MINUTES OF MELCKENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Budget/Public Policy Session in Conference Center Room 267 on the 2nd floor of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 8, 2021.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair George Dunlap and Commissioners
Patricia “Pat” Cotham, Mark Jerrell,
Vilma D. Leake, Laura J. Meier,
Elaine Powell, Susan Rodriguez- McDowell, and
Ella B. Scarborough
County Manager Dena R. Diorio
County Attorney Tyrone C. Wade
Clerk to the Board Kristine M. Smith

Absent: Commissioner Leigh Altman

Note: Commissioner Scarborough attended remotely

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions.

Motion was made by Commissioner Cotham, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried 4-3 with Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell and Leake voting yes, and Commissioners Meier, Powell, and Rodriguez-McDowell voting no, to allow Commissioner Scarborough to participate in the meeting remotely.

The introductions were continued and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was conducted.

Commissioner Susan Rodriguez McDowell said she and Commissioners Jerrell, Meier, and Altman took a tour with Sheriff Gary McFadden recently. She said he would be reporting on the status of various facility projects, including the proposed relocation of the Sheriff’s Office Field Operations Division as well as the detention modernization projects, both approved in the FY2018 budget, and would provide insight into the Sheriff’s Office headquarters at 700 East 4th Street and his recommendation to relocate his office to a more suitable location.
The Board received a report from Garry L. McFadden, Sheriff, Chief Deputy Jason Beebe, Chief Deputy Rodney Collins and Major Johnathan Carter regarding the Sheriff’s Office Facilities.
Sheriff’s Office Field Operations

- Field Operations is comprised of the following divisions:
  - Civil Judgement Unit (CJU)
  - Civil Process
  - Domestic Violence
  - Field Transportation
  - Child Support Enforcement (CSE)
  - K-9

Sheriff’s Office Facility Projects

Jail Modernization, HQ Renovations and Relocation of Field Operations Division

- All projects are moving **extremely** slow.
- Only 8% of the $32.9 million jail modernization budget has been expended. Funding was approved in FY 2018.
- No updates on HQ renovations since December 2020. Was being considered as a joint project with the temporary Field relocation to Annex.
- Capital dollars were approved for Field Operations relocation in FY 2018 for use of the former Work Release & Restitution Center (WRRC) for $1.7 million.
Sheriff’s Office Facility Projects

Relocation of Field Division

- Currently Field Operations is located at the ABC building at 3333 N. Tryon.
- Initial lease date was August 1, 2000, for 3,086 square feet and annual lease payment was $40,118.04.
- New rate for FY 2022 is $61,139 for 4,379 square feet.
- Notified in December ABC would not extend lease beyond expiration of 6/30/2021.
- Notified on March 4, 2021, that ABC would extend lease to 6/30/2022.

Sheriff’s Office Facility Projects

Relocation of Field Division

- County identified a lease space at 616 Colonnade Drive in early 2020.
- Significant effort was expended but negotiations with vendor were contentious, and we opted to walk away.
- 12K square feet
- Initial price/square ft. was $19.75 which was $239K annual lease payment.
- This was Triple Net lease which would have required significant operating dollars to manage.
Sheriff’s Office Facility Projects

Relocation of Field Division

- Because of the ABC lease expiration, Sheriff’s Office agreed for the non-detention Annex Sprung to serve as a “temporary” site.
- Other locations like Hal Marshal and Tom Ray Contor were both identified by County as temporary options awaiting the Annex to be constructed for occupancy.
- However, with the extension of the lease at the ABC Building we are reconsidering relocation to a more suitable long-term site.
- Preferred site is 1801 North Tryon Street.
- Proposed lease price is $28 per square foot. No formal negotiations have been undertaken.
- More convenient to uptown Charlotte than Annex.

Sheriff’s Office Facility Projects

Relocation of Field Division

- The Annex Unfinished Sprung Structure
- Originally purchased for Detention facility in 2007
- Life Expectancy remaining 12+/- years
Sheriff's Office Headquarters

Sheriff's Office Headquarters
- Currently housed at 700 East Fourth Street, Judge Clifton E. Johnson Building
- Was advised $175K was requested for finishes but was not approved.
- Currently unable to have all Executive Staff in one location.
- Current conference room will only accommodate 6-8 people for meetings.
- Requested possibility of relocating to the 7th floor of the Courthouse but was advised the space is for future courtrooms.
- See current state of 7th floor of the Courthouse.

Sheriff’s Office Headquarters

Sheriff’s Office Headquarters
- Currently appears the 7th Floor houses:
  - Maintenance supplies including cabinets with flammable markings.
  - Makeshift breakroom
  - Discarded furniture and trash cans
  - Secure courthouse records enclosed in metal fencing...
Sheriff’s Office Headquarters

Sheriff’s Office Headquarters
County Manager Diorio called on Mark Hahn, Asset and Facility Management Director to speak on this issue.
Director Hahn said the slow process was due to a number of reasons. He said there was a more fundamental disconnect between the Sheriff’s Office and the County not being able to agree on the outcome of each project. He said they were not on the same page.

Director Hahn explained in detail the delays and the disconnect that slowed the process of Sheriff’s Office Facility projects.

Commissioner Jerrell asked what the solutions or options were to help the Sheriff’s Office. Director Hahn said they were moving ahead with the Sprung Structure at the annex and that was the only one being considered.

Chair Dunlap asked when the next CIP would be. Director Hahn said the next CIP would be approved for FY24 - 28 and would be starting work on that the year before.

Chair Dunlap said they had to come up with a temporary solution until that time.

County Manager Dena Diorio said we there was a facility that the County owned at Jail North that could be upfitted for this purpose while we figured out what the permanent solution looked like. She said the funding was already available for it.

Chair Dunlap asked if the Sprung space would give sufficient space for all the field operations. County Manager Diorio said yes.

The Commissioners asked additional questions that were answered by Sheriff McFadden and Director Hahn with regard to spaces available for a temporary facility.

Chair Dunlap said building a courthouse was not a simple process and they were built to last into the future. He said reconfiguring the courthouse only to reconfigure it back to a courthouse was seen as wasted money.

Chair Dunlap asked for both Sheriff McFadden and Director Hahn to schedule meetings and come to agreement on needs of the Sheriff’s Office and possible solutions and report back to the Board in 30 days.

21-6951   COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

The Board received an update on COVID-19 Response from Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director.

Background: The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director will provide an update, which will include information regarding COVID-19 Cases, COVID-19 Testing, and COVID-19 Vaccine efforts.
The Coronavirus is a global pandemic that is easily transmitted from person to person and created a state of emergency in the State of North Carolina, County of Mecklenburg, City of Charlotte and surrounding six Towns. On July 7, 2020, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners adopted a Proclamation to include the provisions of Executive Order 147 with additional requirements for wearing face covering while on county owned or leased property, or indoors or outdoors where Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommended social distancing could not be maintained. Over recent months in North Carolina and in Mecklenburg County, due to measures taken to date, there have been improvements in the COVID-19 metrics.

On May 14, 2021, the Governor issued Executive Order 215, “Lifting COVID-19 Restrictions to Reflect New Public Health Recommendations. On June 1, 2021 the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners adopted a Revised and Amended Proclamation that adopts the provisions of Executive Order 215 with additional recommendations and removes the City of Charlotte and Town of Matthews as joint signers.

Director Gibbie Harris said the numbers were still going down, the average 7-day case number was at 55, hospitalizations were averaging about 76 a day and the positivity rate was about 3%. She said the President asked that a 70% rate of vaccination be reached for all adults by July 4.

Director Harris said 46% of the population was partially vaccinated, 41% was fully vaccinated. She said there was a slight increase in vaccinations of the African American population at 30% and the Hispanic population at 36%. She said 28% of 12 to 17-year-olds, 40% of 18 to 24-year-olds and at least 84% of 65 and older were vaccinated. She said the cash card pilot proved to be very effective. She said they would be administering second doses at the CMS sites the coming weekend and there were seven cites with community partners where they would be giving out first doses for an upcoming event next weekend.

Director Harris said Moderna was seeking ability to give vaccines to 12- to 17-year-olds. Both Moderna and Pfizer are seeking full authorization but that could take as much as two years to get to full authorization. She said Pfizer was seeking emergency use authorization for 2 to 11-year-olds as early as September.

Director Harris said the latest Governor’s Executive Order expired on Friday the 11th. She said at this time there was no mask mandate for the County’s current situation with the exception of certain locations but was not sure if any of that would change by Friday.

Director Harris said those who weren’t fully vaccinated should be wearing masks and social distancing. She said she strongly encouraged people to get vaccinated.
Comments

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she hoped we got to 70% of fully vaccinated in the County.

Commissioner Meier asked if someone received a first dose at one of the CMS sites, could they get the second dose somewhere else. Director Harris said yes.

Commissioner Leake said the Health Department should be utilizing the people in the Beatties Ford corridor and the West Boulevard corridor who were familiar with the neighborhood and possibly provide a stipend to knock on doors and reach more people. Director Harris said they had a plan in place but had to wait until they received the funding, which they had not. She said they would be working with different organizations (churches, and different entities in those communities).

Commissioner Jerrell said Mecklenburg Public Health staff were experts in delivery and community engagement and encouraged the partners to leverage the expertise and knowledge that had been gained over this time.

Director Harris answered questions from the Commissioners.

Chair Dunlap asked for a special emphasis in working with young people.

Chair Dunlap asked Director Harris not to have any advertisement from the County that showed vaccine needles.

Chair Dunlap thanked Ms. Harris for all her work and efforts.

21-6952 UPDATE ON ENCAMPMENT HOTELS

The Board received an update on Mecklenburg County’s Encampment Hotels from Karen Pelletier, Director of Housing Innovation, Strategy & Alignment, Community Support Services.
Encampment Hotel Update
Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners | 8 June 2021

KAREN PELLETIER, MECKLENBURG COUNTY COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

OVERVIEW – AS OF JUNE 4th

Total Served: 213 Individuals

Currently at Hotels: 140 individuals

Exits:
• Permanent Housing: 11 individuals
• Emergency Shelter: 11 individuals
• Unsheltered: 40 individuals
• Detention Center: 6 individuals
• Death: 3 individuals
• Unknown: 2 individuals
### BARRIERS

- Hotels and services extended through September 30, 2021
- Lack of Safe, Decent, and Affordable Housing
- Lack of Permanent Supportive Housing
- Lack of Job Training and Employment
- Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment
- Resources for People with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

### PARTNER AGENCIES

**Hotel Support and Case Management:**
- Block Love Charlotte
- Hearts Beat for One Foundation
- Hearts for the Invisible
- Just Do It Movement
- Roof Above
- Salvation Army

**Employment Support:**
- Center for Community Transitions
- Charlotte Works
- YMCA

**Mental Health & Substance Use:**
- Anuvia Prevention & Recovery Center
- Monarch
- Promise Resource Network

COMMUNITY NEEDS

- Additional Affordable Housing Units and additional Permanent Supportive Housing Units
- Additional Rental Subsidies
- Landlords willing to rent to residents

NEXT STEPS

- Monitor timeline of when United Way will implement the housing initiative
- Agencies will continue their outreach and engagement with hotel residents to address barriers
- Maintain communication with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department
- Develop strategy for residents not eligible for existing subsidies or vouchers
Comments

Commissioner Cotham said she was worried about the people who had to leave the encampment hotels in September. She said she was concerned for their well-being once they had nowhere to go in September. She said a plan was needed to help them and prepare them.
Commissioner Jerrell said the hotel encampment really illustrated how many people in the community cared about the homeless population. He said Deputy County Manager Trotman gave a presentation in which he provided a strategic plan that was being executed with Ms. Pelletier leading. He said the other nonprofit partners showed what could be done as a County. He said he would like to see intentional engagement with groups that dealt and had knowledge around formerly incarcerated individuals and their needs so that they could receive additional support to reengage successfully into the community.

Ms. Pelletier said the Center for Community Transition, who worked with formerly incarcerated individuals were on site at the hotel on Friday, working to help engage people with jobs. She said the County’s Criminal Justice Services were out there every single week working to help people as well.

Commissioner Powell thanked Mrs. Pelletier for the presentation. She said she shared the same feeling as Commissioner Cotham when it came to where the encampment individuals would go to once their stay was no longer extended at the hotels. She said she recalled a county that bought a hotel and turned it into a Hope Center and hoped they could look into that. She said she hoped a good solution was found.

Commissioner Leake asked if most of the homeless people at the encampment were local residents or people who moved here and were now homeless. Mrs. Pelletier said the data that had been found showed people had lived in Charlotte for at least 1 year. She said people came to Charlotte for opportunities and sometimes those opportunities didn’t work out and they found themselves seeking housing.

Commissioner Leake said it needed to be known if the County was taking care of other counties’ and states’ problems that they themselves were not willing to address and if so how that major problem would be addressed.

Commissioner Leake said she repeatedly asked about warehouses or old motels that could be purchased to allow the people to become self-sufficient through skilled training and refurbishing the facility themselves with support from Work Charlotte or other agencies and could be turned into one- and two-bedroom apartments. She said this was happening in other places.

Commissioner Leake asked what the average age for a homeless female versus a male. Ms. Pelletier said she did not have that information for the general homeless population but would get it to her.

Commissioner Leak said housing was the responsibility of the City but that the County had taken it on because of the concern about the well-being of the citizens.
Commissioner Leake said another area that needed to be addressed was the cleanliness of the sites. She said the sites had not been well kept. She asked how the people in those sites could be retrained to care for themselves and their health and their surroundings.

Commissioner Scarborough thanked Mrs. Pelletier for identifying some of the problems within Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Meier asked out of the 213 individuals how many were families with children. Mrs. Pelletier said there were no children.

Commissioner Meier asked if there was an interest in work from the homeless individuals at the encampment from some of the partners. Mrs. Pelletier said there was an interest in work. She said some had barriers or limitations for work due to a criminal record, addiction, no identification, mental health issues or no stable housing. She said it was a bit more complex. She said they were working to be as creative as possible in providing more access to substance use services to mental health services and because housing ends up becoming secondary when it was about managing some of the symptoms. She said to Commissioner Leake’s point. It was not just about moving people into a housing but teaching people how to keep a house and manage their symptoms of substance use or their mental health disorder.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she served as the liaison for the Child Abuse Prevention Fatality team. She said this team wanted to express appreciation for the County and the help the County provided to them during this time.

Chair Dunlap said there was still time for creating a plan after the encampment hotel was done. He reminded everyone that Cares Act funding could be used for this purpose. He said County Manager Diorio served on a task force that was working on this initiative along with the Center City Partners. He asked County Manager Diorio about the timeline to present budget requests for homeless needs. County Manager Diorio said the initiative was called the 2025 Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan which would have recommendations and was slated to be completed in October. She said they would have to deal with this plan separately because decisions would have to be made about the encampment in advance of that.

County Manager Diorio said there was $2.5 million put in the budget to partner with the City and the Salvation Army to purchase a hotel but that there would have to be a different solution, because that project was for families.

21-6955 COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioners shared information of their choosing within the guidelines as established by the Board, which included, but not limited to, past and/or upcoming events.
ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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Kristine M. Smith, Clerk to the Board George Dunlap, Chair