

Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2021

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, convened for an informal session on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 5:03 p.m. remotely with Chair Dunlap presiding.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Commissioner Leigh Altman
Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham
Commissioner George Dunlap
Commissioner Mark Jerrell
Commissioner Vilma D. Leake
Commissioner Laura Meier
Commissioner Elaine Powell
Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Chair Dunlap 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:

- 20-6533: by Commissioner Leake
- 21-6581: by Commissioner Leake
- 21-6591: by Commissioner Leake

CLOSED SESSION

21-6609: CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to discuss land acquisition and to consult with attorney.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:13 p.m. to go into closed session. The meeting reconvened at 6:03 p.m. in open session for their formal session.

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21-6609: Closed Session: Land Acquisition - Catawba River Property on Lake Drive

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 Parcels 031-472-02 and 031-472-44 (+/- .690 acres) in the extra-territorial jurisdiction of the City of Charlotte from Ted Ray and Jill. L. Hendrix for a purchase price of \$200,000.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

21-6594: PROCLAMATION - COVID-19 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Altman, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring January 20, 2021 as COVID-19 Day of Remembrance.

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

21-6599: PROCLAMATION - THEREASEA CLARK ELDER DAY

Chair Dunlap read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring January 20, 2021 as Thereasea Clark Elder Day.

Commissioner Leake spoke about the loss of Ms. Clark Elder and referred to her as an advocate for Mecklenburg County, City of Charlotte, and State of North Carolina.

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

21-6612: PROCLAMATION - NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

Commissioner Jerrell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to adopt a Proclamation declaring January as National Mentoring Month in Mecklenburg County, while specifically recognizing the local organization, My Brother's Keeper Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Don Thomas, My Brother's Keeper made comments and thanked the Board.

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

PUBLIC ART MOMENT

21-6608 PUBLIC ART MOMENT

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell introduced a short video and made comments.

The highlighted public artwork the month was Pillars of Dreams created by artist Mark Fornes and located at the Valerie C. Woodard Center on Freedom Drive in District 2.

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STAFF BRIEFINGS

21-6611: MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' POLICY UPDATES

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney presented Board of Commissioners' policy updates to the Board. He walked the Board through some differences in Roberts Rules of Procedure, as it related to meetings and how they are conducted. He pulled out rules which were brought to his attention or that he had observed that he believed were important to include in the Board's policy, in addition to what was there already. Mr. Wade explained several motions to the Board.

Mr. Wade spoke about remote participation and stated it was only allowed under a state-level declaration of state of emergency. He stated there were specific rules which must be adhered to. He requested that the Board add remote participation to their policy so there would be some guidance within the Board's policy when the State declares a state of emergency.

Mr. Wade stated the third item he was asking the Board to consider was amending the ethics policy to correct some minor deficiencies which had been caught overtime, such as typographical errors, commas instead of periods, or words that should not have been there.

Mr. Wade answered Commissioners' questions and responded to comments.

A motion was made by Commissioner Meier and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to (A) adopt policy provisions under the Board's current Parliamentary Procedures; (B) adopt a Board Policy on remote participation during State Level Declared States of Emergency; and (C) make technical corrections to the County's Code of Ethics Policy.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as followed:

YES: Commissioners Altman, Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Meier, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Leake

Policies recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Documents #72, #73, and #74.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

21-6595: PUBLIC APPEARANCE

The following speaker addressed the Board:

- Jennifer De La Jara - Our International Community

APPOINTMENTS

21-6563: APPOINTMENT CENTRALINA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

A motion was made by Commissioner Meier, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appoint Commissioner Leigh Altman as the Board's public sector representative on the Centralina Economic Development District to fill an unexpired term expiring March 31, 2022.

Commissioner Altman was appointed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-6557: CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG PLANNING COMMISSION'S ANNUAL REPORT

Sam Spencer, Chair and Keba Samuel, Vice-Chair of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission presented their Annual Report.

Mr. Spencer and Ms. Samuel answered Commissioners' questions and responded to comments.

Chair Dunlap requested that Ms. Samuel have the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission formally adopt the creation of a Commissioner liaison. He also requested specifics around the role that the Commissioner would play and if the Commissioner would have a vote or would be just an observer.

Mr. Spencer responded that they would put that as an item at their next meeting.

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

MANAGER'S REPORT

21-6613: READ CHARLOTTE FY2021 FUNDING

Munro Richardson, Executive Director of Read Charlotte provided a presentation. He spoke about what READ Charlotte does, including their accomplishments over the past five years, where they currently were in Mecklenburg County, and how they would move forward.

Mr. Richardson said that Read Charlotte was launched in 2015 as a 10-year initiative in the community to focus on early literacy with a goal of doubling reading proficiency to 80% by 2025. Read Charlotte has four priorities for a local reading recovery: high-quality, targeted tutoring; summer learning; family supports for literacy; and PK-3 literacy instruction. He explained the importance of early literacy, as 3rd-grade reading was a fork in the road for children, since those below reading level were four times more likely to drop out of high school, while 96% of on-grade level readers graduate high school on time.

Mr. Richardson said over the past 6 years they have largely focused on creating system change with effective programs & practices; implementation & improvement; and stronger community connections. He stated they had not done this alone but that it was really a large, community effort, as they had worked with over 100 groups in the last five years.

Mr. Richardson reviewed what they had accomplished over the last five years.

Reach Out and Read

- 2016
 - o Clinics - 12
 - o Medical Providers - 145
 - o Children served - 22,400
 - o Number low-income - 10,000
 - o % of low-income served - 29%

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- 2020
 - o Clinics - 34
 - o Medical Providers - 200
 - o Children served - 36,950
 - o Number Low-Income - 24,000
 - o % of low-income served - 70%

Ready4k Text Messages for Families

- Sent 1.4 million texts, such as tips and advice to families three times-a-week since 2017.

Active Reading Workshops for Families & Tutors

- Trained over 3,600 adults in active reading since 2017.

Free Online Resource for Pre-K - 3rd Grade Families

- Created, Home Reading Helper, a go-to resource online with videos, activities, reading guides, etc. in 2018 and have had 18,158 local visitors and another 338,999 outside of Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Helps Fluency Tutoring

- Year 1: 2018-2019
 - o 153 3rd grade students
 - o 417 tutors
 - o 9,259 tutoring sessions
- Year 2: 2019-2020
 - o 227 2nd & 3rd grade students
 - o 274 tutors
 - o 5,679 tutoring sessions

YMCA Summer Literacy Infusion 2017-2019

- 2017: avoided 95% reading loss
- 2018: avoided 74% reading loss
- 2019: avoided 85% reading loss

Data Collaborative 2017-2020

- Three-year initiative working with 10, non-profit organizations to help better use data to understand the children in their programs and how they could improve the quality of implementation and ultimately the outcomes of children they serve.

Reading Checkup

- New initiative that with the minimum technology of a smartphone, families would be able to have their kids take two quick quizzes to find out their current reading and vocabulary levels to get targeted recommendations of family-friendly activities they could do at home. He said they were closing in on 300,000 Pre-K to 3rd grade children who have taken a reading checkup.

Mr. Richardson reviewed what has happened with 3rd grade scores, stating that 3rd grade scores did not improve from 2015-2019. He explained end-of-grade (EOG) testing in North Carolina. He displayed to the Board the unacceptable EOG reading gaps between white and black students.

Mr. Richardson suggestions were that they needed to provide high-quality curriculum; strong, professional development; and have good instruction in every classroom. He also recommended the individualization of reading supports. There are four different types of reading instruction: word-reading skills by adult and by child and meaning-focused skills by adult and by child, and children need different amounts of these four types of reading instruction at different points in time based upon their reading skills. This spans classroom, home, after school, and summer programs from Pre-K through Third Grade.

Mr. Richardson said they had not seen more improvement based on all of the work Read Charlotte has done was because the children who were to take the EOG in spring 2019

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were already pre-k aged, so the investments in things like Reach out and Read, were not bestowed upon those children. He said if they looked ahead to 2025 at the children who would take the EOG in spring 2025, those children were in pre-k, and some of those children got the benefit of Meck Pre-K, Reach Out and Read, Active Reading, and fluency tutoring would be there when they need it in greater numbers than it was today. He said that scaling was their number one priority and biggest challenge ahead of them. He said they were currently partnering at 31 schools and that there were three, focus areas in the partnering relationships: family supports for literacy at home; targeted literacy tutoring; and coordination with summer-learning programs. He said they wanted at least to double that number by the end of the year, so they needed more partners to reach more schools and also wanted to coordinate with health and human service providers. He said they wanted to continue working with CMS to align Read Charlotte's work. He stated that over the next five years, they would continue to focus on creating systems change and continue a partnership with a relentless focus on the four priorities.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, to amend the 2020 - 2021 Budget Ordinance recognize, receive and appropriate \$70,898 of funding reimbursed by Read Charlotte to the County for the unspent portion of the three-year Data Collaborative Project and \$29,102 in unallocated General Fund Balance to the non-departmental budget of the General Fund (0001) for the purpose of allocating \$100,000 to Read Charlotte to support the community-wide children's reading initiative.

Mr. Richardson answered to commissioners' questions and responded to comments.

A vote was taken on the motion and carried as followed:

YES: Commissioners Altman, Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Meier, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Leake

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

21-6601: 2020 MECKLENBURG COUNTY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Dr. Monica Allen did not review the 2020 Mecklenburg County Performance Report for the Commissioners in the interest of time but responded to comments and questions.

Chair Dunlap temporarily left the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

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

21-6593: MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' 2021 STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Starla Tanner, Legislative Affairs Liaison, presented the Board's 2021 State and Federal Legislative Priorities, as approved by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee on January 14, 2021.

Guiding Legislative Agenda Principles

- Support legislation that grants counties greater flexibility.
- Support legislation that provides funding to counties.
- Oppose legislation that removes authority from counties.
- Oppose legislation that creates unfunded mandates or directly shifts costs to directly or indirectly to counties

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Strategic Engagement

Maintain proactive and strategic engagement with delegation members and regulatory agencies.

She stated that this year's agenda would be presented differently from that of other years. In the past, there was a state agenda and a federal agenda; however, in conducting this year's strategy meeting with departments, many of the issues at state and federal levels were connected by policy, implementation, funding, or a combination of all three; therefore, the presented recommendation would be a comprehensive agenda of county priorities using the format of the previous federal agendas.

Legislative Priority Areas

- Coronavirus Pandemic Response
 - Support direct funding to local governments with flexibility that includes replacing lost revenue.
 - Provide added flexibility to align the verification process of federal public assistance benefit programs, provide waivers for face-to-face processes, and provide telephonic approval for electronic signatures to limit in-person contact and prevent the spread of COVID-19.
 - Provide resources to support public health infrastructure, including funding for vaccine distribution, data technology and personnel.
 - Prioritize robust funding for programs that help address housing insecurity, mental health, substance use issues, and domestic violence, amplified by the pandemic.
- Education
 - Support funding to provide all public-school students with an excellent education, including investments to assist communities in eliminating achievement disparities, the alignment of funding following student enrollment and addressing the impact of the coronavirus on students' academic achievement and progress.
- Health and Human Services
 - Oppose new restrictions, funding reductions, and overly burdensome implementation requirements for programs utilized to support self-sufficiency such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Social Services Block Grant, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program.
 - Advocate for sufficient funding of the reauthorized Older Americans Act (OAA) programs, which supports services for seniors like long-term care, senior centers, nutrition, transportation, and caregiver and in-home care support.
 - Advocate for sufficient funding to provide in-home services to disabled individuals ages 18-59 who wish to remain at home and may not be eligible for OAA programs.
 - 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.
 - Request assistance to allow CDC funding to end the HIV epidemic to be directly allocated to the county instead of having the dollars sent through the state, which will cut down on administrative time and costs.
 - Support opioid abuse initiatives to build a coordinated approach to address addiction and reduce deaths related to overdose.
 - Support legislation related to gun violence prevention to help address the unprecedented levels of young children becoming victims of violent crime.
 - Support integration of systems for effective public assistance benefit eligibility determination.

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- Support assistance for youth aging out of foster care and implementation and funding for child welfare and foster care reforms made under the Family First Prevention Services Act.
 - Support expansion of Medicaid, protection of Federal-State-Local Partnership for Medicaid and increased flexibility to support local systems of care.
 - Support policies and funding for local behavioral health services to assist non-Medicaid eligible consumers including, but not limited to, criminal justice involved and homeless services.
 - Support funding and policies that promote affordable housing opportunities and address factors related to homelessness, including source of income rent discrimination, HOME, and Community Development Block Grants.
 - Advocate for an increase in the property tax thresholds used to determine eligibility for housing insecurity programs.
- Infrastructure and Environment
- Support policies that allocate more funding for regional transit infrastructure, increased local decision-making authority, and prioritized federal investments that advance economic development, mobility, and safety.
 - Support efforts to address options for residential “orphan” roads that need to be brought up to NC Department of Transportation standards.
 - Support policies that promote equitable access to broadband and other communications technology to bridge the digital divide, especially in difficult to reach communities.
 - Support increasing EPA funding for air quality and environment support programs including Section 103 and 105 as well as the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) discretionary grant program.
 - Advocate for local governments having the option of requiring pre-existing impervious areas to be treated when a site is redeveloped to reduce flooding and negative water quality impact downstream.
 - Monitor reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and support efforts to digitize floodplain maps, enable affordability of flood insurance, reduce compliance and mitigation costs, and lower the number of repetitive loss structures.
 - Support improvements to recycling policies and programs for electronic waste, scrap tires, and white goods that adequately address implementation and costs.
- Public Safety and Criminal Justice
- Advocate for increased resources that assist community policing initiatives that help lower crime, reduce substance use and overdose, recognize community impacts from individuals with behavioral or mental health issues, and create an atmosphere for productive dialogue between law enforcement and disadvantaged communities.
 - Support funding and policies that address juvenile crime prevention, domestic abuse prevention, human trafficking, illegal drug and alcohol abuse diversion, and mental health treatment.
 - Support policies that ensure health treatments for pre-trial detainees and prohibit termination of federal health benefits of jail and prison detainees, including Medicaid and veterans’ benefits.
 - Support efforts to reform existing bail structure and explore alternative bail structures, including preventative detention, using non-financial pre-trial release options.

Chair Dunlap returned to the meeting at 9:03 p.m.

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

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Commissioner Cotham was concerned that the list of priorities may be too long. She recommended focusing on fewer items, like five or one in each category, while working very hard on them so they would get something.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated she did not feel there was anything more important than the children and the public schools.

Commissioner Powell felt leaders at every level needed to see their list of priorities, which she loved.

Commissioner Leake agreed with Commissioner Cotham that the list was too much for the State to even look at. She stated she was glad education was added, since it was a responsibility of the State to finance education. She said health and human services was also something they should be asking for in Raleigh.

Chair Dunlap said while he liked the stuff that was on the list, the list was entirely too long. He believed it would be best to pick five or six to really focus on and hone in on.

Ms. Tanner responded that part of the framing of the recommendations this year was providing the document as a resource to the delegation. She said when she spoke to Representative Carney and Senator Marcus, they were very excited to have a resource of the priority areas. She asked the Board to consider the five areas as the priority more so than the whole list.

Chair Dunlap thanked her for clarifying.

A motion was made by Commissioner Meier, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to adopt the Board's 2021 State and Federal Legislative Priorities.

21-6596: COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director, provided an update on data and response efforts in Mecklenburg County. She said they have seen a slight decrease in the average number of cases that were being experienced each day. She said they were down to 784 over the last seven days. She said they had also seen a slight decrease in the average positivity rate to 12.4% over the last seven days. She said they have seen an increase in hospitalizations average per day, which was at 540. She said even with the improvements, they still had a high rate of virus in the community and have experienced the second pediatric death reported in NC over the weekend. She said it reemphasized for them that the virus did not respect age, race, or any other factor when it would decide to infect someone and potentially take a life. She said they continued reemphasizing a need to continue with prevention measures.

Ms. Harris said the demand for testing continued to be high, and she reemphasized that testing was widely available in the community. She said residents should not have to pay out-of-pocket costs for a COVID-19 test. She said there were some pop-up testing sites in parking lots and gas stations. She said anytime they hear about those, they check with them. She said until they check with those pop-up sites, they have no way of knowing whether they actually have the capacity to do the testing, and most of those are charging. She said the County continued doing drive-thru testing Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. She said Novant, Atrium, CVS, Walgreens and StarMed also continued testing. She stated the average turn-around time was two days.

Ms. Harris said they were currently focused on the top-two groups that the State had required of them. She said that was Group 1, which included healthcare workers with current, in-person, patient contact and long-term care staff and residents and Group 2, which has changed from 75 and up to 65 and up, regardless of health status and living situations. She said they were hearing some concerns from some in Group 3, that in other counties in the State they were being vaccinated but not here in Mecklenburg County. She emphasized the fact that Mecklenburg County was sticking to the State requirements currently, and those two groups were the ones they were focused on. She said it would

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unfortunately take a while, with the current amount of vaccine they had, to get through those two groups before they would get to Group 3. She was asking for community support and for people to not jump the line and try to get vaccinated if they were not yet eligible. She said today that Mecklenburg County received 6,825 doses as of January 18, 2020, with 7,516 being administered. She said the reason for the additional doses was that some of the vials allowed for six doses, and the staff squeezed every drop they could get. She said in addition to that, they received 2,925 doses for second doses and have administered 369. She said they were supposed to hold those for the people who have received their first dose. She said you would see the number go up but that they would not keep up with that as well as they have the first doses.

Ms. Harris stated they have continued their work at Bojangles and that they had multiple partners working with them on that to help with second doses. She said StarMed would be doing that at Bojangles, and MEDIC would be doing it at their site on Wilkinson Boulevard. She said that support was allowing the County to continue focusing on first doses and get them out as much as possible. She said they were reopening appointments for Group 1 and Group 2 priority areas for February 1 through February 20th tomorrow at 8:30 a.m. She said people could schedule appointments by going online or calling the hotline. She said the process has been on raising awareness with the community around the virus and ensuring equitable access. She said they had a community engagement group that involved public health leadership, public information with the County and key community partners, and the [inaudible] of this group were to widely disseminate accurate and up-to-date information regarding vaccine safety and efficacy, prioritization currently as well as availability of vaccine. She said they were engaging community partners and community members to serve as trusted voices for vaccine awareness and messaging. She said the group was also developing multiple communication channels to enable the community, including healthcare providers, community-based organizations, the media, and the general public to obtain information from public health regarding COVID-19 vaccine. She said they were depending on the Board of County Commissioners to disseminate information in the community and to serve as trusted voices in their communities. She said they were actively partnering with their FQHC's and other community providers to coordinate vaccination delivery. She said they have also conducted outreach through medical societies and directly with specific providers regarding vaccine resources and availability. She said they were collaborating and communicating on a regular basis with both Atrium and Novant to ensure a coordinated approach to vaccine delivery in the County, which includes meeting regularly to review current vaccine supply and available appointments, eligibility, and upcoming plans for distribution. She said they wanted to make sure they were leveraging all of the vaccine that would be coming into the community. She said they continued to support both of the hospitals and their efforts to increase capacity to deliver vaccines in the community. She said many knew Atrium had an event at the Speedway and the following weekend at the Bank of America. She said Novant was also looking at increasing their ability to do vaccinations in mass situations in the community. She said that as efforts evolved, they would continue to focus their efforts in prioritizing vaccine availability among the communities most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, including specifically communities of color, through specific outreach with the community partners, community-based organizations, and intentional media campaigns. She said they were also prioritizing appointments at Bojangles and through vaccination in a community setting. She said throughout the vaccine distribution planning and response, equitable distribution in the community has been and would continue to be a central focus for the efforts. She said they were continuing to advocate with the State to build out the ability to make local access to data, from the State's system, that would allow the County to understand who was receiving vaccine and where they were falling short to address the needs of the most disenfranchised and vulnerable populations. She said they currently did not have the ability to do that with the State's system.

Ms. Harris said they were partnering with community stakeholders to host pop-up clinics targeting minority and underserved communities. She said this week they would have a site on Friday at C. W. Williams and that they did a site last Saturday with Charlotte Community Health Center. She said they were working on an event with a church on Saturday and expected to do a site at one of the Inlivan sites, which was through the Charlotte Housing Authority. She said they were working with the shelters and would be

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out to the shelters one day this week to vaccinate individuals in the shelters over 65 who were interested in the vaccine. She said they worked with the Charlotte Medical, Dental, and Pharmaceutical Society, which was a minority provider society to make sure they were vaccinated, especially those who were not connected to either one of the health care systems. She said they were also working with representatives from the immigrant and refugee community. She said they offered to vaccinate and were waiting for names from them depending on how many they offer to vaccinate they would either do a special clinic or work them into the vaccinations they were providing currently. She said both of the health systems were also planning community based and mobile mask clinics as they moved forward. She said they were just trying to leverage the vaccines they were receiving. She reemphasized the fact that they needed more vaccine and were advocating with the State almost daily for more vaccine in Mecklenburg County. She said they still had significant limitations.

Ms. Harris said they were working with both of the healthcare systems in developing materials which would be cobranded across the healthcare systems and the Health Department. She said you would see two of those right here. One would provide specific information about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, and the other document talked about how you could make an appointment. She said the document was being made available in a number of different languages which were in the community.

Ms. Harris as they moved forward with a vaccine, they had to remember that it would be a while before the vaccine really had an impact in the community. She said they had to vaccinate a whole lot more people than they have been able to vaccinate up to this point based on what was available. She said they had to continue to focus on prevention efforts that they knew worked. She said that there had been multiple concerns voiced about the directive and multiple people voicing support for the directive. She understood there were two sides to every issue. She said they had a number of individuals who asked for exceptions for some groups and some activities. She reemphasized that the intent of this directive was to reduce the virus in the community by limiting exposure, asking businesses, organizations, and individuals to stay home, unless leaving for an essential and necessary activity. She said they had less than two weeks left on the directive and were asking the community to continue to stick with it to help get the numbers down so they could be more effective as they opened things up. She said it was essential for people to continue wearing their masks and to wait six feet apart and washing their hands, but the main thing right now is they need them to prevent being out anymore than they absolutely had to.

Speaker Andrew Blake addressed the Board regarding CMS cancelling high school swimming activities.

Commissioner Altman asked if public health would be able to deliver on a second dose for all of the people who have had the first dose. She asked about the shift in priority for the disabled and chronically ill. She asked who Mecklenburg County was following on that and why other counties got to do things differently.

Ms. Harris responded that the issue with prioritization had been incredibly challenging at the local level in particular because of the shifting recommendations which were coming from federal to state level. She said there was some drastic changes in some of those recommendations, which have made some people uncomfortable. She said the people with chronic conditions and disabilities were probably one of the ones most impacted by that. She stated she was not sure she fully understood why some of those recommendations were made. She said the expectations from the State and federal government was that those people who were 65 and older were at higher risk of severe complications, regardless of whether they had a chronic condition or not. She said that was why they had been prioritized at this point and as they currently understood it, those under 65 with chronic conditions would fall into Group 4. She said it could change again as it has changed several times since they started with the vaccine. She said they would not even be in Group 3.

Commissioner Altman asked if Mecklenburg County was bound to follow the State and if they were bound to follow CDC.

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Ms. Harris responded that they were required, at this point, to follow the State, as they were the ones who provide the County with the vaccine. She said there were a few counties which have gone into Group 3 and have given some vaccine. She said she believed the State was trying to address that. She said she did not know their decisions for doing that. She said the State has been very clear that it was a requirement they had to continue to receive vaccine. She responded that they would not be inappropriately using the second doses and would make sure those who had first doses would have the second available when it becomes their time.

Commissioner Leake shared that she had received her first vaccine and that there were three sites she would be visiting over the weekend. She said one was First Baptist West, Derita with Reverend Boyd, and CN Jenkins with Reverend Cannon, hopefully maintaining the flow of people to get those shots, especially those in her district.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked why North Carolina was the 45th state getting out vaccines. She asked where Mecklenburg County stood as far as if all of the vaccines were out.

Ms. Harris responded she could not speak for the hospital systems, as those get to them directly from the State, but in terms of Mecklenburg County, Mecklenburg County receives vaccine on Tuesday and by Monday, the amount of vaccine was already exceeded. She said they were making sure they were getting them in arms and were done before receiving the next shipment. She said she was pleased to say they did get a little extra vaccine from the State with 800 doses of Moderna. She said that was the first time they had received that vaccine and it was easier to get out into the community. She said they would be using that on the pop-up sites they talked about. She said they were getting it out as fast as they could and making sure they were not wasting it. She said they had not wasted a dose yet.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell found it hard to understand how some people could have mass efforts without enough vaccine. S

Ms. Harris responded it was challenging for everyone to figure that out, because they really did not know the formula the State uses to allocate vaccine. She said they were trying to make sure every county and hospital system had vaccine. She said the mass vaccinations that the hospital systems were talking about were regional, mask-vaccination sites. She said they got their doses for their entire system, and what they would get would not just go to Mecklenburg County, so it is hard to tease out how much vaccination comes to Mecklenburg County. She said anyone could go to the sites at Bank of America and the speedway if they made an appointment. She said it was hard to understand where all of the vaccine comes and who all gets it, since they were not able to pull local data out of the system yet. She said there were pockets in the State where vaccine had not been moving for different reasons, and the State was starting to talk about starting to shift back vaccine around from those who were unable to get it out, but that had not changed the allocation yet at this point.

Commissioner Jerrell asked how important testing was with the sporadic distribution of the vaccines.

Ms. Harris responded that testing continued to be very important, because people still needed to isolate and quarantine if they were positive. She said the numbers were still way too high. She said it would still be a while before there was enough in the community to make a difference.

Commissioner Jerrell asked when data would be available to show who had received vaccination to ensure the hardest-hit areas were being taken care of. He believed Mecklenburg County residents needed to be priorities if people outside of the County were able to make an appointment.

Ms. Harris responded that the data piece was concerning to them as well. She said she could look at data from the individuals the County was giving vaccine to but could not look at the hospitals' data or at what CVS or Walgreens was doing. She said the numbers

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were not looking the way they wanted them to look. She said from the beginning they had been prioritizing populations as they received more vaccine but that they were starting to shift focus, as the hospital systems were going to the large events and had the capacity to do that and the County didn't, to the populations that they knew they needed to get out to. She said they had been informed by the State and federal government that the vaccine was coming from the federal government, and as far as the federal government was concerned, [inaudible] jurisdictions. She said the County had not been allowed to save vaccine for Mecklenburg County residents. She said they were strongly recommending for people to be vaccinated in their home county. She stated they could not turn people away just because they did not live in Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Meier asked why the lights were not staying on for people playing tennis in the evening.

Ms. Harris responded that, in generality, what they intended with the directive and reason they intended it were the numbers in the County and amount of virus and the fact that every time you go out of your house, you would potentially be exposing yourself to COVID-19. She said even if you go out during the day to play basketball or tennis or whatever, you would potentially be exposing yourself to COVID-19. She said their intent was that everyone should stay home unless it was necessary or essential to be out. She said if people chose to go to the parks and those sorts of things, she was not stopping them; this was a recommendation to the County based on what was believed to make a difference. She said she could not speak on other departments within county government.

Lee Jones, Park & Recreation Director, responded that they tried to align their business operations with the organization's approach with the staying home [inaudible]. He said the parks were open seven days-a-week, 365 days-a-year, and the County has taken this position, and he believed they needed to lead by example. He said about 56% of the tennis courts were lit and if the remainder were available, you would have congregations.

Commissioner Powell stated that she was happy that Mr. Blake brought his compliant forward but that they have received hundreds of complaints, with people calling the Board unreasonable, nonsensical, and multiple other adjectives about the park, athletic fields and lighting. She said they had not had any complaints about the rest of the directive; it was all park related and at a time when they really did not want people to mingle with each other. She said they wanted them to be outside and wanted to encourage outdoor activities. She asked didn't they want people outside in nature preserves and parks.

Ms. Harris responded not right now as the intent of the directive was to get people to stay home. She said she would love for the parks to be open and that she loved sports but also wanted the kids in school too and for businesses to be open but as long as the numbers were as high as they were, everyone was at risk. She said that was why they were asking people for a short people of time to consider staying home unless absolutely necessary or essential for them to be out. She said that was the point behind the directive. She said they would love for people to be outside in their backyard with their family but not mingling in parks.

Commissioner Powell said she understood that but that she was not staying away from nature preserves; she was going. She said she was following all the rules as she wears a mask and stays six feet away if not farther. She said she needed that time outside. She said she understood not congregating, but if they were going to have a directive like that, the public deserves to understand why they were not turning lights on; it should not be a mystery. She said other than just saying they did not want people to congregate, which everyone should know by now, they needed data to support why this was good.

Ms. Harris responded the numbers she provided to the Board each week were the reasons; the deaths they were seeing were the reasons. She said she did not know what else to say, as they knew what works and the earlier stay-at-home order made a huge difference in where they were going with the virus, which is why they did this again. She said they were now in much worse shape than when they implemented the first stay-at-home order.

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Chair Dunlap said there was a saying that someone can give you information but cannot make someone understand it and that there were people who did not want to understand it, because it was not in line with what they wanted. He said the real question was if they wanted to do what they could do to limit the amount of spread in the community, and if they did not want to do that, everyone ought to be able to do what they want to do. He reminded the Board that this was in lieu of shutting the place down, which was the first course of action they took. He said they work with all of the Towns. He said they actually had a stay at home order as opposed to asking people to stay at home, because that was where they were headed, and if it got bad enough in some of the Townships, they would join with Mecklenburg County and the whole place would be shut down and the economy would be shut down but that they were not trying to do that. He said they did not want to do that, so they were asking people to take reasonable measures, and in this case, the reasonable measure was only three weeks. He said he understood why people did not understand it, because it was not inline with what they wanted to do; people want to do what they want to do, which is why they have so much spread. He encouraged everyone to listen to the data and information that was being put out there.

Chair Dunlap said they did not know how many people in just Mecklenburg County had been vaccinated in totality.

Ms. Harris agreed.

Chair Dunlap stated that was a concern, because they did not know if they were doing what they set out to do, which was to get people who were more susceptible to the virus. He said there was a difference between a directive and a mandate and that the Health Director count does not mandate anything, but she could give a directive. He said whether or not you follow the directive would be up to you, because there would be no penalty. He said CMS chose to follow the directive, and now the County was being blamed for issuing a directive. He said CMS had choices just like everyone else had choices, so Ms. Harris could not be blamed for doing what was best for the best interest of Mecklenburg County as that was her job and why she was paid.

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS' MONTHLY REPORTS

21-6618: DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORTS

The January 2021 Monthly Department Management Reports were provided to the Commissioners for information only.

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 activity.

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve consent agenda, including amending the December 10, 2020 minutes to reflect that Commissioner Powell attended the meeting in person.

21-6572: MINUTES

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: December 7, 2020 Swearing In Ceremony; December 8, 2020 Budget/ Public Policy Meeting; December 10, 2020 Special Meeting; and December 15, 2020 Regular Meeting.

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21-6585: AD VALOREM TAX ADVERTISEMENT

Order the advertisement of delinquent 2020 real estate and personal property taxes.

21-6590: TAX REFUNDS

Approve refunds in the amount of \$31,544.18 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.

21-6614: STORM WATER PROGRAM - HAZARD MITIGATION CATAWBA RIVER FLOODPLAIN ACQUISITION

Authorize the County Manager to execute all documents necessary to complete the purchase of property located at 1529 Lake Drive, Charlotte, NC (tax parcel 031-472-07), for \$175,000 from U.S. Bank Trust, N.A. as Trustee for LSF9 Master Participation Trust.

THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT

20-6533: GENERAL OBLIGATION SCHOOL BOND RESOLUTION

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adopt a Resolution Authorizing Issuance of General Obligation School Bonds.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #75.

21-6581: 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 Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of \$31,357 from Smart Start to the General Fund (0001) within the Department of Social Services.

21-6591: GRANT APPLICATION - NORTH CAROLINA VOLKSWAGEN SETTLEMENT PROGRAM FUNDING

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 \$25,000 in North Carolina Volkswagen Settlement Program funding to support installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at County Facilities and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the award amount to the multi-year grant fund (G001) within LUESA for the duration of the grant.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

21-6597: COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Cotham congratulated the new President and Vice President and hoped they had listened to what the President has said in terms of unity and a better world for all; God bless America.

Commissioner Powell said it had been a big day for the Country, and her number one, favorite thing about the inauguration was that the minister who prayed, prayed for environmental stewardship.

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Commissioner Jerrell said a lot of the time when they talk about the number-one priority of reducing racial disparities and tie them into systemic and institutional structures that cause barriers for predominantly people of color and those who were socioeconomically disadvantaged, as a lot of people did not understand they could connect the dots. He gave an example of how at the start of COVID-19 testing, people of color were being devastated and not being tested, and there were some excuses thrown around as to why. He said now they were at the vaccination stage and were not sure who was being vaccinated. He said it was not a knock-on public health but about systems and institutions so that people could understand what they were discussing when they talk about racial disparities. He called on the community to come together to work with Public Health. He believed the County was always a great partner for so many people and that it was time for people in the community to step up and be a great partner for the County and with the County. He called on the partners to come together and work with Gibbie and her team to get the County the data out into the community and get to the hard-to-reach communities. He said there was no reason why the disabled folks should be all the way down the list. He said they had to do better when it came to working together. He said it was meant to be in love and constructive feedback.

Commissioner Leake said this was a good and blessed day for the community and the Country but to see what people, who perceive to be powerful and making this community great again, it said, without the inclusion of those of color. She stated it was not just in Washington, D.C. but also in Charlotte, North Carolina and on the County Commissioners and City Council, so they had a lot of work to do, because people become upset when people speak up and speak out. She said they always want to find a way to cut them off or shut them down, so she could see how it felt when people do that, as she felt it every day. She said she would continue to represent the people of District 2 and tell them what was going on behind closed doors. She said she would fight for education so that her babies could write and have arithmetic and get a job and not be in poverty-stricken communities.

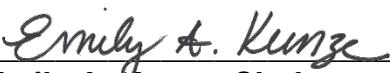
Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she was proud to be a part of the Evaluate Upstream Homelessness Prevention design sprint last week on Thursday and Friday. She said it was a great County-initiated effort in which everyone spent time to come up with ideas and brainstorm ways to prevent homelessness. She said it was a group of 38 people which included elected, the business community, philanthropic community, housing partnership, Crisis Assistance Ministry, and people with lived experience in homelessness. She stated it was led by Courtney LaCaria and Rosalyn Allison Jacobs who did an outstanding job. She reminded everyone of tomorrow night's homelessness townhall and hoped the community would show up.

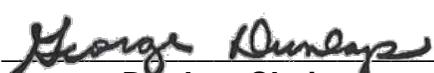
Chair Dunlap said there was so much misinformation about homelessness, and every time he would hear someone say the homeless had no place to go, he would have to say, but they could have a room tonight. He said they needed to understand why people would choose not to have a room and choose to stay in a tent as opposed to having a room. He said they would be able to delve into all of those things at the townhall meeting and that the goal would be for the community to walk away feeling better about the things the County was doing and to also come together to talk about other things the County needed to do to improve the current situation.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.


Emily A. Kunze, Clerk


George Dunlap, Chair