. He said most of the Board knew David Howard and the family. He said that the deadline for the Homes Program was October 19, 2020 to get applications in. He said that was for the cost-burden homeowners who could potentially get a grant to a maximum amount of $440. He reminded the public about the community service grant information meeting which was scheduled for October 29, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. He said that applications would be open through December 4, 2020, and folks could reach out to Brittney Jones.

Commissioner Powell said she wanted the people in Huntersville to know that the environmental stewardship committee had received an update on the gasoline leak, and the EPA, NC Department of Environmental Quality, and Mecklenburg County were doing all they could to ensure Colonial was doing their due diligence. She said they were aware of it and wanted everyone in Huntersville to know that. She said she drove more than 300 miles yesterday to see a family member who had not been allowed to have visitors in the extended care facility for more than 160 days. She said the rules were that she could visit
for 15 minutes on the front porch as long as she had a mask and was 12 feet away and all of the rules of being able to have family time. She said as she was driving there she thought it was such a long way but that it was worth it just to have that 15 minutes of time together and that it would haunt her for a long time. She said she was so happy she went and that it was worth every second times a million but that it was hard. She said the people there were looking out the window. She said they feel they are in prison. She said she just wanted to share that, because they needed to do what it takes to get rid of it. She said if someone could not visit a loved one right now to find a way to reach out to them, because it mattered as it was a hard time to so many people in different ways. She said she believed the way to get through this was together in little ways like calling each other, sending post cards, and driving to visit people if allowed, and following the rules or recommendations.

Commissioner Fuller said how much he appreciated Commissioner Powell’s comments and dedication to drive 300 miles for 15 minutes. She said it was a testament to her commitment to service, generosity, empathy, and why she needed to remain on the Board.

Commissioner Leake said thanks to those piggybacking off what Commissioner Powell stated and that you never know when you would need people. She thanked those who assisted her last Tuesday after sitting in a meeting for seven and a half hours to ensure her people were represented by the Board. She said she fell outback and if it was not for Dena Diorio coming out she was not sure how long she would have stayed there. She said she certainly appreciated Ms. Diorio from the bottom of her heart for having her phone on and answering it instead of getting into her car and driving away as if she never existed. She said she certainly appreciated Mr. Bryant, Mr. Fuller, Mr. Troutman, Mark Jerrell, Pat Cotham, and Dr. Johnson, those who assisted her. She said she wanted them to know she appreciated them.

Commissioner Leake said she lost one of her good friends, Mary Hopper, who was Mary Turney, who co-founded the African American Cultural Center, whose name does not sit on that building, that was the Old Little Rock Church. She gave thanks to the family for including her in the services, which she could not attend. She said she had a proclamation that she would read at an appropriate time, to and for the family, that want it read to the public and not sitting on her desk. She appreciated Mary’s work, and her husband was a former assistant principal in CMS. Mary was an associate professor at UNCC in the Department of English. She said she was a graduate of Livingstone College, a very fine woman who founded an institution that does not carry her name. She said that worried her that she and her husband, who still lives, were not given credit as ought to be, for a black woman who worked hard to set up that facility and name did not appear within the confines of the outside of the building.

Commissioner Leake stated that District 2 was worried about the violence that was being experienced within the community and that there was a program that would be held on the first Saturday of November at 11:00 a.m. off of Beatties Ford Road by those persons who were a part of the committee which started three years ago on the issue of violence. She welcomed all who were interested.

Commissioner Harden gave props to staff for the work they did in the long-term care and nursing home facilities. She said they had an outbreak status of 23, which was way down, and that they had worked so hard. She said she was dogging them, and it was because so many of the folks were in her district. She said it was sad the stories that people called her with everyday about not having access to their loved ones and how hard it had been. She said that Commissioner Powell painted that picture accurately. She said she knew staff worked really hard and that the results could be seen in terms of the positivity level, commitment to masking, and campaigns that had been done. She said it made a difference and has saved lives without question. She said that staff was owed a lot of appreciation.

Commissioner Harden stated that the Health Director put out guidelines for Halloween and as hard as it was to be faithful to those recommendations, she was asking people in her district to please follow those guidelines. She said they were meant to protect people

living in the nursing homes, family members and others around us. She said while it was hard to not participate in neighborhood festivals and congregate trick or treating activities, they would have to make that sacrifice this year. She said their sacrifice would save lives and keep kids in school and businesses operating.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said everyone just needed to look at it as the beginning of a holiday season that would look very different than normal and that everyone needed a new normal. She said she hoped everyone in the community would exercise their right to vote.

Chair Dunlap stated he still continued to meet with constituents and people in the community. He said that he and the Manager recently met with the CEO of Centen and shared with the CEO the Board’s concerns. He shared that the Board wanted to offer some suggestions as to organizations that his staff might be involved with in terms of their board of directors, and he supported that. Chair Dunlap stated they would get financial support as well. He said he would not direct them to be involved in any particular organization, but if they had a passion for whatever that was, the organization would support them. He stated the CEO said one of the reasons why Centen never had to institute a program for diversity was because they hire based on qualifications. He said when you do that, you do not have to worry about setting up quotas and things of that nature.

Chair Dunlap stated he had a conversation with CMS Board Chair, and they were looking forward to having a meeting December 10, 2020. They both agreed they would talk to their respected boards and have the board share meeting expectations. He said they wanted the County to recognized what their duty and role was as school board members, because the County Board of Commissioners could not tell them what to do. He said in exchange, he told the CMS Board Chair that they needed to recognize that they did not have the financial responsibility that the County provided them. He said they would talk in terms of give and take.

Chair Dunlap made notice of a new greenway opening in Cornelius. He thanked Commissioner Powell for her passion from the visit that she spoke about. He agreed with Commissioner Fuller’s assessment of why she needed to remain on the Board. He thanked Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell for having the courage to say her peace relative to the land that they purchased to ensure that the greenway continued.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.
MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 5:17 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioners Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by introductions, the invocation, led by Chair Dunlap and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

-20-6421: by Commissioner Leake
-20-6429: by Commissioner Leake
-20-6431: by Commissioner Leake

STAFF BRIEFINGS – NONE

CLOSED SESSION

20-6423: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to discuss land acquisition and to discuss a personnel matter.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:21 p.m. to go into closed session in Room 267 and returned to open session at 5:54 p.m.

FORMAL SESSION

The meeting reconvened at 6:05 p.m. in Room 267 for the Board of County Commissioners' Formal Session.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION – NONE
PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6424: Public Appearance

No speakers addressed the Board of County Commissioners.

APPOINTMENTS

20-6434: Appointments

Alcoholic Beverage Control Board

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023. This advisory board requires that nominees be interviewed.

The Ad Hoc Committee conducted interviews on October 14, 2020. Commissioner Fuller, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, announced that the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Jordan Boyd.

The recommendation carried by the following vote:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

Jordan Boyd was appointed.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring September 30, 2023.

The results of the votes are as follows:

Round 1:
Jennifer Boyce, 3 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Harden and Powell
Lorie Brown, 2 votes by Commissioners Fuller and Rodriguez-McDowell
Ryan Kerstan Pickell, 1 vote by Chair Dunlap
Jacqueline Yelverton, 2 votes by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake

Round 2:
Jennifer Boyce, 2 votes by Commissioners Cotham and Powell
Lorie Brown, 4 votes by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden and Rodriguez-McDowell
Jacqueline Yelverton, 2 votes by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake

Round 3:
Jennifer Boyce, 4 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Powell and Scarborough
Lorie Brown, 3 votes by Commissioners Fuller, Harden and Rodriguez-McDowell
Jacqueline Yelverton, 2 votes by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake

Round 4:
Jennifer Boyce, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Powell and Scarborough
Lorie Brown - no vote was taken since Ms. Boyce received a majority vote.

Ms. Boyce was appointed
Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee

The Board considered two appointments to three-year terms expiring September 30, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to extend the terms of Larry Blakeney and Jeffrey Giddens to September 30, 2023.

Larry Blakeney and Jeffrey Giddens were reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring August 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to reappoint Robert Bruton.

Robert Bruton was reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring October 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to reappoint Tarshia Faniel.

Tarshia Faniel was reappointed.

Park and Recreation Commission

The Board considered one At-Large appointment for an unexpired term expiring June 30, 2021.

Srividya Ganesan withdrew her name from consideration.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to appoint Megan Gregory.

Megan Gregory was appointed.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-6464: Centralina Regional Council Report

Geraldine Gardner, Executive Director, Centralina Regional Council, presented information on the organization and its programs and services. She stated as part of a rebranding that they changed their name from Centralina Council of Government to Centralina Regional Council. Their refreshed mission statement was to lead regional collaboration and to spark local action to improve opportunity and expand quality of life. She emphasized the importance of regionalism. She said when they come together as a region, it is in the interest to think about how they may confront some of the challenges and leverage the opportunities together. She said the work centered on three work streams: how they collaborate across the region to creatively address and solve challenges; how they support local governments through the work they do; and how they deliver services to individuals across the region.

Ms. Gardner walked the Board through a few examples of the work and how they were collaborating with the County. She said on the regional side their work was focused on regional growth, economic development, mobility, health, and intergovernmental affairs. She said their current focus for the current fiscal year lied in implementing regional plans for growth and economic development and leading a new initiative around regional mobility. She said their role was to bring stakeholders together across the region and set a collective framework and to support local implementation and how that evolves in each and every community.
Ms. Gardner spoke about Connect our Future, a regional growth plan that the organization lead its development with a whole range of stakeholders for the broader region. She said it was a playbook for how they accommodated the projected doubling of the region’s population between now and 2050. She stated that one of the new areas of work they were currently focused on was a new study on regional mobility called connect beyond. She said it uses the basic principles of Connect our Future, such as locating jobs near housing; thinking about priority transit corridors, and it dives into a deeper analysis. She said that Connect Beyond would define the single vision for coordinated transit across the broader study area and would very much build on the CATS 2030 plan. She said it would be done in partnership with the MTC and CATS and would yield very specific recommendations and implementation plan. She pointed out that they knew transportation was the long game and it takes decades for these types of initiatives to be implemented but that one of their focuses was to make sure they were thinking about today’s ride. She said this project was so important because they knew a reliable and connected multi-modal transportation system was absolutely critical to their economic competitiveness, not only in the southeastern region of the U.S. but also globally as they were competing for talent and new businesses to come to the area.

Ms. Gardner said in terms of project timeline, they were about halfway through their 18-month timeline and were in the second step of identifying high-capacity transit corridors. She said they were also doing it in effort and coordination with Mayor Lyles’s Charlotte Moves Taskforce. She highlighted a few things from the last two workstreams. She said they provide technical assistance, including staffing support, advice and expertise and project implementation. She said for the County they support the community development block grant program and the implementation of the microbusiness stabilization fund that they set up in response to COVID-19. She said that staff collaborates with staff on a range of transportation projects, including the Catawba Crossing’s Advisory Committee and they also participate on the Age Friendly Mecklenburg Committee as well.

Ms. Gardner stated they were the area agency on aging for the region. She said they have the responsibility of serving as the workforce development board for seven out of the nine counties, not Mecklenburg but that they do collaborate with Charlotte Works when it came to hiring events and regional talent discussions. She said their aging team was the first in the State to offer virtual health and wellness classes to the seniors.

Ms. Gardner answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

20-6417: Public Hearing- Street Lighting Final Assessment

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing.

Chair Dunlap read for the record that the Board (A) acknowledged receipt of certification that a notice of the public hearing was mailed by first class mail to all property owners in the Capps Hollow, Cardinal Woods and Cardinal Woods Estate, Hearthstone, McGinnis Village, Mountain Point, Mountain Point Estates, Royal Oaks and Spicewood Subdivisions and (B) acknowledged receipt of the Assessment Rolls for Mecklenburg County’s participation in the Street Lighting Assessment project for the Capps Hollow, Cardinal Woods and Cardinal Woods Estate, Hearthstone, McGinnis Village, Mountain Point, Mountain Point Estates, Royal Oaks and Spicewood Subdivisions.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and to adopt the final assessment resolutions for each of Capps Hollow, Cardinal Woods and Cardinal Woods Estate, Hearthstone, McGinnis Village, Mountain Point, Mountain Point Estates, Royal Oaks and Spicewood Subdivisions.

Resolutions are recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #48-#55.
MANAGER’S REPORT

Dena Diorio, County Manager said that she was sure that the Board knew Christy Lantis, the Deputy Assessor who worked for Ken Joyner. She stated she was sad to report that she passed away last night. She had Leukemia and was undergoing treatment. She said that things were progressing, and things went wrong. She took a turn for the worse. She asked the Board to keep her, her family, Ken, and the team in their thoughts and prayers.

Ms. Diorio asked the Board to extend the deadline for the receipt of applications for the Homes Program. She said if they remembered, in September, they approved the Homes Program, which was the helping out Mecklenburg’s homeowners with economic support, a grant program created to help individuals and families stay in their homes as a result of rising property values.

Ms. Diorio stated that thus far they have had some success and that thus far they had appropriated $250,000. She said that as of yesterday, they had received 181 applications, of which 49 were approved, 58 were pending, and 84 were denied. She said they had only approved so far $17,230 in grants. She said she would like the Board to extend the deadline for the receipt of applications to November 13, 2020.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell and carried unanimously to extend the receipt of application deadline for the Homes Program to November 13, 2020.

20-6415: Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprise Disparity Study

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director stated in FY19 and FY20 budgets, the Board elected to make funds available to the Office of Economic Development to conduct not only an analysis of the policies and procedures for minority, women, and small business contracting within Mecklenburg County but also to conduct a disparity study. He said that they selected Griffin and Strong out of Atlanta to conduct the study.

Michele Jenkins, Griffin & Strong, P.C., presented a summary of findings and recommendations regarding the Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprise Disparity Study. She stated they looked at the County’s data for the past four years, including policy. She said when they look at if there was a disparity if it was statistically significant and what caused the disparity, which was likely caused by something other than the race and gender of the owner. She said they also look at the marketplace disparities as well. She said that they collected a lot of the antidotal evidence from a number of methods, including public hearings, focus groups, surveys, and individual interviews and emails. She said that helped them to get the temperature and understand more of the unique characteristics of Mecklenburg County. She said it also helped to formulate the recommendations.

Ms. Jenkins said they broke down their analysis by industries: construction, AME, professional services, other services, and goods. She said they looked at the last four years and where they were spending at least 75% of their dollars. She said for construction it was the Charlotte MSA; in AME it was the Charlotte MSA. She said for professional services it was the whole state of North Carolina, as well as other services, and for goods it was the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Ms. Jenkins said when they looked at prime, they looked at prime plus some. She gave the summary on the dollars that were ultimately spent. She said for construction the total percentage spent with minority-owned firms was 1.18%, total dollars spent with female-owned businesses was 16.65%. She stated they were non-minority females. She said with AME, the total percent spend was 13.35%; with female-owned firms, .88%. She said in professional services it was less than 1% and females were a total of less than 1% to all MWBEs. She said in other services they spent 3.25% and a total of 5.03%.
Ms. Jenkins said that was her summary of availability and that they would ultimately compare
the two to see if there was a disparity. She said for their percentage of ready, willing, and
able in the marketplace by category was 14.91% minority in construction and 7.43% female
owned firms in constructions. She said it was 14.91% minority-owned firms in AME and
6.86% female-owned firms in AME. She said for professional services, the available
percentage 18.30% MBE and in female-owned firms 7.16%. She said in other services it
was 17.72% MBE and 6.69% for female-owned firms. She said for goods and supplies it
was 8.83% total MBE and 6.15% for women-owned firms.

Ms. Jenkins reviewed the industries with significant utilization in MWSBE. She said for
construction, female-owned firms were overutilized. In AME, black-American owned firms
were overutilized, and Hispanic-American firms were at parity. She said in other services,
American Indian owned firms were overutilized. She said in all other categories, for all other
ethnicities there was a statistically significant underutilization, based on what should be
expected based upon the availability of the firms in the relevant markets.

Rodney Strong, Griffin & Strong, P.C., gave recommendations based on their findings. He
stated the first recommendation was for the County to consider increasing the allocation of
resources, included in staffing. He said to run an effective program, they really needed a
staff of at least two or three people, compliance officers who could help provide the various
services that needed to be provided in terms of monitoring and contract administration.

Mr. Strong’s second recommendation was that there be a subcontracting goal program to
set contract by contract goals in construction the first year and phase in the additional
categories as the resources increase. He said they were recommending separate MBE and
WBE goals. He was also recommending that they apply all the contract compliance
techniques, that they go in and do outreach, forecasting, monitoring, and contract
administration.

Mr. Strong’s third recommendation was that there would be robust, good-faith efforts, which
would be firms who come in to do business with the County must meet the goals or
demonstrate good-faith efforts and that good faith efforts equal meeting 50 points, as set by
state law. He said if they did not meet the goal or satisfy the good-faith effort, the bid would
be rejected as not responsive or responsible. He said that process was an important one.
He said they were also recommending a small business reserve program, where certain
levels of contracts be set aside to only be competed aside to only be competed among small,
local businesses.

Mr. Strong stated they were also recommending vendor rotation. He said that on a routine
basis, for regular purchase, you select several firms who could provide those services and
rotate those vendors. He said they were also recommending a mandatory subcontracting
requirement so that contracts over a certain threshold must have subcontract requirements
so that you increase the opportunity for small firms to participate as small contractors on
larger contracts. He said it would provide for more opportunities for the MWSBE. He also
recommended that they strengthen their project forecast. He said when they identify
opportunities in the budget process for the next year’s budget and you publicize those and
forecast those opportunities coming up as far in advance as possible, it would allow for better
planning for those firms, including targeted outreach. He said it would also encourage the
firms to seek out partners they could team with and increase their capacity that would in
order to compete on other projects.

Mr. Strong stated they made a recommendation regarding supportive services. He said
those are really technical assistance, business incubators, financial assistance, and loan
programs. He said the County did not necessarily have to run all of those programs their
selves; it could refer companies to those services that already existed, such as the small
business development centers that were operated by the department of the small business
administration. He said one thing that would really help would be to encourage firms to have
conversations when they were unsuccessful about why they were unsuccessful, in order to
target the recommended, supportive services to them in order for them to be more
competitive on their future bid opportunity. He said they also recommended a prompt pay
ordinance to assist small businesses in meeting their financial obligations, and it would put
a penalty on prime contractors who delay payment. He said he also recommended there be
an encouragement of joint ventures, and for projects of a large size, they recommended
team ing and joint ventures be encourages. He said lastly that they were recommending data
maintenance reform, basically suggesting that the commodity code practices were revised
and that they track award data and implement a process by which they track the
subcontractor data, requiring the primes to provide the data.

Mr. Zeiler spoke about next steps in action planning. He said six of the eleven
recommendations the County already began processes on. He stated that over the next 30
to 60 days, the Office of Economic Development and Minority Women and Small Business
Enterprise Division would be working with the Enterprise Management Office to understand
how they could work through a process to take the recommendations, turn them into
actionable steps and recommendations they could put forth in an action plan that they would
then go forward with implementing. He said they would be able to provide the work plan
within the next 60 days.

Commissioner Harden asked how best to hold staff accountable to making the
recommended changes.

Ms. Jenkins responded that there was a scorecard and that some jurisdictions have how
well a department was doing as part of the performance review process. She said there was
also an internal scorecard to see where you were doing to begin to meet some of the steps.
She said one way was to look at ways in which you incentivize but definitely look at
incentives and reviews as part of their review process would be to take this into account.

Commissioner Harden asked County Manager Diorio how she saw the implementation of
the program being worked into the performance plan.

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated she was getting ready to percent the FY21 workplan
to the Performance Review Committee next month, and it included the development and
implementation of the recommendations.

Commissioner Harden asked if it would have specifics and a scorecard.

Ms. Diorio said no, because they would not have the plan ready for another several weeks
or months, because they just received the recommendations and did not have a full-blown
implementation plan yet.

Commissioner Fuller asked about looking into adopting best practices where communities
have done disparity studies and have truly followed through on adopting the
recommendations and actually acting out the recommendations so that they would have a
template for what worked.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough
to adopt a resolution supporting recommendations provided by Griffin & Strong, P.C. as part
of the Mecklenburg County Disparity Study.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if there were any existing templates or anything from other
communities you worked with relative to scorecards that they could have visibility to.

Mr. Strong responded that they would bring that back to the Board as there were several
jurisdictions using them, including Chicago and Memphis.

Commissioner Jerrell made comments in relation to the high-level of professionalism of
Mecklenburg County staff.

Commissioner Cotham asked if the women were certified as a woman-owned business.

Ms. Diorio said all the certification was done by the City.

Mr. Zeiler said there were multiple certification arms, and the City of Charlotte does a small
business certification for the region; the State of North Carolina and a couple other
professional organizations do certifications for minority and women owned certifications.
Commissioner Cotham said she always resented this as she had her own company for 10 years and kept hearing from the City and other places about becoming certified but that she had to spend money to get certified. She said in talking about equity, to charge someone starting a business an extra fee to be certified to be a certified woman. She thought the principle of the whole thing was ridiculous.

Commissioner Cotham spoke about a developer which had a big reception and invited all minority contractors and from that many got jobs with that company, because they were looking for them. She said she believed that was a wonderful way to help minority contractors and put them together. She asked if that was something the County could ever do to help minority contractors to get some of the things, because it was hard when you start to get those relationships.

Mr. Zeiler responded that the certification used by Mecklenburg County within their MWSBE program charge no fees, so the City of Charlotte charged no fees for its small business certification and the HUB certification that they use for women and minority status was a publicly ran project which also charged no fees. He said they had an upcoming event connecting contractors with subcontractors just as she had mentioned.

Commissioners made further comments.

Commissioner Powell stated she had a worry about the consequences of mandatory subcontracting if they did not specify more than that. She said they did not want to be a part of perpetuating inequities on the small businesses that might want the bits so bad that they were not paying the employees anything but minimum wage. She believed it was an important recommendation but that they needed to be careful about how they implemented it so that they were not part of perpetuating disparities. She started she hoped they were looking to Mecklenburg County for the businesses as it was better if they were trying to get business from Mecklenburg County businesses.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded unanimously.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #56.

20-6425:  COVID-19 Response Update

Raynard Washington, Deputy Health Director provided an update on COVID-19 data and the response to it in Mecklenburg County. Dr. Washington gave an update on the flu season stating that flu season has started and that they were working aggressively to be able to do two things, most importantly of course they wanted to increase awareness in the community around the flu and thing they could all do to prevent the further spread of the flu, particularly as they were also battling the COVID-19 pandemic. He said they had launched their media campaign, which was a combination of social media, radio media, print media, tv media, and the Fourth Street parking deck banner to remind people to get their flu shot and to adhere to the three w’s in their fight against COVID-19 and the flu. He said they also updated the flu information on the website, providing additional information around resources, including where they could go to get vaccinated. He said they had transitioned the COVID-19 hotline to also being a flu hotline as well. He stated it would be available for calls Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Washington said they were also increasing availability of the flu vaccine and hopefully increasing the number of folks in the community that would get the vaccine. He said that last year and several years prior, based on population-based surveys, about a third of the residents received a flu vaccine. He said that was not good and that they number needed to be increased. He said on top of flu and COVID-19, there was also seasonal cold and other viruses floating around in the air. He said it was really important to try to get as many people vaccinated as possible. He said they were expanding the number of flu vaccines they had available in stock and made a request to the State for an additional 6,500 vaccine to be available to anyone in the community, not limited to children and pregnant women. He said they have made the vaccine accessible in many ways. HE said they had extended the
appointment availability and were having two events. He said the first was Flu Fighter
Fridays, which would be done of four Fridays over the next few months. He said they would
be at the Health Department starting this Friday at the Southeast location at 249 Billingsley
Road from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. He stated it would be a drive through. He said they would
also be having Sleeve up Saturdays on November 14th and December 12th. He stated no
one would need health insurance or ability to pay. He said there was also good community
coverage through retail and healthcare.

Dr. Washington stated they were seeing an increase of COVID-19 cases throughout the
County and have seen the number of daily cases almost double throughout the last week.
He said things were looking really good for the County a couple of weeks ago and that they
were now unfortunately seeing an uptick in cases. He said they were seeing about 177 cases
per day on average but that they were able to staff pretty significantly with case investigators
and contact tracers. He stated they felt very prepared to be able to respond as they had
seen the increase over the past week or so. He said this was not just in Mecklenburg County
but in the region across the State and states across the Country. He said as the fall season
came into play, they expected this to happen, so they were digging in right now and needed
everyone to jump in as it related to what worked to keep the virus spread as slow as possible
in the community.

Dr. Washington said that to date there were 377 deaths in Mecklenburg County and over
half were related or connected to the outbreaks in long-term care facilities. He said staff was
working closely with the long-term care facilities, getting the number in outbreak status down
really low. He stated the Communicable Diseases team was on the phone daily with the
facilities talking them through step-by-step, making sure they have access to testing and
have all of the appropriate measures in place.

Dr. Washington stated not much had changes as far as virus demographics in the
community; they still continue to see that nearly three quarters of the cases were among
young adults, specifically ages 20-39. He said one in four over all were in Hispanic. He said
that pattern had improved fairly significantly over the last several months, as they’re was a
huge disparity for a very long time. He said it was pretty much not there any longer. He said
they did a lot of work with that community to insure there was testing information and
resources available. He said the good news was that over 80% of the folks that had been
diagnosed with COVID-19 were out of isolation and were recovering well with no significant
consequences but that they do still have a number of people who end up having severe
complications and have to be hospitalized.

Dr. Washington said the hospitalizations were increasing, partially due to increase cases
among residents and the surrounding counties. He said they saw this happen really quickly
and a number of hospitals in surrounding counties reached their capacity and have started
to send their patients to Mecklenburg County. He said they were a regional healthcare
provider, as the local healthcare systems do provide care not just across the counties and
state but also across the State line. He said it was very important for the County to work
closely with the healthcare systems to insure they have all the necessary resources they
need in terms of PPE and support and that they were monitoring with them daily how many
patients they have in the hospital, what their staffing looks like, and their capacity to be able
to provide care. He said they really had to watch that very closely, especially as flu season
starts and as they were experiencing an increase in cases now.

Dr. Washington said they were up to about 6% on average over the past week and that they
had been as low as 4.5%. He said in terms of COVID-19 testing, they were seeing increases
in demand for testing, which was obviously due to increase spread in the community. He
said that more of those folks who were being tested were testing positive. He said they were
doing pretty good as a county in the spirit of testing and that testing was still widely available.
He said there were a number of locations open seven days a week and there were over 25
retail sites where you can get tested fairly easily. He said that turnaround times were
relatively stable right now, as lab test results were coming back within 24 to 48 hours. He
said they were working to deploy new testing resources in the County to supplement some
of the long-standing testing access points and that they have additional resources from both
the State and federal partners that have been very helpful for them in the process. He said
they had new mobile testing where they were able to quickly mobilize to any location across
the County and they also had some surge testing capacity, which they were using currently to try to test as many of the teachers and staff in the public-school system. He said they were also expecting increase capacity in terms of the rapid test. He said the state was providing an additional supply of rapid test to the community, which would be deployed this week to the Health Department, to make available to their testing partners in the community. He said they were trying to focus their areas to make sure they were reaching those hard-to-reach populations and groups of folks who find it difficult to access testing like high-risk adults who need to be tested and folks who were in neighborhoods with more community spread than others. He said they were using all the data they had to try to help focus and target those efforts, both in terms of where cases were occurring and where they were seeing less testing in the County. He said they were also working with their university partners to ensure that those students on campus right now were tested before they go back home for Thanksgiving. He said they were also trying to get creative where there were gatherings to make sure testing would be available following those events. He said the offer was still on the table if any community organization or group would like to host testing. There was plenty of capacity and supply to do so, and they could reach out directly at mecklenburgcountync.gov. He said they have received three or four responses to that in the last week or so, and they were currently being set up.

Dr. Washington gave a reminder of who should be tested in the County. He said the testing guidance had not changed. He said the following should be tested: any individual experiencing COVID-19 symptoms; anyone who had close contact with a known positive; individuals who were higher risk due to their age or underlying chronic illnesses or due to where they work such as a frontline worker or first responder. He said if you have been to a gathering of any kind, please watch for symptoms and be tested, as many individuals in gatherings range in size from 10 people at a restaurant to 100 people at a house, especially where people were not complying with social distancing or wearing masks. He said it was really important because people thought they had a little cough or allergies but need to go get a COVID-19 test. He told people to not discount those symptoms.

Dr. Washington stated they would continue to work with their partners to make sure testing was available to everyone who needed it, regardless of insurance coverage. He said they had a testing work group that they would be reconvening next week again to talk through the additional strategies they needed to take. He said if you ever had a question about testing they could call the Health Department.

Dr. Washington gave an update on the ambassador program, which they thought was going very well. He said they had completed over 750 compliance inspections and responded to 726 service requests. He said the teams were out in the field any time of day in the evenings or whenever there was something happening where they believed there may be an educational opportunity or opportunity for them to be able to influence businesses or groups or gatherings to do what they knew was right in terms of wearing masks; social distancing; and maintaining occupancy limits. He said the ambassadors had seen improvements as they go out to places then go back for a reinspection to ensure the organizations were making progress towards maintaining crowds, mask wearing, and enforcing social distancing. He said they were seeing progress, which was good news, because he believed most of the businesses were doing the right thing but that there were some who were continuing to have challenges, and their goal was to find them and to try to provide as much education as possible. He said when the education fails, obviously there could be enforcement actions.

Dr. Washington said that several of the locations increased in security to assist with crowd monitoring, mask wearing, and social distancing. He said it was important to have those staff in place to be able to do crowd control when those things happen. He said some were self-managing well. He said they did a spotlight of one of the breweries this weekend who decided to close their taproom, Sycamore Brewing Company. He said they appreciated it, because the company noticed things were getting out of hand, and the best option was to not let it get that way and to stop before it gets too far. He said he needed for all of the businesses to adopt that mentality as they needed to be watching, have enforcement mechanisms, and if it got to be too far, they needed to stop. He stated that would help everyone in the fight against COVID-19 as they moved ahead.
Dr. Washington gave an update on an active outbreak under investigation. He said they were working with the United House of Prayer for all People on Beatties Ford Road. He said they made an announcement over the weekend that there had been at least nine cases associated with a convocation event that occurred over the course of October 10th and 11th. He said they were aware that the vent was almost a full week of activities, but they were pretty confident the best opportunity for spread in the cases they had at the time were related to, the Saturday and Sunday events, which were much larger crowds. He said they were now up to 50 laboratory cases associated with the event, and they were individuals who were Mecklenburg County residents and attended at least one of those events throughout the week. He said they were now encouraging everyone who either attended any of the Saturday and Sunday events or anytime in the window of October 4th through the 11th to be tested at watch for symptoms. He said it was going pretty quickly and they really wanted to ensure the community was aware that there were certainly individuals who were infectious at some of the vents and they want people to do the right thing and quarantine, isolate, and follow the County’s instruction. He said the 40 cases arson had upwards to 75 close contacts who may have been potentially exposed to or now being contacted for quarantine. He said that five of those who tested positive were arrangements to a congregate living center, which was an independent living facility for seniors, because now they have launched a cluster at that location due to all having tested positive.

Dr. Washington said he reached out to one of the leaders at the church and have advised them not to have any gatherings in the coming weeks as they do not know how far the spread went at this people. He believed it was not a good idea to convene the same group of people at this time. He said they had not had testing at the church, but the County was looking at setting up an additional testing site at the northwest location, which was not very far from the church, in order to create an additional opportunity for people to get free testing.

Dr. Washington gave an update on Mecklenburg County Public Health Clinical Services. He said they were currently offering clinical services at both southeast and northwest locations as well as virtual. He said they offer family planning, STI testing and treatment, immunizations, breast and cervical cancer screening, which would be available at both sites, and tuberculosis and refugee clinic which were available at northwest. He said the services were all at no cost or low cost. He reminded everyone that they had to do what they had to do to keep the virus spread slow in the community, which was wearing a mast; waiting at a distance; cleaning hands and surfaces; and avoiding large gatherings of any kind.

Commissioner Jerrell said the feedback he got in his district was that it was not being reported or it was being under reported in the refugee community and that they did not want to self-quarantine due to economics or financial reasons. He said he hoped they could find ways to connect them to additional resources, particularly the financial resources and food resources. He believed the language piece was another huge barrier.

Dr. Washington said they had resources available for folks who tested positive with COVID-19 and needed to quarantine for any reason, mostly supported by the State but in the form of food resources, there was a cash payment available now and the social workers and community health workers who were funded through the State were able to provide those services. He said individuals should not be hesitant to answer the phone when we call because we were to say stay home, because there were resources available to help people be able to do the isolation and quarantine safely and with basic social supports.

Commissioner Fuller said there were a lot of cultural reasons why folks in those communities may not want to engage with government, but to the extent the County could do more outreach to those communities, he believed they would benefit from that.

Commissioner Fuller asked about an allege COVID-19 cluster that the Charlotte Observer was reporting.

Dr. Washington responded that any clusters that occurred within childcare facilities or congregate living centers like shelters or independent livings or nursing homes were publicly reported every Tuesday and Friday. He said there were two additional clusters which were identified in two facilities just this week, which was added to the report. She said they had a few of those occur over the course of the pandemic. He said they treated those like they
would a long-term care or nursing up. He said they were immediately in touch with the staff there and testing out a plant if they needed one, as well as much decisions about isolation and quarantine for the folks who were involved.

Commissioner Fuller asked if it was in a Meck Pre-K facility.

Dr. Washington responded that he would find out.

Commissioner Fuller asked what they were doing to prepare for a potential deluge of people coming from other places in the State and from South Carolina.

Dr. Washington responded that the healthcare system was aware off the situations, not just in this region but across the Country. He said they worked with them in emergency management and other partners to monitor the situation closely. He said they have increased their PPF, increasing their staffing as they were allowed to. He said there were a number of other measures put into place to insure when any surge in hospitalizations come, they could handle the surge within the walls of the buildings they had currently. He said they obviously did not know what was to come and that was why they could continue to reinforce the need for everyone as a community to play their part in it and wear a mask, keep a distance, and not go to gatherings, because it was really important to do everything they could to slow the spread. He said they were prepared for a surge and were doing everything now to prepare in terms of staffing. He said they were hopeful they did not get to that point. He said they meet with the hospitals, emergency management, the policy group, and town leadership twice a week.

Commissioner Leake made comments regarding the cluster of positive cases attributed to the United House of Prayer. Commissioner Leake allowed Elder Murray, United House of Prayer, to address the Board regarding the preparations they made and the response they were pursuing.

Commissioner Harden requested that the Halloween criteria be reviewed.

Dr. Washington said that the single most important things they could do was to wear a face cover, not make contact with others, not gather in bars and restaurants, and not participate in parties and that it was okay to trick or treat if it was safely being done.

Commissioner Harden asked if there was more money that could be spent on marketing and getting out those messages to the community. She believed those investments would lead to lower rates of transmission as they went through the holiday season.

Ms. Diorio responded that the County on me CLT campaign was being continued through the end of the calendar year. She said they did have additional dollars to spend. She said they were also looking into a message being created around behavioral health.

Chair Dunlap asked how they were contact tracing when people were coming from all over the States.

Dr. Washington said it could be challenging but that they did make contact with all of the surrounding counties in North and South Carolina for folks who may have come from this immediate area to the event. He said the most effective thing was to talk to the people who were there. He said the contact tracing team handled that. He said if the close contacts lived in North Carolina, they would put them into the contact tracing system and the health department where they lived would contact them. He said they made every effort to do so but it was challenging as they did not have a list of everyone was not in attendance.

Chair Dunlap stated that testing was intensified immediately after Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Chair Dunlap inquired about the enforcement of COVID-19.

Ms. Diorio responded that CMPD continued to do enforcement of the executive orders.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6463: Request Update - COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund

Commissioner Cotham stated she has always commended County staff and the Boards for wanting to be transparent and she believed they had that as an ultimate goal. She said back in April they were in the early days of the pandemic having remote meetings and she was excited that the County staff was helping to allocate money to get it quickly out to small businesses. She said as she recalled, they worked on two different funds, one for micro businesses and for businesses up to 50. She said for this specific one that they had $5 million and learned the State had all of those rules and they had to have a third party to administer it. She said that she was contacted by a reporter from WCNC, Nate Morabito. She gave him credit, stating the media was there to give their information to the public, so they were working for the community just as the County was. She said they wanted transparency, and it seemed as though this particular fund took a turn for the worse. She stated she did not vote for it as she thought the fee was excessive. Commissioner Cotham requested that the be transparency of those dollars so that the public would know where their money was going.

Ms. Diorio responded that the reported did make a public records request for the list of companies which received loans under the small business relief fund. She said they did not get that information; Carolina Small Business administers that on their behalf, and the County would get metrics and data on a macro scale, in terms of how many loans they had given, how many companies it went to, and what the amounts were. She said they wanted to protect the borrower's, because they did not want their situation being made public. She stated she understood the other side, which was the transparency piece. She said when he made a public records request, they did not have a public record which was responsive to his request, because they did not have the information. She said that was where they kept saying they did not have it, then she and Commissioner Cotham had conversations about it. She told her it would make it easier if the Board made the request to have it provided, then they would have a public record they could share with the media. She said she did not want to set a president of creating a record to respond to a media request, so that was why it was handled this way.

Commissioner Cotham requested it be broken down by district. She said when you are getting public dollars it was a different ball game and when you get them it is always transparent. She believed there were some communication misses there. She said going forward she request if they were ever working with a nonprofit on one of these things the State makes them do, that it is made clear.

Ms. Diorio said she agreed and was happy to do that.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cotham and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to direct the County Manager and staff to provide the names of the companies which have received the loans and the amount of the funding they received from the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Fund and also to provide the information by district.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if this was before they received the CARES Act Money.

Ms. Diorio said it was County general fund dollars, but they now have converted it over to CARES Funding.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell she said when people want to know where their tax money was going, this was CARES Act money that came from the federal government. She asked if that was correct.

Ms. Diorio responded that she was correct.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she felt the story got to a sensationalized, heightened level that did not need to be that way that made the Board look as if it were doing
something shady or wrong or did not know what they were doing. She wanted to dispel that myth. She asked if anything changed, if people who received the money that their identity was protected because of trying to protect their businesses from appearing to be struggling financially. She wanted to know what had changed since then for them to disclose that information.

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director stated that Carolina Small Business Development Fund, as part of its protocol, generally has a policy of not disclosing borrowers’ names to public entities. He said in the County’s negotiations with Carolina Small Business Development fund understood that and talked about after all the funds had been dispersed, doing a post action analysis, and at that point they would request the names of the borrowers. He said they wanted to protect them, but they also wanted to insulate the Board and staff from any charges that there may had been undue influence. He said whenever they had conversations with Carolina Small Business Development Fund, they say they have a lender, identified by this number, and that they do not have any insight into them, that way they would not know and there could not be a charge that perhaps a Commissioner or staff was unduly influencing a decision on a lending or decline of lending on a particular borrower.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell responded that she really appreciated that and believed it would be extremely useful to have a breakdown of the types of businesses, the districts, and amounts, but she did not personally feel she needed to know the names of the businesses.

Commissioner Harden asked if they were contractually guaranteed privacy. She wanted to know if that was a part of their lending agreement.

Mr. Zeiler responded no; they were not.

Commissioner Leake stated she received several phone calls asking her what businesses received money, when on the news they talked about these large corporate businesses got money which was not intended for them, but they got taxpayers money and used it. She said they wanted to know what happened to the money the County provided. She received three calls Saturday night from three, black women in business who said they had applied three times and never got a dime. She said they felt they were overlooked. She said she did not know what the criteria was, but they have a right as the public to know how money was given. She said when the Foundation of the Carolinas came to the County and generated funds to give to the public, they have the right to know how they dispense that money. She said the money was not their money; the money came from the County. She said there was a committee which sat down to determine how those funds were going to be generated, also the money from United Ways. She said the County pays those companies money to disperse the funds they had provided. She said people could not believe they gave United Way $1,000,000 to dispense their money, people could not believe it; they thought it was exorbitant. She said they had a right as a community to ask those kinds of questions when they were asked to them as Commissioners. She said they should have received a report written out how the funds were deviated and given to the community so that they would know who they needed to help more. She said when people do not want to itemize how they spent the money but just spent it, that would not tell her anything. She said that was a major concern in many communities, as people fall out about money and become awfully upset when it would become money. She said she believed they should still have a list of how the money was disseminated.

Commissioner Fuller said he supported the motion based on the general principle he had of when businesses come to get public money, they should not expect that it would be private. He said maybe it was a question of what is disclosed, and he believed it should be limited to the recipient of the funds and how much they got. He did not believe they should be releasing their individual, financial reports. He said if you did not get a loan, you want to know who did and why and how come they did not get it. He said he did believe that this was unnecessarily sensationalized, as he saw some political candidates trying to muddy the waters. He said he did believe it was important for the Board to say publicly that they believed in the principle of transparency when it came to taxpayer dollars and that they would make a disclosure of at least those two things.

Commissioner Jerrell said he respected where everyone was coming from with respect to the motion, but he just wondered if they were conflating the issue. He asked if the issue was
the process did not get money, which was legitimate. He said there was room to explore how that happened and what was behind it. He also asked if the issue was disclosing who got what funding. He said he believed there were two separate issues there and the other thing he believed they had to consider was if it was CARES Act Funding, he was not so sure he agreed with the argument around the expectation to disclose that information. He said he was not sure he had ever seen the federal government disclose loan amounts and the company name with how much they were awarded. He said he was not sure he agreed going down that road, as he believed there was a way to provide information while actually protecting the business but believed they should be definitive around the information they were working for. He said if it was district level or industry, he was on in favor of it. He was not sure it should be the specific business.

Commissioner Powell said that public trust was very important, and she agreed with Commissioner Fuller who thought it was an issue. She did not think to ask if it would be public; they just assumed everything they did was public. She said they were hearing from the community, call after call, people who were in crisis angry or in shock, and a lot of her calls were from small business owners. She said the Board was not perfect, but their intention was, and they were doing their best to make sure they came up with solutions for the community who were in crisis in a situation they could not have anticipated. She wanted the community to know they never thought it would be anything in darkness; who thought it was an issue. She said now that it has been brought to their attention. The public deserved to know, and she fully supported that.

Chair Dunlap stated he agreed with Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell that it was sensationalized. He said it gave the appearance that the County did not have a clue as to what happened to $5,000,000. He said the Board never does anything without the expectation of it not being public. He said it was not a question of not having the information available; it was the fact that the people they were asking the information of did not have the information. He said that lead people to believe that they did not know where $5,000,000 was. He said if the right questions were asked, they would have known where the $5,000,000 was, because they would do then what they would do tonight, which was to request from the Small Business Loan Association who received the funds. He said it cold have been avoided had people not participated in what he thought was a question from a reported which was worded in such a way that you were sort of entrapped. He said people went down that rabbit hole, but the bottom line was that it could have been said that they did not know but could request the information and provide it to you. He said for Ms. Diorio to have it put on the agenda, because if the person who said it did not put it on the agenda, he would. He said he was glad it got there, so they could put it to bed once and for all.

Chair Dunlap said he believed there was some other information that people needed to know about the loans. He asked how many requests for loans would be made.

Mr. Zeiler responded that there were 563 applications received by Carolina Small Business Development Fund, and out of that, 197 loans had been approved, and 33 loans were pending. He said at the beginning of this, they were clicking along at about a 60% approval rate and they were now down to about a 25% to 29% approval rate. He said their average was at about 39% loan approval. He said the average loan size was $26,000. He said that 52% of the loans have gone to minorities; 34% of minority-owned businesses have gone to women-owned businesses, and out of that, they knew that about 930 jobs had been retained and saved as a result of this. He said those were real lives, real employees and their families. He said there were another 390 or so jobs which were expected to be created out of the program.

Chair Dunlap asked out of the 563 loan applications, if there were any complaints.

Mr. Zeiler responded that they have a weekly call with Carolina Small Business Development Fund, and if there were any particular applications that had a nuance to them that they would like to discuss with them around underwriting, they go through that. He said the only recall they had received out of the 563 applications was a company that had been declined for a loan and did not understand why. He said they reached out to Commissioner Jerrell and Commissioner Jerrell reached out to him. He said they then reached out to Carolina Small Business Development Fund and realized at the end of it that the applicant had put the wrong incorporation date on their application, so they had not met their threshold of being in
business for two years. He said he worked with Carolina Small Business, and they corrected
the application, and the company received their funding. He said each applicant, whether
they were given a loan or declined for a loan, also receives a packet which has information
about other resources available in the County and the State, as well as names, telephone
numbers, and emails of the key OED staff who would be able to help them going forward.
He said those who were accepted, who get alone, know they can reach out to the County
and work on business plans. He said those who have been rejected know they can reach
out to the credit access and counseling program to work with them to try to shore up their
finances.

Chair Dunlap said since he knew the media watches the meeting, the community would
know they were even more transparent than they ask them to be.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she 1,000% believed in transparency, but as long
as they did not change the rules- She said her impression was that the businesses thought
they were going to be protecting their businesses from being exposed. She said it made her
feel better to know that was not one of the pieces of the loan, that they would be private.

Chair Dunlap stated he knew how people felt, because they were in crisis, and it was
embarrassing to know they need that support. He said he felt bad they had to release their
names, but it is public, and that was the way they operate.

Commissioner Cotham stated she did not believe anyone who received COVID-19 dollars
should be embarrassed, as everyone was going through a once-in-a-lifetime experience.
She said they should feel they received some support from their tax dollars, whether it came
from the County, the State, or federal; tax dollars were tax dollars.

Commissioner Jerrell pulled up information on PPP loans and stated it did not give company
names, just city, state, amount, business type, veteran status, and some other identifying
demographic information.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell and seconded by Commissioner
Harden, to direct the County Manager and staff to provide loans and amount of funding
companies received from the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Fund and
provide the information by district; the identifying information will mirror the PPP loans as
shown on the SBA website.

Commissioner Cotham said there were a lot of different lists.

Commissioner Jerrell said it came from the SBA site.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, Jerrell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Leake, McDowell-Rodriguez, and Powell

A vote was taken on the main motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell,
and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Jerrell

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS

20-6436: Department Management Monthly Reports

Monthly department management reports for October 2020 were included in the agenda for
information. These reports highlighted key activities and initiatives within the County
departments and show relevant performance indicators of departmental activity.
STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

20-6427: Tax Refunds

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve refunds in the amount of $1,339.10 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes, and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6428: Land Acquisition - Irvins Creek Greenway

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of a permanent greenway easement (±0.12 acres) and a temporary construction easement (±0.01 acres) on Tax Parcel 193-151-03 from Carolina Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, Inc for the future construction of the Irvins Creek Greenway for a purchase price of $1,850 from Fund PAYGO.

20-6430: Grant Application - National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC) - Sheriff's Office

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to (A) affirm submittal of a grant application up to $16,000 from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC) as a Sub-Grantee of General Dynamics Mission Systems, Inc. and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.

20-6421: Budget Amendment - FY21 Revenue Increase for Department of Social Services - (DSS)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of $177,693 from Smart Start to the General Fund (Fund 0001) within the Department of Social Services.

20-6429: Donation from Partners for Parks for Senior Fan Program

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate a donation of $4,620 to the General Fund (0001) within the Park and Recreation Department from Partners for Parks for the purchase of fans.

20-6431: Grant Application - North Carolina Alliance of YMCAs COVID-19 Grant

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm submission of a grant application to North Carolina
Alliance of YMCAs of up to $350K to be used to support remote learning and (B) if awarded, recognize and receive award amount.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6422: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Jerrell reminded the community to vote.

Commissioner Cotham shared an experience she had in relation to the court. She asked the Board to continue to talk to legislators about the needs in the court system so they could have enough money to operate, because they did not have it.

Commissioner Leake thanked the community for supporting her and said to not forget the seniors.

Commissioner Harden stated that the name of the Morrison Regional Library was changed to the South Park Regional Library, and it was done in coordination with the family who donated the land and who’s relative it was named after. She said that name and the values the former governor had advocated for were not the values of the community today. She thanked the community for supporting that. She said in thinking about what the Board has done to address racial inequality, she could see some of the fruits of the decisions they have made, and she was proud of the district.

Commissioner Harden said there was a lot of miseducation around what you could do during early voting and that people needed to know they could register and vote at early voting. She said it was not too late to register and vote.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk
George Dunlap, Chair
The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget/Public Policy meeting in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center on Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 2:33 p.m. with Vice-Chair Powell presiding.

Present: Commissioners Patricia “Pat” Cotham, Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller, Commissioner Susan Harden, Commissioner Mark Jerrell, Commissioner Vilma D. Leake, Commissioner Elaine Powell, Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell, Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

Absent Until Noted: Chair George Dunlap

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Vice-Chair Powell called the meeting to order, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

20-6478: FY2021 First Quarter Board Budget Priorities Update

Adrian Cox, Acting Budget Director, provided the Board with an update on the status of the approved FY2021 budget items associated with each of the Board's FY2021 Budget Priorities: Reduce Racial Priorities, Affordable Housing, Fund Meck Pre-K, Mental Health Support and Parks and Greenways. Mr. Cox gave a summary of the budget at the first quarter then reviewed each of the Board’s priorities. He said each quarter, they would also include an update for the other investments that were added by the Board as part of the budget process.

Mr. Cox stated that there were far less expenses in the first quarter, which was especially true for new investments since it was a period of planning for new programs, solutions, and negotiating new contracts. He said they did not expect to have a large number of actual expenses or performance results that have been achieved. He said sales tax was not distributed until the second quarter, and 80% of property taxes collected in the three months between November and January. He said there was at present time a total of $184 million of the County’s budget that was dedicated to the Board’s priorities. He said that $32.4 million was added for the fiscal year. He said the Board’s budget priorities made up 10% of the total budget 2% represented the new funding for this fiscal year. He said the remainder of the budget was laid out as follows: 21% Required Programs With No Funding Discretion; 52% Required Programs With Funding Discretion; and 17% Non-Mandated Programs. He said for 2021, there was $32.4 million of new funding for the Board’s priorities, and the other category was for the investments made in the budget cycle that did not align to one of the five board priorities. Mr. Cox stated that committed funds were those funds which were obligated or specific services for contracts for specific services and for new positions that have been hired.

Mr. Cox stated that as of the first quarter, 38% of the Board’s budget priorities have been committed. He said the grassroots non-profit, grant program was established and that their partner, the United Way, accepted applications in August and were expected to announce awards in January. He said the contract with Young, Black Leadership Academy was established, and in the first quarter, 43 students received leadership completion certificated and 100 parents have completed at least one of the parent college education workshops. He said for the Three Sisters Market Food Co-op, the Co-Op obtained a letter of intent for a location and had established an agreement with the Carolina Farm Trust for sourcing.
products. He said the County was awaiting the final proposal. He said that funding for interpreting services at CDSA was being utilized, and the MWSBE Compliance Coordinator was expected to be hired in November. Contracts were established with Loaves and Fishes, My Brother’s Keeper, and Prospera. He said that Loaves and Fishes served 230 individuals through this program in the first quarter. He said they expected to have performance data from My Brother’s Keeper by the second quarter, and in the first quarter, Prospera provided three business seminars and the organization also assisted five small businesses with submitting loan applications.

Mr. Cox stated that in total for 2021, there was $8.6 million of new investments tied to reducing racial disparities, and much of that investment was for new programs that were being developed. He said that $1.4 million was committed for the programs on the slide. He mentioned the status of the Small Business Revolving Loan fund, which began last year, and he stated as of the first quarter there were two loans which were approved. He noted the program was in operation for about two months before the onset of the pandemic, which greatly hampered the startup of new businesses. He said there were two business applications that were under review.

Mr. Cox said with regard to the new funding for Meck Pre-K, all of the 89 Meck Pre-K classes were open; 780 of the 801 slots had been filled. He said the total funding for early childhood education included $21.3 million in funding for Meck Pre-K, and $4.1 million had been spent to date. He said there was $21.7 million for the childcare subsidy. He said $4.5 million had been spent at the first quarter, and 1,198 children received the childcare subsidy. He said all of the funding for the early childhood education was committed to provide the programs through the end of the year.

Mr. Cox said for affordable housing, the contract was established for Habitat for Humanity, the Roof Above, and the Time Out Youth Center. He said Habitat for Humanity completed 14 projects in the first quarter, and a Roof Above provided services at the Hill Rock Estates, and in the first quarter, the Time Out Youth Center provided housing and case management for 10 youth. He said three had received independent living skills, and two received job placement. He said there was a new NOAH project that was under development. He reviewed performance information on their affordable housing programs. He said 87 households received rental subsidies as of July 1. He said there was a three-month lag and he expected them to have higher numbers. He said they would be adding four new units to the contract at Grier Heights and 22 new units through the Archdale NOAH project, which was in draft. He said there was $4.1 million in new investments; $3 million had been transferred to the rental subsidy fund, and $1.1 million was committed for the contracts in the operating budget. He said much of the work for affordable housing was completed through the multi-year rental subsidy fund, in which there was $14 million in investment in. He said $3 million was new funding for the year, and $11 million was added in 2020, and to date, $10.2 million was committed for the listed programs. He said there $3.2 million that was unallocated and would be used for future programs which were under development.

Mr. Cox said much of the new funding for parks and greenways was for new facilities which have not year come online yet. He said there was $4.3 million for the Eastway Recreation Center. He said the construction was complete for the rec center, and the facility was expected to open late fall or early winter, depending on COVID-19. He said funding was being utilized for the nature center, and the Quest Center was scheduled to open October 31 with limited staffing. He said additional security was being provided at the parks, and the operating for new greenway sections were expected to come along in the second, third, and fourth quarters.

Chair Dunlap arrived at 2:47 p.m.

Mr. Cox said American Legion was expected to open in the fourth quarter. He said additional funding for summer camps and the youth conversation core would be utilized in the spring. He said for parks and greenways there was $5.3 million in new investments and much of the funding was for new facilities that had not opened yet. He said about half a million dollars was committed in the first quarter. He said two items were carry overs from the last fiscal year. He said there was $3.9 million for capital reserve projects for parks, and the projects were underway. He said about a million dollars was spent to date. He said there were also
58 positions which were added for Parks and Rec in 2020, and 30 of those positions were filled. He said that the majority of the vacant positions were for new facilities that had not yet been opened. He said he expected the positions to be filled in the fall.

Mr. Cox said that for mental health, $4.3 million was included in the budget for support staff for CMS. He said that funding had been repurposed to provide a livable wage. He said the enhanced services at the detention center were being provided and they hoped to have some performance metrics by the second quarter. He said therapeutic services for Raise the Age Youth were being provided, and they have served eight youth. He said the contract was in place for Mental Health of America, and they hoped to have performance data in the second quarter. He said there were $6.2 million of investments, and $4.3 of funding for CMS had been repurposed for the sustainable wage, and $1.7 million of commitments had been made. He reviewed the other investments made as part of the 2021 budget that did not neatly align to one of the Board’s priorities; however, each quarter they would be brought back as part of the report, so a status could be seen.

Commissioner Jerrell said he understood the need for certain items to be attacked tactically, but he felt for the community it may be hard to gage the amount of lift they were getting from their spend overall with the community. He requested that in the retreat that strategic goals were set, and that progress would be measured against those goals.

Dena Diorio, County Manager said they do strategic planning and have their core strategic plan and departmental strategic plans, which spoke to a lot of those issues. She said they did not do strategic planning beyond three years, and that there was no way they could assess how far along they would be in 2035.

Commissioner Jerrell requested that his colleagues started to look at it and took that level of approach at the retreat to measure and engage against that from year to year so they could tell the impact and progress they get.

Commissioner Cotham asked about the process of the $4.3 million in funding to CMS ---being repurposed.

Ms. Diorio responded that she was informed that was how they would go ahead and execute on the Board’s direction on the $15 an hour wage for all of their employees, and her response was that they needed to go to the Board of County Commissioners and say that to them. She said it sat them back a year, because they had them building year over year to try to add more money each year to do more supportive services for students. She said they did get some CARES funding for that purpose, but it was not ongoing dollars. She said she was not sure what the implications were once the CARES funding goes away.

Commissioner Cotham stated it concerned her about their commitment to mental health if that was the first place they went.

Chair Dunlap said if money was designated for a specific purpose, and if that purpose changed, the Board needed to be informed. He said CMS did not just have the right to unilaterally use it for some other reason.

Commissioner Powell asked for more details around park and recreation and greenways, because it felt like every time they were in a financial situation, that initiative would be at the bottom of the totem pole, and the needs were great. She said she was very concerned about it and that it set them back every time that they do not spend the money that was designated. She said not only was it designated but the other dollars they added, because it was a priority to the Board, were not spent. She said she was very concerned about it, and it was something she would give voice to as long as she was breathing.

Commissioner Fuller said the report that Mr. Cox gave was more in line with the type of reporting they needed on a regular basis to see where they were with that current year budget with what investments they put in the budget and where they were with the spend on the investments. He agreed with Commissioner Jerrell’s comment about wanting to insure they had clear, strategic, goals of where they were trying to get.
Commissioner Fuller asked with respect to the loan program, on the loans issue versus administration, it seemed like there was a lot of administration comparatively to loans that had been spend. He asked if the administration was front loaded.

Mr. Cox responded that the administration was front loaded and paid on an annual basis. He said it would be consistent for the life of the program. He said as they get more loans, that ratio would change in favor of the number of the loans.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the percentage breakout was fairly consistent on a year-to-year basis. He said if you included the new Board priorities, existing Board priorities, and non-mandated programs and put them together, it would be 27% of the funding that was non-mandated funding.

Mr. Cox said the 17% was non-mandated, and the 52% were mandated programs but with discretion on the level of funding. He said it was not necessarily parceled out in that 52%, but it was fairly consistent, and the Board priorities expanded each year as new funding was added.

Commissioner Fuller said the 17% plus the Board priorities were things the Board did not have to do but that they chose to do, and they were things that they were not mandated to do.

Mr. Cox responded that was correct.

Commissioner Fuller said everything else was mandated, but what may be different was the level of funding, and then there was the section where there was no funding discretion at all and they were mandated to do it.

Mr. Cox responded that was correct.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the breakout was fairly consistent year-to-year in terms of percentages.

Mr. Cox responded he would think that it was, unless there were unfunded mandates which came from the State or Federal government.

Commissioner Fuller if they had made any progress on the Birth to Three area.

Ms. Diorio responded that once they got into COVID-19, they were working primarily on trying to move the program virtual, which was what they did in the spring, and the Committee really stopped meeting, due to focusing on other things. She said the answer would be no, that they had not moved forward with any new initiatives on Birth to Three.

Commissioner Fuller said he did not want it to fall to the waist side.

Commissioner Leake said when it came to reducing racial disparities and seeing all of what was necessary to make it happen, she felt concerned to feel she was unsure what goals they intended to reach and by when. She asked if Three Sisters Market Food Co-Op had taken place or if it was in the process.

Ms. Diorio said the County has had conversations with Three Sisters Market Food Co-Op about them standing up a pilot site on West Boulevard. She said they had a plan to do a very significant capital campaign but that this was a concept, and it has worked very successfully in other parts of the County. She said they had a really strong plan and strong partners. She said they said to them that they would help them stand up the pilot to get proof of concept, see if it worked, and that would facilitate them being able to do the capital campaign they want to do. She said they already had land they got from Inlivian to put their big market on. She said they had site control, but the County wanted to see if it worked. She said if it worked, they may be able to duplicate it in other places, so they money they would
give them was to help them upfit the pilot site. She said it was a vacant Jack in the Box. She said they were waiting for the final proposal for the site.

Commissioner Leake stated she was shocked because she had not seen it before as it related to moving this far with it, because they had talked about asking other stores with mini markets to come in. She stated her contention was to send a letter, and she planned to make that motion so they could put it in operational process so the grocery stores could tell the Board in person that they would not be able to support providing mini markets in the community. She said the public needed to know this, not just the Board. She said they needed to know that the large markets refused to provide what they said they were trying to do, which was provide for the community’s racial disparities. She said the first place they start with was food. She said she also talked about being in touch with owners of Food Lion and have yet to receive a response. She was concerned that communication was not with the Board as it related to the Three Sisters Market. She asked where they had a market.

Ms. Diorio said the initiative was not new; she had introduced the Three Sisters Market initiative in her Manager’s Recommended Budget in May. She said they did not have one but that there was one in Chapel Hill that was very successful. She said to be clear, this item was in front of the Board since last May.

Commissioner Leake stated she understood that and that was why she was bringing it up.

Ms. Diorio responded they could take a road trip.

Commissioner Leake said there was not enough being said to the general public about what they do and how they do it with investments in the community. She requested answers to her unanswered questions from Cardinal. She stated they needed to do a better job with mental health, because the State of North Carolina had given up on mental health for people. She said that was why they had homelessness up and down the street.

Commissioner Leake asked how many people’s homes have been helped saved. She asked how many people have been helped with rent. She asked how many were being saved by providing facilities that would help them to save by renovating or refurbishing facilities rather than pumping money into a hotel or motel that do not employee black people or people than their own race in these facilities.

Commissioner Harden asked how much from FY2020 was not spent from board priorities.

Mr. Cox responded that he would come back with that information.

Commissioner Harden said she remembered it being a big number and wanted to remind the Board of how much unspent board priority money there was in FY2020. She asked what would happen to the money when it goes unspent, and how do they make sure it did not happen again.

Mr. Cox responded that funding that was not spent in the operating budget would typically fall to fund balance if there was sufficient revenue. He said if there was a shortfall in the revenue, that would offset the underspending. He said funding dedicated to multiple-year projects would remain for those specific projects. He said that for new positions, they would continue on in the second budget.

Commissioner Harden stated she wanted to ensure the community got the funding the Board allocated for.

Commissioner Harden requested an after-action report for the Aging in Place, tax relief program and asked about the amount of tax relief that was being given.

Ms. Diorio stated there was a cap on how much tax relief would be given, and it was not inconsequential. She said there was $250,000, and it depended on the value of the house and amount of taxes people were paying.
Commissioner Harden felt there was more relief to be had and felt there was a disconnect in terms of that. She thought it may be worth having a follow up recommendation on how to fix it.

Mr. Cox answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell felt it would be helpful to have more ambitious goals for both the Board and community to know what they were trying to do.

Monica Allen, PhD, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Director spoke to the Board about strategic planning and targets.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6435: 2020 Employee Climate Survey Results

Monica Allen, PhD, Strategic Planning and Evaluation Director, presented the results of the 2020 Employee Climate Survey. The results are used to evaluate performance on the County's Corporate Scorecard as well as understand perceptions employees have about working for and within Mecklenburg County. She said the impact of the recession was significant and they asked the Mecklenburg County employees a host of questions to see what they were going through and feeling.

Dr. Allen said this was their 18th year of conducting the survey, and their general purpose for conducting the survey was to access general motivation and satisfaction in the organization and employment development perceptions of the organizations. She said they also liked to conduct the survey to access process towards performance goals, identify areas of improvement when it comes to business support services, as well as to get some general sentiments. She said they administered this year's survey in July.

Dr. Allen said the response rates were pretty good. The response rates were 69%, which equated to about 3,689 full-time and part-time employees who responded to the survey. She reviewed the demographics, stating there was good alignment in representation of the survey respondents to the employees' population. She said that younger cohorts tend to be a little underrepresented. She said it was nothing out of reason or with concern. She said there was good representation in respondents by race and ethnicity but that there was some underrepresentation in the African American group, light in the Hispanic/Latino group, and Asian/Pacific Islander.

Dr. Allen reviewed the results from the motivation and satisfaction index, which helps to understand employees’ perception of Mecklenburg County, gage supervisor and manager relationships and talk about coworker relationships. She said performance on the index was really strong since they began conducting the survey, as they have remained exemplary and successful during the highlighted time period. She said they came in at 91%, which was the highest they have been on the index since they started tracking back in 2002. She said the highest item in FY20 was 94% for the question about “Supervisor provided flexibility needed to balance work and life. She said the lowest preforming result was that “Supervisor encouraged creative thinking.” She said the result was still pretty good. She said there were two items were at six percentage points in terms of the difference from last year to this year. She said they were, “I would recommend Mecklenburg County as a good place to work” and “Most days I feel good about coming to work.” She said that at the end of the day the good news was that supervisor-employee relationships were strong, coworker relationships were strong, and employees have positive perceptions of Mecklenburg County.

Dr. Allen reviewed the results from race and ethnicity across the different groups, they checked out everything to see if there was disparity, and she said there was no disparity for the first four identifiable groups. She said no disparities were seen with age nor tenure either. She spoke about survey results related to executive leadership and department directors, stating that favorable comments were received for both categories. She said in terms of workload reasonability, stating that in FY20, the result was at 81%, which was up eight percentage points from FY19. She said the higher result was not necessarily reflective
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of all departments. She said you want the results to be higher, not lower, and they saw comments from HR, Register of Deeds, and AFM, but those were all departments that were impacted by the number of visitors. She said in terms of less favorable, those departments which were probably more impacted, like Public Information, the number of hours staff worked and still were working, went down. She said medical examiner got hit really hard in terms of number of cases and calls for services and things like that and also Criminal Justice Services and LUISA as well. She said options were given to employees to choose how to best manage their workload in their department or division, and the highest number of responses was around adding positions. She said she understood that if employees thought adding positions was a solution, it really may not be adding positions. It may be that there are vacancies and that they were not filled. She said that "work I do is important" was pretty high on the survey by 99% of employees.

Dr. Allen said that 95% of teleworkers said their transition from office to home was smooth or very smooth. She said technology transition was rated smooth or very smooth for 93% of teleworkers. She said that results were very favorable in regard to how prepared people were to perform their job during the crisis, as 95% of employees said they were. She said some employees acknowledged that the crisis was unexpected and difficult to entirely prepare for, which was understandable. She said that 90% of the employees said they felt supported by their supervisor and that some employees offered suggestions for improvements. She said 98% of employees who responded said that they were in good spirits; 96% were happy. She said 96% were calm, and about 89% said they felt relaxed. She said they also needed to flip it, by asking employees how stressed they were. She said lower results were actually better. She said a large number of respondents felt stressed, exhausted, and worried, as it related to experience around COVID-19. She said they did not separate out why those employees felt that way but that some of them commented that they wanted to return back to work. She said that public health workers did have really high motivation and satisfaction through it all; they did feel support from management and prepared to do their job. She said she looked to see if they were also the ones who were most impacted and that that was not what she saw, which was good. She said that Park and Recreation employees stated they felt supported by management, but some of them felt like they may have not been as prepared to do their jobs, since some of them were asked to do childcare for essential workers. She said some from the Medical Examiner’s Office expressed concerns with going into the homes of individuals who may have passed away from COVID-19 to remove the bodies, as they could possibly be exposed.

Dr. Allen stated they had high results and that should things go down next year, the situation may change, and that is seen in dynamic situations where you see increases and decreases, so they will want to take a look at that. She said they had yet to really know the long-term psychological impact on employees but that she was sure that was data that HR was keeping track of.

Dr. Allen said in looking at the engagement research from Gallup, they really could not track employee engagement, because there were so many fluctuations, which meant that at the outset of COVID-19 for them engagement may have been really high and as they prepared to transition it may have waxed and waned a little in the summer, and now engagement was high again due to soon going back to work. She said one thing that Gallup also said was it was key for managers to have high engagement, because managers set the tone for the engagement of people who report to them, and managers affect 70% of the variance in team engagement. She said typically, whatever employees were experiencing, if not a home related thing, would be greatly affected by management. She said, "My department director clearly communicates what is going on in my department" came in at 83%. She said that was a form of engagement, and that was their initial kind of attempt to start measuring engagement.

Dr. Allen said that the American Psychological Association (APA) recommended that managers and employers in organizations be flexible about where, when, and how work would be done when reopening the workplace. She said leaders needed to determine how to support the emotional and mental wellbeing of employees. She said that we have been in the work-from-home space and now we were used to that and have to transition back. She said that would be potentially another psychological disruptor, not necessarily saying it would be bad but that they needed to look at what could management do now to get the
employees, who would be returning back to work, into a good space to go back into their office. Dr. Allen stated that the employee-survey results could be accessed through a dashboard and could be looked at by department and other things. She said that they would be sharing customer results on hopefully November 10, 2020 to give insight around what the community was experiencing.

Dr. Allen answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Fuller suggested more publicization of the work that was done at the County for both the public and employees to understand how important their work was.

Commissioner Harden said told Dr. Allen to think about how they would increase the response rate going forward.

Commissioner Powell asked Dr. Allen how she decided on the questions they would ask for the COVID-19 survey.

Dr. Allen responded that they like to do research, benchmarking, and best practices, so they took a look at several surveys from academic universities and colleges to engage their employees then decided which would make sense for the County. She said the questions about affect were from many different sources, such as APA and a few others that told things to understand about employees, because if they were stressed, worried, or exhausted, that would impact performance. She said there was impact seen in performance in some cases across the organizations.

Commissioner Jerrell requested to find out: what the employees needed from the Board; how employees felt about diversity within the organization; and do employees feel there was a career path where they were.

Dr. Allen stated that she was working with HR around questions dealing with career growth and development.

\textit{The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.}

\textbf{20-6472: COVID-19 Response Update}

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director, provided an update on COVID-19 health data and trends and the County’s response to the pandemic. Ms. Harris stated that their count at the end of the day was 33,500, with 388 deaths. She said there were 22 outbreaks in congregated sites, and the latest data report showed 184 daily average confirmed case over the last seven days. She said that was an increase for them over the past 14 days. She said that there were 114 for daily average hospitalizations, which was an increase over the past 14 days. She said there was a 6.4% positivity rate, which was also an increase over the past 14 days. She said there was a 6.4% positivity rate, which was also an increase over the past 14 days.

Ms. Harris gave an update on the United House of Prayer stating there were 146 related cases to that outbreak; 140 of them were Mecklenburg County residents. She said there were also residents in Gaston, Cabarrus, and Iredell Counties. She said there were a total of five deaths, with one more under investigations. She said there were currently 10 known individuals in the hospital. She said there was a total of 19 cases in the senior living facility, belonging to the church across the street, with 16 of them being residents. She said three were staff. She said there were two cases in the White Oak Manor Senior Living Center, one staff and one resident. She said they had notified several local health departments in California, D.C., Georgia, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and South Carolina to let them know of potential exposures. She said they were also tracking some other potential outbreaks in gatherings in the community. She said they were continuing to work closely with long-term care facilities with routine testing of staff and rapid response when they had positive cases. She said they did recognize though that as the community spread increased it would increase the likelihood they would see more cases in the long-term care facilities. She said they were paying very close attention to that.
Ms. Harris stated they heard of reports of numerous gatherings associated with positive cases. She stated there was a large party at a restaurant which involved healthcare workers that resulted in some cases. She said there was a large house party, birthday party, involving high school students that involved positive cases. She said people needed to understand the responsibility they had in preventing further spread by avoiding gatherings and sharing information with the Health Department when they receive a call about the situation. She said she received an email from the Attorney General’s Office, who will be issuing a state warning letter to Nikko’s Japanese Restaurant to address the concerns identified with an event that took place. She said they were working with CMPD and their ambassadors to monitor the site and give them the information and education they needed to do better in the future.

Ms. Harris said in terms of testing, they received some anagen tests from the State and were distributing those to community partners, which have been going out this week. She said some of the partners included UNC-Charlotte, Johnson and Wales University, Davidson, Charlotte Community Health Center, the Mecklenburg County Detention Center, Charlotte Fire, and Star Med, who was the contractor with the State for testing in the community. She said in addition to that they had two days of testing at the Northwest Health Department down the street from the United House of Prayer. She said the sites were extremely well attended, and they were extending that Monday, November 2, 2020 through Friday. She said the testing would be available from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Northwest Health Department parking lot. She said Star Med would be providing both rapid anagen and PCR testing with no cost to individuals. She said that was available, not only to people who attended the church but also to anyone in the community who would like to be tested and to first responders, county staff, and any other high-priority individuals who may need to be tested. She said they would adjust that scheduling for future weeks depending on the demand that was seen but because it was so well attended, they decided to extend it.

Ms. Harris stated they also provided testing last week and this week for teachers and staff from the school system as they were looking to go back to in school for elementary. She said last week they tested about 900 individuals, and there would be four sites this week. She said they were continuing to encourage them to be tested. She said those sites were also available for others as well. She said they continued to work with first responders to provide guidance to them on prevention, contact tracing, and appropriate, return-to-work guidance. She said there was some concern voiced about their ability to come back to work after potential exposures. She said there was a lot heard about essential workers these days and that there was guidance from CDC that depending on the level of exposure, there was the potential for individuals to go back to work without quarantining for 14 days, so long as they were without symptoms and implement the prevention measures consistently while they would be in the work setting. She said this was sometimes the only way they could keep sufficient people in the ambulances and on law enforcement. She said this was happening within the hospital systems as well. She said they have worked very closed with them around their protocols and would have another meeting with them later in the week to update those protocols and ensure they were efficient.

Ms. Harris stated that the CDC put out additional guidance last week on contacts. She stated they were redefining what a close contact was. She said the statement was that, “close contact is someone who has been within six feet of an infected individual for accumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period,” so not just a one-time shot. She said if you were in and out of a room with someone for 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, with someone who was infected, that would be considered a contact. She said that changed how the County was doing their contact tracing and the number of people who were in contact that they were getting from contact tracing, and it also underscored the importance for maintaining social distancing at all times, in all settings.

Ms. Harris said they had a Flu Fighter Friday event Friday and vaccinated over 200 individuals. She said they also had an event at the Vietnamese Community of Charlotte Health Fair on the 25th and vaccinated over 20 individuals that day. She said they had some specific emphasis over the next number of weeks for back-to-school vaccine focus, and they also have Sleeve Up events Saturday, November 14, 2020 and December 12, 2020. She said they were finalizing locations for that and would get information out on it.
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Flu Fighter Fridays were November 20, 2020; December 12, 2020; and December 18, 2020. She stated more information would be given out on that as well.

She said they distributed 360 households and eight daycares potassium iodide over the past weekend. She ended with enforcing the three W's. She said they were looking at changing messaging a little bit to add a few things to that. She said one thing they would add was to avoid gatherings, and the second would be to stay home if you were sick. She said they had a culture with work ethic that you go to work unless you cannot. She said that was not the right message right now and if people were ill, they need to stay home. She said if children were ill, they do not need to go to school. She said those were the ways they would keep things open.

Commissioner Harden asked if there was a place the community could go to see the total capacity of the hospitals. She said they knew hospitalization as it related to COVID-19 but that people were wondering with the flu and all of that.

Ms. Harris responded that the number was variable, which was a challenge with that. She said what they did know was that the hospital systems had a baseline but that they also, if you would remember last spring there were a lot of discussions about whether they needed a field hospital or whether they could expand within their system to meet the need. She said they built that capacity to expand within their system, so the County would have to work with the hospitals to see what may be available that they could make public.

Commissioner Harden requested a code or some way for the public to know, as they went through flu season, where the total capacity would be in the hospitals.

Commissioner Harden asked if large gatherings were still the number one place where people were getting exposed.

Ms. Harris responded gatherings of all sizes was where people were being exposed. She said it was not just large gatherings but family gatherings or gatherings with people you were normally not around or gatherings where you were not necessarily wearing your mask or social distancing. She said when we get together with our family, we needed to think about that as we moved into the holiday season and colder weather where people would be inside more. She said the people you were safest with were the people you live with. She said people would gather but that it needed to be done safely.

Commissioner Harden stated she would like to see all of the elected officials coming together and messaging together, because she believed both tradition and alternative messages that people were getting, was hurting the community at this point. She said if there was money to be allocated towards another big messaging campaign, she believed it would be money well spent.

Commissioner Leake stated she was continuously in contact with the leaders of the House of Prayer in Washington D.C. and sharing information with the County Manager as it came in. She said the meeting that was had yesterday was well received by the community of ministers. She said one question the general public may want to know was about attending services. She said some people were still having services in their churches.

**20-6471: Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Powell said it was important to remember that the Board priorities were the community priorities.

Commissioner Leake said thank you to the Manager for the diversity of staff across the organization, as it spoke volumes. She asked for what they were doing to be publicized.

Commissioner Harden asked everyone to follow the guidelines provided by the Health Department on the safe way to experience the holiday, which would exclude festivals and going up to the door and grabbing candy from a candy bowl. She said they wanted to keep the rate low in order to get the kids back to schools and keep businesses open.
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell implored everyone to go and vote.

Chair Dunlap said Monday there was a celebration for Sarah Stevenson, and they expected 50 cars to show up for the parade, and 48 did. He said she had the opportunity to go outside to wave. He said some got to get out of the car to make comments, and he was thankful for that. He said

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to discuss, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session, Wednesday November 4, 2020 at 5:23 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present:  
Chair George Dunlap  
Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham  
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller  
Commissioner Susan B. Harden  
Commissioner Mark Jerrell  
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake  
Commissioner Elaine Powell  
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell  
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order, followed by the invocation led by Commissioner Fuller, and then followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

20-6451: Commissioner Leake  
20-6452: Commissioner Leake  
20-6454: Commissioner Leake  
20-6459: Commissioner Leake  
20-6482: Commissioner Leake

STAFF BRIEFINGS – NONE

OTHER BUSINESS

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to move Agenda Item No. 20-6482: Proclamation – Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society Day under the Awards/Recognitions section of the agenda.

CLOSED SESSION

20-6475: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to discuss land acquisitions and to consult with the County Attorney.
RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:31 p.m. to go into closed session in Room 267.

RECONVENE

The meeting reconvened in open session at 6:31 p.m. in Room 267.

LAND ACQUISITIONS

20-6475: Closed Session - Land Exchange - Cullman Avenue Flood Mitigation

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) adopt a resolution of intent to exchange County owned Tax Parcel 083-031-06 (+/- 0.49 acres) for Tax Parcel 083-031-14 (+/- 2.75 acres) and a conservation/trail easement (or fee simple donation) of approximately 1.2 acres on the southern portion of Tax Parcel 083-031-28 with Flying KR Real Estate LLC or its assignee and (B) authorize the County Manager to negotiate the terms and conditions and execute all documents necessary to complete the exchange of property with Flying KR Real Estate LLC or its assignee.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #57.

20-6475: Closed Session - Land Acquisition - Reedy Creek Nature Preserve

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcel 105-091-24 (+/- 100.283 acres) in the City of Charlotte from Cox Media Group, LLC for expansion of Reedy Creek Nature Preserve for a purchase price of $20,000 per acre (with the final purchase price being determined by a survey to follow).

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6482: Proclamation - Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society Day

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring November 4, 2020 as Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) Day in Mecklenburg County.

Renee Jones and Robbie Lett, Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society, accepted proclamation and made comments.

The proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6465 Public Appearance

No speakers addressed the Board of Commissioners.
APPOINTMENTS

20-6467: Nominations/ Appointments

Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee

The Board considered three appointments for three-year terms expiring October 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to reappoint Jennifer Diviney, Patricia Moore and Jacqueline Sinicrope.

Jennifer Diviney, Patricia Moore and Jacqueline Sinicrope were reappointed.

Region F Aging Advisory Committee

The Board considered one appointment to an Alternate position for a one-year term expiring October 31, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to appoint Tekola Tessema.

Tekola Tessema was appointed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE

MANAGER’S REPORT

HOMES Program

Dena Diorio, County Manager asked for the Board’s consideration to another revision to the HOMES Program. She said as of November 3, 2020, they have received 292 applications, with 95 approved. She said so far they have allocated $32,494. She said 137 applications were denied, with the majority of those being because the applicants were over income. Ms. Diorio requested for the Board to extend the application deadline to November 30, 2020 and increasing the income threshold. She stated that the current income threshold was 50% of AMI, which equated to $41,750 for a family of four. Ms. Diorio recommended the income threshold be increased from 50% AMI to 80% AMI, which would be $66,800 for a family of four. She said the AMI for this area was $83,500. She stated if the Board approved the recommendation, the number of approved applications would increase from 95 to 178. She anticipated that a large number of applications would be approved by extending the deadline and increasing the threshold.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to increase the income threshold to 80% AMI and to extend the receipt of application deadline for the HOMES Program to November 30, 2020.

Ms. Diorio answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the allocations should be higher.

Ms. Diorio responded maybe as she would like to see how things go for a week or so at the 80% AMI. She believed another thing that could be considered was making the benefit a little richer, in addition to increasing the income threshold like was talk about before. She said they were tinkering with it to see where the sweet spot was but that they could do that and report back at the next meeting to let the Board know how it was doing.
Commissioner Jerrell stated that it looked as though the average allocation was about $350. He asked should there be money left over, if they could consider going back to those who had money previously granted to them.

Ms. Diorio responded yes.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

20-6466: COVID-19 Response Update

COVID-19 Update

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director, provided an update on COVID-19 data and the response to it in Mecklenburg County. Ms. Harris said they were currently at 35,332 cases in Mecklenburg County since March and that their case count was hovering around 214 average cases-per-day. She said in early October they were in the low 80’s per day, meaning that Mecklenburg County more than doubled in the average number of cases being seen per day. She said they surpassed 400 deaths and now had 403 deaths in Mecklenburg County. She said that was a one percent mortality rate, which was low but did not diminish the fact that there were 403 people in the County who died from the virus. She said there were now 24 congregate sites in outbreak status and were averaging about 129 hospitalizations per day, which was an increase. She said North Carolina was ranking 27th in new cases in the Country, 30th in positivity rate, and 22nd in death rates. She said they were hovering in the middle at this point. She said they were currently at a steady increase, but it was not the significant rise that they were seeing at the state level and some surrounding counties. She said it was steady but not a spike at this point.

Ms. Harris said there was a big spike in Hispanic cases back in weeks 20 to 25 but that the number went down. She said what they were seeing now was fairly consistent with the population in Mecklenburg County in terms of the percentage of cases. She said they had not completely leveled off and that the Hispanics were still just a little higher than their population numbers but that it was not off by much.

Ms. Harris said there were a few spikes in some age groups but that the majority of cases were in the 25 to 59-year olds. She said there were a couple of times when the 60-year old’s spiked and some jumps in the 0-17, but for the most part, they have been fairly steady across the board. She said the zero to 18 numbers were lower than the population in the County, which was to be expected since they were not seeing as much infection in that age group. She said the 20 to 39-year olds were higher than the percentage of the population in the County.

Ms. Harris stated that between October 15, 2020 and October 28, 2020 that there were a few changed. She said the County’s Latino numbers for the 20 to 39-year olds was a little bit lower than it had been. She said the County was seeing higher numbers in the under 20-year old category for Latinos. She said they had unfortunately seen a significant increase among the white population in the 20 to 39-year olds over the month of October. She said there was a small shift in where some of the highest numbers of cases were in that two-week period of time. She said they were fairly concentrated in the eastern part of the County, and it is now moving into the western part of the County and centralized to some extent. She said this helped them to understand where to focus in terms of education and testing. She said they were using that data to do those things.

Ms. Harris said they were on a bit of an increase with the hospitalizations. She said they were unfortunately averaging about 129 cases per day, which was an increase over the last 14 days. She said they were hanging around a 6.2% positivity rate. She said in October, they went down a bit for a week or two when they were at 4.5%. She said they look at case rate-per-100,000 and unfortunately the County was in the red again. She said there were a number of reasons for that: more testing and more spread in the community. She said the positivity rate was still in the lower part of the yellow. She said the County would hopefully be able to maintain that. She said unfortunately, some of the
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counties around Mecklenburg were seeing positivity rates above 10%, and there is travel back and forth between counties. She stated they were very closely watching metrics.

Ms. Harris said one of the new things was that there were testing partners which were starting to require test kits to detect COVID-19, Influenza A and B and RSV all in one. She said those would become more available in the community with one test to find out why people were actually sick, rather than people having to go get a COVID-19 test then a Flu test. She said they were doing testing Monday through Friday in the parking lot of the Northwest Clinic on Beatties Ford, and that had been a fairly popular site. She said they would continue that as long as there were good numbers there.

Ms. Harris said testing guidance had not changed much, but they were also adding some other testing considerations for people while moving into the holiday. She said if someone was going to travel, in a number of cases, there would be pre-travel testing recommendations and/or requirements if you are going places. She said there were a number of testing partners in the community which would test people who needed that test. She said in addition to that, she recommends if you are considering travel or spending time with someone over the holidays who was at high risk, that you be tested before you go. She said that was what was recommended in addition to the three W's. She said just because you were tested does not mean you would be fully in the clear, but it would give you an idea that you were not exposing someone directly. She said you would still need to wear your mask and social distance. She said for other types of tests look at the retail, mobile, and ambulatory sites for those instead of hospitals.

Ms. Harris said that the Ambassador Program continued to grow; they completed 1,158 compliance inspections. She said they were getting very good response from the business community, as they were very open to the ambassadors going into their business, reviewing what they had in place, and taking the County’s recommendations. She said if the ambassadors go into a place and find them non-compliant at the time, the ambassadors will check back in a week. She said what they were finding was good compliance. She said in most cases it was very supportive. She said they were starting to visit churches now but that they always call ahead to make sure they were comfortable with the ambassadors coming in to have conversations with them about the things they could do to better protect their population. She said they were looking at other businesses as well. Ms. Harris said there were currently six ambassadors in place, and the County just posted six more positions on the County website. She said there was a lot of interest at the state level in the program. She said the State was considering funding some of these opportunities in other counties. She said they were also getting calls from counties that wanted to know how Mecklenburg County set this up and how it was working. She said they had a great relationship with CMPD and the Sherriff’s Office. She said if they go to a place where there was a problem, the ambassadors would call them to come out and manage it. She said it had been a really good process for the County.

Ms. Harris gave an update on the outbreak at the United House of Prayer. She said they were seeing a reduction in the number of cases that they were seeing from that and that there were very few at this point. She said most of them were secondary cases from people who attended then exposed someone else. She said they believe that situation was in a better place. She said that there were unfortunately two more deaths since the last time she reported. She said the County continued working with the church to try to help with capacity and compliance with some of the things they were asked to do. She said they had been responsive.

Ms. Harris said there were three upcoming Flu Fighter Fridays at Southeast. She said they were seeing a reduction in the number of cases that they were seeing from that and that there were very few at this point. She said most of them were secondary cases from people who attended then exposed someone else. She said they believe that situation was in a better place. She said that there were unfortunately two more deaths since the last time she reported. She said the County continued working with the church to try to help with capacity and compliance with some of the things they were asked to do. She said they had been responsive.

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Ms. Harris said there were three upcoming Flu Fighter Fridays at Southeast. She said the next Sleeve Up Saturday would be November 14, 2020 at Albemarle Road Middle School. She reminded everyone of the three W's, not to gather in groups, and if you are sick, stay home and consider getting tested. She said the issue of immunity was a big question mark these days. She said there was some research being done but that they still did not understand what immunity looked like from the virus at this point. She said mostly what she was hearing from the experts was that some level of immunity could be expected for about three months. She said they were starting to see some people who were positive in March, April, and May, who were testing positive again. She said even though you have had the virus, you still need to wear a mask, wash your hands, not gather, and social
distance. She said just because you have had the virus does not mean you have ongoing, lasting immunity.

Ms. Harris answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Harden said at UNC-Charlotte they were required to have the Flu shot, and you could not go to campus without it. She asked if there were things that could be done, like those kinds of measures, by asking companies to take those kinds of measures.

Ms. Harris responded currently the main thing they were doing was communication and marketing, trying to help people understand the importance of it this year. She said the hospitals and Health Department required it and the County strongly encouraged it and made it readily available for staff. She said that many folks were hesitant to require it. She said they get information out to businesses that it was strongly encouraged. She said when ambassadors go out, that was part of their message, that if they wanted their staff to stay healthy and working, they needed to get the flu shot. She said requiring was not an option.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the map in conjunction with testing was not clear to her.

Ms. Harris said the bottom line was that they had widespread community involvement, regardless of where you were. She said few people stay in their zip code. She said what the map showed was the location of the home of the person getting tested. She said it did not show they worked in another part of the County or went to a store or bar or restaurant in another part of the County. She said what they were trying to do with testing and education was look at the population in those areas and get information to them and have testing available to those areas.

Commissioner Leake asked if the County was telling the school system to advocate for the flu shot.

Ms. Harris responded that she had been working with the school systems around the teachers and workers in the schools. She said she was also getting that information out through the school nurse. She said the clinics that were giving school vaccinations were also giving out flu shots as well.

Commissioner Leake stated she had a concern with the COVID-19 testing at the Northwest Clinic being from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. because of the working people in the area. She asked if the time could be moved until later.

Ms. Harris responded that she would check on that.

Commissioner Leake asked for clarity around a letter from a Commissioner to Ms. Diorio about the Universal House of Prayer.

Ms. Diorio responded that initially when Ms. Harris decided she needed to sign the order to abate the [inaudible] hazard, it was because at that time, they were not receiving any cooperation from the United House of Prayer. She said they were also hearing the United House of Prayer would have additional events. She said they were concerned about public health and safety, so Ms. Harris signed the order, which allowed the County to take significant steps against the organizations. She said once the order was issued, the County was able to get cooperation from the church. She said there were several conversations between the church’s legal team and the County’s legal team to negotiate a settlement for them to be able to open their churches and worship. She said at that point, it was about a week since they were able to worship. She said she did get some questions about whether or not that was the right approach, but that they have taken the position and always have, that their primary responsibility is to protect public health and safety. She said they were never taking the position because they were trying to take punitive action against one house of worship versus another.
Commissioner Leake said it was a major concern, the feeling that it was singled out, and why would a commissioner want to take that avenue without knowing the full story. She said she was hoping the black churches would not be used as a whipping board when it came to issues that impact the black community. She said it was their feeling that they did not want to have a problem with the Board about this issue. She said she appreciated the letter that was sent to Washington D.C.

Commissioner Jerrell said people in the community were very frustrated about establishments that were not adhering to the orders in place. He requested a high-level overview of how people should go about reporting and going about the enforcement process. He asked if there was any guidance on the County’s website. He inquired about COVID-10 numbers in CMS. He stated that people were frustrated with having to piecemeal information with COVID-19 and Influenza. He said he knew it was hard to get a repository of everything that was going on. He recommended a repository for people get information on testing partners, places they could go, like a one-stop-shop.

Ms. Harris responded that in terms of enforcement, they receive information in many different ways. She said she receives emails and that they get a lot of calls to the hotline as well. She said they also look at social media to see where there were issues. She said there were some reports that go to the City, and the City sends them to the County. She said they were coming from many different places. She said the easy thing for people to do was to call the hotline. She said they were following through on complaints. She said the thing that people needed to understand was that sometimes what you think you are seeing was not exactly what was happening. She said if someone saw a place that was completely packed, and there was video of it, and no one was wearing a mask, that sort of a thing, yes. She said she would still rather hear from people about those things so the County could follow up instead of assuming the people were not seeing what they thought they saw.

Ms. Harris said there is a testing site you can put in your zip code; it would give you the closest place you could go. She said unfortunately for a lot of people that was not necessarily what they wanted; they want to see what the options were and to pick what they want. She said the County could also come up with something that could go on their website with the full list, which changes weekly. She said they could make it more readily available so it would be easier for people to see what the options were.

Chair Dunlap asked why black and brown people were no longer showing as adversely affected by COVID-19.

Ms. Diorio responded if you looked at the death data, African Americans were more impacted. She said that half of the deaths were from long-term care facilities, which were mostly with white residents. She said there were African American and Hispanics in the long-term care facilities but not as many. She said if you look at the deaths in the community, the African American community was more heavily affected. She said almost all of the individuals who have died from COVID-19 in Mecklenburg County have had other chronic diseases, not just age, and unfortunately they knew the African American community was more affected by those chronic diseases, which would put them at a higher risk. She said in terms of numbers that they were not seeing the spikes they were seeing in the beginning.

Chair Dunlap stated he wanted to use her comments to make a point. He said if African American seniors were dying at a higher rate in the community, that meant a family member or someone close to them was the one bringing the virus to them.

Ms. Harris said in most cases.

Chair Dunlap said his appeal was if you were interacting with seniors, take some responsibility, because that was how they would get it. He said he knew a lot of times that grandchildren or family members visit who have been a little bit of everywhere, and in order to slow that rate of death down, they needed to take some responsibility. He asked if the numbers were reflected in the diagram, because it seemed to him if there were 100 and something cases, there should be a significant spike. He said all the people who went
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to the brewery were less likely to report they went to the brewery even though they went and got COVID-19 tested.

Ms. Harris said in reference to not reporting they went to the brewery, she said exactly. She said in some cases, the 180 cases they had from the outbreak from the church situation were spread over a week or a week and a half. She said they were in there on the diagram. She said the challenges with the gatherings and things like that is that people were not giving the County the information. She used the example of Gaston County, which reported two cases from the large gathering over there. She said if there were two cases over there, there had to be more, but people were not reporting. She said that was part of the challenge; you see the numbers going up significantly in some areas, but people were not always telling where they had been.

Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager, provided an update on the CARES Act Funding.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to approve the allocation of the remaining $383,000 in the following manner: $100K to Pineville Neighbors and $282,833 to the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership (CMHP), both for general assistance.

Commissioner Powell asked if there was a school nurse at every opened school.

Ms. Harris responded yes.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Coronavirus Relief Fund Update

Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager, said at the October 6, 2020 meeting the Board was revised of having had $2.5 million in unallocated funding available from the Corona Virus Relief Fund Spend Plan. He reminded the Board that they approved the appropriation of $2 million to the community fund that was being administered by the United Way and the Foundation of the Carolinas. He said that left roughly about $530,000 for additional investments. He said in addition to the $2 million, they also had to provide $154,000 to the Council of Government for the administration of the Small Business Program as well. He said that left a remaining $320,000 available for spending.

Mr. Bryant said the Manager was recommending that $100,000 went to Pineville Neighbors for general assistance. Pineville Neighbors had spent 100% of their funds, which was providing rent and utility assistance to their town residents. He said they served 171 households. He said for the remaining amount of $283,000, the Manager recommended it went to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership for general assistance. He said the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership spent $985,000 of the $1,000,000 they were awarded. He said they served over 800 households. He said the Board’s approval would provide a little less than 60 days for those two agencies to get that funding out of the door. He said it would also earmark the entire $39.2 million in relief funds that the County received from the federal government. He made the Board aware that the County Manager considered exercising the claw back option that was in the contract, which was the option that she had to repurpose funds that she felt some of the agencies may not expend by the end of the year. He said that county staff were in the process of validating the performance and cost dating received for the period of October. He said they hoped to validate all of that information by Friday or Monday at the latest. He said they would advise the Manager of what that validation looked like, which would influence her decision accordingly. He said the Manager did make the Town Managers aware of her consideration of the claw back, as well as county staff who were working with the non-profits. He said that was just a heads up that they were taking a close look at those agencies that were having some concerns with getting the funding out by December 30. He said they would repurpose it accordingly to ensure the funding goes to those in need.
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A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to allocate $100,000 to Pineville Neighbors for general assistance and $283,000 to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership for general assistance.

Commissioner Powell asked where the spend was with the Ada Jenkins Center.

Mr. Bryant responded that was one of the agencies they were looking at. He said they had some conversations with them and will see where they are once the data is validated.

Commissioner Powell said so all the money was not spent.

Mr. Bryant responded that was correct, and that was the majority of all of them, because it was a range. He said some have spent as little as 15%, and some have spent a significant amount and were on track to spending all of their funds by the end of December.

Mr. Bryant answered to Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6450: Economic Development Framework and Strategic Initiatives

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director, provided information on the Mecklenburg County Economic Development Framework and Strategic Initiatives. Mr. Zeiler gave the history of the document. He stated that in 2014, at the BOCC Economic Development Planning Retreat, the Board established five focus areas for economic development including aspirational statements and guiding principles. In 2015, Manager Diorio launched the Office of Economic Development and tasked it with developing ways to implement the focus areas. Over last 4 years, the Economic Development Committee has weighed in on and guided the development of Framework Objectives and Strategic Initiatives. In 2020, under Economic Development Committee leadership, a Focus Area for Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise Opportunities was added for BOCC consideration. He stated that there were six focus areas: Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise Opportunities; new and existing business growth; small business and entrepreneurial growth; strong communities and neighborhoods; workforce development; tourism, arts, and culture.

The value statement: Minority, Women, and Small Businesses (MWSBE) are essential for building a diverse and competitive landscape in business opportunities, contracting, and the County-wide economic ecosystem. Mecklenburg County is committed to increasing the participation and utilization of MWSBEs in Mecklenburg County business opportunities.

Framework objectives:

• Support minority, women and small business enterprises through enterprise wide Mecklenburg County purchasing and contracting activities with a robust compliance and auditing process by collaborating with internal and external stakeholders.

• Maintain and develop partnerships and a collaborative environment with business resource providers, industry associations, and groups that support MWSBEs, to
enhance the tools and network of the businesses we serve and to create best practices.

- Provide access to opportunities, capital, resources, and networking to help MWSBEs be competitive in the contracting environment through capacity building.
- Build and nurture relationships with the MWSBE business community, through activities such as outreach events, program sessions, and one-on-one/group coaching.
- Address findings and recommendations identified from the FY2020 Mecklenburg County Disparity Study.

Strategic Initiatives:

FY2020 Mecklenburg County Disparity Study: Develop implementation plan to incorporate Mecklenburg County Disparity Study recommendations into County policies and procedures.

The full list of recommendations from the Study are shown below:

- Recommendation 1: Allocation of Resources, Including Staffing – Evaluate resource allocation including creation of contract compliance program and staff
- Recommendation 2: MWSBE Subcontracting Goals – Develop policies and procedures to establish contract by contract MWSBE subcontracting goals and implement compliance programs
- Recommendation 3: Robust Good Faith Efforts – Incorporate Good Faith Efforts metrics into bid evaluation process to determine if bidder is responsive/responsible
- Recommendation 4: Small Business Reserve Program – Establish a program that reserves contracts exclusively for small businesses
- Recommendation 5: Increased Vendor Rotation – Use vendor rotation to limit routine purchases from majority firms, particularly in Professional Services, and to ensure that MWSBEs have an opportunity to bid along with majority firms
- Recommendation 6: Mandatory Subcontracting – Establish and implement thresholds for mandatory subcontracting
- Recommendation 7: Strengthen Forecasting – Utilize long range planning tactics to allow for longer lead times and planning of outreach efforts
- Recommendation 8: Supportive Services – Coordinate a suite of supportive services to increase the number of new MWSBEs and capacity of existing MWSBEs
- Recommendation 9: Prompt Pay Ordinance – Adopt ordinance requiring prime contractors to promptly pay all subcontractors, including third party verification systems
- Recommendation 10: Encourage Joint Ventures – Use the evaluation criteria of large-scale contract bidding opportunities to encourage joint ventures
- Recommendation 11: Data Maintenance Reform – Implement new systems to better track commodity codes, subcontractor participation and award data

Mr. Zeiler answered questions and responded to comments.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6495: Update on Cardinal Innovations Healthcare

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to recuse Chair Dunlap and Commissioner Jerrell from this agenda item and excuse Chair Dunlap from the remainder of the meeting.

Chair Dunlap and Commissioner Jerrell left the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Vice-Chair Powell presided for the remainder of the meeting.
Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager, presented the ongoing challenges experienced in the County’s partnership with Cardinal Innovations. He said during the presentation he gave in February, he recommended two action items for Cardinal: submit a formal improvement plan and create a shared data system to track referrals and outcomes between Cardinal and Mecklenburg County. He said in response to the request of Cardinal, the County received an outline for a new child welfare clinical care model for youth and DSS custody in August, which as of today has not been fully implemented. He said the County had not received any formal plans that support people served by Criminal Justice Services or services for adults or people experiencing homelessness. He said that Cardinal also informed the County that they were exploring granting DSS staff access to an online portal that would allow staff to see if services for children and adults in county custody were authorized or denied. He said Cardinal did not communicate the date on when that solution would be implemented.

Mr. Trotman stated that as reported in February, the County also submitted a request for reimbursement to Cardinal in July 2019, because their network did not have the adequate capacity to serve the children in custody. He said the County incurred emergency placement calls as a result. Mr. Trotman stated that County legal staff were meeting with Cardinal’s attorneys since June 2020 regarding reimbursement for costs incurred. He said those costs were approximately $1,000,000. He said that was because residential treatment services from Cardinal were not readily available. He said the issue was ongoing and had not been resolved. He said although there were minimal outcomes to report, DSS staff and Criminal Justice Services staff were meeting with Cardinal in an effort to improve collaboration. He introduced DSS Director, John Eller and Criminal Justice Services Director, Sonia Harper.

Mr. Trotman said one example of their collaboration was that Cardinal partnered with the County and seven non-profit agencies on Meck Hope, a short-term initiative focused on the behavioral-health needs of Mecklenburg County residents in the wake of COVID-19. He said services offered included: 24/7 resource and referral call line; substance abuse screening and treatment; and access to behavioral health services for uninsured and unemployed individuals. He said on October 19, Cabarrus and Union Counties Board of County Commissioners voted to disengage from Cardinal. He said on Friday, October 23, Mecklenburg County submitted a joint letter to Forsyth County to Cardinal Innovation’s CEO, Trey Sutton and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, Mandy Cohen, outlining ongoing concern.

Mr. Trotman stated the County received email communication from Cardinal last week stating they were in receipt of the letter and were preparing a response to address the concerns. He said Cardinal asked that the County share any additional feedback through an online form posted on their website. He said on October 29, several counties in Cardinals catchment area were invited by Rockingham County to participate in a conference call to share their experiences. He said along with Rockingham County and Mecklenburg County, other participating counties included Davidson, Stokes, Forsythe, Alamance, Cabarrus, and Union.

Mr. Trotman said as it related to youth and custody, each county had experienced the same major challenges: limited network capacity; delays in service authorizations; and clinical recommendations not being approved for higher levels of care. He said that on Monday, Charlotte’s Center for Legal Advocacy; Council for Children’s’ Rights; and the National Health Law Program issued a letter to Secretary Cohen outlining similar concerns to those elevated by Mecklenburg County and discussed with the other counties just mentioned.

Mr. Trotman discussed challenges outlined in the joint letter with Forsyth County to Cardinal and the Secretary. He stated that the persistent challenge with Cardinal continued to be network capacity, which referred to the network of behavioral health service providers in treatment program openings that were available in the community. He said emergency placements for county youth in foster care was a place where the effects of limited network capacity could be seen. He said in FY19, approximately $2.3 million in county funds were spent for children in Mecklenburg County custody who were placed in emergency care due to services not being readily available. Mr. Trotman stated
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that in FY20, over $2.4 million in county funds were spent, an increase in approximately $100,000 from the previous year.

Mr. Trotman stated that Cardinal was not responsible for all of the costs, but there were at least 100 instances in FY19 and FY20 where children were placed in emergency care beyond 30 days because their contractor provider network did not readily accept Mecklenburg County youth in custody with the most serious behavioral health needs. He said recently Cardinal health staff reported that 47 therapeutic foster care providers had been added in Mecklenburg County, but on October 5, DSS had at least 18 youth in custody and awaiting residential treatment services. He said staff submitted the list of children to Cardinal, and as of November 3rd, only two children were connected to residential services through Cardinal. He said as a result, the children may be stuck in hospitals and emergency placements, which they would not be receiving the appropriate treatment. He said as it related to services for the adult’s division, staff continued to report limited assistance with identifying appropriate residential treatment options for their wards and a lack of clarity about what resources were available.

Mr. Trotman said Criminal Justice Services staff continued to report that many clients with both mental health and substance use disorders were met with barriers to services and find themselves being bounced between treatment providers. He said in other words, the overall continuum of care remained fragmented and continued to make seamless service transitions from emergency rooms in jails nearly impossible.

Mr. Trotman said the DSS and CJS staff report gaps in treatment services that were available in the community, especially for clients with significant needs and barriers and that clients often wait lengthy periods of time to be approved or denied for services. He said in FY20, the average wait time for hard-to-place children with complex needs was approximately five months, ranging from 31 to 87 days. He said staff had difficulty getting services authorized for clients who were indigent and not Medicaid eligible. He said the amount of state funding available for those populations and how to access the funds was unclear to the county staff and providers. He said that clients were often not approved for treatment that was clinically recommended by licensed providers or physicians. He said that meant that many individuals did not receive the level of treatment that was needed to meet their behavioral health needs. He said as a result of the challenges with accessing care, the County had to enter into direct contracts with providers as a workaround to ensure clients received appropriate services. He said for example, DSS entered into contracts directly with residential service providers due to an inability to access care for youth through Cardinal Innovations. He said beds with these residential services cost $231 per day and were paid with county funds.

Mr. Trotman reviewed a few key recommendations that were in the letter to Cardinal and the State. The County requested that Cardinal authorize or deny requests for enhanced behavioral health services within a timeframe of 72 hours or less. Increase timely access to therapeutic foster homes by making the approval process for providers less cumbersome. Improve access to state funded behavioral health services for people who were indigent and do not have Medicaid. He said the County requested a corrective action plan by Monday, November 9, 2020 and asked for Cardinal to include a deadline for resolving the issues. He said after thoughtful consideration of the issues, staff recommended the Board considered the disengagement process with the desire to receive better and more timely access to behavioral health services for individuals, families, and children. He said that although they requested an improvement plan from Cardinal and the State, the County believed beginning the process was still warranted due to the lack of confidence in Cardinal’s ability to make the necessary changes. He said the recommendation was based on the history and experience working with Cardinal and the consistency of issues throughout the catchment area in peer counties. He said the disengagement process could be found in the North Carolina General Statutes. He said more details to the process were in the administrative law codes. He said the County must provide written notice of their intent to disengage to the Secretary, Legislature, and effected counties in Cardinal's catchment area a minimum of nine months prior to the proposed date of the engagement. He said the County would need to publish a plan for disengagement on the County website and accept public comments on the disengagement plan for 60 calendar days. He said the Secretary must be provided written
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documentation including the following: approval of a disengagement plan by the Board of County Commissioners with the date of approval, and the approval had to be by majority vote.

Mr. Trotman said in closing that the County continued to do due diligence to work with Cardinal to resolve the ongoing issues; however, Mecklenburg County residents continued to go without appropriate services and timely treatment. He said because of the persistent challenges outlined in tonight's presentation, the County asked the Board to authorize the County Manager to begin the process of disengagement as outlined by the NC General Statutes and NC Administrative Code.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to authorize the County Manager to begin the process of disengagement as outlined by the NC General Statutes and NC Administrative Code.

Trey Sullen, CEO of Cardinal Innovations Healthcare, addressed the Board of Commissioners regarding this agenda item. He said that the discussion about the County potentially perusing disengagement with Cardinal Innovations was disappointing and inconsistent with progress that Cardinal had made. He said that one week ago Cardinal received the letter from county staff asking both Cardinal and the Department of Health and Human Services for an action plan in response to some of the concerns that Mr. Trotman outlined tonight. He stated Cardinal assumed that was a good faith request and that it would allow DHSS and Cardinal to respond. He said he could share with the Board that Cardinal would deliver a concrete plan to the County on Monday that would be responsive and addresses the concerns and that Cardinal already made progress on a lot of the issues that Mr. Trotman spoke about. He said for example, since February, Cardinal resolved the issue with Crisis, to ensure adequate funding for that provider. He said Cardinal added over 230 providers of services, many of which were focused on the services for the kids in the community. He said Cardinal launched two programs designed to create capacity in the hospital partners emergency departments.

Mr. Sullen said they were also concerned about tonight’s discussion creating more confusion and potential disruption in care for the 145,000 Cardinal members with complex and challenging conditions, who live in Mecklenburg County. He said in 2019, Cardinal Innovations received $239 million in Medicaid state funds for members in Mecklenburg County. He said they invested $247 million in the care for those individuals. He said the majority of the individuals they served were socioeconomically disadvantaged, and their lives were already precarious in general. He said the COVID-19 pandemic had obviously made that worse. He said by increasing the risk of interruption in care, would further jeopardize the health and wellbeing of some of the Board’s most vulnerable constituents at the worst time, while dealing with the pandemic.

Mr. Sullen stated tonight’s topic was further disappointing given their collaboration and addressing public health issues such as homelessness, food insecurity, and continuity of care. He said that Cardinal Innovations recently announced making more than $245,000 in COVID-19 relief grants to 31 non-profits here in Mecklenburg County. He said that was immediately after the shutdown. He said the broader relief fund included $2 million for the community, and Cardinal also funded an additional $14.5 million in Covid relief and stabilization fund directly in the County, just since June 30th and continued to add to that number daily. He said Cardinal had partnered across the County with non-profits to offer financial support and resources. He said they partnered with first responders for training and within the community for wellness. He stated that Cardinal Innovation’s efforts and investments in the community were significant and more importantly, no single organization can single handedly solve the issues raised here today. He said they were systemic in nature and many communities, not only in North Carolina, but across the Country were dealing with exactly those issues. He said that being said, Cardinal was doing its part to move the system and county forward by making real and meaningful change. He said they will see that in the action plan Cardinal would respond to on Monday. He said ultimately, the final determination about Cardinal’s relationship with Mecklenburg County would be made by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Secretary. He said regardless, Cardinal would be steadfast in its mission to protect the folks they had the privilege to service, 825,000 of them in North Carolina. He
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said frankly, Cardinal believed the right path forward would be to continue to build on the progress made rather than to create more instability.

Commissioner Fuller said it was not terribly surprising that they were here. He said this went all the way back to 2013, even before 2013, at a time when the State told the County to create an agency called MeckLink, because the State were with a Republican dominated General Assembly and wanted to change the way that behavioral health was delivered in North Carolina. He said the County spend county money to create an agency, only to have the rug pulled out from under and told the County that the County had to go with a private agency. He said the County had no choice in the matter, state statute and the State statute specifically prohibited the County from providing behavioral health services. He said after litigation the County joined with Cardinal. He said at the time, you could predict issues, and Mecklenburg County alone represented more than double the amount that was already in Cardinal’s catchment. He said Mecklenburg County was going to be the big dog in this always, and you had a program- He said he was just trying to say there was a difference between the counties in Cardinal at the time and the largest, urban county in the State. He said there was bound to be problems administering a program to provide behavioral health for a highly dense, large, urban county was just different in kind and scope than what had been done before. He said at the time, he remembered himself saying they needed to do some thinking about how it would work. He said it was 20 other counties and Mecklenburg County in one catchment area; that was bound to be problematic.

Commissioner Fuller said he was not blaming the current CEO for this, but there were actions taken by previous CEOs and board of Cardinal that were antithetical to this working. He said he was not just talking about the salary grabs and all the other things that were happening that caused the State to have to come in and essentially remove everyone. He said this was the history they were dealing with. He said it was not a history the County caused but that it was put upon them. He said they wanted to try to make it work, even though it was something the did not prefer to do. He said he was glad the County wrote the letter to the Secretary. He said he believed they had to make the best of a bad situation, because his concern was that even if they disengaged from Cardinal, unless they were able to set up their own, the County would go to another one. He wanted to make clear that he would not countenance being asked to take sides against county staff on issues of whether things were happening or not happening. He said he would not countenance someone saying county staff was wrong; he said they may be but that he would not countenance that. He said the claims of whether things had been taken care of or not taken care of, that he would not countenance siding with someone else over county staff. He said he took what staff said to the Board as where they were. He said that was what they were charged to do. He said what he would say however was that in the end, they had to somehow make this work.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Fuller to give Cardinal Innovations one last chance but to give the County Manager authority now, that if it did not work, that she could go forward with the process and not have to come back to begin disengagement.

Without a second, the substitute motion failed.

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated the problem with the relationship was that the contract was between Cardinal and the State, so Mecklenburg County had no ability to make anything happen as it related to the relationship. She said they had no leverage other than disengagement. She said they had been at it for years, and while she appreciated Trey saying he would come forward with a plan, she could not tell the Board how many times she had heard that before. She said they were still sitting there and had 16 kids sitting in emergency placements. She said the difference this time was that they had the attention of the Secretary, and she had a conversation with Dave Richard yesterday about it, and he understood how important it was for Mecklenburg County to be able to disengage, because July 1, 2021 when Medicaid transformation goes into effect, they would have no opportunity to disengage. She said the County’s time frame to disengage every single day gets smaller and smaller. She said she needed to make sure she protected the interest of the County so if they needed to get out, they could get out. She said she was willing to work on dual tracks to look at their plan. She said Cardinal
would submit a plan, and the State would also submit a letter to Mecklenburg County and tell us how they intend to hold Cardinal accountable to achieve the things they say they will do. She said she was happy to look at that, but she believed they needed to have the ability to start thinking about where the County went text if it did not work, because they could not wait six months for Cardinal to be able to execute on the plan, because July 1, 2021 is only 8.5 months away. She said that was why it was critical and time sensitive. She said they would probably start tomorrow, because there was a lot involved.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney said as the County Manager stated, there was a lot involved, and to do a disengagement plan, there would be a lot of notification, and things must be done within the statute period of time. She said for every day you wait you lose opportunity to meet the statutory requirements.

Commissioner Fuller asked about the Medicaid transformation.

Mr. Trotman responded that the State made a decision to shift physical health fee for service reimbursement model to full managed care. He said not only would it be behavior health, but it would also be physical health. He said they would have five managed care programs in Mecklenburg County. He said some of the behavioral health services would also be a part of those physical health plans, like Blue Cross, Signa, or Anthem. He said the State had not given clear guidance or information on what services would be managed by the physical health providers and what services would be left with Cardinal.

Ms. Diorio said they did understand that the kids who were in county custody would still be managed by Cardinal, so the County would not have the ability to change.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the transformation would take away any disengagement opportunity because it would all be-

Ms. Diorio responded that the whole structure would be different.

Commissioner Fuller asked if they were disengaged by Cardinal Innovation, what would it mean.

Ms. Diorio responded that it meant the County would be with another LME/MCO, and that would still be the be the case, but we would expect that we would get a higher level of service from another LME/MCO than they were getting from Cardinal.

Mr. Sullen said if it was helpful, there was one other piece of the transformation story which was the foster care population. He said one year after the commercial plans go live, the departments would also launch a RFP process which would include a foster kids plan which would be statewide. He said it would be the five plus the six, plus local behavioral health organizations. He said that Cardinal would be one of those tailored plans. He said there was an additional wrinkle for the children they were talking about tonight.

Commissioner Fuller asked if they believed the County would receive better service from some other entity.

Ms. Diorio responded that the County had been talking to Partners for probably a year and other counties which were part of the organization, and they were very satisfied with the service they were receiving from Partners. She said there were eight or nine counties that were talking about disengaging from Cardinal. She said it could not all be Mecklenburg County. He said it was the same stories, the same frustrations. She said Union County and Cabarrus have already voted to disengaged, and Rockingham would be sending a letter. She said she believed Stanley County had reached out and Alamance, Davidson, Stokes which also expressed concerns. She said there were 20 counties in the catchment area, and she believed that was about nine or 10 so far.

Commissioner Leake said when Cardinal came just some months ago, a room was packed with people, and they talked about correcting some of their issues and problems that the County was confronted with then. She said it was a problem for them from the
very beginning, even talking to some of the workers of Cardinal who have withdrawn employment. She said they were at a place of no return, as the longer they waited the worse it got, and the public was holding the Board accountable as elected officials. She stated she wanted to make sure the County did the right thing for the people who sometimes could not make those decisions.

Commissioner Harden stated she agreed with Commissioner Leak. She said since Cardinal came to the presentation, they were in contact with her. She said she appreciated the increased service to the Commissioners, there were 16 children. She said families reach out to the Board, so the Board knew their needs were not being met. She believed that was why the Board had staff to help make hard decisions.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated she would support staff 100% with this and that staff had been dealing with this for so long. She said it was time to make a change and that she believed with the window closing they had to accelerate, because they had to think of the children and all of the people who reached out to the Board with problems. She believed it was long overdue. She said she thought Cardinal lost all credibility.

Commissioner Cotham said she blamed the State putting the County in the situation and for backing the County into a corner. She said it was extremely hard and that the County did as best of a job as it could to get through it.

Commissioner Fuller said since his motion was not seconded that he would support the original motion.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS - NONE**

**CONSENT ITEMS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

**20-6442: Set a Public Hearing for closing a portion of the right-of-way for Limehurst Place**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) set a public hearing for December 15, 2020 to hear all interested parties who appear with respect to closing a portion of the right-of-way for Limehurst Place and (B) adopt a resolution declaring intent to close a portion of the right-of-way for Limehurst Place.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #58.

**20-6447: Construction Contract - Independence Park Renovation**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to award a construction contract to JD. Goodrum Company in the amount of $3,061,583.60.

**20-6448: Abandon the right-of-way for Kistler Farm Road**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adopt a resolution requesting the Board of Transportation to abandon all of the right-of-way and maintenance for Kistler Farm Road.
Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #59.

**20-6449: Storm Water Program - FY19 Hazard Mitigation Floodplain Acquisition**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) accept the Offer of Sale of Real Estate from Robert & Alexandra McKinsey, owners of property located at 5801 Wedgewood Drive, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 171-091-10), for $431,000 and (B) authorize use of the structure for training exercises by local emergency response agencies.

**20-6453: Duke Lighting Service Contract - Renaissance Park**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve a new 10-year contract with Duke Energy at $2,432.79/monthly to provide replacement lighting along the drive and parking lot areas of Renaissance Park.

**20-6455: Tax Refunds**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve refunds in the amount of $8,552.31 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of $11,181.81 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes, and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**20-6456: Land Donation - Irvins Creek Greenway**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) accept a permanent greenway easement (+/- 0/26 acres) on Tax Parcel 193-151-05 from the Town of Matthews for Irvins Creek Greenway and (B) accept a temporary construction easement on Tax Parcel 193-151-05 (+/- 1.03 acres) from the Town of Matthews for the construction of Irvins Creek Greenway.

**20-6457: Greenway Donation - Clem’s Branch**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) accept donation of a portion of Tax Parcel 223-511-01 (+/- 7.8186 acres) from District South Ballantyne, LLC (and/or its successors or assigns) for the Clem’s Branch Greenway and (B) accept permanent greenway access easement donation (+/- 0.1044 acres) of a portion of Tax Parcel 223-511-01 from District South Ballantyne, LLC (and/or its successors or assigns) for the Clem’s Branch Greenway.

**20-6458: Lease Amendment - Anuvia Prevention and Recovery Center, Inc.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) accept donation of a portion of Tax Parcel 223-511-01 (+/- 7.8186 acres) from District South Ballantyne, LLC (and/or its successors or assigns) for the Clem’s Branch Greenway and (B) accept permanent greenway access easement donation (+/- 0.1044 acres) of a portion of Tax Parcel 223-511-01 from District South Ballantyne, LLC (and/or its successors or assigns) for the Clem’s Branch Greenway.

Commissioner Jerrell returned to the meeting at 8:55 p.m.
THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.

20-6451: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase)
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue of $121,639 from NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DPH) in the General Fund (0001).

20-6452: Appointment of Review Officer
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend "Resolution Designating Review Officers to Review Each Map and Plat Recorded in the Register of Deeds Office pursuant to N.C.G.S. 47-30.2" to include Andrew Ventresca.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #60.

20-6454: Duke Lighting Service Contract - Thereasea Clark Elder Park
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve a 10-year contract with Duke Energy at $458.10/monthly to provide lighting along the pathway loop at Thereasea Clark Elder Neighborhood Park.

20-6459: Development and Reimbursement Agreement - Wilmore Centennial Park
2021 Authorization Park and Recreation Capital Project Ordinance- Wilmore Centennial Park
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a Project Development Agreement and all other documents necessary between the County and The Square South End, LLC ("the Square") for the construction of a Wilmore Centennial Park on Tax Parcels 123-06-209, 123-06-210, 123-06-211, 123-06-212, 123-06-216, and 123-06-223 and (B) approve FY2021 Authorization Park and Recreation Capital Project Ordinance in the amount of $2,000,000.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #61.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6468: Commissioner Reports
Commissioner Jerrell congratulated his colleagues and future colleagues. He acknowledges those who are non-elected yet take themselves to service every day, staff, team members, and employees of Mecklenburg County and said thank you. He thanked District 4 for entrusting their confidence and faith in him to be their voice.

Commissioner Cotham congratulated everyone and stated she would miss the two colleagues who were leaving.

Commissioner Rodríguez-McDowell thanked her pool of volunteers, donors, supporters, family and friends.

Commissioner Harden said people were really participating in voting, as she had 80% turnout in her district. She thought there was so much suffering going on, and people were asking for leaders to tell the truth about what was happening in the world currently. She stated she felt one reason people were reelected was because they were authentic.
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She said she respected and admired the people who were reelected to the Board. She felt it would be important over the next few weeks to think of ways to bring the community together, as she believed there would be forces among them that would try to divide them.

Commissioner Leake announced that Bishop Lewis Hunter transitioned from virus complications in Atlanta, Georgia. She spoke about divisiveness brought on by the leadership of the Country.

Commissioner Fuller asked if the Nation was what they thought it was and stated he had to believe the Nation had progressed, because he would not be on the Board if there was no progress. He stated there was a long way to go. He mentioned the new commissioners who would come on board, Commissioner elect Leigh Altman, who would serve at large and Commissioner elect Laura Meier, who will serve in District 5. He said they worked hard. He said as he rolled off the Board, he was leaving so proud of the Board. He said he would miss serving with the Board.

Commissioner Powell stated she believed in America and that she had been showing up and serving the community for 31 years, and she would get to serve years 32 and 33 as District 1 commissioner. She stated she did not take that lightly. She stated she would continue to serve and never ask someone their political affiliation when they were sharing an idea, because all ideas matter.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

_____________________________     _____________________________
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk      George Dunlap, Chair
The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget/Public Policy Meeting, Tuesday November 10, 2020 at 2:34 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina at with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present:  
Chair George Dunlap  
Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham  
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller  
Commissioner Susan B. Harden  
Commissioner Mark Jerrell  
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake  
Commissioner Elaine Powell  
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell  
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order and led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COUNTY MANAGER NAMED CHARLOTTE BUSINESSWOMAN OF THE YEAR

Chair Dunlap took a point of personal privilege and introduced Dan Lugo, President of Queens University of Charlotte and Cathy Bessant, Chief Operations and Technology Officer for Bank of America, who have a special recognition for the County Manager, Dena Diorio.

Mr. Lugo stated that the Charlotte Businesswoman of the Year was established back in 1986 to recognize a leading female executive who had made significant sustained contributions to the business community. He said there was an esteemed election committee that did the work annually in partnership with Queens that moves through an amazing number of nominations. He stated they used criteria they call the three C’s that was promoted by the McCall’s School of Business: competence; character; commitment to the community. Mr. Lugo reviewed the members that the 2020 committee was comprised of. He stated the reason they were at the County Board of Commissioners Meeting was because the Committee was so excited to recognize Mecklenburg County Manager, Dena Diorio as the 2020 Charlotte Businesswoman of the Year.

Mr. Lugo stated that Dena would be the 36th woman to receive this award and that they would look forward to celebrating that in the spring of 2021. He said she joins an incredible group of women in leadership like Cathy Bessant with Bank of America, her colleague, Andrea Smith; Lynn Good of Duke Energy; Carol Lubin of Atrium Health; and Jennifer Applebee of Ray Ward. He said he had the pleasure of surprising Dena at her Monday meeting with her executive leadership team thanks to Derrek Ramos and Michael Bryant, who were also importantly her nominees. He said that would tell you how beloved she was by her team and staff. He said it was amazing to see her expression change from her assumption that Queens was back again to ask for more, when in fact they were there to celebrate Dena in all of her accomplishments which were so fitting.
Cathy Bessant said they were there to recognize excellence in leadership; running and institution; and humanity. She said she thought a lot about what she could say about Dena today, and normally, this would be a huge luncheon and that if she were standing there, she would say that she could rattle off a long, exhaustive list of Dena's accomplishments. She said she had personally experienced them and that most recently in her unbelievably fantastic leadership, her census count in Mecklenburg County, where against all odds they achieved the largest participation rate ever in the history of Mecklenburg County, which was pretty spectacular and very important. She said that list could go on forever.

Ms. Bessant said she thought she would talk about three things that made Dena very special. She said the first was courage. She stated she did not believe in being fearless, but she believed that courage was what happened in the face of fear when people acted despite the fear or overcoming the fear. She said that she has seen the County Manager to immense things with amazing courage. She said Dena takes on tough issues, deals with them honestly and directly and did not back down from challenging conversations and that she somehow finds a way to bring consensus in all of that. She said the everyday courage that it took to play her role and do her job was immense. She said being a County Manager, she couldn’t imagine anything harder, including her own job. She said her brother was the Deputy City Manager in Mesa, Arizona and she lived first-hand from him in his phone calls every weekend the challenges that he faces with the appropriately demanding commission and electorate. She said the courage Dena brought daily was remarkable and set a standard for all public servants.

Ms. Bessant stated that the second thing was Dena’s creativity. She thought of Dena as a solution finder, as she was a solution-focused person. She stated that Ms. Diorio did not dwell in the problem, though she always worked desperately and deeply to understand it but not to wallow in it. She stated that the demeanor that she brought to everything she did was looking at how to move forward and find a solution. She said she could not say enough about the spirit of creativity. Ms. Bessant said that a few weeks ago when she called Dena with something she was struggling with, Dena’s first answer was not, okay let's focus on the struggle. She said it was okay, let's get a group of people together and figure out if there is a solution here. She said she appreciated that immensely.

Ms. Bessant stated the third thing was her humanity. She said that Dena did not believe in doing things to people but with people. She said in a business, some days she believed she was fortunate, because the people she worked with daily actually, kind of had to do what she says, since she signs their pay checks. She said that was not a luxury that you have in public service, and the ability to bring people with you to demonstrate humanity and understanding and vulnerability and commitment were what sets a great leader apart, and those were things that Dena exhibits in aces. She said she could not say enough about the humanity she brought to what she does daily. She said one of the important things about Queen's University and the Charlotte Businesswoman of the Year recognition was that it was important it was a leader that carried them forward. She said she believed such a brilliant choice was made in this recognition, so it was her honor in front of everyone to once again congratulate the County Manager, Dena Diorio as the Queen's University and Charlotte Businesswoman of the Year.

Dena Diorio, County Manager thanked Dan and Cathy and all of the member of the selection committee, as well as her team for nominating her. She said it was an immense honor for her, and she was close to tears that day when they went to her executive team to tell her. She stated she could not believe it. She said the women who had been honored with the award had always been people she had admired. She said she always wanted to be Cathy Bessant when she grew up, so maybe she was not a little bit closer. She said she was honored she could serve this community, as it was the most important thing she did. She stated she cherished the work she did every day. She said thank you for giving her the ability to do what she did and to do it well and for continued support.
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell congratulated Ms. Diorio. She thanked her for being who she was and for bringing herself to the role. She believed the community was better for having Dena as the County Manager.

Commissioner Harden thanked Queen’s University for holding up the County in that way, as it was an incredible list without question, and Commissioner Harden believed Ms. Diorio may be the top one that had every been on there. She said it was awesome of Derek and Michael to nominate Dena and thanked them for doing that, because it took a lot to put together the nominations and to do those kinds of things. She said it was thoughtful work on their part.

Commissioner Leake thanked them for honoring a young woman who was deserving of the bumps of the middle of the road that she had been confronted with and in spite of, she had made the bumps smoothed for those who needed it the most, the community. She said if it were not for Dena, many of the programs that had been supported and people would hopefully come out of poverty due to her efforts and desire to make the community what it ought to be. She said if you look at the staff, it was an integrated staff, which meant those persons who work with her, all did not look like her and that was a plus for this community. She said when you look at the budget, that meant some other people besides white people were making money and contributing to the community, which was important. She told Dena that she loved her dearly. She said she remembered the day she was interviewed for the job and that she came well prepared. She said she had on one of the sharpest suits she had seen and that she came dressed appropriately for the interview. She said she was grateful to be a part of that committee. She said her journey with Dena had been long and uphill but in spite of it, she made those mountains small. She thanked Dena for what she had done and continued to do, even with the loss of her loved one, she never missed a beat. She said Dena never stopped being the drum major and leader of the band.

Commissioner Fuller said he couldn’t help but think about when he became Chair of the Board, that her hiring was the first thing that he led. He said he did not expect it, because she had been their Finance Director, perfectly competent and all of that. He said the skills she showed in interviews for the County Manager job made it crystal clear, and he knew then that she would be a star. He said he had the privilege of working three years very closely with her as Chair and County Manager. He said he saw firsthand what resulted in the award she received today. He stated that Cathy was right, courage and creativity and humanity were absolutely at the center of everything that Dena does. He said in once sense, he was not surprised that she received the award. He said as he mentioned to her, she served as the Chief Executive of a 6,000-person, $2 billion organization. He said that was a big deal anywhere. He stated she did it with almost effortlessness, though he knew she put plenty of effort behind it. He said he was so proud that as he finished his service on the Board, that she was awarded deservedly, unqualifiedly, this high honor of the Charlotte Businesswoman of the Year, because that was what she was. He said particularly this year of all years she really showed her ability with all of the things that were put on her, like a global pandemic, and she was in charge of managing for Mecklenburg County, all the one-million people who lived here. He said that was a big deal and that she did and was doing it expertly. He congratulated her on the well-deserved award.

Commissioner Jerrell congratulated Dena, stating it was well deserved. He said a lot of times these accolades were broken down by categories, women, black people, or whatever. He stated when he thought about Dean, she was one of the rare people that did not have to be categorized when looking at the level of proficiency, expertise, and just overall greatness at what you do. He said yes, it is an honor for a woman, and he thought that was fantastic but that it would not matter if it were man or woman, and that was such a testament to her. He said he believed it was phenomenal. He said they had a
conversation about legacy one time, and while this is a great honor, it still would not be her legacy, as her legacy would live on in the community. He said her stamp was here and would live on for a very, very long time. He congratulated her and thanked her for everything she did.

Commissioner Cotham congratulated Dena, stating she was so happy for her and the County. She said she remembered when she met Ms. Diorio, she said she could make a good fee off of her, because she knew from being an executive recruiter. She said over the years she had heard comments about her salary with the County but that she knew that Dena could make more money in the private sector but that she chose to serve the County and the County's people and that she chose to make a difference, which took a special type of person. She said it also took a special type of person to work with the Board, since they would go to her at all times of day or night with some pending constituent problem but that she was always there. She said she was the hardest working woman and that she had seen her car by itself in the parking garage many times, so she knew she was working hard on some big thing. She told Dena she was so proud of her and was honored to work with her. She said Dena was also very open if the Board disagreed on something and that they could always talk about it and that it did not mean less of each other. She told Dena she was amazing and became more amazing each year. She said this year was the best year, because it had been the hardest year but that she ascended to the occasion and had her staff all rising as well. She said she was so appreciative.

Commissioner Scarborough said that her way was the way they needed and that she appreciated Dena. She said she knew her children got tired of being told how wonderful Dena was but that they just had to take it, because she did it her way and did it well.

Commissioner Powell said she was glad to hear humanity spoken about. She said the C's were all important in leadership but that there was nothing more important to her than the caring, so the word she would use was wholehearted, a whole-hearted problem solver. She said she believed they should all use their talents and strengths to help others, and a lot of times, people did not do that. She said some use their talents and strengths to make money, so what Commissioner Cotham said was true; Dena could make a lot more money somewhere else, but she was a servant and her commitment was wholehearted. She said one of the greatest blessings of being Vice Chair was that she shared a wall with her, so she knew how committed she was from deep within to making sure that the local government was stable. She said everyone had different views and perspectives but that nothing was more important that the stability of local government, especially this year, in a time when people needed them more than ever. She said Dena never lost sight of that and that her commitment had been so wholehearted and was the thing that she admired the most about Dena and she believed people recognized the least. She congratulated her and said she deserved it.

Chair Dunlap said as Pat and Trevor could attest to, serving in the role of chair puts you closer to the County Manager, not because you were more important than the rest of the Board, but you would get to see her in situations that you would not typically see around the dais. He said she meets with the new CEOs in the community and the Charlotte Executive Leadership team, and there was no one who was a bigger advocate for Mecklenburg County than Dena Diorio. He said he could say anytime she was in front of any group, she had their interest at heart. She said something he learned about Dena when she was first appointed Manager was that she really wanted to make everyone look good, but that came with trust. He said some of them had been with her a lot longer, and the more you got to know her, the better you would realize that you will trust her, and she will do you proud. He said there was no greater honor that he knew of in the community than to be selected as the Charlotte Businesswoman of the Year. He said he could not think of anyone more deserving. He congratulated her and thanked her for all she did.
Ms. Diorio thanked Commissioners, Dan Lugo, Cathy Bessant and staff.

20-6499: 2020 MECKLENBURG COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEYS

Monica R. Allen, PhD, Strategic Planning & Evaluation Director, provided an overview of the methodology and demographics used for the survey results, with respect to perceptions of Mecklenburg County Government and attitudes and awareness of Mecklenburg County programs and services. Dr. Allen also reviewed COVID-19 surveys. Director Allen also highlighted survey results for public health initiatives/programs; elections; and Park and Recreation usage.

Dr. Allen said that for respondents, the most important issue facing Mecklenburg County today was affordable housing followed by crime and Equity/Inclusion. She said on the survey they also saw two new categories pop up in terms of the most important issue, and that was around politics, government policy, and COVID-19. The results were useful for guiding outreach and programming efforts. She said the survey revealed a continued need to promote and market County programs and services to increase resident awareness.

Dr. Allen said there were five survey sections for the COVID-19 survey: mental health; financial impact; leadership access to goods and services; and communication and internet access. Resident respondents indicated feeling a wide range of emotions since March 2020. The sentiments and feelings of Mecklenburg County employees, as indicated through the 2020 Employee Climate Survey, align closely with those of County residents. She stated that 96% were in good spirits, and 82% were worried. The percentage of respondents who had experienced positive emotions since March 2020 was high across all races/ethnicities. African American respondents tended to experience less of the negative emotions compared to Hispanic and White respondents.

Dr. Allen said African American respondents and those between the ages of 18-34 were more likely to indicate “significant daily” or “severe disruption” across all dimensions of access. COVID-19 impacted employment for Mecklenburg County residents in a variety of ways, from working more hours than usual to being furloughed. African American and Hispanic respondents were more likely to have lost their job or been furloughed compared to White respondents. Nearly all respondents, regardless of race/ethnicity, had access to internet at home. Like the annual Community Survey, national and local tv news channels remain the number one source of information for residents to receive information regarding COVID-19. Around half of survey respondents have confidence in city and county leadership to manage through COVID-19. Residents rated local government (Mecklenburg County) and state government (North Carolina) response to COVID-19 higher than the response at the federal level.

Dr. Allen summarized the survey results. Residents across all demographic groups continue to view Mecklenburg County as a great place to LIVE, LEARN, WORK and RECREATE. Television was the preferred source of communication, while the use of many social media platforms increased. Affordable housing remained the number one most important issue for respondents, followed by crime and equity/inclusion. Awareness results were useful for guiding outreach and programming efforts (example: increase in Veterans awareness of Veterans Services Division). COVID-19 had greatly impacted the mental health of residents across all demographics. Accessing childcare during COVID-19 was the largest disruption to daily life for respondents.

Dr. Allen answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Note: Each year, the County's Office of Management and Budget - Strategic Planning & Evaluation unit administers the Community Survey to gather data on Mecklenburg County
residents’ perceptions on various aspects of County operations, particularly the level of awareness about County services, the perception of the value of County services provided and the level of satisfaction residents have with opportunities for citizen involvement, and insight into the most important issues facing Mecklenburg County. The perceptions are important to know because they inform the Board, County Management and employees, and the public about how well the County is performing in the eyes of the community and where there are opportunities for improvement.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6501: COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director, provided an update on COVID-19 health data and trends and the County's response to the pandemic. She said total case were up to 36,863 as of today, with a total of 411 deaths. She said that they were up to 27 outbreaks in congregate sites, with two in childcare settings. She said there were 210 daily-average, confirmed cases over the past seven days, which was an increase from the last report. She said there were 144 average, daily hospitalizations, also an increase since the past report. She said the positivity rate was up to 7%. She said all of their numbers were going in the wrong direction. She stated they were not going as quickly as they were in other southern states or the northern Atlantic seaboard. She said they needed to be vigilant and continue to enforce things that would make a difference in the communities, which were the three W's, in addition to staying away from gatherings and being tested and staying home if sick.

Ms. Harris gave a quick update on the United House of Prayer. She said they had now recognized a total of 208 cases related to that event, and 199 of them were in Mecklenburg County. She said they had a total of nine deaths, eight in Mecklenburg and one under investigation. She said they were pretty sure it was related, but they did not have the death certificate yet. She said in terms of Halloween, what they knew now was that they had cases from nine different parties that they were aware of, ranging in size from very small to over 100 people. She said each of them had at least one to two cases recognized so far. She said they were continuing to track that. She said there was one party where the two individuals who tested positive were 12 and 16-year olds. She said they knew those types of gatherings were problematic for the community.

Ms. Harris gave a quick update on school data. She said over the past week, the total number of in-person students were 41,688. She said they had 11 cases report, and they were scattered across the schools. She said they did not see and school clusters or any spread from the cases. She said the total number of employees were 19,106, and there was a total of 29 new positives. She said part of that may have been related to the mass testing the County made available to teachers. She said they recognized more cases but that they were not seeing those related to any one particular school or seeing evidence of spread from those cases. She said that was all good news so far from the schools. She said next week the same information would be available for private schools as well as clusters. She said UNC had a cluster of eight cases in their baseball team that was just recognized. She said UNC was dealing with it appropriately.

Ms. Harris said that Pfizer had a vaccine that was proving to be as much as 90% effective, which was pretty significant. She said what they knew about the vaccine was that it required to stay frozen at less than -80 degrees Fahrenheit. She said it was a very fragile vaccine, which would make it challenging in terms of how it was administered. She said it would require either a freezer that would keep it at that level or significant dry ice. She said they were exploring both of those options in terms of supplies and what they could do to make sure they were ready for that. She said they were looking at the possibility of the vaccine being available in late December or early January. She said the thing that needed to be understood was that all of the information could change in a week, but this
was what she knew at this point in time. She said it would require two injections, three weeks apart. She said immunity would take 28 days from that first dose. She said it was not like it was an immediate immunity once you get vaccinated with the first dose. She said the County was continuing to move forward putting frameworks in place. She said they were working with their partners in the hospital system to do that. She said she did not know when it would be available, how much they would get, what type of vaccine would be available, or what kind of community response they would get. She said she knew there would be some significant challenges with communication. She said they were taking all of that into account as they planned around the vaccine. She said what they knew as of now, based on the current guidance, in planning was that there would be four faces for distribution. She said Phase 1A, had two phases. She said the current framework estimated that in North Carolina there would be 68,000 to 69,000 which fell into that category. She said that category included healthcare workers at high-risk of exposure based on work duties, which could be hospital workers, EMT/Paramedics, morticians, funeral home directors, and those providing home medical and nursing care, as well as anyone caring for COVID-19 patients, including those who were dental. She said the other group included those in Phase 1A were long-term care staff. She said those were the people who would be focused on initially, if and when they got vaccine.

Ms. Harris reminded people about Sleeve-Up Saturday November 14, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Albemarle Road Middle School. She said it was free. She said the next Sleeve-Up Saturday would be December 12, 2020 with a location to be determined. She said in terms of Thanksgiving that she was hoping to get some documents out later in the week with guidance around it. She said her concerns were Thanksgiving and Black Friday. She said they were hearing from a number of different businesses about how they would handle Black Friday. She said it would be a challenge if you thought about what Black Friday looked like over the past years. She said it was something that would have to be watched as well. She said they would have a document which talked about the Thanksgiving perspective and how you would address your family celebrations, what was safe, less safe, and unsafe. She said they should have that out by later in the week. She said they recommended getting tested before going to gatherings or traveling over the holidays. She said there would be a document which would spell that out. She said they did know for people who wanted to be tested before travel or going to a family gathering, their best bet would be to go through one of their sites with Star Med. She said Star Med was their partner with the State, and they were easily providing testing for individuals who would travel or get ready to go on a fathering. She said CVS and Walgreen and the hospital system were pretty much sticking to the current guidance. She said they had not shifted them to looking at guidance differently.

Ms. Harris reinforced the three W’s of wearing your mask; social distancing; and washing your hands, as well as avoiding gatherings, and staying home if you were sick. She said that people assumed if they felt better they would just go to work but that unfortunately with COVID-19, that was not a good decision to make. She said if you were ill or your children were ill, stay home.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to extend the meeting beyond 5:00 p.m.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as followed:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Chair Dunlap

Commissioner Fuller said when you took into account that they were now in a transition period of Presidential administrations with an administration that had not been on the
mark with responding to the pandemic, he was concerned about the next two months. He asked if Mecklenburg County was prepared and asked what they were doing to prepare for what was coming our way.

Ms. Harris responded she knew they had vaccine coming but that would not be an answer for them quickly. She said right now the amount of vaccine globally that Pfizer thought they would have, you have to understand that you have to half that, because everyone needs to have two doses. She said there were more vaccines coming down the pipeline, and hopefully they would be easier to administer and only require one and that there would be more available. She said vaccines were not the answer right now. She said what they knew was that what would make a difference in the community was if people continued to do the things that were asked of them. She said it was getting harder and harder for them to do that. She said to do everything you could to encourage neighbors, friends, coworkers, churches, everyone to do the things that they knew would make a difference, because if everyone was socially distancing and staying away from gatherings and wearing masks, the numbers could be cut instead of going in the other direction. She said it was a matter of getting everyone to that place. She said she kept telling people that no one is more tired of this than she was but that it did not mean that the guard should be let up but that everyone needed to stay vigilant.

Ms. Harris said the hospitals were working hard to make sure they were staffed up and revisited their plans for surge capacity if they needed it. She said they were feeling fairly comfortable where they were and have not gotten to the place where they had to pull back on elective surgeries or procedures, those sorts of things. She said they were still handling. She said they knew there was capacity there if they get to that point.

Ms. Harris said she was having almost daily conversations with the schools, courts, and other groups about whether and when they may have to pull back from their plans of opening things up again. She said that was what had to be recognized, that they had to be flexible within the timeframe to make sure they were addressing issues as they came up. She said the other parts of that was that they were watching those numbers all of the time to make sure they knew what was going on in the community and trying to respond appropriately.

Commissioner Fuller asked if Mecklenburg County was prepared to lock back down if they had to.

Ms. Harris said it was not her decision to make. She said she did not believe that anything was off the table at this point. She said she knew there probably was not a lot of willingness in the community to think about that but that if things got a lot worse, she believed they had to be able to consider any option they needed in order to manage the situation.

Commissioner Harden said they needed to create a plan for what was going to happen.

Ms. Harris responded that they had plans at a number of different levels, and to start locking things down now when the numbers were still somewhat manageable, and hospitals still had capacity and people were still working would be a really hard sell on the community. She said she understood what Commissioner Harden was saying about being proactive, but at the same time, it had been about a balance from the beginning and was not just about COVID-19 but the economy, health of the people, fiscal health of the people, and ability of people to manage their lives. She stated it all had to play into it. She said whether they liked it or not, politics had played part in decisions that were being made. She said they were under the Governor’s order and would respond as the Governor moves in that direction. She said there were people at the federal and state and local level looking at all of those pieces to try to respond appropriately.
Commissioner Harden felt if there was a time when they got to this number of cases, that sends the warning that they would have to do more severe things, she believed that people could prepare for that. She wanted the community to be given the information they needed to prepare themselves for whatever was coming. She asked if there was something that could be done in coordination with the City and CELC and school system to get more visibility to the free flu Friday.

Ms. Harris responded that they could work on that.

Chair Dunlap said that locally what was happening had not changed, meaning in order for Mecklenburg County to do something differently than what the Governor was doing, it required all municipalities to agree, and Ms. Harris stated it more than once that there was not an appetite for that to happen. He said given that, they had to rely on and support what the Governor was doing by virtue of the fact that the Governor had decided to stay in phase three and reduce the number of people who could be in an indoor meeting, was his response to what was going on. He said he was sure the Governor was just as responsive and would take the necessary action.

Commissioner Leake announced to the Board the death of Annette Mason, a former teacher for the district.

20-6500: COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Jerrell reminded the community about the Homes Program, which was extended until November 30, 2020 with an increased AMI. He said Happy Veterans’ Day and thanked them for their service. He spoke against voter suppression.

Commissioner Cotham recognized Veterans’ Day and the anniversary of the Marines. He said the chairman was a Marine. She said that veterans in prison needed to be remembered also. She was glad to see an emphasis for veteran housing over the years. She mentioned being a daughter of a WWII veteran and having uncle in WWII.

Chair Dunlap said she was speaking of the Marine Corps Birthday, which was today; it was formed in 1775.

Commissioner Scarborough said Happy Veterans’ Day. She mentioned her two veteran uncles. She asked everyone to take the time to tell veterans Happy Veterans Day.

Commissioner Powell thanked Veterans. She thanked Michael Dickerson, Crystal, Tony and all the people who work with them to support them. She announced the unveiling of the Environmental Leadership Action Plan on environmental stewardship.

Commissioner Fuller wished veterans a happy Veteran’s Day. He spoke of his veteran uncles. He said veterans should never come home and not have a place to live or job that pays them.

Commissioner Leake spoke about the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote and how black women still could not vote. She spoke about the veterans who were rejected after they came home from the Vietnam War.

Commissioner Harden said it was an absolute honor and privilege to be on the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Rodríguez-McDowell paid tribute to the Rodríguez men who are veterans in her family, as well as all of the men and women of District 6 and Mecklenburg County who have served.
Chair Dunlap congratulated the County Manager on her accomplishment. He wished his fellow Marines a Happy Birthday. He said Happy Veteran’s Day to the other veterans. He reminded everyone of the three W’s.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to discuss, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned.

The meeting adjourned at 5:16 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk
George Dunlap, Chair
MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 5:22 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present:  
Chair George Dunlap  
Commissioners Patricia “Pat” Cotham  
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller  
Commissioner Susan Harden  
Commissioner Mark Jerrell  
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake  
Commissioner Elaine Powell  
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell  
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

INVOCATION/ PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order. Commissioner Fuller led the invocation followed by Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

-20-6481: by Commissioner Leake  
-20-6483: by Commissioner Leake  
-20-6487: by Commissioner Leake  
-20-6488: by Commissioner Leake  
-20-6490: by Commissioner Leake  
-20-6491: by Commissioner Leake  
-20-6493: by Commissioner Leake

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to move the proclamations, Agenda Item No. 20-6481: Joint Proclamation Declaring November 2020 Homeless Awareness Month and Agenda Item No. 20-6483: Proclamation – National Adoption Awareness Month from Consent to Awards/ Recognitions.

STAFF BRIEFINGS – NONE

CLOSED SESSION

20-6476: CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to discuss a personnel matter.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:28 p.m. to go into closed session in Room 267.
FORMAL SESSION

The meeting reconvened in open session at 6:44 p.m. in Room 267 for the Board of Commissioner’s formal business meeting.

20-6476: CLOSED SESSION – MANAGER’S PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Commissioner Powell, Chair of the Performance Review Committee provided a report from the closed session regarding the FY2020 Manager’s Performance Review.

Salary

Commissioner Powell reported, based on the review of information, that the Board reached a consensus on the following: the County Manager performed all key initiatives as established in her FY20 Work Plan at an exemplary level, the County Manager demonstrated all leadership competencies ascribed to her position, and the County Manager met the established expectations for the performance year and successfully delivered additional key projects and initiatives.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell that the Board approve a 3% in the County Manager's base salary, which when combined with the deferred compensation, a 5% 401K match, and her expense allowance it will equal a total compensation of $417,404.12 effective July 1, 2020.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Powell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Rodriguez-McDowell

Performance Bonus

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell that the Board approve a one-time performance bonus of 5% which would be $17,216.18, which when combined with the deferred compensation, a 5% 401K match and her expense allowance, equals a total compensation of $434,620.29.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Leake, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Harden, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

FY2021 Work and Performance Plan

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to approve the County Manager’s FY21 Work and Performance Plan as proposed and amended by the County Manager.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6481: JOINT PROCLAMATION DECLARING NOVEMBER 2020 HOMELESS AWARENESS MONTH

Commissioner Cotham read the proclamation and made comments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cotham, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously, to adopt a joint proclamation declaring November 2020 as Homeless Awareness Month in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.
Chair Dunlap requested an update on efforts to address homelessness.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**20-6483: PROCLAMATION - NATIONAL ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH**

Commissioner Jerrell read the proclamation and made comments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation designating November 2020 as National Adoption Awareness Month in Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Leake made comments.

A copy of the proclamation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**20-6474: PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

No speakers addressed the Board of Commissioners.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**20-6506: NOMINATIONS/ APPOINTMENTS**

*Arts & Science Advisory Councils*

The Board considered one two-year appointment expiring June 30, 2022 for a Northwest District 2 position.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Jonathan DuBose for the Northwest-District 2 position.

Jonathan DuBose was appointed.

*Bicycle Advisory Committee*

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring March 31, 2023 and one appointment to an unexpired term expiring March 31, 2021.

The following nominations were made:

- Robert Schweitzer by Commissioner Rodriguez McDowell
- Dustin Branham, by Commissioner Powell
- Michael Trivette by Commissioner Cotham

These appointments will be brought back to the December 1, 2020 regular meeting for Board consideration.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE**
ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-6479: PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Peter Engels, Park and Recreation Commission Chair presented annual activities to the Board.

He reminded the Board that they approved funding in 2019 for a new parks master plan. A consultant was subsequently engaged, and the 18-month planning process kicked off last November. Despite COVID-19, the timeline is being met. The Park and Recreation Commission was actively involved with representatives on the process steering committee, participation in public workshops, and progress discussions with staff. Despite limitations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, 12 public workshops have been conducted to date. Input continues to be solicited using digital tools such as Zoom meetings, email, social media, and the plan’s website, MeckPlayBook.com. He said there were four focus groups with 88 participants; nine pop-up events and 12 public workshops with 312 participants. He said there were 412 survey participants.

The Park and Recreation Commission maintained a network of advisory councils as its primary strategy for obtaining public input and engaging community partners. Regional councils representing northern, central, and southern Mecklenburg County engaged residents on matters affecting parks in their geographic area. Advisory councils for Athletics, Aquatics, Cooperative Extension, Golf, Greenways, Senior Citizens, and Stewardship provide citizens with specific subject matter interests to also be involved. Each of the councils is chaired by a member of the PRC and continues to meet regularly via video conferencing with Park and Recreation staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Collectively, this network comprises over 100 residents regularly participating in a citizen engagement process.

Key topics in 2020 were:

- Proposed County budget feedback
- Greenway priorities and progress
- Natural resources preserve and protection
- Master Plan creation and input
- Equity in the park and recreation system

Natural spaces and recreational programming are public services that should be available for all, regardless of individual background, income, geographic location, or any of the other defining traits that make each person’s experience unique. The Park and Recreation Commission continues our focus on equitable access and quality across the system. Through our community liaisons and research, the PRC proposed funding to begin to correct inequities in the Mecklenburg Park and Recreation system. The BOCC answered with $2 million for this effort. The PRC continues to work with staff on disbursement.

The Park and Recreation Commission continually monitors community need against allocated funding as a means to advise County Commissioners of current gaps, future trends, and the voice of the community on what they need from a park, recreation, and greenway system.

Ongoing opportunities:

Land Acquisition

The PRC continued to hold the position that land acquisition was one of the County’s top needs. With competition from private developers, the window was closing to ensure they had the dedicated space for our residents and visitors and to protect our precious natural resources.

Equitable Operations and Maintenance

All communities see education, health, and social benefits by having good quality parks and recreation centers. An intentional focus to support underserved areas and the people
power to do it were critical. He said they look forward to monitoring the use and impact of funds provided this year to advise on future equity investments.

Growth and Comprehensive Planning Partnerships

The area was growing too rapidly to engage in community planning in silos. Despite differences in jurisdiction and funding, the PRC strongly advocates for all entities that have community planning responsibilities to regularly meet and together craft one vision for our region’s future through collaborations, such as the Intergovernmental Relations Committee’s work on multi-modal transportation.

COVID-Safe Programming Options

Parks and greenways saw record-breaking use locally and nationally in 2020. As North Carolina progresses through the phased reopening plan, community members were eager to return to the recreation programming they missed and the services they depend on. As a society, would not be returning to “how things were before” and need to leverage creative solutions to offer COVID-safe youth and senior programming.

Commissioner Jerrell requested to see what feedback they were receiving in underserved areas in regard to programming.

Mr. Engels answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**MANAGER’S REPORT**

**20-6469: COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE**

COVID-19 Response Update

Dr. Raynard Washington, PhD, MPH, Deputy Health Director, provided an update on COVID-19 data and the response to it in Mecklenburg County. He stated the County was continuing to experience an increase in COVID-19 cases. He said as of this evening that they have had 39,014 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Mecklenburg County residents and have lost 425 residents. He said they were averaging about 300 cases a day over the course of the last week or so, which was an increase from what was being seen. Dr. Washington thanked the public health staff and others who continued to work seven days a week to make sure they were doing everything possible to slow the spread of the virus.

Dr. Washington said they were up to about 32 outbreaks in congregate living settings, long-term care facilities and schools and child-care facilities. He said many of them were managing pretty well; the case counts were fairly low, but there were some which were more challenging that staff was working with the leadership teams at those facilities to make sure everything possible was done to manage and maintain the spread of the virus in those facilities. He said among the outbreaks was an outbreak at the Salvation Army Center of Hope. He said the County was working very closely with the leadership and staff at the shelter. He said to date there was at least 20 cases, three of which were among staff members. He said the team was working very closely with them and has been on site several says and tested all the residents and staff twice in the past several days. He said they had one testing event last Thursday onsite at the shelter and another today. He said they had moved upwards to 40 individuals out of the shelter to the isolation and quarantine hotel. He said some of which had been confirmed positives and some of which had been deemed close contacts to those positive cases. He said there were a number of individuals and families among that count. He said they were working very closely at ensure that facility had the most rigorous infection-control measures in place. He said they were working to identify additional or alternative housing options for the residents in the shelter so they could keep the census there pretty low while trying to get the outbreak under control.
Dr. Washington said that the percentage of positivity had not increased as dramatically as some of the other indicators. He said they were seeing increases in percentage of positivity, which on average was 8.2% over the last week, which was a fairly significant increase from where they were in early to mid-September. He said it was not as high as some other areas across the State or Country, but it was an important indicator of how much spread was happening in the community. He said it was important to track this over time. He said the increases were concerning.

Dr. Washington stated they were continued to monitor the percent of positivity and looking at how it varied across the County. He said they would continue to do that as they moved ahead. He said they were starting to see some more rapid increases in some zip codes in the County where their positivity rates were higher than the County overall. He stated they were looking at those areas to make sure there was adequate testing in the areas and in the areas that were more vulnerable. He said those zip codes were towards the western and southwestern parts of the County.

Dr. Washington said the hospital census of COVID-19 positive patients was also trending upward and had been for the past several weeks. He said it was averaging roughly 172 patients with COVID-19 in hospitals in Mecklenburg County each day, which was a dramatic increase from where the County was just several weeks ago. He said thanks to more effective treatments and earlier diagnosis, individuals were staying in the hospital for shorter periods of time, and hospitals were reporting that they were stable at this time. He said the hospitals had capacity built in in terms of beds and staffing in both intensive care and critical care units, as well as in general population in the hospitals. He said they were monitoring that capacity on a daily basis. He stated there was additional surge capacity within the healthcare system that could be activated in the event it was needed. He said the County worked with the healthcare system very closely to ensure the County was looking ahead at what things may look like in the months to come. He reiterated that the County was a regionally healthcare provider, so the situations in the counties around Mecklenburg County and even in South Carolina would impact what would happen in Mecklenburg County. He said they were observing that some of the increase was due to hospitals in neighboring counties reaching their capacity, particularly in intensive care units and critical care, which was causing some patients to have to be diverted to Mecklenburg County. He said it was important that they worked with partners in neighboring counties to insure they were doing everything possible to slow the spread.

Dr. Washington said there was an entire dashboard of indicators that CMS was monitoring as it related to COVID-19. He said among that was two measures that were a reflection of community transmission or community spread. He said the first was the seven-day case rate. He said that indicator had moved into the red zone as a result of the increase in case count that they were experiencing locally. He said that was a reflection of community spread and transmission. He said that indicator in of itself was not the only indicator they had to use if they thought about the status the school district was, but it did give the County some insights around what was happening in the community around the schools. He said that schools had not been a significant source of transmission in Mecklenburg County or even across the Country. He said as the County continued to work with the school district on making sure they had implemented all the appropriate measures to avoid spread of the virus when students were in school to prevent students from having to be potential sources of spread for themselves or families or staff and teachers.

Dr. Washington stated the percent positives increased out of the green zone over the last six to eight weeks, and it was now in the yellow zone. He said this was being watched closely. He said he had had a meeting with CMS leadership tomorrow to insure everything possible was being done to ensure the safety of students, staff, teachers, and the school district. He said as of a few days ago, in the last two weeks, there were 18 COVID-19 positive students at CMS and 22 COVID-19 positive students at non-CMS schools. He said there were 30 staff at CMS and nine staff at non-CMS schools who were positive. He said they did a large-scale testing and made it available to all of the CMS teachers and staff. He said that testing did identify some additional cases and was part of the increase among staff.
Dr. Washington said they had no-cost COVID-19 testing pretty widely available throughout the County. He reminded everyone that there were local sites that were open daily in the County, operated by health systems and other partners. He said they had community testing sites that were set up and stationed in areas in the County daily for testing. He said urgent care facilities were also offering COVID-19 testing. He said the family-qualified health centers were also offering COVID-19 testing. He said that many of the primary care and pediatric officers, which had not previously been offering COVID-19 testing was now able to order COVID-19 tests in the primary care office. He said retail clinics in CVS and Walgreen also had testing in them and of course both of the hospital systems had testing at each pathology location. He said turn around times were stable but had increased a little in the past month or so. He said they were under two days on average, and they are now coming back in over two days. He said they were looking to make sure that with the slight increase that the County was still staying on top of the case investigations as quickly as possible so that metric did not extend any longer. He said they still had the option available, if community organizations were interested in participating, for host sites for mobile or drive through testing events. He said they could email meckhealth@mecklenburgcountync.gov.

Dr. Washington advised anyone with symptoms similar to COVID-19 to be tested, which included just a cough, sinus or allergies. He said he could not tell you the number of people who thought they just had allergies or sinuses, but it was in fact COVID-19. He said it was better to be tested and know than to assume it was something different and potentially infect other individuals. He said if you have had close contact with anyone who had been diagnosed with COVID-19, whether that person has had symptoms or not, it was also equally important for you to be tested. He said if you were high risk due to age or other health conditions and you are going to go out in public or interact with other individuals or your work environment is high risk, requiring you to interface with the public, it would be important for you to be tested. He said anyone who had attended any type of a gathering, especially those where COVID-19 safety guidance was not adhered to, it would be really important that following that gathering you quarantine and get tested three to five days following the gathering. He recommended people to not go to any gathering that would not be a hearing to COVID-19 safety guidance and said it included any type of gathering, social; religious; a protest, whatever it may be. He said if you are planning to travel it would be important to try to reduce the harm that may be associated with more folks being in those spaces. He said to continue being tested. He said if you are going to be around high-risk individuals, your family is having Thanksgiving and you are going to be around an older adult or anyone with any underlying chronic illness, the County’s recommendation was to not gather. He said they were talking about alternatives that they were suggesting, but if you must, to consider being tested. He said even with the negative test result, it was still important to continue practicing the three W's even at a small family gathering. He said it is important that people keep their distance, keep their mask on when not consuming food or beverage, and maintain it the entire time when with other individuals you do not live with. He said the test was not a “get out of jail free” card; a negative test result just meant, at the time of testing, you were not negative, but you could leave the testing site and become infected, so it would be important to continue to practice the three W's.

Dr. Washington said their recommendation for non-urgent testing was to utilize the retail, mobile, and inventory sites. He said they preferred for people to not to use the hospitals for that, because they wanted to reserve those for folks who were symptomatic and may need to potentially be hospitalized. He said the Health Department’s hotline was available to everyone as it was since the start of the pandemic. He said if you had questions about COVID-19 or questions about testing or the flu you could call. He said they were offering some additional holiday testing, as they wanted to make sure that folks in the community were able to have access to testing resources as easily as possible in the County. He said one thing the County was doing as a strategy to reduce the harm that may be associated with people moving around and being in new settings where they had not been was exit testing with the colleges and universities who were on campus. He said they were hosting exit testing in partnership with UNC Charlotte this Thursday, Friday, and Saturday on campus for all of the students. He said testing tomorrow would be at Johnson and Wales. He said Davidson College had a routine surveillance testing program that
they would be using to test all of their students before they went back home for the holidays. He said the schools were not returning after the Thanksgiving break, until the spring. He said they also extended the hours at the Northwest location for testing since it was quite busy there. He said it was at no cost and now open from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at least through December. He said there would be a special testing event presented by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Mecklenburg County Public Health, and Star Med Health, and Target on the Target store on University City this weekend to create additional opportunities for folks who may need to be tested. This will be available Friday through Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. He said it would be drive through with a walk-up option. He said they were seeing an upward increase in demand for testing in the community outside of the holiday testing, and they wanted to make sure the testing was available so everyone who needed could do so ahead of next week. He said there was a new testing effort happening at Bojangles Coliseum starting Friday that would be available seven days-a-week in front of the Oven's Auditorium at 2700 East Independence Boulevard. He stated it would be at no cost. He said their recommendation was that folks were safer at home with those you live with, and you will have an opportunity to live together next year.

Dr. Washington stated they just released additional guidance for the community as it related to Thanksgiving. In reference to Halloween, he said that while many people in the community abided by the safer options, some chose the unsafe option. He said they were pleading with folks in the community to choose the safer option, which was to celebrate at home with those who you live with. He suggested virtual dinner, so you can still see and interact with your family but not be in the same physical space. He said obviously doing things at home with your family that live in your house is a good option. He said there were activities you could watch on tv. He said if you must gather, do so wisely and choose the safer option as it related to gathering, such as avoiding large gatherings, especially any kind that was indoor. He said it was important to not gather inside during this time. He said it was the best opportunity for the virus to spread quickly and was not a wise idea at this time. He said to wear a mask and maintain social distance if you gather, while keeping the gathering as small as possible. He said it was always better to stay local instead of traveling out of town, because that would add additional risk of exposure. He said if you could stay outside to do so, as it would be the best course of action in this less safe option. He spoke about hand and surface hygiene being critically important, especially when being around other people. He said if there would be food that you would not want to have buffets where people have to touch or share utensils, because all of those things create additional opportunity for risk. He said they were discouraging that. He said the community needed to do the right thing and help with the efforts and to stay vigilant. He reminded everyone to avoid contact and self-quarantine after and gathering, not just Thanksgiving. He said to avoid contact with anyone who was sick and to avoid any large events at all costs.

Dr. Washington provided an update on the Ambassador Program, stating Mecklenburg County currently had five Covid-19 Ambassadors and were bringing on five more, with the possibility of seven in the next week or so. He said they were working quickly to hire those individuals and get them trained. He said the program had been a large success and a really great model in the jurisdictions in the State and across the Country for how to provide education for businesses that were reopening and trying to safely offer services and goods to those in the community. He said to date the had conducted over 1,500 compliance inspections, responded to over 1,400 service requests, and usually the most common concerns when the ambassadors do inspections were that folks were not wearing mask, not adequately socially distancing, and a number of establishments continued to be challenged with maintaining occupancy limits in their space. He said a great example of public health and law enforcement working together to help address the needs of the community. He said the ambassadors partner with the CMPD officers to address any violations that they observe while out in the community. He said most institutions and establishments were working hard to do the right thing, but there were a number of institutions who were continuing to be a challenge when it came to adhering to the things that they knew work to keep the spread of the virus low. He said the County needed people in the community to do the right thing in terms of if you see a place that is overcrowded, go somewhere else. If you see a store with too many people or a line, try to go back later. He said it was a community efforts to insure we move forward.
Dr. Washington said there were two vaccines which were recently announced or released preliminary efficacy data, both of which had very promising results with greater than 90% effectiveness. He said they were expecting the safety data for both of those vaccines would be released pretty soon. He said that so far preliminary signs did not indicate any major safety concerns with either of the vaccines. He said it was expected that one or both of them would be applying for emergency authorization pretty soon. He said the State had submitted its preliminary vaccination distribution plan, which included a four-phase prioritization framework that they were working towards developing a local version of implementing that locally. He said they have completed their provider enrollment agreement, which was a requirement for the Health Department as a part of the State and federal vaccine planning. He said they have convened a working group of the house systems as one of the emergency management partners to insure they had a plan in place for how they would handle initial distribution of the vaccine and coordinate the communication strategy to the community members about where it would be available and who would be initially eligible to receive it. HE said they were currently assessing vaccine storage options and storage capacity in the County. He said the health systems and other partners, as well as the Health Department, made investments to insure there would be adequate refrigeration to be able to store a vaccine that would have very low temperature requirements. He said they were making sure they would have a very full assessment of that capacity it the County. He said they were doing additional outreach to other healthcare providers in the community who may be potential partners in the work, as well as developing the community engagement plan, to ensure the community was aware of the vaccines, data supporting the vaccines, and distribution strategy.

Dr. Washington said they were continuing their efforts to ensure everyone in the community would be able to access a flu vaccine. He said there were two very successful flu events at the Health Department. He stated they had vaccinated well over 200 people at all of them. He said they were continuing to offer extended appointments at the clinics. HE said they had four additional, large-scale, drive-thru events planned in November and December. He said the next Flu Fighter Friday would be on Friday, November 20, 2020. Dr. Washington reminded the community to continue to practice the three W’s and to avoid gathering in groups at all cost. He said they were focused on being able to make the way through the current surge. He said the public health systems were working hard to be prepared, as were the healthcare systems and social services systems. He said they needed the community members to do their part. He said wear a mask, especially if you are to be indoors where people are to be around you. He said it was much easier to wear a face covering than to have to deal with some of the other consequences of COVID-19. He said to please maintain 6-feet distance when around others; do not gather in large groups, and of course continue to sanitize your hands and surfaces as much as possible. He said if you feel sick, please stay at home. He said the key messages were available on the website and in a number of languages to make sure those in the community who do not have English as a first language will be able to access the materials and have those important messages. He said they would be working with community partners to make sure the messages were getting out into the community.

Coronavirus Relief Fund Update

Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager, provided an update on the CARES Act Funding. He stated they earmarked a total of $24 million of the $39 million to support current and projected cost through December 30, 2020. He said those expenses spread across these five categories: Employee and facility safety; personnel costs; public health; housing and homelessness; and other. He said in addition to the $24 million in current and projected cost, the Board supported recommendations to invest $8.5 million in relief funds throughout the entire community, including the Towns and unincorporated areas. He said staff described those investments as initiatives that required minimal planning and the providers were positioned to assist the County with distributing the relief funds to those residents in need, in an expeditious manner.

Mr. Bryant said that Phase II investments were those which required more time to review partners and proposals and to ensure the application met the strict eligibility requirements. He said the $6.7 million investment took a little more time to fully execute. He said it was
a total of $39 million across those three categories. He reviewed a summary of the Town’s activity. He stated that Cornelius has spent all of their funds. Davidson and Pineville have less than 10% of funds less to spend. Huntersville has spent just over half of their allocation, and Mathews and Mint Hill have both spent over a third of their funds. He reviewed a summary of activity for the community partners. He said of the entire list, there were only two providers there was a concern with. He said those were Ada Jenkins and Grace Mar.

Mr. Bryant reviewed other investments:

- Arts, Science, & Culture - $1M
  - Grant applications have been submitted for consideration
  - Review committee will review applications on November 23, 2020
  - Approval decisions will be communicated to providers immediately

- Digital Divide (Refurbished Laptops): $500,000
  - 99% funds spent to-date
  - 1,085 households served

- Small Business Grants: $2.2M
  - 16 grants awarded to-date totally $185,000
  - Over two hundred applications under review that total $2M
  - No concerns with awarding funds by December 30, 2020

Mr. Bryant reviewed the County Manager’s recommendations for the Board’s consideration.

- New investment #1
  - Appropriate $150K of the $1M designated for PPEs to support Atrium Health’s mask initiative

- Clawback
  - Ada Jenkins: $100,000
  - Criminal Justice Services: $67,180
  - Grace Mar: $20,000

- New investment #2
  - Appropriate $1,037,180 to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership for rent & mortgage assistance. (recommended appropriation is the balance of the PPE budget & the recommended clawbacks)

Dena Diorio, County Manager, stated that the new investment #1 was the work with Atrium on the Million Mask Initiative. She said they set aside a million dollars for additional masks, and when she spoke to Atrium about that, they believed the $150,000 would allow them to buy 50,000, three-ply, cloth mask to get them through the foreseeable future. He said they did not want the County buying more mask and stockpiling them. She said the County would go ahead and deploy those dollars elsewhere. She said they still had the ability to buy more mask in the future should it be needed.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to approve the Manager's three recommendations: (1) appropriate $150,000 of the $1 million designated for PPEs to support Atrium Health’s mask initiatives; (2) implement clawbacks for the following: Ada Jenkins in the amount of $100,000, Criminal Justice Services, in the amount of $67,180 and Grace Mar in the amount of $20,000; and (3) appropriate $1,037,180 to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership for rent and mortgage assistance.

Mr. Bryant answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried unanimously.
Mr. Bryant said that next steps were to communicate clawback decision to the providers continue to monitor performance and cost data; and to continue to provide status updates to the Board.

Commissioner Harden asked what Dr. Washington projected cases to be by January 1, 2021.

Dr. Washington responded that he would provide that information to the Board as a follow up.

Commissioner Harden asked if it was a correct assessment that the increase in congregate infections were from staff.

Dr. Washington said that was correct.

Commissioner Harden asked if more strict protocols needed to be put in place around staff at congregate facilities.

Dr. Washington responded that the County works closely with them and has testing available routinely at those facilities, which was how they were able to identify a number of those cases among the staff. He said the County continued to make sure the facilities were adhering to the infection and control protocol and routine nesting among staff.

Commissioner Harden asked if that was adequate and was concerned it was not.

Dr. Washington responded that the increase among staff was a reflection of what was happening in the community. He said they do not just go to work and go home; they are in the community, and there was an increased community transmission, so Commissioner Harden was seeing that spill over into the long-term care facilities. He said the County was working with them to insure they had as much capacity in terms of surveillance testing among the staff to make sure if staff was infected, they did not come into the facility.

Ms. Diorio said the point that Dr. Washington was making was that the County has been doing all of the testing of staff, it was being caught before they go in the facility and infect the residence, which is what you want. She said you cannot control what happens when staff is outside. She said this was not being done before, which was why there were so many residents getting it.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked about pairing COVID-19 test with flu shots.

Dr. Washington responded that there were some community events happening that were offering those two at the same, but the County has not coordinated any of those events, just because there were a number of logistical things that had to be considered with administering a flu shot that was a little bit different than just collecting information and swabbing someone.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated that Congresswoman Alma Adams raised the issue at a national level about the increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19 toward pregnant women. She said that Latina women counted for 50% of the COVID-19 cases among pregnant women and that black, brown, and Native American mothers have a higher mortality rate than that of white mothers. She asked if this was being tracked at a local level and if the County and the County’s health care providers were doing everything they could to take steps to be proactive with pregnant women.

Dr. Washington responded they were tracking race and infection and were aware of case among women who were pregnant. He said they had not observed any disparity outcomes to date, and the healthcare systems were testing women on admission to the hospital to insure they were aware of any infections ahead of admission and so there would not be any spread in the OB Ward. He said the hospitals were working hard and had been doing so since the beginning to ensure those women were protected when going into the hospital and catching those cases early.
Chair Dunlap said when they first started out doing the reports, the Board would be told how many deaths occurred between one report and the last report. He said that was extremely helpful to him. He said he wanted to confirm a rumored he heard or to see if it were antidotal information, that many of the COVID-19 cases that showed up in the school system did not occur in the school system, but people were getting it out in the community and taking it to the school. He asked if that were true.

Dr. Washington said there had not been significant transmission in the school; it was because individuals had been exposed outside of the school and may or may not come to the school. He said that some of the cases that were listed in the total count were individuals who had not been in the school. He said some were working remotely who had been diagnosed, as well as virtual learning students. He said they were not infections associated with students or staff being in the school. They were just among individuals who were connected with the school district. He said the same was true for the non-public schools. He said there were 425 deaths just to be clear with everyone. He said they were happy to report the number of deaths in between the meetings so the Board could tell the difference between the two-week, time period.

The presentations are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

CONSENT ITEMS
A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda.

20-6426: MINUTES
Approve the following Meeting Minutes: October 6, 2020 Regular Meeting; October 13, 2020 Budget/Public Policy Meeting; October 20, 2020 Regular Meeting; and October 27, 2020 Budget/Public Policy Meeting.

20-6461: FLEET AUCTION REVENUE AND EXPENSES
Appropriate vehicle auction revenue received from the May 9, 2020 vehicle auction from Fleet Reserve Fund Balance in the amount of $137,982.27 to the Fleet Reserve Fund (9010) for future vehicle purchases

20-6484: ENGINEER SELECTION FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021 AND 2022 FOR STREAM RESTORATION PROJECTS
Authorize the County Manager to negotiate fees and execute contracts with firms to complete the design of the Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022 Storm Water Stream Restoration Projects.

20-6485: TAX REFUNDS
Approve refunds in the amount of $18,435.50 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.
Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2020

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes, and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6486: SET PUBLIC HEARING - PRELIMINARY STREET IMPROVEMENT

Adopt a Preliminary Assessment Roll Resolution for the costs associated with street improvements in the Hearthstone Subdivision and set a public hearing for December 15, 2020 on the preliminary assessment roll.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #62.

20-6489: US ARMY DONATION - HISTORIC DOWD HOUSE ARTIFACTS

Authorize the County Manager to execute all documents necessary for the County to donate military related documents and memorabilia from the Historic Dowd House (former Camp Greene) to the United States Army, 4th Infantry Division Museum Fort Carson Colorado.

20-6492: LEASE AMENDMENT - CARE MANAGEMENT AT ATRIUM MYERS PARK

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a lease amendment with The Charlotte Mecklenburg Hospital Authority (CMHA), to extend the lease term, including option periods, and relocate offices within the building for the County's Care Management program operated from 1350 S Kings Dr, Charlotte, NC.

20-6494: AMBLE DRIVE RECYLE CENTER ROOF RENOVATION-LUESA

Authorize the Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Weathergard, Inc for the Mecklenburg County Amble Drive Recycle Center (MRF) roof renovation project in the amount of $871,139

20-6497: GRANT APPLICATION - STATE FARM DRIVE SAFE TEENS GRANT - SHERIFF'S OFFICE

(A) Approve submission of a grant application to State Farm Insurance for State Farm Drive Teens Grants for $5,000 to educate young drivers about safe operation of motor vehicles and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the Sheriff's Office for the duration of the grant.

20-6513: LAND EXCHANGE - CULLMAN AVE. FLOOD MITIGATION

(A) Adopt a resolution authorizing the exchange of County owned Tax Parcel 083-031-06 (+/- 0.49 acres) for Tax Parcel 083-031-14 (+/- 2.75 acres) and a conservation/trail easement (or fee simple donation) of approximately 1.2 acres on the southern portion of Tax Parcel 083-031-28 with Flying KR Real Estate LLC or its assignee and (B) authorize the County Manager to negotiate the terms and conditions of the exchange and execute all documents necessary to complete the transaction with Flying KR Real Estate LLC or its assignee.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #63.

THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm submittal of a grant application up to $250,000 from the Charlotte Host Committee, CLT Host 2020, Inc. and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to decline the County's statutory right of first refusal to a +/- 1.03-acre portion of Tax Parcel 065-091-19 (Lakeview School) that is owned by Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education ("CMBE") to permit CMBE to enter into a lease with Lakewood Preschool, a North Carolina Corporation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appropriate $500,000 in available fund balance from the Public Golf Courses Consolidated Capital Reserve Fund (9002) for the Phase III Engineering Plan/Design Plan.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $15,226 in Federal funding from Centralina Council of Governments (COG) for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) to the General Fund (0001) in the Department of Social Services (DSS).

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a lease amendment with Cookson Limited Partnership, RLLP at the County's undeveloped Cook Park located at 15010 Ervin Cook Rd, Huntersville, NC (Portions of Tax Parcels 009-041-03 and 009-041-05) to extend the lease term an additional five (5) years.

Commissioner Harden stated she appreciated the fact that they would have extra testing before people go on Thanksgiving break. She wanted to make sure the community knew they could get testing at Target this weekend, Friday through Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. She said the Bojangles Coliseum would also be available for testing from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. She said you do not have to watch the national news long to understand what was happening with COVID-19 across the Country. She said if you look at that rate of increase in the County since October, her question was what would be the thing that would turn things around. She said why would it be thought, given what was happening across the Nation, that somehow that would turn the corner. She encouraged everyone to start thinking how they could integrate testing to a greater degree in their lives. She asked everyone to please take quarantining recommendations seriously. She said she would be getting her UNC Charlotte COVID-19 test before she goes home to her family as she teaches face-to-face at the University. She said knowledge was power, because if people knew they were asymptomatic, they may change their mind about who they spend time with. She asked everyone to take advantage of those opportunities.
Commissioner Leake thanked the health committee, stating they had wonderful presentations by Dr. McKnight and Deputy Director of D.S.S and Shirley Emmanuel and Reverend Dr. Boyd. She said they gave an excellent presentation as it related to the Village Heartbeat update, which dealt specifically with health disparities. She said they would put all the information received today in the newsletter and hopefully get it out to the general community, so they would have an opportunity to have received the same information. She said there were over 50 people who tuned into the meeting and WCCB was there as well.

Commissioner Jerrell said it was their last in person meeting, and he was ingraining a picture of the Board in his mind as is. He said it was an honor to serve with each and everyone of them. He said everyone on the Board had a lot to be thankful for, and he believed this year Thanksgiving would care a special meaning for everyone. He wanted everyone to remember to be safe. He said he would be thinking about the families going through the holidays with heavy hearts because there were so many people who have exchanged time for eternity going through the pandemic. He asked everyone to hold loved ones extra tight and demand that they remain diligent around the information they had. He said they should not let up as it was their responsibility to demand they did the right thing. He said there was a lot of help out there for those in the community. He said there was a website, charlottewaterhelp.com, where you can apply through the end of December for grants to help you with your water bill. He reminded everyone of the Homes Program; deadline ends November 30, 2020. He said the budget survey was up on the County website, and there was a testing locator if you want to find out where a COVID-19 testing location was. He said it was really important to take advantage of the COVID-19 testing events.

Commissioner Cotham reminded everyone that the holidays were not joyful for a lot of people, as it could be a very depressing time, and she believed this year it would be more than usual, because there would be some empty chairs at the Thanksgiving table. She said a lot of people have lost loved ones. She said her sister died in May. She said every year it was a time when mental health really needed to be focused on and to check on friends and family and try to have a conversation with them. She said the people who were struggling on the edge and the homeless neighbors needed to be kept in prayers and thoughts. She said sometimes just a kind word would go such a long way. She said they were so grateful for anything. She asked people to remember mental health this holiday season.

Commissioner Powell said that last night, City Council voted to rezone a significant chunk of land from residential to industrial in Commissioner Leake’s district. She said it was very sad and that it was 156 acres in critical watershed in the Lake Wylie protected area, which was a piece of land that the government should own. She said it was considered, but at the time, they thought it was too expensive. She said it was ashamed, because everyone needed to pay attention. She said it was in the ETJ. She said it was remarkable that 156 acres of greenspace was just rezoned to industrial, and she was very concerned about it. She said the community was very upset, and the Board’s job was to listen to the community, and they feel very unheard. She said there were four City Councilmembers who voted no, but they were very disappointed, and it was sad, because the only representation they had was us. She said it was hard to meet was person who was not impacted significantly in some way by COVID-19. She said she was thankful for IT. She said she was going to miss her colleagues who were leaving the Board. She thanked them for their service and told them that they would be missed. She thanked them for giving up that part of their life to make a positive difference.

Chair Dunlap said there was a testing opportunity at UNC Charlotte to take advantage of. He said there would be testing this weekend at Target located at 8120 University City Boulevard. He said that testing would be held Friday through Sunday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day. He told the Board that he appreciated each one of them. He said the one uniqueness about the Board was that if you listen, while they all come from different perspectives, they all genuinely care about the community and each other. He said thank you for the opportunity to serve with them. He said he was thankful for County Manager, Dena Diorio as she did so much for the community that it was often times unnoticed. He said he was glad they were able to retain her as the Manager, and he believed she was
probably even more deserving than what they were able to provide for her tonight, but he was glad he was able to do that. He thanked her for what she does for Mecklenburg County.

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely Tuesday, December 1, 2020 at 6:09 p.m. with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present:  Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller
Commissioner Susan B. Harden
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent Until Noted: Commissioners Vilma D. Leake and Ella B. Scarborough

Commissioner Fuller stated it had been an honor and privilege to represent all the more than one-million people in Mecklenburg County for the last eight years. He said he served as a County Commissioner At-Large and that it would be his last meeting as a county commissioner, and he wanted to thank the public for the opportunity to serve the County and welcome to the people.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order. Commissioner Harden led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

20-6505: Commissioner Leake
20-6509: Commissioner Leake
20-6520: Commissioner Leake
20-6425: Commissioner Leake
21-6517: Commissioner Powell

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6512: Board of Commissioners Plaque Presentations

Dena Diorio, County Manager said that Commissioner Trevor Fuller served admirably for four terms since 2012, and Commissioner Susan Harden served for one term from 2016 to 2018. She thanked both of them for their service and thanked Trevor Fuller, as they had worked closely together when he served as chair of the Board. She said they had accomplished a great deal together, and she thanked him for his vision and ability to execute. She thanked the Board for their service for the present term.

Commissioner Harden stated it had been an honor to serve the residents of District 5 and all of the people of Mecklenburg County. She said they had accomplished so much as a board. She especially wanted to recognize her freshman sisters and brother: Commissioners Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Jerrell, the fresh four. She said they had
a plan to aggressively implement an agenda of housing; workforce development; equity; education; mental health; and the environment. She said they knew that no one commissioner alone could do anything, but together, we could move mountains, and we did. She said there were a couple of accomplishments she was particularly proud of, which she highlighted. She said the first of those would be the work in Pine Valley. She said as many may have known, Pine Valley was a historic neighborhood of 200 homes in the southwest corner of District 5 off of South Boulevard, where all of the car dealerships were. She said when she was running for office and canvased the neighborhood and spoke to residents that it was apparent that the neighborhood needed some TLC. She said the neighborhood-owned community center had lost its occupancy certificate, and there was talk of a neighborhood park promised for 20 years in an overgrown lot. She stated that after she was sworn in, they went to work with community partners and community itself. She said RIBIC renovated the community center, and they received two neighborhood, City of Charlotte neighborhood matching grants to replace the heating and HVAC in the community center, and they were able to regain all permits. She said they helped Pine Valley to obtain their 501(3)c status. She said the basketball courts enjoying the community center had become overgrown and unusable. She said they renovated the courts with new concrete, backboards, nets, and lines. She stated that Park and Rec build a beautiful neighborhood part with a gorgeous community garden, and despite COVID-19, they had their first abundant crop this summer. He said thanks to Mecklenburg County, 50 Pine Valley seniors received food boxes delivered monthly to the community center where neighborhood volunteers were organized to distribute them to senior’s homes. She said the community garage and nutrition boxed help to address the food desert. She said that now, the community center hosts breakfast and lunch. She said they added Wi-Fi to the community center, and in January 2021, an out-of-school educational enrichment program would be offered at the community center. She said the community had an exciting agenda for 2021, and she looked forward to see how they will build on the investments that had been made in justice; economic mobility; and quality of life.

Commissioner Harden highlighted a second initiative, which was the Board’s commitment to eliminating racial disparities; she raised up the two references if investments in black maternal health, where black women were fix-times more likely to experience poor outcomes from pregnancy when compared to white women. She said this was grounded in racism and bias, as their resolution noted, when they declared racism a public health crisis.

Commissioner Harden said the other effort she wanted to highlight was the removal of the racist monument that was erected in 1929 near what is now Memorial Stadium. She said that public celebration of white supremacy, which had been part of their collective history for 90 years, had been removed and hopefully stored in some basement somewhere. She said it would not be a part of the beautiful renovation of Memorial Stadium. She said the next effort she wanted to highlight was the commitment to public education, especially what the Board did for teachers, by making CMS teachers the highest paid teachers in the State, with a benefit of the locally funded teacher supplement by Mecklenburg County. She said regrettably, Mecklenburg County residents had to step in and assume the responsibility of adequately funding the schools and teachers. She said the State of North Carolina continued its decade trend of underfunding the schools. She said that as a result, school quality suffered. She said that thankfully, the Board of Commissioners continued to make investments to help slow the impact of the investment at the State level.

Commissioner Harden said lastly, she wanted to talk about their COVID-19 response and the impact of COVID-19 for seniors living in long-term care facilities. She said there were more long-term care facilities in District 5 than any other district, and she said she knew that 50% of the deaths from COVID-19 occurred in those facilities. She said the isolation and the fear had taken a severe toll on the mental health of the seniors, and she was particularly proud of the CARES funding the Board used to improve the mental health of seniors during this time.

Commissioner Harden stated it had been a privilege to serve with everyone on the Board, and she was grateful to them and believed she could call them all friends. She thanked the Mecklenburg County staff and County Manager for their dedication and service. She said she would be praying and cheering them on as a citizen as they navigated the County forward.
Chair Dunlap said he learned today that Wake County passed a quarter cent sales tax that would go for all teacher salaries. He said Mecklenburg County may have some work to do. He said as an elected official, particularly

Commissioner Fuller said everything had a season, and this was his season for the last eight years and that it was an honor and privilege to represent the people of Mecklenburg County, the region, and the State, and nation. He said he was proud to serve Mecklenburg County because of the people, their can-do spirit, their professionalism and dedication, and how they get things done. He said they did not just talk about things. He said that was a tremendous testament to the community. He said there were many elected officials across the Country who remark about how remarkable it was that they work together throughout the community. He said it was a true pleasure to serve the people of this county. He said he was proud of the accomplishments they had made, in particular the accomplishments they had made in light of the challenges they had faced. He said even when he first came in office in 2012 there were challenges to face with the 2011 reevaluation they had to get straight with the delivery of mental health services they had to navigate through. He said he was proud that they made it through those challenges because they did so with the leadership of a county staff that was second to none.

Commissioner Fuller said he was so proud of the Mecklenburg County staff. He said there were over 6,000 employees who were Mecklenburg County employees who were dedicated, intelligent, resourceful, and really get the job done for the people. He said they could not say it too much, because what they did in things large and small was tremendous. He said as elected officials cannot really do anything without the support and efforts of the staff.

Commissioner Fuller gave a particular thanks to the County Manager who was the first employee he had the opportunity to follow when he became the Chair of the Board. He said he served for three years as chair with Dena Diorio as County Manager. He said he could tell from personal experience working very close with her that she was a tremendous public servant. He said she was exceedingly resourceful and would tell you like it was. He said you may not want to hear it sometimes, but she would tell you like it was. He stated he appreciated that. He appreciated that when he brought the idea to her of universal pre-k in Mecklenburg County, she didn’t just resist it, but she jumped right on it and in it full all the way. He said that was why today they had spent, as a county, $50 million, and he tried to spend much more, to educate the children at the earliest years in life. He said that would not have happened without the dedication of the County Manager who brought many resources and helped lead the Board to make that possible. He considered that a great accomplishment for the County, and he was glad to have been able to lead that effort.

Commissioner Fuller said it was Mecklenburg County that led the discussion about economic opportunity in the community. He said they were the ones who highlighted the fact they were 50 out of 50 when it came to economic mobility in all the largest cities in the Country. He said they took that on and formed the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Economic Opportunity Task Force to address the issue. He stated since that time in 2014, they had been working diligently in the community in all ways. He said he was proud of the community that they had really embraced the notion of how they could make economic opportunity real for every sector of the society. He said they had much work to do, but you could see all around the effects of having engaged in that conversation and in the work of the taskforce, which itself in part helped lead to the universal pre-k effort. He said he was proud to have led the Board and the County for those three years. He said he considered it an honor of his life to have done that. He said here is this kid, a black boy from the hood in Buffalo, New York, who made his way to this great city and county and became a county commissioner at-large, then a chair of the county commissioners of the largest county in the ninth largest state in the Country. He said it was remarkable and why he still believed in the American dream, that no matter where you start, in America, you can go wherever you want to go, but you have to do it with the help of other people, and that was the only way he made it there, through the help of many people.

Commissioner Fuller stated that in that regard, his colleagues on the County Commission for the last eight years, he really enjoyed working with, in particular the last crew and last two years. He said he was so proud of the work they did in those last two years, and it was
his most enjoyable term on the County Commission. He stated they had accomplished a great deal and set up many more accomplishments to come in the future. He said their work on affordable housing, when at one time they were hardly in that business and now here they were, which was a great development for the community.

Commissioner Fuller said he enjoyed working on the State level, particular with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, how much it had been a pleasure to serve on the Board of the State association of all the commissioners across all 100 counties of North Carolina. He said that too was a great privilege of his.

Commissioner Fuller said you take your opportunities where you can, serve where you can, and leave with your head held high hoping the accomplishments could continue when you leave. He said that would be how he leaves today, with some bitter sweetness of not being in action but with great pride, not only in what they did but in all of the commitment to the County. He said he would be watching and would not say goodbye, because he would still be around, as he still had some more service left in him. He said he would say so long and wished them all very well.

Commissioners made remarks to the outgoing members.

**20-6511: Ceremonial Gavel Presentation**

Dena Diorio, County Manager said it was an honor and privilege to present the ceremonial gavel for your service as Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners for the term of 2016 to 2018. She said she appreciated his leadership more than he knew and that it was an honor and privilege to work beside him and together to solve problems and do what they could to make Mecklenburg County a better place. She said from the bottom of her heart, thank you for your continued support. She stated he had been a tremendous leader of the Board and in the community and that they were forever grateful for that.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**20-6521: Public Appearance**

No speakers addressed the Board of Commissioners.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**20-6526: Nomination/Appointments**

Bicycle Advisory Committee

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring March 31, 2023 and one appointment to an unexpired term expiring March 31, 2021.

A vote was taken on the nominees as follows:

- Dustin Branham, 4 votes, by Commissioners Fuller, Harden, Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Robert Schweitzer, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell
- Michael Trivette, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, and Jerrell

Robert Schweitzer and Michael Trivette were appointed.

Commissioner Scarborough joined the meeting at 6:52 p.m.
City Of Charlotte Zoning Board Of Adjustment

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term expiring January 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, to appoint Krista Long.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell and Rodriguez-McDowell

NO: Commissioner Powell

Krista Long was appointed.

Information Services & Technology Committee

The Board considered one appointment to an unexpired term expiring February 28, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to appoint Unithia McGruder.

Unithia McGruder was appointed.

Region F Aging Advisory Committee

The Board considered the Clerk's Office request to make the following administrative changes: move Corsha Caughman from an Alternate slot to a Delegate slot to fill an unexpired term ending June 30, 2021 and correcting Tekola Tessema's term expiration date to June 30, 2021.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve moving Corsha Caughman from an Alternate slot to a Delegate slot to fill an unexpired term ending June 30, 2021 and correcting Tekola Tessema's term expiration date to June 30, 2021.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-6480: Information Services and Technology Advisory Committee Annual Report

Erica Frazier, Chair of the Information Services and Technology Advisory Committee, presented the Committee's Annual Report to the Board.

Alignment and responsiveness: Ensure IT investments are aligned with County objectives. Provides transparency and ensures resources are spent accordingly.

Objective decision-making: IT professionals from within the community offer suggestions and expertise in areas such as resource balancing, risk management and accountability of resources and objectives.

Ms. Frazier went over the list of members on the Information Services and Technology Advisory Committee and the ISTAC talent matrix which showed the County Commission District each member was in and their relevant talents out of the following six: strategy & planning service development; IT security services; IT quality services; engineering & tech services; and IT business operations.
Meeting Minutes  
December 1, 2020

The Information Services & Technology Advisory Committee will serve as an advisory group to the Board of County Commissioners and will review plans at a conceptual level for major new automated systems with respect to:

- Adequacy of the system functions to solve the business problem(s) addressed by the system
- Appropriateness of the technical approach utilized
- Availability of adequate hardware, software, communications and personnel
- Advise on how IT is accomplishing goals or approaching challenges
- Provide feedback to the BOCC on IST strategies, implementations and challenges

The following list of 2020 ISTAC Accomplishments were reviewed despite some meetings being missed due to COVID-19:

1. Received updates from the CIO on ITS’ FY20-22 Strategic Plan, projects, and the IT department’s efforts to mobilize the County to work remotely during the current COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Advised the CIO on following topics:
   - Information Security
   - RNC Readiness
3. Took the County’s CIO and Information Security team members on a tour of a major banking center’s Security Operations Center
4. Provided the Board of Commissioners ISTAC’s recommendation on FY21 funding priorities for Information Technology Services.

FY21 Strategic Plan Core Themes for IT Services were reviewed:

- Protect and secure County technology
- Mature the ITS organization
- Build a resident responsive platform
- Promote equity and inclusion

Mecklenburg County ITS should focus on the following to best serve the residents of Mecklenburg County:

- **Strategic Planning** must remain continuous and adaptable based on emerging technology and organizational needs.
- **Securing County Technology** from external threats and unauthorized use.
- **Leveraging more Cloud Services** for better service and disaster recovery capabilities.
- **Data Management Strategy** to include governance of County data and data access controls.
- **Resident and Employee Experience** by developing technology that is responsive to the needs of our residents and supporting departments.
- **Metrics and Continuous Improvement of Internal Processes** to provide actionable data, proactive services and to deliver long term value.

Ms. Frazier answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

**MANAGER’S REPORT**

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated that she was pleased and saddened to report that after a nationwide recruitment that garnered over 150 applicants that Phin Xaypangna has been appointed the County of Ventura, California’s first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer. She stated she was proud of Phin, and that she was the person who had really helped to drive equity, diversity, and inclusion in the organization. She said she had been amazing, but for her to be able to go to a new organization to be the first person in that role was a testament to the work she did with Mecklenburg County.
20-6445: REMOVED - Eastway Park Apartments - Affordable Housing 55 and Up Presentation

This item was removed from the agenda and will be brought back to the December 15, 2020 regular meeting.

20-6502: CMS Carry Forward Request for Security Upgrades and Budget Amendment

Earnest Winston, CMS Superintendent made introductory remarks followed by a review of the security upgrades and budget amendment by Shawn Turner, CMS Director of Building Support and Fakhar Shahbaz, Director of Maintenance.

Ms. Turner said that safety and security of students and staff is the number one priority, and these initiatives were to enhance or support prior investments:

- Know who is on campus and why they are on campus in order to keep everyone safe and secure
- Access to our buildings has to be limited for security purposes while school is in session
- Ensure seamless communication with law enforcement and first responder partners
- Enhance and sustain video retrieval and monitoring capabilities
- Improve plan for potential cyber threats

The 2014 security enhancement project cost actuals were:

- $7,097,543 - Electronic Locks, ID System, Visitor Management System, Entry Cameras (Helios), Panic Buttons
- $1,459,447 - Bi-Directional Amplifiers – Signal boosters that sustain two-way radio communication throughout a facility
- $10,768,010 – Cameras

Total Cost: $19,325,000

This funding was provided in response to the December 14, 2012, shooting incident at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Mecklenburg County approved the FY 2014 Capital Project Ordinance for this funding on May 21, 2013.

The 2019 security enhancement funding, a $4.6 million investment as followed:

- $1,931,264 - Video Surveillance to upgrade video surveillance coverage with emphasis on mobile classrooms, playgrounds, and outside venues; workstation upgrades at high schools
- $1,672,016 - Electronic Locks (325) to upgrade digital door access at more than 140 schools
- $96,720 – Detection Enhancements, such as: metal detection equipment and gun detection canine
- $900,000 – Crisis Alert Systems in high schools

Total Cost: $4,600,000

Fakhar Shahbaz, CMS - Director of Maintenance discussed security enhancement funding.

2021 Proposed security enhancement funding, a $4.6 million investment as followed:

Critical Sustainment of the Previous $12.7M Capital Investment

- Critical Life Cycle Replacement of Camera Servers - $2,461,300
  - Live feed from cameras record and store videos which are necessary to assist our CMS Police Department with identifying theft and/or other criminal activities. Replacements are required to continue safety and security monitoring and
playback capabilities. The recommendation is to replace camera servers at 99 schools in Phase I.
  o Phase 2 – replacement of camera servers at the remaining 64 schools. An investment of $1,600,000 is required during FY2022 and FY2023.

- Replacement of Obsolete/Defective Cameras - $331,044
  o CMS has more than 7,200 surveillance cameras for security; this equipment is critical to keeping our sites safe. The recommendation is to replace 196 cameras at 12 schools.

Credentialed and Controlled Access to Enhance Safety and Security

- Expansion of Helios Visitor Management Systems - $137,656
  o In order to control who enters our buildings, we use Helios (a video doorbell) for all schools; it allows for viewing and controlled access of visitors into each facility. The recommendation is to install additional visitor management systems at 8 schools.

- Expansion of Electronic Locks/ Badge Readers - $160,000
  o This system provides controlled access for CMS employees through the use of badges; the system maintains a record of each employees’ access to buildings which is a very important step in keeping track of who enters each building. The recommendation is to install additional electronic locks at 20 schools.

- Purchase New Badge Software and Printers - $200,000
  o In order to keep up with the large number of staff members, this effort needs to be centralized and controlled for access to all buildings. This would also allow for increased data integrity and security, and improved reporting on employee access patterns.

- Exterior Doors to Enhance First Line of Defense - $300,000
  o Exterior doors are the first line of defense to restrict potential forced entry into a facility; exterior doors are also vital to maintaining the building envelope; the recommendation is to upgrade/replace exterior doors at high schools as part of Phase I.

Seamless Communication for Rapid Response

- Building Signs for First Responders - $500,000
  o These signs are needed by first responders so they can quickly report to crisis situations when they occur. The recommendation is to install standardized signs at all schools.

Crisis Management Plan to Enhance Safety and Security

- Establish District Emergency Command Center - $360,000
  o Emergency power to maintain direct lines of communication/collaboration between different tiers of command during crisis situations. The recommendation is to provide a diesel generator for back-up power for the entire six-story main Education Center building.

- Data Security-Cyber Disaster Planning-$150,000
  o CMS needs a long-term plan for potential technology-related threats. This would be the initial planning phase in support of crisis management policies, communication, partnering, and training.

The circle of safety was reviewed, and it involved safety at a school level; district level; community level; and a personal level. School safety was everyone’s responsibility; CMS protects students and staff with a comprehensive approach to safety, well-being and security.
A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commission Rodriguez-McDowell to Amend the 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance to appropriate a carry-forward of $4,600,000 of unspent funding from FY2020, in the form of available fund balance, for CMS security enhancements, allocating $1,678,700 to Category 1 and $2,921,300 to Category 2.

Commissioner Fuller asked if that was $4.6 million the County had appropriated in the budget in 2020 to CMS that CMS did not spend.

Ms. Diorio responded that was correct.

Commissioner Fuller asked how it was unspent.

Chair Dunlap said you remember they had this contract that had some issues.

Commissioner Fuller responded that he did remember that.

Mr. Winston said the $4.6 million that the Board previously approved was geared to be used to help expend the crisis alert system Syntegics to other schools in the district. He believed it was public knowledge now that CMS and the company that provided that materials, had come to a mutually agreeable resolution to resolve the dispute; they would no longer move forward with those plans to expand that system. He said they came up with an alternative plan that they believed was best for the district.

Commissioner Fuller said the adjustable plan would cover the needs that would cover the needs that they were trying to cover in 2020 or a different set of needs.

Mr. Winston believed the proposed plan would meet needs, as there were greater needs; he stated it would meet a portion of the needs but that it was their best thinking with the plan they presented today.

Ms. Diorio stated she had several conversations with the Superintendent about the proposal, and when they received it, she sent it to Keith Greg, IT Director, and Asset and Facility Manager for them to review it and ensure they felt it was consistent with best practice as it related to security. She said after they had some questions that CMS responded to, they felt comfortable with the direction CMS was heading in, which was why the Manager brought it forward. She stated if she did not feel comfortable with the direction that CMS was heading, they would not want to bring it forward for the Board to consider.

Commissioner Leake joined the meeting 7:51 P.M.

Ms. Diorio and Adrian Cox, Acting Management and Budget Director responded to Commissioners’ comments and questions.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as followed:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

NO: Commissioner Leake

No vote was recorded for Commissioner Scarborough.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to approve an adjustment to the 2020 - 2021 Budget Ordinance appropriations to Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education by purpose and function, as defined in the uniformed budget format, to reflect a decrease of $950,384 from Capital Outlay, Category 1, and an increase of the same amount to Category 2.

Commissioner Fuller asked what was intended with the motion.

Ms. Sheila Shirley, CMS Chief Financial Officer responded that it was just a reclass between the category one allocation of capital outlay to category two. She shared it was the way it
was demonstrated and allocated in the proposed budget; it was just an inadvertent oversight that all of it was allocated in category one in the estimate that was provided. She explained that category one was funds that were used for capital outlay around construction or renovation projects, things that were done to buildings themselves. She explained that category two was more for furnishings, equipment, desks and those kinds of purchases for capital items.

Commissioner Fuller asked if their intention was to have the $950,000 in furnishings rather than in the capital outlet.

Ms. Shirley responded that he was correct.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as followed:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

NO: Commissioner Leake

No vote was recorded for Commissioner Scarborough.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Commissioner Scarborough left the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

20-6523: REVISED - COVID-19 Response Update

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director provided an update on the COVID-19 data and response in Mecklenburg County. She stated that as of the end of today that there were 43,815 cases since March in Mecklenburg County with 456 deaths. She said there were 29 congregate living sites in outbreak status, including the jail, four clusters, one in a child-care setting, and three in private schools. She said they were averaging about 356 infections a day and 208 hospitalizations. She stated the latest percent positivity rate was 8.9%. She said they closed the County Covid Response Team down for two days over the holiday, and they came back in Saturday and Sunday and worked hard to catch back up. She said the spike in cases based on that could be seen. She said the percent in positivity dipped for a couple of days. She said the main reason for that was that there was a significant increase in the amount of testing which happened in the week and a half before the holiday. She said the testing volumes were up almost 40% to 45%. She said there were several days when they tested 5,000 people in Mecklenburg County; the testing has slowed a bit following the holiday, and the percent positivity rate was up the last few days. She said her guess was that testing demand would stay elevated but not nearly as high as it was before Thanksgiving. She said Mecklenburg County would get back to a true percent positivity rate, which would show the elevated spread that they were seeing in the community.

Ms. Harris said they were continuing to work with the hospitals as they managed it and that the hospitals were still feeling they had a situation they could manage. She said they had not backed off of elected procedures at this point, so they still had capacity if they needed to do that. She said they were watching that closely was well. She said the seven-day COVID-19 case rate as of November 29th was 224.3 cases per 100,000. She said the North Carolina Division of Health and Human Services County Alert System was where they would classify counties as red, orange, or yellow. She said that Mecklenburg County was in the yellow range for the last time they did it. She said they only do it every two weeks. She said their classification of red was greater than 200 cases per 100,000. She said obviously Mecklenburg County was in the red with that particular metric. Ms. Harris said Mecklenburg County was currently at 8.9% with the positivity rate. She said that they were classifying orange at 8% to 10% with greater than 10% being red. She said with one of the metrics, the County was in the red, and in the other, orange. She said the hospitalization rates were going up, which was of concern to the State. She said she would not be surprised if they
next time they issue that report for Mecklenburg County to be at least in the orange, if not red.

Ms. Harris said as she mentioned, testing was up over the Thanksgiving holiday, with 479 test done at Bojangles; 317 at Southeast Health Department; 602 at Northwest Health Department; and 1,201 at the Target over a weekend. She said as of right now, they were looking for a permanent site in University City, because that seemed to be a popular place for testing. She said they were having an availability for testing throughout the County. She said the wait time for test turn-around times went up because of the surge, but they have stabilized and were attempting to start thinking about the challenges related to the CARES Act expiring this month. She said all of the additional testing that was being done was being covered by CARES Act dollars, and the individual organizations which were doing the extra testing were being paid for the testing of individuals who were uninsured as well as the copays for individuals who were insured. She said they were also providing resources to the County for surgery sources. She said all they knew at this point was that would end at the end of December, but the need for testing would not end at that point. She said they were looking at possibilities, having conversations with the State about it, but she believed that was a potential concern for them as they moved forward.

Ms. Harris said speaking briefly about projections, she stated there were a number of national projections they look at, and they all use Mecklenburg County data. She said what they were seeing was that most models were indicating the next four to six weeks would be tough for Mecklenburg County. She said there was a possibility in some of the models that there may be a peak around late December, just before Christmas, but none of the models account for surges that may be seen after Thanksgiving activities. She said they were watching that closely.

Ms. Harris said the Ambassador Program continued to be busy, with the biggest issues being mask wearing, social distancing, and occupancy limits. She said they were observing quite a bit of compliance, but the problem was the 10% non-compliant were significantly non-compliant. She said they were working with CMPD as well as Alcohol Law Enforcement and the ABC Board to try to address those issues. She said she received an email from them today about some hookah bars that were not covered by the ABC board, since they did not sell alcohol, but they were staying open late. She said they videos she saw were very concerning, as there were a lot of people, no masking or social distancing. She said the County would start to work on that this week. She said they had just hired seven new ambassadors and were at a total of 12. She said there was still some capacity if needed.

Ms. Harris said there were two vaccines which sought emergency use authorization. She said Pfizer was going to be evaluated on December 10, 2020 by the FDA. She said if they were approved, they expected vaccine in North Carolina December 14, 2020. She said Moderna was expected to be evaluated December 17, 2020, and if they were approved, it would be expected in North Carolina December 21, 202. She said there was a third vaccine, AstraZeneca that had preliminary data that was very promising, but they did not apply for the authorization yet. She said even though the vaccines were coming into the State, they would be coming in multiple shipments. She said it would not all be going out to the counties right away. She said they anticipate some of the vaccine to go for the top to the federal pharmacy collaborative that was going on that would address long-term care facilities. She said the rest of it initially would probably come to the hospital systems for health care providers. She said the advisory committee on immunization practices under CDC met today for Phase 1 and recommended specifically health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities for vaccine, which was similar to what the State recommended. She said that would be watched closely while they waited for more information. She said they were doing significant planning and met today with partners, including the hospitals, Emergency Management, community healthcare providers, and MEDIC. She said they were strategizing around vaccine communication, outreach, and delivery to the community and would continue to work on that. Ms. Harris gave information on upcoming free, flu-vaccine events.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he was concerned about what things would look like come January and February. He asked if the County has thought about travel restrictions where people would quarantine for 14 days or anything like that.
Ms. Harris responded that there were some recommendations from the federal government coming back from Thanksgiving about what people should do if they did that type of travel, but at this point, it has all been recommendations. She said there would need to be conversations about how they moved into the holiday season in terms of recommendations or implementations. She said she believed it would depend on what the numbers looked like over the last couple of weeks.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he was specifically talking about people who would be traveling, because he knew there were recommendations coming out which were asking people to not travel.

Commissioner Harden asked when projections would be released for what the numbers look like. She believed it would be important for the community to see what she was seeing.

Ms. Harris responded that there were a number of sites the County looked at, and she could provide the links of those sites, as well as what some of those projections looked like. She stated Atrium Health had some projections but that they were not yet comfortable sharing them with the community. She said she understood that, because it basically looks at their entire system. She said the County was looking at the sites using Mecklenburg County data, and the only caveat she would make to the sites was that they would not account for a surge that may be seen from Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Harden asked if what they may see on the sites could be an understatement.

Ms. Harris said exactly.

Commissioner Harden asked if the County was freaking out about the loss of CARES funding for the free testing. She asked what the County could do about that.

Ms. Harris responded that it was a major concern, because most of those who were doing the extra testing were businesses, and she did not believe they would continue to do free testing. She was not sure how much resources they State would make available after. She said they were continuing those conversations with them and looking into providing vaccine. She stated it was not clear, other than the fact the vaccine would be free, that the administration of it would be reimbursed. She said there were some concerns around funding moving forward.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if she had concerns about shopping.

Ms. Harris responded that she believed since seven new ambassadors were hired that it would give more capacity to be in those places more often. She said she was concerned about holiday shopping and people being inside in large quantities. She said many of the businesses were very careful about that but that there were many others that they would be working with to try to help them be as compliant as possible.

Commissioner Fuller said CMS were lobbying for their folks to get vaccinated. He asked if there was anything the County was doing to lobby for distribution of vaccines, from federal or state level, for people in Mecklenburg. He asked what they were doing to address enforcement.

Ms. Harris responded that the County was constantly having conversations with the State about what was needed; she said she agreed with Phase 1a, which was for the healthcare workers and first responders to receive the vaccine. She said the question was how it would get into the community. She said the County was advocating for EMS staff and firefighters and some of the others out in the field but also really focusing on long-term care facilities, as that was where 50% of the deaths had been. She stated there was a lot of information the County just did not have yet from the federal government and the State, and that would help the County push where it wanted to go.

Ms. Diorio said there were a lot of conversations about local governments doing civil penalties for violations of the Governor’s order. She said the School of Government posted a blog post today which raised a lot of questions and concerns about whether the County
actually had the authority to do it. She said she knew Greensboro and Winston-Salem have installed by executive order or emergency decree that they would go ahead and enforce and enact civil penalties. She said they were not 100% sure that was legal, and the blog post was pretty clear on that. She said it was really determined based on who had the ability to enforce. She said Mecklenburg County as an organization did not have any enforcement authority, so they needed to rely on CMPD and local police departments in the towns, as well as the sheriff. She said they have had a lot of talks of this over the pandemic and that there were two concerns. She said one was bandwidth. She said they did not have the resources to enforce a mask mandate, particularly now with an individual mask mandate that the governor just came out with. She said the second piece was that there was a lot of concern around law enforcement approaching people and having to get into confrontational issues about whether or not they were wearing a mask. She said law enforcement was not readily willing to get involved in those kinds of conversations with individuals. She believed voluntary compliance would be the most effective way to get people to do what the County needed them to do.

Commissioner Powell asked how many school nurses there were.

Ms. Harris responded that they were continuing to recruit with an ongoing recruiting process as well as working within the system to make sure there would be nurses available. She said she believed the schools were currently covered, especially since they were not moving forward with opening middle schools for right now anyway.

Chair Dunlap asked if certain vaccines would be going to certain locations.

Ms. Harris responded that the first vaccine the State would receive would be the Pfizer vaccine, which was the one that would need to be kept so cold. She said that presented all kinds of challenges, since it was not just a matter of keeping it cold but there would also be a whole process that you would have to use, such as special gloves you would need to wear to handle it. She said once Moderna becomes approved, it too would be shipped to North Carolina. She said from what they were currently understanding was that each state would receive some of each vaccine as they got approved. She said the State would get additional shipments on a weekly basis, not all at once. She said they were hearing the State would receive an initial shipment of 85,000 doses of Pfizer vaccine. She said it would come in 85 plus shipments. She said they were still trying to figure out how it would all happen, and she believed the State may also be trying to still figure it out in some cases.

Chair Dunlap said he was concerned because it was still new, and he did not know what the federal government was planning on doing, but because it was still being tested, that the County track who gets what for long-term analysis.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS' MONTHLY REPORTS

20-6498: Department Management Monthly Reports

The November 2020 Department Reports were included in the agenda as information highlighting key activities and initiatives within the departments and show relevant performance indicators of departmental activity.

The reports are on file with the Clerk to the Board.

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE
CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to approve the following Consent items:

20-6473: Minutes

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: January 29-30, 2020 Annual Retreat; November 4, 2020 Regular Meeting; and November 10, 2020 Budget/Public Policy Meeting.

20-6504: Budget Amendment-LUESA Auction Revenue

Amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of $3,406 from the County Vehicle Auction to the General Fund (0001) within the LUESA Land Development Division.

20-6510: Foxhole Landfill Asphalt Pad Paving - Yard Waste Processing Pad

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Blythe Brothers Asphalt Company LLC for Construction Services for the Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Services Foxhole Landfill Yard Waste Asphalt Pad Paving Project in the amount of $822,187.52.

20-6515: Foxhole Landfill Phase 2 Cell 2 Construction

(A) Authorize the Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Triangle Paving and Grading, Inc. for construction of Phase 2 Cell 2 Construction at the Foxhole Landfill in the amount of $5,441,824.50. and (B) additionally, for FY21, authorize the Transfer of Funds from the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund (Fund 7001) Fund Balance to the Solid Waste Management Facilities Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of $5,441,824.50 to allow completion of this project.

20-6516: Tax Refunds

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of $2,184.98 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor (B) Approve refunds in the amount of $51,338.08 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action was necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

THIS CONCLUDED ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.

Commissioner Powell left the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

20-6505: Revised Grant Application - US EPA - LUESA Air Quality

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the submission of the County's revised FY20 & FY21 CAA Section 105, Federal grant application up to an additional $100,000 (B) upon award of grant, recognize, receive, and appropriate the additional grant award to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

20-6509: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue of $1,465,667 from NC
Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health (DPH) in the General Fund (0001) (B) authorize additional grant-funded positions in the Health Department

20-6520: Department of Social Services (DSS) Mecklenburg Transportation System (MTS) Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan and Title VI Plan

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the revised Mecklenburg County Transportation System’s Safety Plan and operational policy (B) approve the revised Mecklenburg County Transportation System’s Title VI Plan (C) allow DSS/MTS with support from the Transportation Advisory Board to make revisions to the plan as needed.

20-6525: Set Public Hearing - Grant Application: FY2022 FTA 5307 Urban Area Transportation Grant Application – DSS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to (A) schedule a public hearing on December 15, 2020 to receive comments on the application for FY2022 FTA 5307 Urban Area Transportation Grant for Fiscal year 2021-2022 (B) authorize the Clerk to the Board to publish Notice of Intent to hold a Public Hearing.

Commissioner Powell rejoined the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

20-6517: Resolution - Hazard Mitigation Plan

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimous to adopt resolution approving 2020 Mecklenburg County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #64.

COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

20-6524 Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Leake wished Commissioner Fuller good luck as he left the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners. She made note of World AIDS Day.

Commissioner Jerrell told both Commissioner Harden and Commissioner Fuller that they would be missed. He encouraged the community to get tested. He said DSS was offering help to residents when it came to a low-income, energy assistance program.

Commissioner Harden said there was a lot of virus in the community right now and wanted to lift up the teachers in the classrooms and thanked them. She said she believed her replacement; Commissioner Laura Meier would have her hands full but that she believed the District 5 community was excited to have her representation. She believed she would make great contributions to the Board.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said it was a bittersweet mood for her right now since it would be the last time for this Board to ever meet in this form. She stated it had been an incredible two years. She said she was grateful to have had the opportunity to serve with her colleagues. She let the public know the Board was aware of the problem with homelessness in the community. She asked when the Board would receive a presentation on the topic.

Ms. Diorio responded that staff did commit to that and that it was on the public policy agenda for December 8, 2020.

Commissioner Cotham thanked Commissioner Fuller’s family for the sacrifice they made for him to be able to be on the Board. She made note of World AIDS Day.
Commissioner Fuller told the Board he looked forward, as he went into civilian, cheering the Board on.

Commissioner Powell said it seemed like they were just sworn in yesterday; it went by so quickly, and she could not believe this was their last meeting. She said she thought of a couple things she did want to say. She said she loved her first retreat and felt it was such a blessing to sit in between Commissioner Dunlap and Commissioner Fuller. She said as they were going through those days of the retreat, she started to see what a beautiful heart he had and different life experiences he had been through. She said she did not know if a lot of people knew that, and she would not tell them any of his life experiences, but he really cares. She said her grandmother, who was no longer alive, would love him. She said every time she heard Commissioner Fuller speak, she thought of that, because she would love the way he delivered it, the vocabulary, all of it. She said they would miss that. She said thank you for sharing yourself and that they work better as a group when we share ourselves. She stated she really appreciated that. She said for Commissioner Harden, she would speak about superpowers, and she believed Commissioner Harden’s superpower was helping young people believe in themselves. She said while she was working in the university, she was in the right place and wished her luck with her superpower, because the young people needed people who believed in them and help people believe in themselves. She said it was a blessing to work with them both. She thanked them for their service and stated they made the world a better place. Chair Dunlap gave thanks to Phin Xaypangna on the behalf of the Board. He also thanked the outgoing Commissioners and welcomed oncoming Commissioners.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell and seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to adjourn the meeting.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

NO: Commissioner Leake

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

______________________________  ____________________________
Emily Kunze, Clerk                                                     George Dunlap, Chair
MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Swearing In Ceremony in Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, located at 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, N.C. at 6:03 p.m. on Monday, December 7, 2020, with Dena Diorio, County Manager presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair George Dunlap
Commissioner Leigh Altman
Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Laura Meier
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

CALL TO ORDER - SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

Dena Diorio, County Manager, called the Swearing-In Ceremony for the 2020-2022 Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners to order. Ms. Diorio presided until the election of a temporary chairperson.

INVOCATION

Reverend Dr. Robert Charles Scott, from St. Paul Baptist Church, led the invocation.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The National Anthem was performed by Jamelia Ptah.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dena Diorio, County Manager, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

OATHS OF OFFICE

The Oaths of Office were administered by The Honorable Christy Mann, Chief District Court Judge of the 26th Judicial District of North Carolina, to the following persons who were elected to the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners in the general election held December 7, 2020 for a two-year term expiring Monday, December 5, 2022:

Patricia “Pat” Cotham, At-Large
Leigh Altman, At-Large
Ella B. Scarborough, At-Large
Elaine Powell, District 1
Vilma D. Leake, District 2
George Dunlap, District 3
Mark D. Jerrell, District 4
Laura Meier, District 5
Susan Rodriguez-McDowell, District 6

County Manager Diorio congratulated the Board members on their election to office.

Oaths are on file with the Clerk to the Board.
ELECTION OF TEMPORARY CHAIRPERSON

County Manager Diorio called for nominations for the election of a Temporary Chairperson, until such time that a permanent chairperson was elected.

Commissioner Dunlap nominated Commissioner Elaine Powell for the position of Temporary Chairperson.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to elect Commissioner Powell as Temporary Chairperson of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners.

Note: No other nominations were made for the position of Temporary Chairperson.

County Manager Diorio turned the gavel over to Commissioner Elaine Powell.

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

Commissioner Leake and Commissioner Cotham made remarks in regard to the expectations of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.

Temporary Chairperson Powell called for nominations for the election of Chairperson of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners for a one-year term expiring December 6, 2021.

Commissioner Jerrell nominated Commissioner George Dunlap for the position of Chairperson and addressed his nomination.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Altman, and carried unanimously to close nominations for the position of chairperson under one said name.

Commissioner Dunlap stated it had been his pleasure to serve as Chair for the last two years. He said he grew tremendously during the role of Chair. He said he gained a lot of experience and knowledge from having served in the role, and he enjoyed working with each and every Boardmember. He said he appreciated their comments, some positive and some critical, but he took them all in stride, because he wanted to be the best Chair they deserved representing him. He appreciated their support and looked forward to serving the community for the next year as Chair.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to elect Commissioner George Dunlap as Chairman of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners for a one-year term expiring December 6, 2021.

Temporary Chairperson Elaine Powell announced the election of Commissioner George Dunlap as Chairman of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners for a one-year term expiring December 6, 2021.

Temporary Chairperson Powell turned the gavel over to Chairman George Dunlap.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson George Dunlap called for nominations for the election of Vice Chairperson of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners for a one-year term expiring December 6, 2021.
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell nominated Commissioner Elaine Powell for the position of Vice Chairperson.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to close nominations for the position of chairperson under one said name.

Commissioner Powell stated she would continue to do her best every day with a mindfulness that wherever she needed to do better, she would. She stated she wanted to be the best Vice Chairperson she could be. She welcomed healthy feedback in a loving way, as it would be easier to hear that way.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell and carried unanimously to close nominations under the said name and to elect Commissioner Elaine Powell as Vice Chairperson of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners for a one-year term expiring December 6, 2021.

REMARKS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioner Altman said she was excited to join the Board and to learn from the Board as they work together to improve the quality of life for all of the residents of Mecklenburg County. She thanked her truly incredible husband; three, teenage boys; her dear friends; members of the faith community; and her amazing, campaign staff and army of volunteers. She stated her background was as a public-interest lawyer, where she worked on the behalf of those who needed a voice. She said she has seen many things that went wrong along the way: unequal justice under the law; hardworking people who were preyed upon by scam artists; qualified renters being denied housing by racist landlords; the elderly and the infirm being mistreated, sometimes even by their own family members; children grappling with abuse, mental-health issues, neglect, and lack of opportunity. She said it broke her heart but also intensified her resolve to find opportunities to make things right and just. She stated that was why the County Commission meant so much to her. She said she was there to fight for families, which for her meant two things: health and safety of families and the economic empowerment of families, because poverty was one of the great common denominators of human suffering. She said the management and recovery from COVID-19 was paramount, and they were going into a difficult winter and would have to continue avoiding gatherings and continue wearing masks. She said they would listen to their scientists to their caregivers and to their public-health officials; bless them all. She said they must also confront systemic racism in all of the public institutions, from the criminal justice system, to health care, to education, wherever it may exist. She said they must work to increase the household wealth for their residents. She believed there was much more they could do to connect people to training for 21st century jobs in growth industries in Mecklenburg County. She said they needed to do this, not only because they have seen record unemployment here in Mecklenburg County due to COVID-19, but because improving household income was key to improving access to affordable housing, healthcare, transportation, food security, and so much more. She said as an At-Large Boardmember, it was her job to represent all the people throughout this entire county, and she took this responsibility very seriously. She said no matter who you were or where you lived in Mecklenburg County, she wanted you to know she was there to learn from you and listen to you, and she was ready to get to work.

Commissioner Leake said she was excited about the election we had and grateful to the public for having voted her back into office for a 10th time. She said it was all about the people, and when they talk about their job as it related to human resources, that was their responsibility. She said looking at the Manager, who employs the County’s staff, will say what she can do and what they cannot do economically, which was important. She stated one of the major issues she was taking care of those who could not take care of herself. She welcomed the new Commissioners to the County. She said if there was any way she could assist that she would be more than willing to share with them. She said her district, District 2, was the most powerful district in the County, and she wanted her people to know that they were loved, respected, and had someone who spoke with and for them and their needs. She stated it said a lot that the people trusted them and valued what they have done. She prayed for the same type of strength with the community. She said she has been in this community
since 1964. She taught in this district, been educated in Mecklenburg County as it related to the people and taught over 150 students a day. She said that tells you about the knowledge and number of people's lives she had touched. She said her educational background was in education, but if you live long enough, you have good common sense. That was what her mother used to say. She said as they talk about race relationships, what has happened and what was happening today in America, the disregard for the Constitution, the disregard for the election process, the disregard for anything that had gone on before in this country. She said we were living under a shadow of almost losing our rights as a people. She said that by saying that she prayed we would not stay under the umbrella of one who was not concerned about the people but concerned about themselves. She said if you want to feel free to have a conference with her, her door was always open. She said if you have a criticism, she did not know whether she will take it or not, but she would at least hear it. She said she loved what she did, loved the people, and loved God. She said she was a Christian, and her husband was a pastor in the AME Zion Church. She said she had a son, who was deceased from AIDS, and she suffered through taking care of a child who died because of what America said was not acceptable and her friends and either others who found a way to criticize her life and her son but because of it, it made her stronger. She said being a black woman in a community, you have a hard time anyway. She said she was proud of her blackness, who she was, and her heritage. She said she suffered in a segregated school system and in an environment in Mecklenburg County in teaching that was segregated, and this board was a segregated board of nothing but five white men. She said today, there was a difference if you look around the table. She thanked God for that opportunity, because God knew her mother never thought she would be sitting there making decisions over millions of dollars and the lives of millions of people, so she was grateful for the community and everyone, whatever color they may be. She said thank you for the opportunity to serve the County and most powerful district, District 2.

Commissioner Meier thanked the voters who had the confidence in her to put her where she was. She acknowledged that her campaign team, John and Amanda Holloway were a fantastic team and got her where she was today. She thanked the volunteers, stating she did not think she could ever tell them how much she appreciated everything they did for her and stepped out of their comfort zone and knocked on doors in a pandemic and dropped literature for her. She said their confidence in her got her to where she was today. She said to her family, husband and two sons, they put up with her the entire campaign season. She mentioned how big of a deal it was to go through a campaign and how hard it was on a family. She thanked her family for that. She thanked her blackness, who she was, and her heritage. She said she suffered in a segregated school system and in an environment in Mecklenburg County in teaching that was segregated, and this board was a segregated board of nothing but five white men. She said today, there was a difference if you look around the table. She thanked God for that opportunity, because God knew her mother never thought she would be sitting there making decisions over millions of dollars and the lives of millions of people, so she was grateful for the community and everyone, whatever color they may be. She said thank you for the opportunity to serve the County and most powerful district, District 2.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said it was an honor and privilege to be reelected to serve the great and diverse people of Mecklenburg County, Commission District 6 and all of Mecklenburg County. She said she recently learned that if District 6 was a city, it would be the eighth largest city by population in North Carolina. She said she was deeply grateful that her constituents endorsed her style of positive, thoughtful, honest, and measured leadership. She stated that serving on this historic board, made up of seven women and two men, for the first time in our history, the Board of the largest county in the ninth largest state in the Country was something she was truly proud of. She said she used her first term as a commissioner to build relationships and learn about the complex ways the system has been set up. She stated she would continue to look for ways to build support around her ideas and to dismantle the systems that hold the community back. She believed government works best through collaboration and partnering, by always challenging the status quo to see if we could do better. She said they face multiple crisis in the community today and must continue making progress on multiple fronts. She said it was a balancing act and a complex web of competing priorities. She said the time was now for us to focus on that which would bring us together, the similarities of our hopes, the recognition of our connectedness and how that affects the future they all want to give their children and those who come after them. She said the seat she had at the dais was not taken lightly. She felt tremendous responsibility to
represent the values she shared with the people who helped her get there. She said to those who trusted her with her votes, thank you. She said to those who voted for her opponent, she said please give her a chance. She said to all of the above, please reach out to her anytime, as she would always do her best to answer and understand concerns. She said to the Mecklenburg County Staff, from the executive team to public health, to social workers, to Park and Rec staff, to all of the over 6,000 employees who put their heart and soul into the work of serving the public, she applauds them and says thank you for their commitment and how they show up and make the community a better place. To her family, she said she would not be there without their support. She thanked them for all the ways they had sacrificed to help her be the servant she desired to be. She said her husband Gavin and daughters Katie and Maria, son Gavin, and brother Jim have all cheerfully done every crazy thing she had asked them to do and made her immensely proud. She said to her dedicated, core-campaign team: Janice Robinson; Charlene Gadarowski; Dan McCorkle; and growing number of volunteers and campaign downers, thank you from the bottom of her heart. She said they had supported her with their time, encouragement, and treasure. She said they had walked for miles to hang literature and stood out in heat, cold, and rain to help bring her message to the voters, with positive energy and good will on her behalf. She said she could not have done it without her. You knew who you were: Kevin Kendrick; Sheila Houpe, Retha Williams, Cassandra Balosos; Paul and Kelly Dickson, and she appreciated each and every one of them.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said to the Democrat women of Mecklenburg County, they were her Democrat family and had been there supporting her through thick and thin; she thanked them. She stated she was grateful to the BPC and Equality NC, the Sierra Club, CMAE, Hispanic-American Democrats, and of course the MCDP and Chair Jane Whitley and all the groups which had supported her. She said to the honorable Mayors John Higdon of Mathews and Jack Edwards of Pineville, that they both stood behind her and probably took some heat for supporting her; she valued their working relationships and thanked them for being fair and honest as they worked together for their share of constituents. She said her path to this seat came through grassroots leaders; the base level of all political activity was the precinct leaders. She said they were the literal grassroots, so many patriots and hardworking people who believed in representative government and demand leaders who would show up and listen. Kim Bines-Ume, Connie Green Johnson, Kevin Muldowney, Dimple Shah, Barbara Proffitt, Virginia Keogh, Debbie Baynard, Gail Mason, Nick Clift and far too many more to name. You all are doing important work and you should all be very proud of keeping this seat against the odds. She said an incredibly diverse 104,000 people voted in District 6 from Steele Creek to Pineville, Ballantyne to Mathews and Mint Hill, almost 33 miles from end to end; 33 miles of constituents, people, places, needs and hopes! I am here to represent all of you to the best of my ability. She said we were all in this together; we were all connected. Thank you for placing your trust in me.

Commissioner Jerrell said that in so many ways this was such a historical night as he looked across the dais and saw seven women. He stated he was someone raised by a single mother and had a very strong wife and two girls, and to have seven, elected women at the dais was an honor to serve with each and every one of them, then to also have the County Manager in the role she inhabits as well, was so amazing. He felt so humbled to be a part of this particular board at this time. He said it showed what could be and what should be, so kudos to each and every one of them. He said for a board to be led by an African American man was certainly an inspiration to him personally for a lot of different reasons, hopefully some of the obvious. He said thank you: this was very humbling. He thanked, for another opportunity to serve, what he called the melting pot of Mecklenburg County, District 4, for their continued faith in him. He thanked his amazing wife Whitney and his children Sarai and Melanie, who continued to sacrifice as they endeavored along this journey of service together. He also thanked his BPC family, Weeping Willow AME Zion family, Giovani Love and Rodney McGill and so many people who although he ran on a post, you are never in the journey by yourself, so he wanted to thank everyone who supported, helped, and believed in him. He said that two-years ago, when he was at this same point, he was unsure what the Board would be able to deliver to the community. He said they had some really big asks and were filled with hope and a spirit that transformational change was on the radar and in many instances, imminent. He said they wanted to move into waters that had not been previously tread. He said the first action was to make their number-one priority, as a board, to reduce racial disparities. He said that little did they know or realize at that time that
this decision and focus would really become so prevalent and relevant during the time of their service. He said the lessons they had learned from COVID-19 was that with shared vision, focus, and fiscal management, they could meet their challenges and needs of the residents. He said they learned they must do even more to level the playing field for the most vulnerable. He said they also learned their working families need and deserve support as well. He said the small business owners, artists, health care workers, hospitality industry personnel, first responders, and so many more, were the backbone of the economy and had to be supported, because when they stop, we all stop. He said it was under this backdrop and with this realization that he challenged his colleagues, staff, and the community to once again decide to take bold steps and to move smartly into uncharted waters. He said they must stretch their comfort zones and be forward thinking in their approaches of governance and support for the residents of Mecklenburg County. He said it was time once again to be bold and look to transform the systems and institutions. He said they must be intentional about calling out racism and dismantling the systems and institutions that continue to perpetuate racism and that they must make investments that level the playing field and allow all citizens to experience a high quality of life. He said they should change the negative experiences of those living in the crescent and should no longer allow the narrative of someone’s zip code dictating their success. He said residents should have equal access to all the County had to offer: quality education for all; beautiful parks and open space; connectivity that would lead to critical points of access; healthcare; healthy environments free of toxic exposure; social services; and economic opportunity and upward mobility. He said let’s not forget that the decisions they made were not only for 2021, but they were decisions that would reverberate and be felt in 2041 and beyond. He said let’s be sure they were ready to meet those challenges, not focused on the things that divide or hold us back but with a focus on the things that allow them to ensure a better future, quality of life, and opportunity for success of all residents of this great county. He congratulated Chair Dunlap, Vice Chair Powell, and all of his colleagues, and said let’s go to work.

Commissioner Cotham said on election night she was so grateful to be re-elected to her fifth term as an at-large commissioner. She was humbled to have received precious votes from Democrats, Republicans and unaffiliated voters throughout each of the six districts. She wished she could thank all 357,206 who casted their precious vote for her, but she thanked them with her actions, her being visible in the community, her studying the issues and her willingness to listen to a different perspective. She made a good decision on election night. She spent the evening uptown until 11:00 p.m. with homeless neighbors. She wanted to be with them, because they kept her grounded and focused. She said as she began her fifth term, she committed she would always conduct herself professionally and would continue to build relationships with all elected officials and other governing bodies. She wanted the voters to know that she would always represent them and will work to get things done for the people. She remembered in 2012 when she was fortunate to be one of the new four Commissioners. She said they were excited and happy and ready to go to work and they did. She stated she was thrilled to see two new Commissioners who will bring a positive attitude and new ideas. Commissioner Meyer and Commissioner Altman were passionate about serving and would bring new levels of experience and expertise. They would be a bolt of adrenaline to challenge them and bring them together. She said they need them and looked forward to learning from them as their colleague. Together they needed to listen to their bosses, the people, who were paying the bills. She said the people deserved more than a seat at the table, because they own the table. She said she would listen to everyone. She said they had a great community and the hard work of county staff was a huge reason for that. She said their outstanding County Manager, Dena Diorio continued to show bold and common-sense leadership with great results. She said they were all proud of the awards she had won for her leadership. She said the wonderful county employees were working long hours to distribute short-term services to people in need, especially during this pandemic. She was especially proud of the work they have done to help veterans and those who are homeless. She said County services help husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, moms and dads who just needed some help and now they are on their way in life. She said with winter coming she hoped they could help protect our vulnerable neighbors who were freezing on a bench or in a tent uptown. She asked if they could do better with warming centers and stated she believed they could and must. She said COVID changed their world, and they talk about “returning to normal,” but everyone would likely all have to adapt to a new normal. They would need to have some big discussions about what the future might look like. Would companies continue to work remotely after a vaccine is available? How
Would that affect the commercial development in uptown? Airlines were struggling; would there be a return to business travel, or would remote be the norm? If these scenarios happen, how would that affect essential hourly workers? She hoped to hear from economists more often this year as they needed to better understand what the data show. Neighbors were still reeling from loss of life of loved ones from COVID. This could not be minimized, and they needed to better understand depression and grief, otherwise they could see increases in substance abuse and suicides. She said she was all about big ideas, and they needed some.

She said let’s talk about the business community. They needed to grow the economy for everyone and learn more about obstacles that professionals in the development community face. The more they could develop businesses, starting with real estate development, the better off they would be to grow the economy for everyone. She said they need political will to solve problems like housing. The County could not be an obstacle to real estate development and business, and she was so proud of the improvements they have made in Code Enforcement, and she thanked the manager for that. We wanted a vibrant economy, and she did not think they could just say “it was a city issue.” She said they needed to step-up and support the City and the towns on this issue. She said the Manager was “a steady hand” to keep the taxes low so economic development continues and people could stay in their homes and apartments. She said they needed to hear new ideas on housing and believed they would. She said they needed to be more aware of their six towns. As she said in 2016 and in 2018 when she was sworn in, she would love to have each Mayor sit with us for a board meeting. She said they could benefit from their wisdom. She said maybe a school board member and a legislator could also join the BOCC at one of the meetings, and maybe they might invite the BOCC Chair to sit with them at their meetings. She stated the people wanted them to work together. She stated that good schools were so important to the neighborhoods and economy. The most important influence over a child was the ability to raise student achievement in the classroom by having a great teacher in the classroom. She said they should not play politics or take a gamble with their teachers but instead we should take decisive action. She said their actions must show that the board’s priorities remain clear, that they support the children and the school communities. She said they need to “peel back the onion” on educational issues to rebuild trust and have the best schools and reward teachers so they feel valued. She said they knew during this COVID year, many of the children were falling through the cracks, and they need to support them more. They needed to listen to parents and the community more in Districts with failing grades. She said maybe they could have a new committee to “Save our Schools” and do a deep dive into failing schools. She said they couldn’t wait, as the time is now. She missed congratulating the graduates and shaking their hands on their graduation day. She said they needed to see the great results of our collaborative work. She hoped CMS would welcome them back. She said they had many unique problems that were tearing our families apart. She attended way too many funerals of young people who had died from suicide. The stigma of mental health prevents everyone from knowing the facts about mental health. Heroin and substance abuse live in the community and affect everyone. She said they had to do more, as loved ones were suffering and dying. She said they had too many homicides and couldn’t be numb to the violence and to guns. She said they had to do better. To solve problems, they needed to use all of their talents of the board and work collaboratively with other bodies of government and local non-profits and community organizers. She believed that, even though they were all Democrats, they would disagree sometimes on issues. She hoped that more people would come to their meetings and sign-up to speak. She stated their voices and opinions hoped they could all work together with respect. She congratulated Chair Dunlap and knew he wanted to be the leader they all needed him to be. She thanked her family, Tricia and John Cotham and her grandsons, Elliot and Ryan, who loved and supported her every day. She said thank you to her small but mighty campaign team, Jonathan who was now in basic training in the military and CL, her amazing “sign guru,” who helped her get her message out to the people. She thanked her Facebook and Twitter friends who shared their stories of joy, struggle, and hope. She thanked their friends in the media who worked so hard to verify their work and communicate it to the constituents. They were professionals who often reported on difficult situations and sometimes she did worry about their safety. She said they were their neighbors and friends, and she was proud of the work they did. She said they cared about the community and their questions make them think and reflect. She said they had work to do and that action speaks louder than words. She said the people were watching them and for them to show up for the people and work together for the people.
Commissioner Scarborough said she was very glad for the swearing in and said her family was also glad, because they were tired of hearing her talk about what was going on at the Board of County Commission. She said she took this very seriously to do this job, because she believed there were people who just do not understand what they do and think it is a glamorous job. She said when they find out they had all of this stuff to do, they do not want to do it anymore. She said she was excited about it and excited about her son who was currently in Columbia, South Carolina working on an issue with a group of folks, which she was not to indulge at this point, because it was North Carolina versus South Carolina, and she was not getting into that one. She said she appreciated the Board of County Commissioners for also helping and being involved with them. She said she would at some point tell them what was going on with South Carolina that she could not talk about. She thanked the Commissioners, Mecklenburg County, and stated she looked forward to serving all of the people.

Commissioner Powell stated she was elected to her second term as District 1 Commissioner, which was all of North Mecklenburg, Huntersville, Davidson, Cornelius, and North Charlotte. She said she thought if her district was a city, it might be the ninth largest. She said she had been showing up for 31 years and would continue to show up wholeheartedly everyday with the intention to do the best for the people of Mecklenburg County. She said there were a couple of things that were really important to her today. She said it was very significant to her that they were led by a strong woman, County Manager Diorio and that seven of the Commissioners were women. She said the person she missed the most at the swearing in was her mother. She said it was bittersweet for her, because she was not there and had been such an example of strength and grace in her life as a single mom. She said with the difficulty of COVID-19, she was reminded daily of the example of her mother’s strength in her life. She said her mother would be so happy to be there to celebrate the seven women on the Board. She said it was remarkable. She said it was good for Mecklenburg County for paying attention to who they were voting for. She said there were people she wanted to thank, because none of them do the work alone. She thanked the Democrats of North Mecklenburg for their never-ending support. She said they had recruited her and had been there every step of the way: Janice; Budd; Adam; and multiple other people. She said thank you to the Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Black Political Caucus, the International Minority Coalition, Sierra Club, and the Lake Normal Chamber of Commerce for including her in different forums where she could talk to people who may not typically vote for her, just so they would know who she was. She said that was important for the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce. She thanked her family and said not only did it take a toll on her family, but now it was taking up a whole room out of their house. She said the whole dinning room table was taken up with the Mecklenburg County Commission.

Commissioner Powell thanked her very good friends and the gift of having earth angels in her life, stating she had really close friends she could call on anytime, anyway, and they make everything better. She said when she was first sworn in, that she was optimistic, and it was hard to believed after everything they had been through that she remained optimistic. She believed it was important for the people to know that these were challenging times, but yet there was still so much hope. She said when they work together and were focused on leadership that unites, they would get through this. She said she had that intention everyday to work, to listen to others, to listen to differences, to be united, to find a place where we could all move forward together. She said when she was growing up, her brother would tease her a lot, and it would hurt, and she would ask why he had to be so mean. She said her brother would respond that he was toughening her up. She thanked her brother, because he sure did toughen her up, and you had to be tough in that job. She said thank you to her brother and example of strength from her mother and to her entire family and colleagues. She said she felt so much hope knowing that some of them- and like Commissioner Cotham said, there was a new shot of adrenaline with Commissioners Altman and Meier. She welcomed the two, new Commissioners.

Chair Dunlap said they each had another two years to make their actions speak louder than their words. He said he would start tonight as he tried to everyday, maybe not in the morning but maybe at noon or night but that he thanked God daily for the opportunity to serve and do His work. He said it was with that sense of joy and honor and humbleness that he
intended to serve the community again. He thanked his campaign manager, Sam Smith. He said most of them knew he never really had a campaign manager, as he kind of did it on his own. He said it was interesting that he finally had someone who could work harder at it than he could. He thanked Sam. He thanked Michelle Hempfield, who had worked every campaign with him since he had run for office, including the first one he lost when he ran for Sheriff. He thanked his volunteers; the Black Political Caucus; the Secret Society, you guys know who you are; and the residents of District 3. He said they had been supporting him now for 25 years and that he could not do it without their help. He thanked the Democratic Party, stating this year it seemed the party just went out of its way to support all of those who were elected. He thanked Jane and her leadership team for all of the efforts to elect Democrats. He thanked his pastor, who was there tonight, Dr. Robert Charles Scott. He said he had the pleasure of serving as Chairman of the Board of Directors at this church for the last seven years of his 19 years of serving on the Board of Directors. He said that was one of the last major decisions the Board made, to bring in Dr. Scott, who came here from St. Louis. He said he was grateful for his leadership. He thanked his church family, and he said the unique thing about his church family and beauty of his church family was that they had supported him for the last 40 years. He said he had been a member for a little over 40 years. He said so many of them lived in his district, and he was grateful to have the support of his church family.

Chair Dunlap said they were all Democrats but all different, with different ideas and ways of doing things. He said he said this to the editorial board, who was so critical of them when they were elected as an all Democratic board two-years ago. He said there was an out cry that there were no Republicans on the Board. He said he told them then and would say it now that they may not be Republicans in name but were just as diverse. He said there were some on the Board who were probably more conservative than some of his Republican colleagues, and there were certainly some on the Board who were a lot more liberal than he was but that they were diverse. He said although they were very diverse and Democratic, they still serve all of Mecklenburg County. He said he has had Republican supporters, unaffiliated supporters, and some of his biggest contributors were Republicans. He said there were people who had supported him that you would not believe supported him; some of Donald Trump’s biggest supporters were also his biggest supporters. He said he could not figure that out, but they all supported him, and he was grateful for that support. He reminded the Board that while they were all Democrats, they had the responsibility to serve the Democrats, Republicans, unaffiliated, those who were registered to vote, and those who chose not to register to vote, as they were still their representative. He said they represent the entire county, every irrespective of the districts which elected them. He said yes, he was elected by the citizens of District 3, but every time he casted a vote, it would affect the citizens all over Mecklenburg County. He said he learned even in the short while since the election that they would have some spirited debates, and that was a good thing. He said he thought the result was that they would come up with the best product or idea. He said while he looked forward to that, his hope and prayer was that when the debate was all over, they would all join hands to work together for whatever decision the Board makes. He said they did not make decisions as a board individually. He said once the vote was cast, it was the decision of the Board. He said that someone said to him, George, one of the things I appreciate about you was that even when the vote did not go your way, you still do your best to make it work. He said he hoped each and every one of them would do that. He said they may not like the ultimate outcome, but if it was the decision of the Board to move in a certain direction, he hoped they would all get on board and do that. He said they had each had their campaigns for the new commissioners, and they will learn that campaigning was a lot different than governing. He said they would also learn the promises they would make will not be able to be kept, but that was what governance was all about. He said what they do was for the good of all citizens.

**BOARD COMMITTEES**

Chair Dunlap announced Committee Chairs.

**Economic Development Committee Chair:** Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

**Health and Human Services Committee Chair:** Commissioner Velma Leake

**Intergovernmental Relations Committee Chair:** Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Performance and Review Committee Chair: Commissioner Leigh Altman

Audit Committee Chair: Commissioner Pat Cotham

Environmental Stewardship Committee Chair: Commissioner Elaine Powell

Chair Dunlap spoke about Commissioner Powell’s commitment to protecting the environment in Mecklenburg County. He commended all of the Committee Chairs for the service they performed last year. He said he would put this board up against anybody, anywhere in the United States, and he did not say that lightly. He said in the next couple of weeks that he would assign commissioners to the various committees. He said he expected that they would work hard to ensure the citizens of Mecklenburg County were well represented and that they would take seriously the responsibility of serving every citizen. He said it was time to go to work and congratulated the Board.

ADJOURMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Cotham, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.
BUDGET/ PUBLIC POLICY

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Budget/Public Policy Meeting on Tuesday December 8, 2020 at 2:32 p.m. at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center in Room 267 with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair George Dunlap (attended in person)
Commissioner Leigh Altman (attended remotely)
Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham (attended in person)
Commissioner Mark Jerrell (attended in person)
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake (attended in person)
Commissioner Laura Meier (attended in person)
Commissioner Elaine Powell (attended in person)
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell (attended remotely)
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough (attended remotely)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Dunlap called the meeting to order and led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

OTHER BUSINESS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Cotham to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and move any incomplete agenda items to the next meeting.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as followed:

YES: Commissioners Altman, Jerrell, Leake, Meier, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell

20-6507: 2021 BOCC MEETING SCHEDULE

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to approve the 2021 Board of County Commissioners Meeting Schedule.

20-6549: UPDATE ON HOMELESSNESS ENCAMPMENT

Chair Dunlap made the announcement that the homelessness encampment being presented today had nothing to do with the fact that a land-owner sued the County.

Anthony Trotman, Assistant County Manager, gave an update on the current status of homelessness and housing and stability in the community, with a focus on the North End Encampment. He spoke about systemic & structural factors that contributed to and perpetuated homelessness, some of which were with housing; income; mental
health; and criminal justice. For housing, according to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, there was no significant investment in housing, over the last 30 years, that was affordable for the lowest-income households. Federal HUD funding for housing programs decreased from $20.8B in FY1999 to $12.6B FY2019 (Decrease of $8.2B). Low-cost units (below $800) decreased by 26% between 2010 and 2018. This means nearly 24,000 low-cost housing units were lost between 2010 and 2018 while the population in Mecklenburg County increased by 135,000. In terms of income, NC minimum wage remained at $7.25 per hour. They would have to work 113 hours a week to afford a two-bedroom unit at fair-market rent, which would be approximately 1,100 without utilities. This would be roughly a 23-hour workday five days a week. Approximately 250,000 people receive public assistance through the Department of Social Services. A lack of adequate mental health resources also contributes to homelessness. Based upon the most recent data available, NC had a total of 2,040 psychiatric beds available, 21 beds per 100,000 population, in 2014. Experts recommend up to 50 psychiatric beds per 100,000. In terms of criminal justice being a factor in homelessness, barriers for the justice-involved including difficulty qualifying for vouchers or housing programs, barriers to employment with adequate wages and discrimination from landlords based on criminal histories.

Mr. Trotman spoke about the development of the North End Encampment, stating that prior to COVID-19, some of the individuals experiencing homelessness were in unsheltered locations, including living in encampments in multiple locations throughout Mecklenburg County. The January 2020 County time count shows there were 170 people counted as experiencing unsheltered homelessness on the night of the survey. After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, homeless services groups and community advocates served meals and provided resources to homeless individuals at the Day Center through Roof Above, which is located at 945 N. College St. In order to remain close to these resources, individuals began locating their encampments nearby, including on and around Twelfth, College and Tryon Streets. Morningstar Storage, NC Department of Transportation and Roof Above are some of the owners for the area occupied by homeless residents known as the North End Encampment. The encampment was not located on Mecklenburg County property.

Mr. Trotman mentioned that North End Encampment, as stated by Roof Above, Supportive Housing Communities, Mecklenburg County Community Support Services as of November 25, 2020, had 91 individuals, including 60 men and 31 women, with no children being reported. At least 40 individuals have been homeless for a year or longer with a disability. Individuals who are not chronically homeless report being displaced from hotels, experiencing job instability, and/or mental health and substance use conditions. At least 84 tents at the encampment are being utilized for storage or are vacant. There were about 82 individuals who are experiencing a mental health and/or substance use issue. While not all have a mental health or substance abuse issue, for those who do, homelessness usually worsens their condition. Most individuals who have reported income data have income below $1,000 per month. At least 34 individuals have no reported income.

In response to COVID-19, Mecklenburg County stepped up to fill a gap in the community. Unlike the mandate for communities to ensure the safety of children and older adults, there is no single community entity and/or agency statutorily responsible for homeless street outreach. As the North End Encampment expanded, Mecklenburg County convened community homeless services partners to help connect people living in the encampment to available resources. He said multiple organizations engaged in the work, offering mental health and substance-use services, peer support, medication management, and support to access social security disability income. They continued to evaluate needs of the individuals at the encampment and help them connect with available resources. This effort also led to improvements in data collection and a deeper understanding of the needs of individuals in the encampment.

For Mecklenburg County’s investment in housing stability & homelessness, Mecklenburg County has invested more than $34 million in affordable housing, rental assistance,
supportive services and services to help households obtain and sustain housing. During the pandemic, Mecklenburg County invested an additional $6.8 million for hotels and $2.8 million for rental assistance to support households facing housing instability and homelessness. During the COVID-19 pandemic, more than 1,000 individuals have been served by a Mecklenburg County-funded hotel. He said the hotel was for individuals 60-years old and older, with underlying health conditions. He stated they were working to extend their current lease agreements beyond December to allow for social distancing, isolation, and quarantine. He stated they also funded 11 porta-johns and handwashing stations to be located near encampments throughout the community at the request of MeckMen and Roof Above. They have done this for the past seven months at the cost of approximately $58,000. Roof Above manages the handwashing stations and porta-johns. The County provided an additional $2.8 million for rental and utility assistance through the CARES Act funding during the pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mecklenburg County convened emergency shelter providers to identify how to expand capacity in response to increased need and continue to comply with CDC guidelines.

Between December 1, 2019 and December 1, 2020, winter emergency shelter capacity in the community increased by 273 beds, including 135 rooms funded by the County to continue social distancing efforts. He said that did not mean they had 273 available beds today. This total includes seasonal beds provided by Room In the Inn, a program of Roof Above. This means, as of December 2, 2020, there was a total number of 188 winter emergency shelter beds available through Salvation Army Center of Hope and Roof Above if the North End Encampment was removed. He said based on the feedback he received yesterday, the homeless service providers said they had capacity to serve the entire North End Encampment with existing shelter beds and hotel bed. He said Roof Above reported that workers had informed individuals in the encampments of the shelter and hotel options. He said by the end of the week, everyone in the encampment will have been offered a shelter or hotel room managed by Roof Above or Salvation Army. He said it was important to work within the existing shelter system process to manage and prioritize shelter resources. He said doing otherwise could result in people seeking resources, particularly at hotel rooms, who may not be experiencing homelessness or in need of shelter services. He said the rental subsidy fund also helped to increase shelter capacity with MeckHome and Link Housing programs. He said the programs were developed to create more housing options for shelter guest, thus creating flow from the shelters and adding bed capacity. He said there were currently 21 openings in those programs this fiscal year, and county staff were working with shelters to maximize those resources. He projected that approximately 560 additional households, including both families and individuals, will be served by MeckHome and Link Housing programs through FT25.

Mr. Trotman said in response to COVID-19 the CDC released guidance to communities that sweeps of encampments should not be conducted if there would be no available housing or shelter options for people living in them, however, this has not stopped communities nationally from removing homeless encampments. He said in regard to the removal of an encampment in our community, state law and the municipal ordinances apply. He said the relevant North Carolina General Statute 14-22b, which refers to first and second-degree trespassing. He said the statute applied to private property. In order to close and/or remove an encampment residing on private property, the property owners and local authorities have enforcement options such as calling code enforcement or local police to remove trespassers. He said shelter resources have been communicated to encampment residence by the end of Friday, it would be up to the property owns to connect with CMPD for enforcement. He said communities also had the option of placing restrictions upon homeless encampments for mechanisms like ordinances. The City of Reno, Nevada started enforcing a no-camping ordinances to specific areas, citing the needs to address environmental contamination and health hazards. He said other options for enforcement may involve public health issues, but as of today, there had not been any reports to date of any public health violations or concerns related to the North End Encampment. He said there would have to be a communicable disease outbreak;
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groundwater issues; or sanitation issues surrounding the site for the public health department to take action to close the encampment on private property. He said an alternative to removal was management. He said San Francisco was one of the many communities along the west coast which created managed encampments. He said San Francisco set up 80 camps in a designated area labeled “safe sleeping village” that was fenced off to outsiders and monitored 24 hours-per-day. He said resources were provided on site, including meals, showers, clean water, and trash pickup. He said other sanction encampments were reported in Austin, Denver, and Las Vegas. He said there was not a significant amount of research on the long-term effectiveness of sanctioned homeless encampments implemented before or during the pandemic. He said to understand the implications of this option locally, the County would need to do further research to understand the impact of having sanctioned encampments.

Mr. Trotman said just as Mecklenburg County adjust to changing conditions, other communities had as well. He said there were additional examples related to encampments. He said they were not recommending any of the strategies; his intent was to only highlight work being done by other communities for the Board’s understanding and education. He said methods of addressing encampments and other unsheltered homelessness typically fall into three main categories: policy and systems; nimble shelters; and housing. He said policy and systems referred to strategies like the use of local ordinances to support safe encampments in designated locations and co-locating and coordinating service provision while also protecting the health and safety of others in the community. He gave an example of Oakland City Council, which recently passed a management policy which made certain areas off limits to encampments, including near schools, homes, and certain businesses. He said the management policy also lays out steps to move individuals from an encampment into housing or shelter and camp closure. He said in addition to policy and ordinance changes, encampments have led community [inaudible] what staff have termed nimble shelter, exploring different options to expand shelter capacity through means previously through impossible or impractical. He said those strategies included using hotels, old hospitals, heated warehouses, parking lots, or even vacant buildings as shelters. He stated that the Oregon legislature recently allocated $65 million for a program called Project Turnkey, which was aimed at purchasing motels and hotels for use as non-congregate homeless shelters. He said Mecklenburg County knew from its own experience in creating the high-risk hotel with Roof Above, that hotel rooms from 80 individuals would cost approximately $2.1 million annually. He said that included expenses for three meals per day, security, laundry, and staffing cost.

Mr. Trotman said that different communities were trying creative approaches when it came to getting individuals houses. He said Chicago started a program called the Expedited Housing Initiative, to test innovative approaches in housing efforts. He said the initiative involved multiple organizations and aimed to house 1,250 households in a 12-month period and reduce the average length of time it took for people to access housing. He said Mayor Lightfoot issues a letter calling for landlords and property owners to participate by providing the City a listing of all available rental units to support residents experiencing homelessness. He said in return, landlords would receive incentives, free advertising, tenant case management, and the assurance of timely rent payments. He said the County was doing a lot of creative work in the community that was worth highlighting, along with the innovative programs like MeckHome and Link Housing, they also implemented Keeping Families Together, an evidence-based program that houses child-welfare involved families experiencing homelessness and Housing for Good, a rapid rehousing program for families fleeing domestic violence.

Mr. Trotman said as a result of the community’s efforts, they could, at this moment, shelter the individuals living in the North End Encampment, if those individuals accept the offer of a shelter bed or available hotel room managed by shelter partners. He said they would continue working with the shelter partners to fund supportive services, paired with permanent housing, such as Roof Above’s new NOAH project at Hill Rock Estates. He stated the County could work with the City to discuss appropriate ordinances for future encampment situations. He said any implemented solutions must be comprehensive and
sustainable after COVID-19; it is important to understand the long-term implications of providing assistance that was specifically intended as an emergency response for access to affordable housing. He said regardless of the chosen strategy, Mecklenburg County could not do it alone. He said the City, State, federal, and philanthropic partners must also be all in. He said the issue of unsheltered homelessness preceded the pandemic and eradicating it now would only be possible if they were employing the systematic solutions that were both comprehensive in nature and sustainable after COVID-19.

Commissioner Altman asked how many estimated, unsheltered individuals there were and how many motel beds were currently available. She asked how many the County could secure.

Mr. Trotman responded that the current number of unsheltered was difficult to estimate, because it was a moving target. He stated what they used in the community was a point time count, and at the time of the point time count in January, they had 170 unsheltered. As he stated in the presentation, they housed 80 of them at the request of Roof Above and Meck Men and with the addition of Roof Above’s Statesville location, they had 120 additional shelter beds. He said as far as the hotel rooms were concerned, that again was a moving target which depended on the day. He said he could say that as of last week, which was in his presentation, he spoke about the number of shelter beds. He stated he could get back to her with the number of available hotel rooms, because the goal for the hotel rooms or shelter beds was really to transition folks into permanent housing. He said that the shelter partners were working with those individuals daily to transition them out.

Commissioner Altman said that she understood what he was saying with all solutions needing to be long term and sustainable after COVID-19. She stated that normally she would agree; however, this was a short-term, unique challenge posed to providing emergency relief to unsheltered individuals that they have access to a safe way to come inside, and there were legitimate concerns that congregate living was a threat to them. She said she believed the County had to make an exception this winter to come up with solutions that were not necessarily geared for the long term, because this was different.

Mr. Trotman responded that the County made an exception. He said at the start of COVID-19, the shelter partners came to the County to ask for County support of physical distancing in the shelters. He said what the County did was lease two hotel rooms for Roof Above and the Men’s Shelter to allow for physical distancing or social distancing in those shelters. He said it was done upon their request; they stated how many rooms they needed, and the County went out and used CARES Act Funding to lease those rooms. He said unlike before, those shelters were somewhat crowded. He said as a result of COVID-19, there was sufficient space in the shelters as defined by the shelter partners.

Commissioner Cotham said people made decisions, whether it was the federal government, city government, county government, state government, people made decisions, and that was what happened. She said they had to have some accountability on this. She said she remembered back in 2010 when she could see low- and middle-income apartments disappearing and suddenly beautiful places and she wondered where all of the people were going, but that was a decision that was made. She believed they could not really solve a problem unless they really confronted it, because they did not want to repeat mistakes. She thought for the public’s sake, they needed to know how the County got there, and there were a lot of things that had happened. She said there were many encampments located all around the County. She mentioned that CMS usually had about 4,000 homeless children, even thought Mr. Trotman said there were no children, there were children who were homeless. She just felt things were being glossed over in the presentation. She stated the County stepped up, and she was proud of that but believed they needed to hold groups accountable.

Commissioner Jerrell asked for clarification on the County not having any authority to remove the encampment since it was not on county land. He said the County could only move in and take action under three circumstances, which were health related. He asked if that was correct.
Mr. Trotman responded that was correct.

Commissioner Jerrell wanted to be clear about if the shelters had current capacity or not. He said it may not be what everyone would like, but right now it could be communicated to the people in the encampment that they had an option to be sheltered in one of the facilities: Roof Above, Salvation Army, or a hotel space. He asked if that was correct.

Mr. Trotman responded that was correct.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what the communication would look like with the people from the encampments to notify them about those options.

Mr. Trotman responded that the street outreach team from Roof Above had continuously done outreach with the encampment residents, and they had shared existing resources, not starting today, but they always have. He said that according to Roof Above, there had been empty shelter beds over the last couple of weeks available for the individuals and that communication had occurred with them. He said they would communicate exactly where the shelter beds were available and the process to move into the shelter.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if they would be wrong to ask the groups, which were doing a tremendous job and have a great heart for the community, as they go out into the encampment to assist individuals, to try to coordinate through a Roof Above or Salvation Army as they try to distribute items, as opposed to directly engaging the encampment.

Mr. Trotman responded that he would definitely suggest that. He said that would make a lot of sense, because that was where the resources were for a street outreach and shelter resources.

Commissioner Leake said the information Mr. Trotman presented to the Board needed to be disseminated throughout the community. She asked how they would provide a means for that information to be disseminated, specifically to the general public, so that some of the questions they were hearing could be responded to through his answers. She said she knew if they could have a press conference on the matter, they would be able to get some information out to the public.

Dena Diorio, County Manager responded that they could find a way to condense that information and push it out in a way that people would see it.

Commissioner Leake said that she heard Mr. Trotman state that there were no reported children, but as was stated by Commissioner Cotham, Commissioners were told that there were 4,000 children who were homeless. She asked if those children were being taken care of.

Mr. Trotman responded that he was specifically speaking of the North End Encampment, not of all.

Commissioner Leake said that grew from maybe two tents, but sometimes we are our own worst enemies in the process of assisting and we generate and escalate the programs, as it related to trying to support and help. She asked where the other groups were who were in charged that could make a difference rather than this one doing something and that one doing something. She said there had to be a health hazard because of the closeness and non-disbursement of trash.

Commissioner Meier said this did not just happen and was not due to COVID-19. She said homelessness was a symptom of affordable housing. She said that affordable housing was something else they needed to tackle and knew they would tackle it. She stated that the County has stepped up.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said they had to figure out if they were just going to talk about the North End Encampments versus homelessness ongoing, because they knew they already had a problem with ongoing homelessness. She said she remembered having a conversation with Mr. Trotman at the beginning of the pandemic, where he said to her that they would not be able to solve homelessness in the middle of a pandemic.
She stated those words stuck with her. She said while in the pandemic, how would the County handle it? She stated she appreciated already-taken steps. She stated that the narrative was that there were 500-700 people who were living in the encampments; it was like an urban legend at this point. She stated that she was glad they were expelling those myths. She stated she would love to hear thoughts on how that narrative arose and if the County actually went out and did a headcount or if the County was just relying on the partners. She asked about the $34 million and wanted to know if it was future money or money that had already been spent. She said asked about the $6.8 million for the hotels during the pandemic, as she wanted to clarify it was CARES Act funding as apposed to the County's general fund.

Mr. Trotman responded that out of the $34 million, there was $20 million that was part of the County’s base budget, and there was $14 million that was part of the rental-subsidy fund, which was one-time funding that would go out to 2025. He said all of those funds were currently part of the FY21’s budget but that the timing of the MeckHome program and Link Housing program would go over multiple fiscal years. He said in terms of hotel rooms that the County has rented, he talked about CARES funding and believed there was some FEMA funding as well to lease some of the hotels as it related to quarantine and isolation. He said those funds were not in the current FY21 budget.

Commissioner Powell asked where the porta-johns and handwashing stations were located.

Mr. Trotman responded that the County worked with Roof Above, which identified several locations, specifically where there were some smaller encampments dispersed throughout the community or where there were a number of homeless individuals congregating. He said the County provided the funding for them. He stated he did not have specific addresses.

Commissioner Powell stated that was good to know, because she was hearing concerns about human waste that was not going into porta-johns, and she wanted to ensure there were hand-washing stations available. She said that in her mind, there were health risks not only to COVID-19 but also to Hepatitis. She said when you drive by, the public perception of what you see in the encampment was bad; you see trash everywhere, tons of Styrofoam. She asked if the County was providing any place for them to throw their trash away.

Mr. Trotman said he would say that was a city responsibility. He believed Roof Above and some of the community partners were going out to ensure there were resources for trash pickup, but it was not something that the County took the lead on.

Commissioner Powell said it was her understanding that many of the homeless have traumatic brain injury, mental health crisis, PTSD, and substance abuse disorders. She asked if he would say that if every person in this North End Encampment wanted shelter, they could get it.

Mr. Trotman responded as of today, yes.

Commissioner Powell asked if people could also call 211 if seeking emergency shelter.

Mr. Trotman responded that was correct. He said County staff identified a need to work with all of the different partners and began to meet with them and develop a plan, because from a data standpoint, there was no data initially associated with this particular encampment site. He said they made sure there was outreach staff going out and assessing each individual to understand what their needs were in order to develop a response to those needs. He said all the data from today was in response to the community support services department taking the lead to organize the homeless service providers to do that assessment.

Chair Dunlap said even on the Board that people were not distinguishing this homeless encampment and homelessness as an overall issue. He said yes, there were a lot of homeless children but that it was a separate issue from what was being presented today,
which was specifically what was going on at 12th and College Street. He said if the Board
would localize the discussion, everyone may be able to understand the impact the County
already made at that particular location. He said the underlying issue was the
misinformation out in the community. He said when they identify serious issues in the
community, they do one of two things, have a summit or have a taskforce. He asked if
there had ever been one for the issue of homelessness.

Mr. Trotman responded he would say yes.

Chair Dunlap said it may be time for the Board to do that again, because there were a lot
of support groups that help with homelessness; some you know and some you do not.
He said they all have the same interest, but no one knew what everyone else was doing.
He said it may be time for everyone to get together on the same page to educate those
who may not know what the County was doing, for there to be a coordinated effort to
address homelessness. He said people say that we will never end homelessness, but we
will never know that unless we put forth a strategy to do that. He said if that was done, he
believed everyone interested should have an opportunity to be at the table. He said people
made suggestions about things that could be done, such as Commissioner Leake
making suggestions about the facilities out by Statesville Road. He said it would be better
than where they were today and that they could be great facilities, which could be upfit
with porta-johns and heating.

Commissioner Altman seconded Chair Dunlap’s suggestion on having a summit or task
force to address homelessness. Her suggestion to Mr. Trotman was to drill down on
nimble shelters. She said some folks in the community were asking if they could pursue
parking lots; she was not sure if that was an improvement, as she was not sure what that
would bring that was an added benefit, but that it was in Mr. Trotman’s slides. She stated
she wanted to understand what benefit he believed it may bring and if it was a strategy
the County was considered and when it would be implemented if so.

Mr. Trotman responded that those strategies were strategies from other communities, not
for the purposes of recommending those strategies to the Board but to educate the Board
on what other communities were doing. He said they had not explored doing that in
Charlotte-Mecklenburg. He stated it was something they could explore but that from a
county perspective, they have not.

Commissioner Altman asked if he had concerns about it.

Mr. Trotman responded he had concerns about the overall need for affordable housing
and shelter, which was why they had been working with their shelter partners and Away
Home and MeckHome to expand the number of offerings. He said some of the need was
more behavioral health needs. He said for whatever the County does, if it is sanctioned
without the supportive services around it, it could just be shifted to a different location.

Commission Cotham stated she liked the idea of a task force.

Commissioner Jerrell pointed out that there was some low-hanging fruit with the Housing
Advisory Board that was supposed to provide some insight into the issue of
homelessness. He said that board was already comprised of individuals looking at this
issues. He said there were some policy considerations and action they would have to take
in broader context, and as they were looking at this, they also needed to make sure they
narrow down those actions they need to talk around funding, specific strategies to deploy,
and what does the policy really look like for the community around the shelter system. He
said he was hoping this would be an item at the retreat for the Board to really have
substantive discussion around what the policy and deployment as a community would
look like. He said he hoped it would be part of the agenda so they could talk not only short
term but also long term and the permanent housing solutions that had been considered
by others.

Commissioner Leake said that by 12th Street there was an issue of rent not being able to
be paid and those kinds of things and cannot live comfortably because of jobs and
education. She said all of those contribute to homelessness and mental issues. She asked if they separate those from the people who have drug addiction and need those services. She said they care about their people and have to come up with a resolution and solution rather than a lot of talking of a task force or membered group of individuals who would yet to come. She said it was not just about money; it was about issues which contribute to the major problems they have, social issues all of this country.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated that a lot of people were concerned about the end of the year and the moratorium on evictions and how that would impact the situation. She wanted to make sure at some point the Board would hear how the plans were for that or if there were plans. She asked if the partners were asking for anything that the partners had not yet done.

Mr. Trotman responded that when Roof Above asked them to expand shelter to serve the unsheltered population, the County did. He said Roof Above and Salvation Army went to the County and said they wanted to provide physical distancing in their shelter, and that was when the County leased the hotel rooms. He said when there was an issue of transportation, if there were ever an outbreak in the shelter, to the isolation and quarantine hotels, the County provided the transportation. He said when there was a request for supportive services or additional supportive services as it related to the new NOAH, the County provided the supportive services in this year’s budget. He said for this year, what had been requested, the County responded to. He said there was always ongoing requests, which would be evaluated as they received them.

Commissioner Powell said she had a lot of respect for what people were doing, because they were doing so much. She said they needed to let the community know what they were doing, because they were doing so much. She said they needed to let the community know what their responsibility was. She said Mecklenburg County could not solve this alone, and they needed partners and the State. She said if this was not a priority for the State, it really hurts local governments, especially in urban areas. She said they needed help from private partners and the community. She said she had some frustration of her life experience of all the taskforces, because she worked on so many where the recommendations were still sitting on a shelf. She said you do all the work and believe it will make a difference, and it just sits on a shelf. She stated she was happy it was submitted as a retreat topic.

Chair Dunlap stated it was the Board’s responsibility to enact policy, and if there were recommendations from taskforces sitting on the shelf with no action, it would be because the Board did not intact policy. He said if there were such a recommendation, regardless of where it came from, it would still be the Board’s responsibility, and they could only hold themselves accountable for that. Chair Dunlap said this was the time of the year when the same people in the community start to complain about whether or not there are warming stations for the homeless, as well as the time they put out negative information about what the County was not doing. He said the County has policies about when warming stations will be opened and whose responsibility it is, so in the near future, if they could get ahead of the conversation and put it out to the community to let them know so they do not have to hear from them first.

20-6477: ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP POLICY MODIFICATIONS & ACTION PLAN

Leslie Johnson, Assistant County Manager said started she would share an overview of the proposed modifications to the County’s Environmental Leadership Policy, as well as share the accompanied action plan. She said the Board adopted an Environmental Leadership Policy in 2004; the policy addressed climate-protection considerations in 2005. She stated that over the years, progress was made; however, there were opportunities to enhance and refine the County’s policy to address the affects of regional growth and a changing environment. She said that last fiscal year, a top priority of the Environmental Stewardship Committee was to evaluate where we were and where we
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wanted to be as a leader that champions environmental stewardship. She noted the Committee Chair, Commissioner Powell, charged them to do more than just draft a new or updated resolution but results.

She stated they also develop a supporting action plan for achieving desired foundation of the action plan was based on five assumptions:

- Striving to achieve local co-benefits
- Purchasing Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) as needed to achieve a 2035 goal
  Note: This is a last resort option
- There are 4 Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) between now and 2035:
  o 2019-2023
  o 2024-2028
  o 2029-2033
  o 2034-2038
- As technology and cost efficiencies are realized, there is opportunity for an accelerated pathway
- Progress on this initiative is dependent on funding allocations

Collective Call for Action – Revised Text

WHEREAS, protecting the environment for the benefit of future generations is in the public's interest and key to Mecklenburg County’s Community Vision, “Mecklenburg County will be a community of pride and choice for people to LIVE, LEARN, WORK, and RECREATE;” and…

Connects with Health – New Text

WHEREAS, environmental conditions affect our community in ways that impact the health of residents; and

Action is a Priority – Unedited Text

WHEREAS, actions by individuals and organizations are necessary to protect our environment and quality of life; and

Advances Equity – New Text

WHEREAS, Mecklenburg County strives to provide all residents an equitable opportunity to thrive and has committed to addressing inequities through systems, policies and practices; and

Commits to Justice – New Text

WHEREAS, no segment of our population should, intentionally or unintentionally, bear a disproportionate risk from pollution or face accessibility restrictions to the decision-making process; and

Recognizes Resilience – New Text

WHEREAS, Mecklenburg County provides critical services that must be resilient to future environmental conditions; and

Climate Change & Current Response – Revised Text

WHEREAS, current local, state and federal regulations are insufficient to overcome the impacts of climate change and regional growth which include energy consumption, transportation and land development; and

Collective Expertise – Revised Text

WHEREAS, Mecklenburg County has organizational, advisory board and community expertise to optimize environmental performance throughout County operations; and

Past Policies Are Highlighted – Revised Text

WHEREAS, Mecklenburg County has a record of strong commitment to the environment and has previously adopted policies or ordinances associated with individual media (air quality, waste/recycling, surface water and natural resources), Environmental Leadership
WHEREAS, Mecklenburg County has determined that a holistic, integrated approach to environmental leadership is more effective than multiple single-issue policies;

Final Policy Commitment

Now therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners adopts this REVISED and updated Environmental Leadership Policy in order that County government may operate in a manner that conserves and protects our natural resources; models environmental stewardship for local government, business and industry in our region; and uses the County's assets, both existing and future, wisely for the benefit of its residents; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that an affiliated Environmental Leadership Action Plan (ELAP) guide the activities of County government; such that the County may take result-oriented steps; and align operations in support of current and future pollution reduction, resource conservation, and climate preparedness initiatives; and

Include the following:

- Comply with applicable local, state and federal environmental regulations and look for opportunities to lead and innovate
- Transition County facilities and fleet to net-zero carbon energy sources by 2035
- Practice waste minimization and recycling at all County facilities
- Identify and fill resiliency gaps in County operations
- Require environmentally friendly designs including net-zero capable buildings in all new facilities and retrofits and when feasible reuse existing buildings and infrastructure
- Make a good-faith effort to include social, economic and environmental considerations in purchasing decisions for goods and services
- Acquire land for recreation, ecosystem preservation, recycling, storm water management and to protect the quality of life in our community
- Manage, maintain and conserve County properties to create resilient ecosystems, including grasslands, forests, wetlands and aquatic environments
- Implement environmental practices in day-to-day business operations
- Provide employees with opportunities and incentives to learn and practice environmentally sound behaviors
- Partner with municipalities, businesses, nonprofits and other organizations that have common goals and interests to efficiently implement this policy
- Work with business partners receiving County funding (CMS, CPCC, Libraries, Medic) to make capital and business decisions that prioritize environmental stewardship
- Routinely review state and federal legislative action that either assists or hinders implementation of this policy
- Conduct outreach and raise awareness about environmental conditions, opportunities for involvement and actions being taken by Mecklenburg County
- Embrace justice through equal protection and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations to include using the County's racial equity toolkit when implementing the action plan, and more broadly, during environmental decision-making

Conclusion

The County Manager is directed to appoint staff charged with implementation of the Environmental Leadership Action Plan and report progress to the Board of County Commissioners on an annual basis to document accomplishments.
Facilities & Fleet
- Net-Zero Carbon Buildings *
- Environmentally Friendly Design
- Net-Zero Carbon Fleet *

Operations
- Responsible Purchasing
- Waste Minimization
- Employee Engagement

Natural Environment
- Resiliency *
- Land Acquisition
- Ecosystem Management

Policies & Partnerships
- Community Partnerships
- Business Partnerships *
- Legislative Priorities *
- Justice & Racial Equity *
- Communication

* Indicates Policy Commitment

Facilities & Fleet
Mecklenburg County and the power plants that serve its facilities use various types of fuel for electricity, heating and transportation needs. Burning fossil fuels to produce energy releases carbon and other pollutants into the air which impacts the environment and the health of our residents. The County is committed to moving away from these carbon-based practices.

Policy Commitments & Recommended Actions:

Net-Zero Carbon Buildings - Transition County to net-zero facilities carbon energy sources by 2035.
- Implement deep energy retrofits in existing buildings (e.g., high efficiency equipment, new control systems, insulation, new windows, etc.)
- Install on-site renewable energy sources, where feasible (e.g., geothermal, solar panels, etc.)
- Explore current and future land holdings with the potential for renewable energy projects or off-site renewable energy sources (e.g., solar farms, wind farms, etc.)
- Use Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) to offset remaining carbon emissions.

Environmentally Friendly Design - Require environmentally friendly designs including net-zero capable buildings
- Use Integrated Energy Design in all new facility construction and major renovations to get to net-zero capable (e.g., prioritizing recycled materials, design strategies, etc.)
- Include renewable energy installation in all new and renovated facilities
- Incorporate principles of increased open space, preserving trees, limiting site disturbance, and modeling exemplary site storm water management during County capital improvement projects and redevelopment opportunities
Net-Zero Carbon Fleet - Transition the County fleet to net-zero carbon energy sources by 2035.

- Replace existing internal combustion engine vehicles with electric and hybrid vehicles
- Install electric charging stations at County facilities to support an electric vehicle fleet
- Use renewable fuels for vehicles such as, off-road equipment, tractors, forklifts, diesel trucks, etc. that do not have equivalent electric replacements
- Accelerate equipment replacements and upgrades through GRADE program
- (Grants to Replace Aging Diesel Engines)

Tracking Progress:

Measure: Percent of energy that is net-zero carbon including offset by RECs
Target: 100% by 2035

Measure: County fleet net fuel usage (gallons)
Target: 6.7% annual reduction

Note: 1. Funding allocations are critical to achieving this goal and any delays in funding will result in a delayed timeline. 2. Initial vehicle conversions will be lower and ramp up as infrastructure capacity and renewable fuel availability increases.

Operations

Mecklenburg County provides services that are essential for maintaining the quality of life for our 1.1 Million county residents. These services are provided by a diverse workforce of over 5,500 people – from lifeguards and social workers to librarians and sheriff's deputies – at over 250 locations across our community. Day to day actions by staff impact the County’s overall environmental footprint.

Tracking Progress:

Measure: Tons of construction and demolition (C+D) waste diverted
Target: Establish a baseline after implementation of C+D program for County facilities and business partners

Measure: Participation in the employee engagement program (Work Green)
Target: 2% annual increase in staff participation (2035 – 50% of staff)

NOTE: Waste reduction opportunities are largely based on tipping fees charged in competition to private sector companies

Natural Environment

Climate change threatens the iconic landscapes, natural resources, wildlife and human population of our region. Mecklenburg County is committed to managing and protecting open spaces, urban landscapes, cultural resources, and local food systems which promotes economic and health benefits. These large-scale efforts are critical in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Policy Commitments & Recommended Actions:

Resilience – Identify and fill resiliency gaps in County operations

- Work with regional partners to identify and resolve geographical threats and assets
- Based on results of assessment, prepare a plan to fill gaps that are identified, including future performance measures

Land Acquisition – Acquire land for recreation, ecosystem preservation, recycling, storm water
As buildout continues, seek out parcels, land rights, and redevelopment opportunities in areas of limited open space
Seek opportunities to reclaim developed properties to create new natural public open spaces
Promote acquisitions of contiguous acreage in support of ecosystem health and flood loss reduction
Purchase land that poses an environmental threat to human health or that has unique natural or cultural resources that are a priority to preserve

Ecosystem Management – Manage, maintain and conserve County properties to create resilient ecosystems.
Continue to manage nature preserves and select County owned properties specifically for water quality and ecosystem protection
Use prescribed burning to promote ecosystem health and reduce possibility of large-scale wildfires
Remove invasive plant species and protect our native plant and animal species
Provides state and federal agencies with annual reports detailing the management activities and population updates for numerous rare and endangered species
Maintain a diversity of landscape types to support and enhance the biological integrity of our region
Manage County hazard mitigation properties to support the tree canopy and ecosystem needs to reduce maintenance costs and add value to our neighborhoods

Tracking Progress
Measure: Parkland per 1,000 residents
Target: At minimum maintain a rate of 19 acres per 1000 residents
Measure: Re-purpose Storm Water’s hazard mitigation properties
Target: 5% annually

NOTE: 1. Build-out presents ever limiting opportunities to acquire undeveloped land and often compounds future prices of acquisitions 2. Mecklenburg County faces challenges within our boundaries due to limited land ownership by other levels of government

Policies & Partnerships
Local government policies and planning efforts have been at the forefront in addressing climate change. The relationships that Mecklenburg County has with local municipalities, businesses, nonprofits and other organizations is critical to effectively and efficiently provide services to area residents.

Policy Commitments & Recommended Actions:

Community Partnerships- Partner with municipalities, businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations that…
Leverage and utilize county resources and expertise to promote environmental stewardship through cleanups, builds, educational events, etc.
Partner with civic organizations to increase public access to natural and recreational areas
Encourage municipal partners to consider open space requirements in their Unified Development Ordinance
Continue to provide recycling capacity to regional municipal partners
Continue to partner with municipal jurisdictions and private enterprises to encourage and expand waste minimization and separation

Business Partnerships- Work with business partners receiving County funding to…
Coordinate energy reporting among business partners (CMS, CPCC, Medic) in order to establish a baseline
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- Explore opportunities to renew joint development opportunities for parks and open spaces at school locations in order to address access to parks (10-minute walk)

Legislative Priorities- Routinely review state and federal legislative action that either assists or hinders…

- Work with state and federal delegations to advance the priorities of Mecklenburg County
- Seek support from the state to address cost recovery of unfunded mandates (tires, E-waste, etc.)

The minimum estimated costs were reviewed.

Next Steps
Community input: MeckNC.gov, December 9, 2020 – January 8, 2021
BOCC Discussion: BOCC Annual Retreat, January 27-29, 2021
BOCC Policy Modification Adoption: BOCC Regular Meeting, February – April 2021
BOCC Budget Adoption: BOCC Regular Meeting, June 2021
Implementation & Evaluation: Action Plan, July 2021 - Ongoing

She reviewed the members of the Environmental Leadership Planning Team

Dr. Johnson answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Meier requested to receive information via email on what the County has done towards racial equity and justice in terms of environmental actions, including what worked, did not work, and what the County has ignored.

Commissioner Powell stated it was important for this plan to be woven into everything Mecklenburg County does. She said they needed to be very serious about it when in the retreat while looking at the budget implications of this, because progress depended on funding, and if it was not a priority, they would not have progress.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked to be assured that the County would be tracking public-health implementations of the action plan. She recommended that actual, specific language be added to the action plan about tracking the impact on health, especially in highly-effected areas by air quality. She also requested implementation of a mechanism for the Board to be able to see what it would take, funding wise, to reach the goals faster.

Chair Dunlap hoped that the useful life of equipment would be reported in this. He believed if the County purchased equipment, that they used it until it had no more life, not just because there were things they wanted to do in a certain timeframe. Chair Dunlap said as it related to justice and racial equity, he requested for it to be more specific about the dumps and other places located other places, primarily in African American communities.

20-6547: FOOD DESERT RESEARCH

Dena Diorio, County Manager, said the next item on our agenda is to go through some research that we have done on food insecurity. This is a very long presentation and we will not get through it in the time allotted. We do have a guest who is Byron White, Director of the Office of Urban Research – Community Engagement, UNCC. They have a proposal that we want the Board to hear because we want to be able to move forward with this proposal as it relates to food deserts and we need the Board to be okay with that we ant to start right away. I’ll have Byron go first with his part of the presentation and we can save this for another day and come back and we’ll hopefully have heard back from some of the food retailers I contacted as you saw the emails today, maybe we can combine this with some panel discussion from them.
Byron White, UNC Charlotte Director of Urban Research reviewed activity to-date:

- Cross-functional workgroups meeting to examine the problem and possible solutions
- Idea sharing with other jurisdictions including the City of Charlotte
- Discussions with non-profits and for-profit organizations
- Over 20 meetings on this problem since July

Food Desert Defined is defined by the USDA, Treasury, and HHS as followed:

Low-income: a poverty rate of 20 percent or greater, or a median family income at or below 80 percent of the statewide or metropolitan area median family income.

Low-access: at least 500 persons and/or at least 33 percent of the population lives more than 1 mile from a supermarket or large grocery store (10 miles, in the case of rural census tracts).

Mr. White said what they were proposing to do was to really help to facilitate the identification of an innovative solution to the long-standing issue of lack of food retail in west Charlotte. He said this proposal looked to employ action research to engage community researchers and experts around a specific innovative solution and deliverable and to have an implementation plan for that solution and innovation by the end of June.

Mr. White said that folks were aware that this was a long-standing issue for the community, particularly for west Charlotte. He said this was not a research effort to produce another report; it was about finally identifying a solution that they could collectively act on based on what they knew and what had been learned in the community. He said the initiative had an expectation that there was a solution in the midst, that probably had not been fully conceived or adopted and could be discovered through interaction of expertise both at the community level and among researchers and others. He said that they were trying to build structures with different parties with their own stack of Legos, and what he was talking about was putting them all on the table and working together to create something new. He said the device for that was action research, which was not the traditional research that often came from Universities. He stated this was around a collaborative integration between researchers, faculty, students, and community leaders, residents, and others. He said everyone was a peer and brought expertise, learns from one another, and most importantly the end game would be a tangible deliverable, an outcome with solutions to a systemic issue.

Mr. White said if you think about what the process will do in terms of the stacks of Legos, they really are in three areas; they are the communities’ aspirations and insights. He said this was not a brainstorming or visioning from scratch. This would be building from what this community has been working on. He said they knew at a community level, certainly the issue of fresh food was part of that aspiration, but it was also about status of the neighborhood; jobs and wealth creation; collaborative meeting space for the community. He said that another area was the retail business decision around food, the question of can money be made, at what risk. What opportunities were there in the community so that there were choices made for this community in particular, and what were the emerging trends in food retail. He said there were best practices and principles not only emerging locally but nationally to draw upon in order to reach that innovation.

Mr. White stated the key for this would be having the right people at the table, that would start with community leadership, organizations, residents, churches, grassroots leaders. He said they were working with the Department of Social Services, Department of Public Health at the County to engage those folks. He said there was UNC Charlotte faculty and Johnson C. Smith University who would be engaged using action research, peer-oriented practices.
Mr. White stated it did not produce a report but that it was real-time, applied data to answer the assumptions that would come up through the innovative process. He said they would also be perusing corporate and philanthropic investment, not just in this process but aimed at implementation when it is done. He said they would be borrowing practices and result-based facilitation, design thinking to reach consensus in this process. He said there were three proposed phases. He said there would be a lot of work done through the holidays to make sure they hit the ground running in January. He said for Phase 1, it was really about identifying promising innovations, getting behind the community and food-retail interests in applying best practices to those. He said this was really using data to test what they knew to come up with promising innovations. He said for Phase 2, it would be building consensus around a preferred solution that involved deeper analysis, broader community and expert feedback and really using data to confirm it. He said for Phase 3, it would be coming away with a game plan for implementation of a solution, starting the groundwork of identifying partners, resources, and polices needed.

Mr. White said the idea was really to think about the Legos on the table and in a transparent way, assemble them in new ways based on what we know and use data and research to verify that possibility so that in the end, there really would be a solution that would be desirable, feasible, and viable.

Chair Dunlap asked what the desired outcome was.

Dena Diorio, County Manager responded that in order to meet the time frame that Mr. White had put into the proposal, it would needed to be started in December. She said they did want to move forward with this and believed it was a really unique way to understand what innovations were in the food insecurity area and that it was a new approach that had not been done before. She believed it would bear some real good fruit. She said this was just one tool in the toolbox in addition to other things being looked at. She said when it came to food insecurity, there was no right answer. She said this would be one approach they wanted to take while exploring other options that were in this deck, as well as some of the other things they had talked about.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Meier to receive this report as information and follow recommendations.

Commissioner Leake stated her concern was that they provide quality foods in neighborhoods that they had yet to do so. She said when a company says no to this community, but yet the Board want to talk about justice and racial equality, if someone was not able to physically or mentally participate because of their lack of sustaining adequate foods that would nourish a person to be productive in the community, then they were not an asset to the community. She said the Board wants. She stated that yes, she was in support.

Commissioner Cotham stated her support.

Commissioner Jerrell said this was a golden opportunity for the County to get ahead of the curb when it came to this issue. He said this would be a new delivery model and a way for them to rethink how to approach food deserts. He said it may serve well to help the Board understand that they would probably have to have a completely different mindset in the way they look at this.

Commissioner Meier gave her full support.

Commissioner Powell asked if Mr. White worked with Dr. Peterson.

Mr. White responded that yes, Dr. Peterson was one of the faculty that had been spoken to as part of the research team.

Commissioner Powell asked if he was also working with Erin Hostetler from Rivendell Farms for the energy and environment.

Mr. White responded that he did not know that particular name. He stated they were reaching out to a number of partners and that most of the faculty they were engaging from
Johnson C. Smith had those relationships, so those nonprofits and organizations would be engaged in working on the issue.

Commissioner Powell said that all of the partnerships were important to her and then the Centralina Council of Governments as a partner as well.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if what they were voting on was having the project be outsourced.

Mr. Diorio responded absolutely not. She stated they would continue to look at all the other things but that this was a very unique approach that would be uniquely focused on the west side. She said they had the rest of the County to work on, including census tracts not on the west side that also had food deserts. She believed there were opportunities for them to pilot those other items in other parts of the County while working on the project on the west side. She said they were not suspending any work they were doing on the food deserts while waiting for the results of this research.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if there was a staff member who was leading the project.

Ms. Diorio said Anthony Trotman and Adrian Cox were working on it and bringing in others from across the County to help.

Commissioner Altman asked what they were really voting on since she saw a $272,000 figure.

Ms. Diorio responded that that the Board would be voting on the approval to move forward. She stated the money was part of the $3 million that the Board put in the budget for food deserts, so the money was already in the budget.

Commissioner Altman responded that she looked forward to any innovations that were supported by great scientists such as Dr. White.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Meier and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 p.m.
SPECIAL MEETING

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for a Special Joint Meeting, with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, on Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 1:02 p.m. in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 267 with Chair Elyse Dashew and Chair George Dunlap and presiding.

Present:

**Mecklenburg County**
- Chair George Dunlap (attended in person)
- Commissioner Leigh Altman (attended remotely)
- Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham (attended in person)
- Commissioner Mark Jerrell (attended remotely)
- Commissioner Vilma D. Leake (attended remotely)
- Commissioner Laura Meier (attended remotely)
- Commissioner Elaine Powell (attended in person)
- Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell (attended remotely)
- Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough (attended remotely)
- County Manager Dena Diorio (attended in person)

**Board of Education**
- Chair Elyse Dashew (attended remotely)
- Thelma Byers-Bailey (attended remotely)
- Rhonda Cheek (attended remotely)
- Jennifer De La Jara (attended remotely)
- Dr. Ruby M. Jones (attended remotely)
- Margaret Marshall (attended remotely)
- Lenora Sanders Shipp (attended remotely)
- Carol Sawyer (attended remotely)
- Gabe Schuhl (attended remotely)
- Sean Strain (attended remotely)
- Superintendent Earnest Winston (attended remotely)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

John Stephens, UNC Chapel Hill, facilitated the joint-board meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dashew and Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. STATUTORY DUTIES AND POWERS OF RESPECTIVE BOARDS

John Stephens, UNC Chapel Hill introduced Kara Millonzi and stated her expertise was in North Carolina law on local government finance, including school finance.

Kara Millonzi, UNC School of Government, provided a review of statutory duties, authorities, and responsibilities of the Board of County Commissioners and a local school board, related to school administration and school finance. She said it was really important to understand that these were only two players in a very broad scheme related to how they set policy fund and administer public schools in North Carolina. She said North Carolina had a very centralized system in the State government in that North Carolina’s General Assembly and North Carolina Board of Education were the primary bodies which set education policy and primary funders of the public education. She said because of that, it impacted the role at the local level. She said local boards of education, in that broader scheme, are the body that was both authorized and charges with
administering public education. She stated in parcel with that was setting local education policy. She said the role of the County Commissioners, when it came to public education, was to provide funding for most capital and some operating expenses, with about one-third of the expenditures being funded at the local level and two-thirds funded at the State level.

Ms. Millonzi stated that there was an overlap between the local school board and Board of County Commissioners in which they would have powers and authority assigned to both boards in a way that both boards must work together to really accomplish the constitutional mandate and to navigate through what the statutes require. She gave the example of one of those shared governances, NCGS 115C-521, the erection of school buildings.

Ms. Millonzi went over the budgeting process and highlighted which board made decisions and what point. She said ultimately, there was not one answer if asked the question of which board trumped the other in terms of authority, as it was really about shared governance. She said the school board adopts its proposed budget, while being mindful that the deadlines were not when the process would start. She mentioned that in terms of a process element, when the School Board would have to make decisions related to a proposed budget in May, it would often be well before the School Board would know what the State contribution would be towards the budget in the next fiscal year. She said decisions would be made based on estimates of the largest source of revenue coming into the School Board, in which the School Board would make its best guesses based upon those estimates, then submits budget to the County Board of Commissioners. She said the Board of Commissioners then had the right by statute to inquire into what the numbers represented and other financial-related information. She stated the Commissioners would then make appropriations in the budget ordinance, including to the School Board, with the School Board having the opportunity to initiate a dispute resolution process if the School Board would find the money appropriate for operating or capital from the County, when added to what they anticipated getting from other sources, would not be sufficient in meeting minimal education requirements mandated by statute by constitution.

Ms. Millonzi reviewed how the money was actually appropriated to the school, including who had control over spending that money and how the money actually flowed.

She said when the County made appropriations, it would be to the following funds:

- Fund 2: Local Current Expense Fund – Almost all money for operating expenses
- Fund 4: Capital Outlay Fund – Money for capital expenditures
- Fund 8: This fund was a fund available for county dollars for programs which charter and other non-traditional schools did not have and specifically pre-k programs.

She reviewed the degree of specificity in which a county could engage in when making its appropriations to a school board, and stated that on the capital side, counties had more authority to direct county dollars.

Ms. Millonzi reviewed the dispute resolution process, which would be initiated by a school board, should a school board feel it was not appropriated sufficient funds for minimum education. Should there be a failed mediation, over the dispute of operational funds, a statutory formula would be used, which would be a per-pupil, maintenance-of-effort plus inflation. She said the formula would be the actual money spent, in operating expenses, by that school board from the last year, divided by the last year’s average, daily membership, to get to the per pupil actual expenditure of county dollars, then multiplied by a statutory inflationary factor, then multiplied by the new, projected ADM number. She said if the dispute process would be initiated two years in a row or more, it would become more painful from a county’s perspective, because you multiply by a higher inflationary factor of three percent. She stated what the North Carolina General Assembly has done in setting up a new scheme was that it has divorces county funding from the needs of the school and tied it simply to what had been done the year before on a per-pupil basis times
Ms. Millonzi said in regards of the capital side, there were several statutory directives, which all called out the County Board of Commissioners as the funder responsible for providing sufficient funding for those capital expenditures. She said if the dispute was over capital, it would then be up to the School Board to decide whether or not to initiate litigation, and should it be initiated, it would then be determined by the judge or jury how much would be necessary to have buildings suitable equipped to maintain the free public schools. She said they would be required to look at factors related to educational goals and policies and to the County’s financial goals and resources.

Ms. Millonzi said where they see disputes were something over what the statutory minimum was, and with that, there was no guidance from the statutes. She said it was within the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners subject to negotiations with the School Board, which was where there would be joint governance. She stated the County Commissioners had authority to increase funding appropriations at any time during the fiscal year but that they did not have authority to decrease their appropriations once a county budget ordinance was adopted, unless there was consent from a school board or a general reduction in county expenditures due to some economic condition, like a pandemic or great recession that hits mid-fiscal year that they did not anticipate and were having to cut across the board. She said even if the school board ended up not spending all of their money in a given year; the money would still belong to the school and should roll over into school-fund balance for the next year. She said a school board could amend their budget ordinance at any time during the fiscal year, consistent with state law and county budget allocations.

Ms. Millonzi responded to questions and comments from board members.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

3. CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Mr. Stephens stated that Chair Dunlap collected questions from the Board of County Commissioners and those from CMS have provided detailed responses.

Ms. Byers-Bailey, Mecklenburg County Board of Education, shared information on where they had been, where they were, and where they wanted to go and introduced Earnest Winston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent.

Mr. Winston, CMS Superintendent, provided a brief review of CMS in recent years. He said that CMS had the commitment to working so that all students could get the education they needed to succeed had not changed. He stated that CMS was not a stand-alone system but part of a community of systems which supported children and their families. He said in terms of racism in the district, they have always had some level of commitment to diversity, and last summer, he asked his team to explore the needed strategy for becoming an anti-racist organization. He said this intentionally put a focus on examining systems, processes, and policies which produce inequitable outcomes. He said it did not sound unique but was, because their focus meant they were no longer focused on having one group make the progress of a higher performing group but instead, they were focused on dismantling any process or system which would get in the way of any or all students performing optimally.

He said there were multiple systems, many of which were out of their scope, and many of them with unintended consequences that kept kids from performing at their full potential. He said it was never more evident than in March, when they had to shelter in place to combat the pandemic, because those inequalities that had previously existed were exacerbated during COVID-19. He said those issues pointed to social, mental health, economic, and environmental injustices, and those injustices have had greater negative impact upon minority and poor families. He said they acknowledged their part for the ecosystem of Mecklenburg County and would never shirk their responsibility to
provide a high-quality education that resulted in students becoming productive citizens in this community and beyond.

Mr. Winston stated that in 2018 the district released the Breaking the Link report, which highlighted student experiences, and unlike earlier equity reports, this report did not count county assets and measure inputs but instead analyzed experiences and outcomes. He said this report highlighted disparities and shaped the Strategic Plan 2024 What Matters Most. He said this plan had three goals and two commitments.

Dr. Ruby Jones, Mecklenburg County Board of Education, stated the Strategic Plan 2024 was about equity and culture. She said each students needs may be different, but those needs must be met at every school in CMS. She said most importantly about the two commitments were that they were in service of one another, because in order for them to create a more equitable outcome for students, the entire ecosystem of education must be considered, which included students, teachers, families, parents, staff leaders, and partners.

Jennifer De La Jara, Mecklenburg County Board of Education, about how they would measure the academic progress, stating they used national and state test which helped them to see where students were and what they could do. She said CMS had been a member of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and commonly referred to as the “nation’s report card.” She said that it was the only nationally-administered assessment of the nation’s public-school students, meaning the same test would be given to all students. She said the assessments were given to a representative sample of students in every state and district, then NAEP would oversee the sampling and testing, grade the test, and give out the results by state. She stated Charlotte-Mecklenburg was also a part of the Trial Urban District assessment, which gave them access to the students’ aggregate results so they could compare CMS students to those in North Carolina and other states. She said they were top performers on these tests consistently year-after-year.

Ms. De La Jara reviewed assessment results stating that for reading, CMS ranked first among CMS ranked 1st among large urban districts in 4th grade reading overall. CMS ranked 2nd among large urban districts in 8th grade reading overall. CMS ranked 1st among large urban districts: Black students in 4th and 8th grade reading. CMS ranked 9th among large urban districts: Hispanic students in 4th grade reading. CMS ranked 3rd among large urban districts: White students in 4th grade reading. She reviewed assessment results for math, stating CMS ranked 1st among large urban districts in 4th and 8th grade math overall. CMS ranked 1st among large urban districts: Black students in 4th grade math. CMS ranked 1st among large urban districts: Black students in 4th grade math. She said that although they were in the top ranks, no one in any state or district was scoring above 50%. She said the State testing had obviously been impacted by the pandemic but shared graduation numbers, stating the numbers had been rising since the decline in 2017. She said that while graduation rates for whites have declined slightly, Asian and black students had seen significant improvements in graduation rates, as they were graduating at higher rates than before. She said that educationally disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners were also graduating at higher rates than before.

Ms. De La Jara responded to questions and comments from board members.

Lenora Sanders Shipp, Mecklenburg County Board of Education, stated the career and college ready gap showed that in 2016-2017, 66.8% of black third graders were not college and career ready in English language arts. She said they could and would do better and aimed to cut that amount in half by 2024, to 33.4%. She said they would know they were getting there by looking at each year and looking if they could move higher with each student each year. She said for white students the career and college-ready gap showed for 2016-2017 was 26.1%, and they wanted to cut that in half to 13%.

Ms. Sanders Shipp stated that strategic efforts were interrupted by community spread of COVID-19, and end of year testing was suspended. She said now in year three of the plan, initial assessments of learning were incomplete, and national and local data suggested students were failing and falling behind, with challenged students falling
behind even greater. She said that led them to ask if they should set new base-line end targets.

Ms. Sanders Shipp responded to questions and comments from board members.

Chair Elyse Dashew shared the strategic plan document for the Board members to study at their leisure. She stated their annual budget in the coming year would be aligned with those priorities, which included: excellence in teaching and learning; dismantling racist structures; and setting high expectations for staff and students. She stated they would also be focused on helping their students and the community to recover from this historic pandemic and regain the ground that they had lost.

Commissioners made comments.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell requested an addendum to the Strategic Plan 2024, which would be a written plan about how they would deal with the fallout of COVID-19, intensive remediation program for the summer and a fall acceleration plan.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

5. CLOSING REMARKS AND NEXT STEPS

Chair Dashew stated she expected it to be a contentious meeting, because that had historically been the relationship between the two boards for decades. She stated she was deeply committed to solving this achievement gap and that it was not easy work, but she was committed to doing it. She hoped instead of fighting one another that they could fight together on behalf of the kids they served and remember the solutions required resources. She said they could not solve systemic inequity on hopes, prayers, and talk alone. She said whether they were talking about giving students access to rigorous, engaging, culturally-relevant curriculum, professional development for teachers and assistants, or having enough guidance counselors or social workers or psychologist or buildings that were clean or safe and not too crowded they were not free, and as a school board in North Carolina, they did not have their own funding authority, so that was where the partnership would come in.

Chair Dunlap wanted to make it clear that it was not necessarily the County Commission talking. He said they were sharing with the Board of Education the concerns of the community, as those things have been brought to the Board’s attention. He stated what concerned him was that when then Board of County Commissioners would tell them what the community said, their response was if the Board of County Commissioners would fix the poverty rate, they would do better. Chair Dunlap requested that they compare the poverty rate to the graduation rate, because the graduation rate was far worse. He said the Board of Education said if the Board of County Commissioners took care of homelessness, they would take care of the student achievement gap; the student achievement gap was far worse, but the Board of Education said they did not want to blame. He said the bottom line was that as long as he was on the school board and county commission, this board of commissioners always sought to work with the school board, which was demonstrated by the virtue of the fact they were given over $700 million a year. She said maybe they need to talk about how they pay for results instead of just appropriating dollars. He said yes the Board wanted to work in partnership but that every time they had a meeting, it was at the request of the Board of County Commissioners; he could not recall one time when the school board said they wanted to meet with the Board of County Commissioners to share good news, data, or accomplishments. He said it was not a partnership if it was always one sided. He said they were there, because the community had engaged them to get the results they were looking for and because the community felt as though they were not being heard. He stated he felt the community’s frustration as well as the Board’s but with that aside, if they would work together, it would have to be in a partnership. He said when they raise questions and concerns, it was not to be beating up on the Board of Education but to get responses to the constituents who were asking the questions.
ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough and seconded by Commissioner Altman to adjourn the meeting.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as followed:

YES: Commissioners Altman, Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Meier, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Leake

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

George Dunlap, Chair
MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Due to the State of North Carolina’s Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Formal Session on Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at 6:03 p.m. at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 267 with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair George Dunlap (attended in person)
Commissioner Leigh Altman (attended remotely)
Commissioner Patricia “Pat” Cotham (attended in person)
Commissioner Mark Jerrell (attended remotely)
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake (attended in person)
Commissioner Laura J. Meier (attended remotely)
Commissioner Elaine Powell (attended in person)
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell

Absent Until Noted: Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough (attended remotely)

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Dunlap led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Scarborough joined the meeting remotely at 6:11 p.m.

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

20-6518: Public Auction for Disposal of Surplus Equipment by Commissioner Leake
20-6532: Commissioning Consultant Selection Northeast Community Resource Center by Commissioner Leake and Rodriguez-McDowell
20-6535: Capital Project Ordinance by Commissioner Leake
20-6537: Easement Donations Stewart Creek Greenway & Stream Enhancement Project by Commissioner Leake
20-6553: Budget Amendment - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Revenue Increase by Commissioner Leake
20-6554: Budget Amendment Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG CV) Revenue Increase by Commissioner Leake

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

20-6545: Order of the Hornet Inductions

Chair Dunlap stated that the Order of the Hornet Inductions was established in 1972. It is bestowed by the Board of County Commissioners on persons who displayed valor or high order of service, uniquely and specifically to the citizens of Mecklenburg County. He
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stated this was the highest honor bestowed by the Board of County Commissioners. He said the Order of the Hornet was founded in the spirit of early Mecklenburg patrons who signed the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775 and proclaimed that the County's freedom from Britain was more than a year before the U.S. Declaration of Independence was signed. He said those early patriots valiantly fought for their independence during the revolution and gave Lord Cornwallace such difficulty during his occupation of Charlotte that he turned the Town a hornets' nest of rebellion. He said because former Commissioners Trevor M. Fuller and Susan Harden reflect the honor, strength, and fierce American patriotism that so stun Lord Cornwallace, they have been recommended for membership in the Order of the Hornet.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Powell to induct former Commissioners Trevor M. Fuller and Susan Harden into the Mecklenburg County Order of the Hornet, the highest honor bestowed by the Board.

Commissioner Altman stated she was Jewish, so she would lay a bit of Yiddish on everybody. She said it gave her naches; it gave her so much pride and joy for the two for the two of them to receive this honor so richly deserved. She stated she had watched them closely over the years and learned from their example of generosity and leadership and wisdom. She stated it was a pleasure and joy to celebrate them today.

Commissioner Cotham stated that she again wished them both the best. She said Trevor left her in 2012, and now she was the only one left. She wished them both much future success. She thanked Dr. Harden for her service.

Commissioner Scarborough introduced herself at 6:11 p.m.

Commissioner Powell thanked the two for their service and said if they ever wanted to know how she felt, they could call her and read the minutes. She said she loved people around people who work to make the world a better place.

Chair Dunlap said there was no greater honor that he had than to be able to be present while the Order of the Hornet was being presented to two people who he had a great deal of respect for. He wished them both well and the best to them both.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded unanimously.

Commissioner Harden thanked her esteemed colleagues for the honor. She stated it was a privilege of a lifetime to work beside them. She said she would start her remarks with
three numbers and that the first was eight. She said the second number was 30%, and the third number was 53%. She said she thought of teaching like a tour bus, and she was the tour director. She said she asks the students to trust her with getting on the ride and that they give each other 100% then hopefully at the end of the journey they had grown in knowledge to be better people. She said she took the same approach to her service on the County Commission to bring her constituents closer to truly understanding the deeply destructive consequences of living in the community that ranks 50 out of 50 in economic mobility. She said it was her journey, as she tried to get her district closer to understanding the systems that create inequality and how the human services provided by Mecklenburg County address those inequalities. She said Bryan Stevenson, civil rights and social justice attorney for people living on death row and author of Just Mercy, a book she teaches in her classes, says that you have to get proximate, close to the issues. She stated he says “If you are willing to get closer to people who are suffering, you will find the power to change the world. You cannot be an effective problem solver from a distance.” She said that was the challenge representing District 5. She said it was a very prosperous and resource rich district. She said many of the community leaders live in District 5, and there are great schools, healthcare, housing, grocery stores, jobs, parks and greenways, libraries, and senior services. She said District 5 was distant from systematic suffering; at the very least, they do not have the daily trauma of trying to get access to high-quality necessities like education, healthcare, transportation, and food. She said it was an honor of a lifetime.

Commissioner Fuller said he was honored to receive the award and that he had been on the other side, giving it to people. He said he had his cube there with him and was proud of his service for the County and proud to serve with them. He said he did not believe it was goodbye; he was saying so long, until they meet again. He said thank you so much for the honor and good luck to all of the Board.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6542: Public Appearance

The following speakers addressed the Board of Commissioners:

1. Becky Shultz, Three Bone Theater – Arts & Culture Sector
2. Ebone’ Lockette, Harvesting Humanity – Arts & Culture/ Culture Blocks impact
3. Kate Dennstaedt – Tent City in Uptown
4. Peter Kelly, Equitable Communities CLT - Support & Questions for Scenario 2 (Eastway Apartments
5. Dr. Monty Witherspoon, African American Faith Alliance for Educational Advancement – CMS Funding Accountability
7. Dr. Dennis Williams, African American Faith Alliance for Educational Advancement – CMS Funding Accountability

APPOINTMENTS – NONE

PUBLIC HEARINGS - 6:30 PM

20-6530: Public Hearing for Closing the Right-Of-Way for Limehurst Place

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing to receive comments with respect to the closing of the right-of-way for Limehurst Place.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to close the public
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hearing and approve the resolution ordering the Closing of the public right-of-way for Limehurst Place.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #65.

20-6531: Public Hearing for the Hearthstone Subdivision Preliminary Assessment Roll

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Powell, to open the public hearing to hear comments with respect to the closing of the Hearthstone Subdivision Preliminary Assessment Roll.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and adopt the Final Assessment Roll for street improvements in the Hearthstone Subdivision.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #66.

20-6541: REVISED - Public Hearing - Grant Application: FY2022 FTA 5307 Urban Transportation Grant Public Hearing - DSS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to open the public hearing to hear comments with respect to the submission of the NCDOT’s 5307 Urban Transportation Grant application.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and approve submission of the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s 5307 Urban Transportation Grant application for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #67.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE

MANAGER’S REPORT

20-6534: Grant - Charlotte Host Committee Economic Development Challenge Grants - Office of Economic Development

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director, provided an update on the grant application of up to $250,000 from the Charlotte Host Committee, CLT Host 2020, Inc. Mr. Zeiler informed the Board that Mecklenburg County was the recipient of a $300,000 grant to provide more supportive services to MWSBEs.

Mr. Zeiler said the Office of Economic Development came before the Board last month for approval to appropriate and receive any funding from a grant through an application to the Republican National Host Committee.

Mr. Zeiler introduced Ned Curran. Due to technical difficulties, no audio feed was received from Mr. Curran.

Mr. Zeiler stated they had been informed that the Office of Economic Development, in Mecklenburg County, would be the recipient of a $300,000 grant for application to create a launch pad program to enable the creation, development, and growth of minority, women, and small businesses aimed at providing contracted services to local governments and institutions. He said this would satisfy one of the recommendations coming out of the recently completed disparity study, which pushed them to work for more supportive services across the Board within Mecklenburg County to help MWSBE’s grow. He stated this was a two-year challenge grant, and they would have two cohorts of 20
students each. He said the goal of that cohort would be to bring the students out to create new businesses that were competitive for business with the County and other institutions across the region. He said their initial application was for $250,000, and they were grateful to the host committee for their generosity in gifting them an additional $50,000 for them to work collaboratively with the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance to help take this program not just out of Mecklenburg County but to the surrounding counties and to make sure they grow the MWBSBE population within our region.

Dena Diorio, County Manager thanked Mr. Curran and the members of the Charlotte Host Committee for awarding Mecklenburg County the $300,000 for this amazing program that will soon be launched.

Ms. Diorio answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Mr. Curran said it was a fantastic grant, which was very well written and prepared. He thanked Peter and his team for how they put it together. He said it was so consistent with some of the values and things they wanted to achieve as the host committee and some of the outcomes they wanted in holding the convention here. He stated they were hopeful it would be a big success. He said as Peter referenced, they were adding $50,000 to having the alliance share the outcomes with other counties so that they could take this and do it in other counties as well. He said he appreciated the collaboration with CPCC and if all went well, hopefully they could tack on some additional money next year to expand it.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

21-6562: Update on Charlotte Moves Task Force

Former Charlotte Mayor and Chairperson of Charlotte Moves Task Force, Harvey Gantt and Taiwo Jaiyeoba, Assistant City Manager and Director of Planning, Design and Development provided a presentation to update the Board on the work of the Charlotte Moves Task Force.

Mr. Gantt said that on behalf of the 25 members of the Charlotte Moves Taskforce, he was pleased to present the recommendations of their final report. He said contained in the report was the collective voice of 25 passionate, experienced, and diverse community leaders who care deeply about the future of Charlotte-Mecklenburg and the entire region. He said they had spent a combined 750 hours of work in over eight months and 10 work sessions, receiving public input, sharing varied perspectives, engaging in vibrant deliberation, and developing a common vision. He said the City staff presented plans already adopted by the City Council or in the process of being adopted by the Council and the County. He named a few of them: 2030 Transit System Plan, adopted in 2006; 2018 Envision my Ride Plan; in 2008, the Greenway Master Plan; in 2007, Charlotte Bikes and Charlotte Walks; in 2018, Strategic Energy Action Plan; and currently in the process of adopting the 2040 Charlotte Future Comprehensive Plan and the ongoing County Meck Playbook. He said they quickly understood that the visionary work that the City and County leadership have done having the foresight to adopt these plans in the past, which successfully aided the work completed by the Charlotte Moves Taskforce. He said they did not have to reinvent the will to come up with what they were now calling Transformational Mobility Network, which was comprised of those approved plans that were in the process of being approved. He said the issue of mobility in the County proved to be a complex undertaking, but they believed their recommendation and conclusions were clear and straightforward. He said if they want the region to keep moving forward and to achieve better outcomes, a new approach would be needed to shape their mobility future. He said that at the outset, they knew the recommendation would be a bold one to meet the charge. He reviewed the recommendations.

Firstly, the taskforce believed they need first a bold vision, which they defined as the transformational mobility network that was a multimodal plan to meet mobility needs and transform how Charlotte moves.
Secondly, a significant investment would be required. They have defined a funding strategy that estimate a cost of $8 to $12 billion, of which $4 to $6 billion was the local share. He said while the cost was the most significant they had ever discussed in the region for investment in mobility, they also know that the cost of doing nothing was greater. He said they could not stand still and expect to be a city and county and region that aspires to expand access to opportunity for all.

Lastly, a commitment to accountability – he said they recognized the scale of what they were recommending demanded robust and transparent citizen engagement, and the outcome must be meaningful and measurable for every part of the community. He stated that above all, their investments must serve to build a more equitable, affordable, and sustainable city and region. He said they must build a culture of partnership. He said they knew that achieving that vision would only come through the collective efforts of a broad set of partners working together. He said this began with the State and extended to the towns and counties of the region aligning common goals and resources to achieve shared success.

Mr. Gantt said they understood that their ask for a full one-cent increase to the current sales tax would require state legislative approval and that their partnership with the state was very important in realizing this goal. He said their partnership with the County and each town in the County was also crucial in realizing these goals. He said while the focus of the task force had been on Charlotte and Mecklenburg, implementing the transformation of mobility network was done within the context of the work of the regional partners, Centralina Regional Counsel, which was doing the work to connect the region together; the Connect Beyond project, which included other counties beyond Mecklenburg County. He said in implementing this mobility network, they had to be mindful of future connections, especially with Gaston, Union, Iredell, and Cabarrus Counties. He said the partnership with residents and business leaders in pursuing this scale of program was very, very important. He said there was a lot of hard work ahead, but he was sure the report was in capable hands sitting in the County to help deliver this program that would change the City, County, and region for generations to come. He stated this would result in job creation, improving upward mobility, a cleaner environment, protecting residents against displacement, and maintaining the quality of life that Charlotte has become known for. He stated he spoke for the taskforce in saying that they were proud to serve Charlotte-Mecklenburg and region at this unique time and were ready support the City in the necessary hard work ahead.

Mr. Jaiyeoba reminded the Board of what he shared last time he was before the Board, with how Charlotte continued to be the fastest growing city in the County, in one of the fastest growing counties. He said they were currently one of the top-five cities in the Country that were beneficiaries of people relocating from cities that were most impacted by the Corona Virus in terms of population; they were bringing their businesses with them. He said they also want a more mobile community. He said that outside of Charlotte, it was Austin, Phoenix, Sacramento, and Salt Lake City. He said one thing that was unique to all of the five cities was that they all had light rail systems and a very effective mobility system, with the exception of Austin. He stated that November 3rd, Austin residents voted $7.1 billion to tax themselves to invest in the mobility system going forward, including about 27 miles of light rail, bicycle network, greenways, improvements to their road system as well. He said that yesterday the alliance issued a number that the Charlotte region would have 1.5 million additional people by 2050. He said to think about the fact that today the region has about 3 million people. He said that may seem like a long-time away, but it is really not, and that is why and investment in people today and how we move people around, connecting them to housing, jobs, good places for our public-health access, and green spaces and approved network allows people to really continue to see Charlotte as a destination and not necessarily as a pass through region.

This multimodal system will increase:

- Rail transit program by approximately 110 miles
- Bus priority investments by approximately 140 miles
  - 115 of new greenways
  - 75 miles of on-street bike lanes
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It is a system that will bring pedestrians within walking distance of a network, 1/2-mile equals 2600 feet, which helps create a 10-minute city) and 60 miles of improvements to our roadway system.

**Vision Statement**

This Vision Statement is from the 2040 Charlotte Future Comprehensive Plan and covers the work of the Task Force & the development of the Strategic Mobility Plan:

“Charlotte will provide safe and equitable mobility options for all travelers regardless of age, income, ability, race, where they live, or how they choose to travel. An integrated system of transit, bikeways, sidewalks, trails, and streets will support a sustainable, connected, prosperous, and innovative network that connects all Charlotteans to each other, jobs, housing, amenities, goods, services, and the region.”

**County Board Resolution**

“...Board of Commissioners recognizes that transportation includes all forms of mobility, and that a connected multimodal transportation would be a valuable and equitable asset for its residents.” “...Be it therefore resolved the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners agrees to commit to work together to develop a regulatory definition of transportation that includes a multimodal transportation network such as shared use paths, greenways, trails, protected bike and pedestrian lanes, sidewalks and public transit.” - From BOCC 9/15/20 Resolution

**Rapid Transit – Corridors**

Our complete rapid transit vision - Shaping our growth and connecting us to the jobs, housing, and opportunities of our city and region.

**Selection Criteria/Approach:**
- CATS 2030 System Plan

**Key Projects/Programs:**
- Silver Line LRT Corridor
- I-77 BRT Corridor
- Red Line Commuter Rail Corridor
- Gold Line Streetcar (Phase 3)
- Blue Line Extension (Pineville/Ballantyne)

What we’ve heard from the Task Force:
- Prioritize light rail
- High capacity regional corridors (CONNECT Beyond)
- Include “true” BRT
- Connect largest employers to largest areas of population
- Plan to support future connections to surrounding counties
- Pair transit stations with neighborhood planning

**Bus Priority – System**

Our expanded and prioritized bus network - Ensuring our access to opportunity is not limited by where we live or owning a car.

**Selection Criteria/Approach:**
- Key corridors from the CATS Bus Priority Study (ongoing)
- Provide fast/frequent bus service throughout the city
- Supporting and connecting to the corridors identified in the Connect Beyond regional transit study.
Key Projects/Programs:
- Central Ave.
- South Tryon St.
- Freedom Dr.
- Statesville Rd.
- Other key corridors from the CATS Bus Priority Study

What we’ve heard from the Task Force:
- Repurpose vehicular lanes to incentivize alternative travel (carpool, bus, etc.)
- Increase high-frequency bus routes beyond the few that are planned – link to areas of high residential density
- Bus shelters everywhere!
- Need to be able to track buses in real time

Greenway – System

Our parks and streets for recreation and mobility - Reaching into our neighborhoods to support walking & biking as a natural extension of our daily life.

Selection Criteria/Approach:
- Corridors that provide the greatest opportunity to connect people to employment centers, parks, schools, and other critical needs
- Connect the greenway network to the rest of the mobility network (ped/bike/transit) and to the region

Key Projects/Programs:
- XCLT 2.0
- Mooresville to Charlotte Trail
- North Charlotte Arc Trail (Long Creek to Reedy Creek)

What they have heard from the Task Force:
- Cross Charlotte Trail
- Connect greenways to the rest of the network
- City + County partner to complete the planned Mecklenburg County system
- Connect to the broader region (i.e. Carolina Thread Trail)

Bicycle – Network

Our bicycles vision for all ages and abilities - Establishing cycling as integral to our character and mobility culture.

Selection Criteria/Approach:
- Leverage/extend existing greenways and bike facilities to create “AAA” (all ages and abilities) bicycle corridors
- Connect to the rest of the mobility network and support “first/last mile” connectivity
- Create bicycle commuting corridors that provide affordable access to jobs and critical needs

Key Projects/Programs:
- Silver Line Rail Trail
- Steele Creek / West Blvd. Commuter Route
- Brookshire Parallel Bikeway
- Critical Network Gaps

What we’ve heard from the Task Force:
- Micro-mobility = bicycles + e-scooters + bike share + …
- Create/enhance corridors for commuting
- Focus on facilities for “all ages and abilities”
- Connected to other modes
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Pedestrian – Walkability

Our investment in first and last mile mobility - Elevating walkability as the foundation of our mobility and community identity.

Selection Criteria/Approach:
• Focused on improving safety and “first/last mile” connectivity to transit and greenway corridors
• Improve pedestrian access by investing in mobility hubs at the confluence of other key mobility networks

Key Projects/Programs:
• First/Last Mile Sidewalk Gaps
• First Last Mile Pedestrian Safety Projects (new crossings)
• Mobility Hubs

What we’ve heard from the Task Force:
• Focus on sidewalks that complete first/last mile gaps
• Shared-use paths (pedestrian and bicycles)
• Funding for micro-mobility hubs

Roadway – Network

Our investment to manage congestion – Managing our congestion and extending the capacity and connectivity of our roads and rights of way.

Selection Criteria/Approach:
• New multimodal transportation options and mitigate areas of high congestion
• Support Vision Zero safety commitment by investing in the High Injury Network
• Establish greater network connectivity, efficiency, and route choice by building new street connections

Key Projects/Programs:
• New Street Connections (Eastern Circumferential, Fred D. Alexander Blvd., Bryant Farms Rd., Philemon Dr., Carowinds Blvd.)
• Priority Roadways & Vision Zero (West Blvd., Tyvola Rd., The Plaza, etc.)
• Priority Intersections
• Connectivity Program/Partnerships

What we’ve heard from the Task Force:
• Focus on safety
• Stitch together a more complete street grid – new streets, more connectivity
• Maintenance
• Redesign roads through residential areas to be less like highways for automobiles and more about moving people.

Task Force Proposed Recommendations

1. Invest in mobility to meet our changing needs:

   The task force proposes a $4-6b (local funding) mobility investment program designed to achieve the vision of the 2040 comprehensive plan for “safe and equitable” mobility.

2. Align our mobility investment with related initiatives:

   The task force proposes an intentional commitment to aligning our mobility investment program with the goals and strategies of the 2040 comprehensive plan and priorities of affordable housing and upward mobility.

3. Commit the resources to achieve the vision:

   The Task Force proposes a clear and straightforward “single source” funding strategy for the mobility investment program (TMN) that considers the City and County’s growth over
30 years and fully funds implementation within a 10-year period financed over a 30-year timeframe. The Task Force understands that details of the financing will be worked out in a financing plan which considers other city priorities during the program timeframe.

Therefore, the Task Force recommends, “One Cent for Mobility” referendum for Fall 2021.

Proposed Recommended Funding Strategy

Time & Duration: Construction 10+ Years & Financing 30 Years
*Exact duration influenced by an agreed upon Financial Plan and construction program

Program Scale & Amount: Total Program $8 to $12 Billion & Local Portion $4 to $6 Billion
*Program Includes design, construction, operation, maintenance & financing

Funding Sources: Primary New Source, Sales Tax “One Cent for Mobility” & Partnerships, State & Federal Grants

Recommended Funding Strategy – Funding Source

Transit Sales Tax – Characteristics

Assessed Rate: 0.5%
Average Growth: 3.58%/Yr.
Designated Use: Design Construction Operations

A peer city, sales-tax comparison from 2019 showed Charlotte with 4.750% state tax; 2.500% local tax, with a total of 7.25% tax. A tax and fee comparison overview of the largest cities in North Carolina was shown.

Next Steps

- Continue coordination
  o BOCC
  o County Towns
  o MTC
  o CRTPO
  o State
  o Federal
  o Community (local and regional)
  o Businesses/Coalition
- Refinement of program
- Refinement of funding strategy

Chair Dunlap asked what role the County would have in this process.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded that the same responsibility that the County had, in terms of approval to get on the referendum, since this was going to be county-wide. He said that was really a major role for Mecklenburg County in this process. He said once they had the go ahead from the State, he believed they would work closely with the County to ensure they would at least have an approval to put it before the voters.

Chair Dunlap asked in other words, the County Commission would have to vote to put the item up for referendum.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded yes sir.

Mr. Jaiyeoba answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Altman expressed her excitement of the vision.
Commissioner Cotham asked how many County Commissioners were on his taskforce.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded that there were no elected officials on the taskforce but that there was equal distribution throughout council districts and commission districts.

Commissioner Cotham said she was struggling with the presentation. She stated they were not in a normal situation, and the idea that he wanted to do this enormous project when there were so many people suffering and the future was a question mark, and they did not really know- She said she did not think they were going back to what they had; they would have a new future, and that could be exciting, but it could be a challenge also. She said especially when talking about a trail, that would be permanent, not like a bus route you could change. She said she was trying to get more information and had listened to the Charlotte Alliances Economic Annual Report the other day to some of the CEO’s of the big corporations. She believed there was a lot of uncertainty; would the major corporations here continue to have their people in uptown after the virus, hopefully, subsides, we do not know. She said or would remote communication become the norm. She said a lot of people were really struggling financially, and it would get worse with unemployment benefits ending and more evictions. He said there were people in tents, and now he was talking about a substantial tax increase. She said she always tries to keep an open mind and would continue to listen, but at this point in time, she questioned this right now due to all of the people struggling while he spoke about billions-

Commissioner Jerrell asked about the tax that was being proposed, in terms of when it would go into effect.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded that if he were to go by the 1998 experience, it did not really [inaudible] until about 2000, two years later.

Commissioner Jerrell said their decisions should not just be looked at in the lense of today but in the future as well. He asked for help in understanding how they would take into account the natural shifting demographics that happen overtime and as people get older and the community spaces grew younger and other places grew older. He wanted to know how they knew the overlays they were looking at had the support needed in 30 years so to speak.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded that was why it was not just one mode but multiple modes, so regardless of the age or demographic, they would still need a widened sidewalk and trails to walk and recreate, maybe not necessarily use rail as much but that there would always be the younger millennials and people who truly relied on jobs and access to housing regardless of demographics who would need to continue to access those things.

Commissioner Leake said they had been talking about mobility in Charlotte for the past 40 years. She said her concern was that he talked about a partnership with the township, making sure they had jobs but not stressing the importance of education in the community. She said they were going to change their way of living because of experiences they were having today. She said when you talk about mobility, the westside of town always suffered, because they did not get the fair share of the process. She was thinking about her seniors, stating she was sure they were aging in the community and asked what they would do to insure the line going down by Beatties Ford right now would impact the full region down there and probably go to Huntersville, but would it impact the rest of the community. She had a problem with not having anyone from Mecklenburg County Commissioners on the taskforce. She had a problem with supporting a process in which they were not included in the planning process. She said she was not sure where she stood with it.

Mr. Gantt stated one of the things they were very concerned about was what the mobility system, in all those various modes, would do to those who were living marginally in the community. He said they had almost 14,000 households that did not have access to an automobile. He said the system would give them access, not necessarily to a car, to transportation modes that would put them in contact with jobs, housing, and education. He said what they were talking about here was to connect all of these within the first and last mile of any trip anybody took. He said they would be able to connect to some kind of
mobility that would move them closer to their community amenities. He said they looked at the cost of transportation now, and it came down hardest on the poorest in the community. He said they pay a huge portion of their disposable income trying to get to and from a job or even to access a job or educational opportunity. He said they thought this system would reduce that cost substantially. He said if they did things to reduce the costs and made the system such that people had access to jobs, he believed they would make a big improvement.

Commissioner Meier said she was 100% in support of building an equitable Charlotte and knew that transportation was a building block of that. She said she would be remiss in not asking what the future held for constituents out there affected by the building of the Silver Line, for example. She stated she has already heard from constituents who expressed their concern that they were going to have 13 homes in their neighborhood seized by eminent domain for the Silver Line. She stated she wondered what they would say to those individuals and if there were any planning meetings with neighborhoods and people who would be affected. She asked if he would work with neighborhoods and there would be any changes.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded that there were currently about almost 300,000 people in the County without access to a car. He said almost half of the people who live in the crescent actually spend more than 25% of their income on housing, so there was good reason to worry about how this investment would affect. He said one think the taskforce talked about was, which was included in the calculation, to build multi-million-dollar investment [inaudible] that would protect folks from displacement. He said in other words, if they were going to put rail line or even trails along side of the corridor, how could they also mitigate displacement to residents, especially those who live in the crescent where there were currently challenges. He mentioned that from the $7.1 billion referendum that just passed November 3, 2020, $300 million was built into it for anti-displacement, which was something they could learn from and incorporate into the program, not just for residents but perhaps even for small businesses that were in vulnerable communities.

Commissioner Powell said District 1 was in a transit desert. She said if someone asked her, she would say there was zero enthusiasm for this plan in District 1, but it was worse than zero. She said it was offensive to so many people who lived in her district, who believed they would have a light rail more than 20 years ago. She said they had been paying the tax for more than 20 years, watching the County develop and make decisions, with no impact fees and tax incentives galore, and now in the middle of a pandemic they were talking about additional taxes. She said there was a bad feeling in North Mecklenburg; they remember and have not forgotten. She said they had not received, based on conversations she had, better than mediocre service until the last six months. She said she tried to keep an open mind, but if they looked at her district, it was offensive to the majority of the population, to ask for an additional tax for them to pay for the rest of Mecklenburg County. She said she represented District 1 and was committed to doing a good job of that. She said if they wanted support of District 1, they would have to come up with something much different and some big guarantees.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell believed it was incumbent upon them as community leaders to look into the future of how they would provide the essential items for the community. She asked how infrastructure investments would affect the economy.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded that it was usually in two ways, direct benefits and indirect benefits. He said usually the direct benefits were people who were hired in the planning and construction phase, and they usually give preference to local residents to have the ability to have part of the construction workforce. He said it was also indirect, because some of what you invest in today may not start generating jobs and opportunities until a few years later. He said the American Public Transportation Association said for every $1 billion invested in public transportation, approximately 50,000 jobs were created, both direct and indirect. He said that was why every time there was a recession in the economy, usually the government will look at infrastructure investment as a way to jumpstart the economy. He said they believed the cities which were ready would be the ones that would have the attention within the incoming administration, especially with the focus on infrastructure. He said in reference to Commissioner Powell’s comment that he
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would be meeting with Cornelius, Davidson, and Huntersville consistently. He said that so far, the meetings had been very productive. He said even with the map the way it was right now, was because it was based on the adopted plan, so only the rail transit, bus transit, and greenway transit affect everything county-wide, but when it came to roadway, pedestrian, and all of that, they were usually within every municipality. He said what he showed were the ones within Charlotte but that he was working with them to get the ones in Mathews, Pineville, Davidson, and Huntersville on the standing that at the end of the day, infrastructure investment did not stop at the boundary of a municipality but really helps the entire region. He said that was why it was very important that it was done together and in such a holistic manager because of the jobs it would create for everyone in the County and region.

Chair Dunlap said they talk quite often about community involvement and letting people have their say and the community speak. He said the role for the County Commission, in this case, would be precisely that, which was the give the community the opportunity to speak. He said his guess was that they would be asked whether or not they wanted to put the item on the ballot for people to have their say. He said he knew many of the board members had different opinions about whether or not they personally like what was being proposed, but it was not about the Board personally but about the community and region. He said the best way to know what their people think was to let them have the say. He said at some point, there would be a motion before the Board to allow people to have their say, and his hope was that they would vote to let people have their say.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6548: Eastway Park Apartments - Affordable Housing 55 and Up Presentation

Dena Diorio, County Manager reviewed two options for the Board to consider. Option one was a one-time loan contribution of $1.5 million for 92 affordable units. Option two was a rental subsidy option for 92 affordable units that obviously would be paid overtime, for a value of $3 million.

Kenya Pleasant, Greystone Affordable Development, provided a presentation for a rental subsidy or one-time loan to fund the Eastway Park Apartments affordable housing project. She said Eastway was a great example of utilizing public-private partnerships to increase the County’s affordable housing stock, and its proximity to some of the County’s assets provides a unique opportunity to positively impact the surrounding community. She said Eastway Park Apartments will be 132 units, provided by the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and will target low to moderate income seniors, which will be houses with persons 55 years and older. She mentioned that the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program was also referred to as LIHTC.

Ms. Pleasant highlighted the development team’s experience. She went over the project overview and highlights.

Overview
- Located at 301 Eastway Drive, Charlotte, NC 28213, the site encompasses a 4.64-acre lot south of North Tryon Street.
- Property is in an Opportunity Zone and is in walking distance to the new start-of-the-art Eastway Recreational Center and the multi-million-dollar Community Resource Center under construction by Mecklenburg County.
- Upon completion the property will be comprised of 132 affordable rental units:
  - 40 units @ 30% AMI: targeting Veterans referred through the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing Program
  - 92 units ranging from 50% - 80% AMI: targeting seniors (55 years of age and older)

Highlights
- Investing in Eastway will benefit the most vulnerable households in our community, veterans and low-income seniors.
- Site has received an allocation from the City of Charlotte Housing Trust Fund
The project’s common areas will be strategically designed to include space for services: conference room, private one-on-one meeting room, exercise room, and other areas which can be used for clinical, and health and wellness service programs.

Project has strong local support including the city council, VA medical center, and neighborhood community groups.

Ms. Pleasant reviewed the site plan and layout and showed project renderings. She reviewed the planned amenities for the common area, as well as unit amenities and security.

**Common Area Amenities**

- Coordinated activities with local service providers and resident shuttle
- Community room
- Exercise room
- Computer room
- Library
- Screened porch
- Tenant storage areas
- Elevator
- Covered drop-off at entry
- Laundry room
- Indoor or Outdoor Seating Areas

**Unit Amenities**

- Dishwasher
- Internet connection
- Washer/dryer hookups
- Patio/balcony
- Emergency pull chain
- Walk in closet
- Coat closet
- Frost free refrigerator
- Mini blinds

**Security**

- Keypad entry system with intercom
- Lighting

Ms. Pleasant spoke about the impact of county resources on the budget and stated you could see in both scenarios how the County’s participation fit into the project, with both having a total development cost of $24,869,665. She said they believe the details of the proposals could be tweaked.

**Scenario 1 – County Gap Loan**

- One-time contribution of $1,500,000 ($11,364/unit) at permanent closing once building is 100% complete
- Firm commitment based on all other sources secured
- Contribution will be recorded as a 20-year deed restriction
- Maintains diverse income-mix at property

**Scenario 2: Rental Subsidy for 92 Units**

- Total 20-Year Contract: approx. $3 million ($32,500/unit)
- 92 of 132 units Subsidized by the County
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- 48 (1) bedrooms: $150 rental subsidy/unit/month
- 44 (2) bedrooms: $120 rental subsidy/unit/month
- Total Annual Subsidy: approx. $150,000

- Closes funding gap but requires 2x the dollar amount as Gap Loan (Scenario 1)
- All units are dependent upon future appropriations
- Minimizes the ability to have a vibrant mixed income community by requiring a concentration of lower AMI units (30% and 50%)

She noted that this system was ranked at the fair-market rank, which tends to be higher than what would be under the tax-credit program and was also consistent with how the rental subsidy is structured under the veterans’ program. She said there were a lot of stakeholders involved in these developments, and from a compliance perspective, they felt that to be less burdensome administratively and from a compliance perspective, for those programs to be aligned was important.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to approve Scenario 1: One-time loan/contribution of $1,500,000 for 92 affordable units.

This item will be brought back to a future meeting to ask for Board action to adopt a resolution and authorize the County Manager to negotiate a contract.

Ms. Pleasant and Ms. Diorio answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

21-6566: FY2022 Budget Retreat

Dena Diorio, County Manager requested the Board of Commissioners provide input regarding meeting logistics and subject matter for the FY2022 Budget Retreat scheduled for January 27-29, 2021.

The Commissioners requested a discussion on Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools at the annual retreat.

20-6546: COVID-19 Response Update

COVID-19 Update:

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director, provided a presentation regarding the latest COVID-19 data and response to the pandemic. She said they were in the middle of the Thanksgiving surge, and they were currently averaging 621 new cases daily and that in mid-November they were around 200 cases a day. She said they were currently at 11.6% for the daily percent positivity rate over the past seven days, when in mid-November they were at 7%. She said at the end of September they had dropped down below 5%. She said the daily hospital census slide was one of the most concerning for them right now. She said their seven-day average was 273 individuals with COVID-19 in the hospital daily. She said the hospital systems have said they had increased numbers in their acute-care beds as well as their ICU beds. She said what they were seeing was the result of the Thanksgiving surge in testing, with more hospitalizations. That was usually a little bit of a lagging indicator for them and was currently proving true. She said they were watching it very carefully, and the hospitals felt they were managing at this point. She said as they continued to have staffing issues, they would have to watch it very closely.

Ms. Harris said they were averaging about 5,000 tests a day and expected to see things drop off a bit after the Thanksgiving holidays, but they had only seen that for a couple of days during the holiday vacation. She said their numbers continued to be pretty high with the number of people who were seeking testing. She said they currently had no-cost PCR and rapid anagen testing widely available throughout the County. She said as she heard
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from people on a regular basis, there were a number of people who were having to wait quite a while to get the testing, whether that was sitting in line or waiting for an appointment. She said the system was a bit strained due to the increased demand for testing, and part of it was that they were seeing a lot of folks with colds and flu symptoms. She said they did not want to discourage them from being tested, because in some cases, it was not cold and flu but actually COVID-19. She said turn-around-times were averaging about 3.3 days currently, which was up from the 24 hours for testing results that were previously seen. Mr. Harris told the Board about upcoming COVID-19 testing and flu vaccination events.

Ms. Harris gave the Board an update on some case management and support services that were being provided. She said there were social work services provided through the Health Department and that they had worked with over 5,000 residents in the community who had been diagnosed with COVID-19. She reviewed their most common needs. She said since October, through the State-funded contract with Kepro, there were community health workers who were providing backup support for the social workers, and they served 4,872 residents since October. She said the State contract with Kepro was extended through June 2021; they have been serving multiple counties in the region and have been great to work with. She said they have conversations with them, at least monthly, to check in. She mentioned there being a good pipeline between the County’s social workers, contact tracers, and case investigators and the community health workers. She said they had access through the State with a one-time financial assistance payment of $400 for individuals who were COVID-19 positive and $800 for families. She said they could provide home-delivered meals and groceries, private transportation to certain settings, medication delivery, and other over-the-counter supplies. She said the County found them to be very helpful and helped them in encouraging people, who were COVID-19 positive, to isolate and still have access to these resources.

Ms. Harris gave an update on the COVID-19 ambassadors, stating that most of the places they have visited came from the ambassadors doing surveillance, be it social media, talking to others in the community, or working through environmental health staff. She said there was fairly good compliance with mask wearing; gyms, private clubs, bars, and breweries were probably the least compliant. She said they continued to work with them and law enforcement to ensure there was as much enforcement and compliance as possible.

Ms. Harris announced the COVID-19 vaccine was here. She said there was a light at the end of the tunnel but that unfortunately the tunnel was not currently a short one. She said that on December 11th the emergency authorization was approved for Pfizer for individuals 16 years of age and older. She said Moderna was being reviewed this week, and there was an indication it would be approved as well. She said the initial shipments came to the hospital systems; Atrium received it earlier this week and have already started vaccinating. She said Novant would receive vaccine on Thursday. She said the Health Department would receive its first doses next week. She said at this point she did not know the date are were told they would be receiving the Pfizer vaccine. She said they thought they would be receiving Moderna, but the latest from the State was that three counties would receive Pfizer instead. She said they were awaiting more specific details, but at the same time, they already had plans in place for vaccination clinics through the end of January. She said they continued to work very closely with partners to ensure they were putting together good, strong communication outreach and delivery systems in Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Harris said there were many questions about who could have the vaccine at this point. She said currently they were starting based on the highest risk for exposure due to job roles or vital to COVID-19 response. She said that was what they were doing in Mecklenburg County. She said Phase 1a would be the first shipments, which would go to hospital workers at highest risk of exposure to COVID-19 positive patients. She said those were the people the hospitals were going to be vaccinating. She said the other two top groups in Phase 1a were state-certified EMT paramedics and EMTs who provide direct patient duties. She said they were working with all of the entities in the County to provide that service and have that staff. She said in addition, the public health staff who were specifically going to be working in vaccination clinics for high-risk healthcare workers. She
said the last two categories were who they, though the Health Department would be vaccinating initially. She said there were several other groups in Phase 1a that fall a little bit lower than those three. She said once they got through those three groups, they would be looking to vaccinate them. She said that would include the medical examiner and others who work with decedents, as well as some home-health agencies. She said long-term care facilities would be vaccinated through the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program. She said it was a program that the federal government put in place; long-term facilities had the option of signing up for the program, and that vaccine would be provided through CVS and Walgreens to residents and staff of long-term care facilities. She said those vaccines would be rolling out over the next couple of weeks as well. She said they had at least a couple of long-term care facilities that did not sign up in time for whatever reason. She said they would be vaccinated through the Health Department. She said they were expecting more information through the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices; they had not made any recommendations past Phase 1a. She said the State had a whole process out through Phase 4, but those recommendations could change based on what ACIP recommends. She said they had been hesitant to put out any recommendations past Phase 1a for Mecklenburg County until they had more information on that.

Ms. Harris spoke about celebrating the holidays safely and emphasized that people needed to practice the three W's. She said right now what they would typically see was a lot of parties and people shopping. She said they recommended people to not participate in parties at this point and that they limit their shopping to what was absolutely necessary and to do as much as they could online or with curb pickup. She emphasized the fact that they really believed the best thing that people could do was avoid holiday travel and limit physical contact to the people they do not live with. She said this was one year they needed to ask everyone to make that sacrifice, because it would help everyone to move forward as they were getting vaccinations out.

Ms. Harris answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Altman asked Ms. Harris to cover the relationship for contract tracing with CMS. She asked Ms. Harris to cover best practices for both indoors and outdoors.

Ms. Harris responded that they had a tight relationship with CMS, working with them on almost a daily basis for cases they have that come up. She said they help them, whether it was through school nurses or communicable disease staff to have a look at those positive results to help determine, in the school setting, who may have been exposed. She said those individuals were contacted, and in addition to that, the County would have conversations with each of those individuals through the communicable disease staff, who would then ask them about contacts outside of the school setting. She said one of the things they had run into was that there were opportunities for people to find out that someone tested positive in a school they were working in. She said they make assumptions about whether they were a contact or not; people needed to be reassured the County was working very carefully with the schools in making sure the people who were contacts get informed, and if they were not contacted, there was not a potential exposure.

Ms. Harris said if you look at the Governor’s executive order, the most recent, the expectation was that people were wearing their mask when leaving their home, meaning in their work setting, meetings, outside, and even 15 feet away from people; you should still be wearing your mask. She said she understood there were some expectations where that would not be helpful for some people due to medical conditions, but for most people, they ought to be able to wear a mask when out of their home. She said there were instances of people who wore a mask and socially distanced from others and still caught the virus. She said there was a lot of virus in the community right now, and because of the level of virus, as soon as you go out of your house, the possibility of exposure goes up. She said the more you can limit that, the better, and when you go out, wear your mask and social distance as much as you can was the most important thing for you to do.

Commissioner Cotham asked if Atrium was taking transfers from other hospitals. She said she heard that non-COVID19 patience were sometimes cared for in the hallways.
Ms. Harris responded that they continued to have conversations with their hospitals on a regular basis about their capacity. She said back in March, when they were talking about field hospitals, the hospitals did a nice job of looking at their space to figure out how they could surge within their space, because that worked better for them. She said they still had the capacity to do that. She said neither one of the hospitals at this point has stopped elected procedures, because they had not felt the need to do that. She said there were several different steps they could take to increase capacity as time goes on, if the need were to arise. She said what they do know was that the number of people the hospitals were seeing increased. She said she too has heard rumors about whether they were accepting referrals from other hospitals. She said they did know a lot of the small hospitals were overwhelmed right now, and she thought there was a limit in what they were taking, because they wanted to make sure they were able to serve the main population currently. She said she had not heard that they were caring for people in hallways at this point. She said that was something she could check on.

Commissioner Cotham requested that Ms. Harris to find out if the hospitals were taking transfers from other hospitals.

Commissioner Jerrell said they needed to continue to set the expectations with the difference between ending the spread and getting back to normalcy. He said they needed to buckle down and understand they were in this for a longer haul. He requested to look at some of the County’s spends to find a way to supplement the assistance so there would be enough incentive for people to not go out and expose themselves to others.

Ms. Diorio responded that they could take a look at that.

Commissioner Leake asked what was being heard about people who work in Charlotte and live outside of Charlotte yet commute in and out.

Ms. Harris responded the thing they did know, based on the last report from the State, was that all of the Counties around Mecklenburg County were red. She said most of them had hire percent positivity rates than Mecklenburg County did. She said if they were moving in and out of the County, they would be potentially exposing people in Mecklenburg County. She said Mecklenburg County had the highest numbers in the State and have since the beginning, but part was due to the size of the population, but many of the smaller counties were seeing a higher percentage of their tests being positive. She said they do see those people going in and out of the County.

Commissioner Leake asked if those numbers helped to increase Mecklenburg County’s numbers.

Ms. Harris responded that they could, yes. She said they have conversations with their fellow county health departments about what they were doing to try to control it and how Mecklenburg County could help them if possible or support them in any way. She said they were doing their best to keep those people at home as well.

Commissioner Leake said she had some concerns, because she was not sure the numbers from the presentation were accurate when it came to places that masks were being worn. She believed there were more people in private clubs who were not wearing the mask than what was stated.

Ms. Harris responded that there were a lot of businesses, and those include bars, breweries, restaurants that were being compliant, and she was appreciative of those which were making the effort. She said unfortunately, they were not seeing a lot about them, and they were seeing a lot about those which were not compliant. She said those were the ones that the ambassadors and law enforcement, ALE, and all of the others were trying to pull into compliance. She said that a lot of them were doing what they needed to do and were trying to be a part of the solutions, because they knew if this compliance did not work and the numbers continued to go up, there would be a possibility that more restrictions would go into place. She said that would hurt them from a business standpoint.
Commissioner Leake said that CMS teachers and parents were disturbed about not knowing about when there are cases within the schools.

Ms. Harris responded that the information about a particular, potential exposure gets shared with people who had potentially been exposed. She said the school system did post when they had cases in schools; it was on their website. She said they were not going into every school where there had been one case that did not seem to create a situation, where there was wide-spread exposure, and announce it broadly, when there was not a need to. She said people feel the need to know, but if there was a need for them to know, they would hear about it. She said the clusters they have seen were mostly in private schools. She said a cluster was defined as five or more.

Commissioner Meier asked if there had been a rise in long-term care facilities or if it had evened out.

Ms. Harris responded that since early November they had almost doubled the number of outbreaks they had in long-term care facilities. She said that was a symptom of the amount of virus that was in the community. She said that usually goes into the facilities from staff who work in the facilities, and they were in the community exposed. She said if they are positive and asymptomatic, they may pass a screen and go in. She said they continued to try to work with those facilities very closely to help them manage those outbreaks when they do happen and also continue to do the education and make sure they had the PPE and other supports they need to try to prevent them in the first place.

Commissioner Powell believed it was important for the community to know the work that the Emergency Operations Center did. She asked Ms. Harris would let the community know, as we were a regional healthcare provider and were concerned about not having enough beds. She asked what the report on beds from the Emergency Operations Center was like.

Ms. Harris responded that the Emergency Operations Center was still open and currently virtual due to some cases of COVID-19 among some people who were working there. She said they were still connecting on a regular basis and that the center currently involved all of the law enforcement entities, first responded entities, both of the hospital systems, the Health Department, Park and Rec, city water, the school system, and some other community-based organizations and volunteer entities. She said what they were doing on a regular basis was looking at the data and issues that they have been experiencing, figuring out what the solutions to those were and how they could work together to make sure they were addressed appropriately. She stated one thing they were looking at on a regular basis was the data and having conversations about if they were at a level of concern and if they were, what needed to be done about it as a community. She believed the fact that this coming together has happened since March was part of what has allowed them, as a community, to manage the situation better than it would have been otherwise. She said it was an ongoing process, and as they were in the throws of things currently, they had meetings scheduled tomorrow morning at 8:00 and 9:00 to talk through some issues. She said she hoped it was of comfort to the community to know all of those entities were coming together on a regular basis to work together to try to improve the situation in the County. She said in addition to the EOC, there was also the policy group that the Manager pulled together; it was meeting twice a week to talk about the issues and to give guidance and support to the EOC and the rest of them in the community on how to manage and what policies they needed to be thinking through.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how much of a role the County was playing in deciding how the vaccine would be dispersed and where geographically it would go.

Ms. Harris responded that what she could tell her was that Meg Sullivan, the Medical Director, was leading that effort for the County. She said they had been pulling together a group for over a month now that involved the hospital systems, Emergency Management, and other providers in the community, to think through what it looked like, how they best needed to communicate as they learn more about when vaccines would be available and who it was available to. She said as they moved forward, they were
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continuing to meet weekly to have those conversations to figure out what they were doing currently, who would be providing vaccine to whom, and who would be taking responsibility for certain parts of this. She stated that as they moved forward and with more vaccine available and working in the community, they were starting to have conversations about what that would look like, where they needed to be, who would be able to provide it in the community, where they would be able to provide it, and how often. She said those conversations were currently happening and the planning was taking place. She said the current challenges were that they were still learning more from the State and federal government about how much vaccine would be available and when. She said they were hoping two more vaccines would be approved in January. She said it was looking promising at this point, then more vaccine would be available, and that would be when they start to get it out to the community. She said they were having the conversations about when and where and how. She said the federal and state government make the decisions about who, in terms of priority groups. She said they will work within that guidance.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated she was curious about why Atrium was able to get the vaccine before Novant and how it would be determined.

Ms. Harris responded that the federal government responded that, and it had more to do with readiness to accept the vaccine; she believed Atrium had their freezers in place earlier than Novant. She said Novant was ready now. She believed only 11 hospitals in the State received that first round earlier in the week; it would continue to roll out from there.

Chair Dunlap asked what the total bed capacity was. He asked if they took into consideration the fact that both hospitals said if needed, they could expand within their own hospital. He believed that was important, because he heard on an ongoing basis about people who were refusing to go to the hospital for whatever reason. He asked her to tell the community at what point someone with COVID-19 should go to the hospital when experiencing symptoms.

Ms. Harris responded that she did not have the actual hospital-bed capacity. She said it fluctuated. She said both hospitals had in their surge planning the ability to take over other spaces within their facilities that were currently being used, whether it was meeting rooms, the cafeteria, and in some places it may be areas where they provide clinical services, where they could stop providing those services and put beds should they need to. She said they had a whole hierarchy of process for what they would do first and how they would make those changes. She said the other option they had, which they did early on and have not had to do yet, was to slow down or stop elective procedures. She said they have not had to do that yet, so they still had the ability there as well. She said to the public that if they felt they needed to go to the hospital for any reason, not just COVID-19, if you had an emergency, you need to go. She said there was no reason for people to hesitate to access their hospital systems when they needed to. She said for people with COVID-19, it started out with being a breathing problem, but there were other symptoms which went with that these days. She said if people were not well, especially if they were having significant shortness of breath, they should not wait; they should go to the hospital or contact their physician if it was during the day, to have that conversation to see if they needed to go. She said people with high fevers or had debilitating symptoms should consider being checked, be it though their doctor’s office, urgent care, or the hospital system. She said people who would have gone to the hospital before COVID-19, should still go to the hospital during COVID-19 and should not wait. She said that with COVID-19 their symptoms were significantly debilitating, especially if it was someone home alone and did not have anyone to watch them to help determine if they needed to go. She said if they were not able to care for themselves, they needed to go to the hospital.

Coronavirus Relief Fund Update

Michael Bryant, Assistant County Manager, provided an update on the Coronavirus Relief Fund Spend Plan. Mr. Bryant provided a recap of the Coronavirus Spend Plan. He stated the spend plan consisted of $39 million, and of that $39 million, $24 million was set aside
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for current and projected expenses through December 30, 2020 for the following categories: Employee and facilities safety personnel costs; public health; housing and homelessness; and other.

Mr. Bryant said the $15 million remaining balance covered community investments. Phase 1 covered: general assistance; towns; non-profits; food insecurity; senior services; community engagement; senior nutrition; and PPE, which added up to a total of $8,605,953. Phase 2 covered: small business; general assistance (United Way); arts, science, culture, and creativity; mental health; digital divide; criminal justice services; and workforce development, which added up to a total of $6,563,111.

Mr. Bryant reviewed partner-spending data, stating it was not his intent to shed any negative attention on the agencies who may have not been in a position to spend all of the funds, as they were expecting to do so by December 30, 2020. He said they have experienced some challenges relative to doing so and with only two weeks remaining, it was time for the County to take the necessary action. He reviewed a list of 10 agencies which were on track to spend all of their funds by the end of the fiscal year. He stated it totaled about $6.6 million, and of that amount, these partners had spent $6.2 million, which represented 93.32%, with $443,204 remaining. He reviewed a list of 5 agencies which were at risk of not spending the funds by the deadline. He stated it total $2.9 million, and of that amount, these partners had spent $2.5 million, which represented 85.12%, with $440,139 remaining. He reviewed a list of 11 agencies which were not on track to spending their funds by the deadline. He stated it totaled $5.8 million, and of that amount, these partners had spent $2.9 million, which represented 50.51% spent, with $2.9 million remaining. He said a total of about $11.7 million had been spent; this did not represent any verbal updates, only the cost information they had received and validated as of December 7, 2020. He said it left a balance of $3.8 million or 75%.

Mr. Bryant gave some additional context. He said some agencies had not provided the results for the November costs for validation from the finance department. He said that all of the agencies and towns with a balance were reminded of the December 30, 2020 deadline. He said the advised personnel cost of $9 million had now been revised to project that it would be about $11.4 million. He said the Board took action to appropriate fund balance equal to the personnel cost to provide aid beyond the December 30, 2020 deadline. He said MEDIC identified about $1.4 million in eligible costs. He said discussions would continue at federal-government level about extending the December 30, 2020 deadline and a second stimulus package.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Cotham, to approve the clawback of all unspent balances as of December 18, 2020 and provide the Manager the flexibility to determine how to appropriate the unspent funds prior to the December 30, 2020 deadline.

Mr. Bryant answered Commissioners’ questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Meier asked what the process would be once it was approved by the Board.

Dena Diorio, County Manager responded that the County would get the money back and do an assessment of needs. She said they would always bring that back to the Board for them to vote on. So, whenever they have made additional funding decisions, they take it back to the Board for a vote.

Commissioner Meier asked if the decisions had to be made by December 30, 2020.

Ms. Diorio responded no, because what they would do was apply the personnel and other expenditures against the COVID-19 dollars that they do not have to return anything. She said as they move forward, they would utilize the fund balance to be able to deploy that for other purposes throughout the community over the next several months.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.
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Mr. Bryant reviewed the following next steps:

- Communicate the Board’s decision to all community partners
- Update unspent balances to reflect all costs as 12/18
- Continue to monitor cost and performance data
- Determine by 12/30 how to utilize the unspent balances
- Continue to provide routine updates to the Board

Chair Dunlap announced that he and Manager Diorio, and Starla have spoken with the Legislators in Washington, D.C. and have encouraged them to try, as best that they could, to get the County an extension on the expenditure of those funds. He said in the event that they did not receive an extension, the Manager had a plan.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS’ MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6527: Selection of NCACC Legislative Goals Conference Voting Delegate

Chair Dunlap suggested Commissioner Powell for the Mecklenburg County’s Board of Commissioners’ voting delegate.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Altman, and carried unanimously, to appoint Commissioner Powell as Mecklenburg County’s Board of Commissioners’ voting delegate for the Annual North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) Legislative Goals Conference to be held virtually January 14-15, 2021.

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda.

20-6529: REVISED - Minutes

Approve the following meeting minutes: November 17, 2020 and December 1, 2020.

20-6536: Tax Refunds

Approve refunds in the amount of $17,422.11 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

20-6555: Mecklenburg County Register of Deed’s Bond

Acknowledge receipt of and approve continuation certificate for the initial $50,000 bond filed in 2016 for a new period beginning December 5, 2020 for Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Fredrick Smith as required by G.S. 161-4(a).

THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT
20-6518: Public Auction for Disposal of Surplus Equipment

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to adopt a resolution authorizing sale of surplus personal property by public auction on January 9, 2021.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #68.

20-6532: Commissioning Consultant Selection - Northeast Community Resource Center

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate fees and execute a contract with SKA Consulting Engineers for Commissioning Services for the Northeast Community Resource Center Project, and in the event negotiations with this firm are unsuccessful, approve negotiations with the alternate firm.

20-6535: Capital Project Ordinance

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the FY2019 Authorization Government Facilities Capital Project Ordinance adopted March 19, 2019 to increase Courthouse Courtroom Upfit by $359,000.

Ordinance recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #69.

20-6537: Easement Donations - Stewart Creek Greenway and Stream Enhancement Project

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) accept a permanent greenway easement (+/- 0.014 acres) and a permanent storm water easement (+/-0.044 acres) on Tax Parcel 071-131-48 from the City of Charlotte for the construction of Stewart Creek Greenway and Stream Enhancement Project and (B) accept a permanent greenway easement (+/- 1.665 acres) and a permanent greenway access easement (+/- 0.463 acres) on Tax Parcel 065-091-44 from the City of Charlotte for the construction of Stewart Creek Greenway and Stream Enhancement Project.

20-6553: Budget Amendment - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Revenue Increase

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in federal revenue of up to $794,006 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in General Grant Fund (GRNT) for the duration of the grant.

20-6554: Budget Amendment - Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) Revenue Increase

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in federal revenue of $467,087 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the General Grant Fund (GRNT) for the duration of the grant.

AMEND AGENDA FORMAT POLICY

Chair Dunlap stated that at the request of a Commissioner, this was added to the agenda and has been on the agenda ever since, but there was a formal process for the adoption of the agenda. He said the last time he did that was years ago, and they needed to formally add it or not add it. He said if they decided to add it, they could have it on the first and third Tuesday or every Tuesday they met.
A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Altman, to formally add “Commissioner Reports” to the Board’s Agenda Format for the first and third regular meetings each month.

No vote was taken on the main motion due to the outcome of a subsequent substitute motion.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Cotham and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to formally add “Commissioner Reports” to the Board’s Agenda format for the first regular meeting each month.

Commissioners made comments regarding the substitute motion.

Commissioner Cotham made a request to withdraw the substitute motion. Commissioner Scarborough agreed.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Powell and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to formally add “Commissioner Reports” to the Board’s Agenda Format for each Board meeting.

The motion carried by the following vote:

YES: Commissioners Altman, Jerrell, Meier, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, and Leake

Policy recorded in full in Ordinance Book 58, Document #70.

**COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

**20-6543: Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Altman said in regard to the uptown encampment and residents who were unsheltered that they were advised by Roof Above and Salvation Army that there was more capacity than there were people who were out in the encampments, so no one should need to be outside if they wished to go inside. She said 211 could be called for more information.

Commissioner Cotham wanted to speak about giving people with a criminal record a second chance. She received a text from a woman she knew for a long time, which said she was reaching out due to being turned down from jobs, because of her criminal background from 17-years ago. She said the woman stated she paid her debt to society by serving the time and had no writeups the whole 12 years incarcerated and that she was chosen to go to the Echo House, center for community transmissions, for good behavior. She said that the woman stated that seven years had passed with no trouble but that she could not find a job. Commissioner Cotham said she received messages like that all of the time. She reminded people to put their money where they were passionate, as dollars speak and told a story about making a large appliance purchase from a company which hired people with a background. She purchased from Plaza Appliance due to their policy of giving people a second chance.

Commissioner Jerrell made an announcement that on December 17th he would be holding a district townhall.

Commissioner Leake stated there was a meeting today with the Health and Human Services Committee and thanked them for being there that evening. She thanked the Chairman of the Board for sending out what each committee represented and what it stood for. She read what the Committee was responsible for and recommended each board member knew what the Committees stood for.
Commissioner Meier announced that there was a big discussion on a greenway connection at McAlpine Greenway. She said that neighbors were against it, and people were for it; it was democracy in action as neighbors and residents were getting involved in the process. She begged the public to have a low-key holiday this season.

Commissioner Powell stated she received multiple calls and emails and talked to parents, community members, and members of the faith alliance. She stated she had a long talk with Pastor Imani fisher, stating it was a blessing of a call and that she heard him loud and clear, while sharing his concerns. She said this was where they were. She said they talked about not finger pointing, addressing issues directly, being positive, the importance of everyone partnering in love together for their children to make sure they were all successful and could read by third grade. She said they agreed they needed take-charge leadership and something like a lieutenant general Hercules to step in and be part of the process to ensure the children’s needs were met each step of the way. She stated she would be part of that leadership and that it would be in the retreat. She thanked him for caring and for his pledge, as she too would not give up.

Chair Dunlap stated all of the appointments were made as well as all of the liaison appointments. He said the Manager was moving forward with the development of a town hall.

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated that at the request of the Chairman, they would be putting together a townhall meeting on homelessness in Mecklenburg County in order to have a community-wide conversation about roles and responsibilities, what has been done, could be done as homelessness in general and specifically as it would relate to the encampment on North Tryon Street. She said that would be done in early January before the retreat.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 p.m.