

**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 16, 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, met for an informal Session on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 267 with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

**ATTENDANCE**

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

Invocation by Commissioner Jerrell followed by Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

**PULLED CONSENT ITEMS**

**21-6716: Pulled Consent Items**

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:

21-6706: Pulled by Commissioner Leake  
21-6711: Pulled by Commissioner Leake  
21-6739: Pulled by Commissioner Leake

**CLOSED SESSION**

**21-6714: Closed Session**

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough and Seconded by Commissioner Powell to go into Closed Session to Consult with an Attorney.

**STAFF BRIEFINGS**

**21-6742: Social Media Update**

Nicole Nolen and Jameil Weldon, Public Information, gave an updated presentation regarding the County's Social Media platforms, which included Mecklenburg County's social media strategy; BOCC meeting promotion; and how the Board can share on social media.

Ms. Nolen and Ms. Weldon answered Commissioners' questions and responded to comments.

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**FORMAL SESSION**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely for a Formal Session on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

**AWARDS/RECOGNITION – NONE**

**PUBLIC ART MOMENT**

**21-6720: Public Art Moment**

In January, the BOCC added a Public Art Moment to the second regular meeting each month. This moment will highlight a piece of public art to raise public awareness and appreciation for the tax dollars that are spent on public art each year.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell gave a highlighted a piece of Art named Nested Hive, now located at the Eastway Regional Recreation Center.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE - NONE**

**21-6715: Public Appearance**

No speakers addressed the Board.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**21-6694: Nominations/Appointments to the Board of Equalization and Review**

The board considered seven reappointments to fill seven 3-year terms expiring March 31, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to reappoint Fela Babb, Barrett Berry, Vincent Bordini, Pamela Hemphill, George Munn, John Petoskey, and Joyce Reid.

Fela Babb, Barrett Berry, Vincent Bordini, Pamela Hemphill, George Munn, John Petoskey, and Joyce Reid were reappointed.

**21-6729: Nominations/Appointments to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council**

The Board was requested to fill an unexpired term expiring June 30, 2021 for the Juvenile Defense Attorney slot.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and unanimously carried to nominate and appoint Heather Johnson for the Juvenile Defense Attorney category.

Heather Johnson was appointed.

**21-6730: Nominations/Appointments to the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee**

The Board was requested to approve one reappointment to fill one 3-year term expiring March 31, 2024.

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

Monique Cartwright was reappointed.

**21-6731: Nominations/Appointments to the Bicycle Advisory Committee**

The board was requested to approve one reappointment to fill one 3-year term expiring March 31, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell and unanimously approved to reappoint Robert Schweitzer.

Robert Schweitzer was reappointed.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**21-6713: Public Art Commission's Annual Report**

Gaurav Gupte, Chairperson of the Public Art Commissioner and Carla Hanzal, ASC Vice President, presented the Public Art Commissioner's Annual Report.

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

Commissioner Leake requested information on how much the County paid thus far.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk's Office.*

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

**21-6740: Criminal Justice Services' Pretrial Services Presentation and Approval of Two Criminal Justice Case Managers**

Dena Diorio, County Manager, explained that the Board of County Commissioners need to approve positions created mid-year.

Sonya Harper, Criminal Justice Services Director, gave a presentation to update the Board on Criminal Justice Services' Pretrial Services for COVID-19 supervision of caseloads. Pretrial Services assists the courts in making release-and-detention decisions that preserve public safety and defendants' civil rights. She highlighted the pretrial caseload by race, gender, and supervision level and reviewed the release matrix conditions, which were guided by law and research; developed by a collaborative of Mecklenburg County criminal justice leaders; indicated when a referral to pretrial services was suggested; and resulted in release. Ms. Harper reviewed the outcome of pretrial close cases from between March 1, 2019 and February 28, 2021, showing that a substantial number of cases were dismissed; of those dismissed, 77% were successful with pretrial. She said that 48% were administrative. This was in-line with research and their own validated data which suggested low-risk clients would do well without supervision. Ms. Harper requested board approval for two Criminal Justice Case Managers.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough and seconded by Commissioner Cotham to authorize two additional Pretrial Services Case Manager positions within Criminal Justice Services, with a combined salary total of \$90,860.

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

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A vote was taken on the motion and recorded unanimously in favor.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk's Office.*

### **21-6717: COVID-19 Response Update**

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided the Board with a COVID-19 Response update. Ms. Harris said they were just short of 99,000 cases in Mecklenburg County since March 2020. She stated there were improvements and that while they were not at a low point, they were moving in that direction and were seeing a little bit of leveling. She said 31% of the cases were among African Americans; 32% among Hispanics; 47% among 25 to 49-year olds; and 53% were among females. She stated they continued to have some disparities in the pandemic and were addressing it. She said they were currently averaging 155 cases a day, which was down from about 900 a day around January.

Ms. Harris said the positivity rate continued to drop as Mecklenburg County was currently at 4.6%, which was down from 15% or 16% in January. She said the hospitalizations were down as well as they were at about 141 a day, which was not at the depth they saw in October but close to it. She stated there was a significant decrease, almost to zero, within long-term care facilities since they began with vaccination. She said that gives them a good idea of what herd immunity could actually do for the community. She said they went from 60 outbreaks mid-January to about 23 outbreaks now. She said that 57% of the deaths within the community were among African Americans and 20% among Hispanics.

Ms. Harris encouraged those who needed to be tested to get tested and stated there was less than a two-day turnaround for results. She said they were currently vaccinating Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3. She stated that tomorrow would start vaccination for Group 4 for 16 to 64-year olds who have high-risk medical conditions. She said they also included shelters and detention centers in this group. She spoke about upcoming openings for vaccinations. Ms. Harris stated the number of African Americans vaccinated had slightly increased as well as the number of Hispanics. She said there were 159,269 individuals who were partially vaccinated, which was about 14.8% of the population as of that day. About 22% of those were African American and 6% Hispanic. She said that in terms of those who were fully vaccinated, African American's made up 19.5% and Hispanics were at 6.4%.

Ms. Harris made the Board aware of additional guidance given by the CDC that individuals would be considered fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving their second dose when receiving the two-dose series or two weeks after a single dose when receiving the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. She stated that those who were fully vaccinated could gather indoors without a mask when around others who were fully vaccinated. She stated you could gather indoors with unvaccinated people in a small number, one other household, without masks, so long as there is no one at increased risk from COVID-19. She stated that despite being vaccinated, you should still be wearing a mask and social distancing when out in public. She stated that she was expecting additional CDC guidance to come out within the next couple of weeks in regard to social distancing.

Ms. Harris stated that nursing home facilities should now allow reasonable indoor facilities at all times for all residents at this time, with only a few exceptions, since they have all been vaccinated. She stated that compassionate care visits should be allowed at all times for any resident. She reminded everyone to follow safety guidelines during spring break. She said they were watching variants and asked everyone to do what was right to avoid going in the wrong direction.

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

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked about the County's readiness for additional vaccine and the appointment process.

Ms. Harris responded that they were able to get the vaccines out with the help of partners. She explained the appointment process.

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Commissioner Meier asked if children playing sports would be required to wear masks. She asked when someone at age 55 could be vaccinated.

Ms. Harris responded that state guidance had not changed in terms children wearing masks, but that state guidance may change over the next couple of weeks, so she would be paying attention to that. She said someone at age 55 would fall into Group 5 unless they have a health condition which would make them eligible.

Commissioner Jerrell asked at what point would it be appropriate for the County to conduct an assessment on its COVID-19 response.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, responded the County was currently in the process of retaining a consultant to come in to give a review of what of what went well and what could be done better.

Commissioner Leake asked what neighborhoods county staff would be going out to since there were seniors who were unable to get out to get a vaccine.

Ms. Harris responded that they were currently working on that and that there was an opportunity for individuals to sign up with the County if they need someone to come out to give them a vaccination.

Commissioner Altman asked if there would be vaccination opportunity for those in North Mecklenburg. She asked about the amount of vaccine being distributed to Mecklenburg County. She asked how it would work with gathering when there were children in the mix and about children enrolling in summer camp since they were unvaccinated.

Ms. Harris responded that they were working on an event in Huntersville coming up and had a church in that area as well, so she believed there would be opportunity in the northern part of the County. She responded that the State was adjusting the amount of vaccine that would be distributed and believed more people would be vaccinated due to pop-up events. She said based on CDC guidance, the belief is if the adults are vaccinated, it would be okay for the kids to be there; you would not want to bring three or four households of children together at once. She said they were talking about one household with another. She said people would have to use their own judgement on those things. She responded that in terms of summer camps, she was supportive of it, especially with outside summer camps.

Commissioner Altman asked when vaccine would be available for children.

Ms. Harris responded that vaccine would probably first be available for high schoolers since that was closer to the age currently being given the vaccine and that it probably would not be until summer or fall.

Chair Dunlap asked about the vaccination refusal rate was being calculated.

Ms. Harris responded that they were working with entities to find out how many were and were not willing and that the number was decreasing.

Chair Dunlap asked when that would become policy on a local level.

Ms. Harris responded that it would depend on the Governor's executive order.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk's Office.*

**DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS' MONTHLY REPORTS**

**21-6723: Department Management Monthly Reports**

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*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.*

*The report was placed in the agenda.*

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS**

**21-6699: Environmental Leadership Policy Modifications**

**Chair Dunlap left the meeting.**

**Vice-Chair Powell presided over the meeting.**

Vice-Chair Powell gave the Board background information.

Leslie Johnson, Deputy County Manager, and Erin Stanforth, Sustainability & Resiliency Manager, made a presentation regarding the Environmental Leadership Policy Modifications and action plan. Ms. Stanforth summarized the policy; highlighted community input; gave action plan assumptions; and reviewed framework on racial equity and environmental justice information.

**Chair Dunlap returned to the meeting.**

Commissioner Powell read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the revised resolution adopting the modifications to the County's Environmental Leadership Policy and action plan.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #84.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk's Office.*

**CONSENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Meier, and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda that was not previously pulled.

**21-6700: Sole Source Vendor Approval – Orsat**

Approve the purchase of equipment as authorized by the sole source exemption of G.S. 143-129 (e)(6) for Orsat.

**21-6707: Budget Amendment - DSS: FY21 Smart Start Child Care**

Amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in revenue and expenses of \$14,682 from State childcare allocations in the General Fund (0001) within the Department of Social Services.

**21-6708: Tax Refunds**

Approve refunds in the amount of \$33,522.93 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

**21-6709: Construction Contract - Lower Little Sugar Creek Greenway and Stream Rehabilitation Project Temporary Access License Agreement - KRG Charlotte Northcrest, LLC**

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Award a construction contract to J. D. Goodrum Company, Inc. in the amount of \$10,592,706.02.

**21-6710: Temporary Access License Agreement – KRG Charlotte Northcrest, LLC**

Authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute a Temporary Access License Agreement with KRG Charlotte Northcrest, LLC on a portion of Tax Parcel 025-291-04 (+/- 0.342 acres) to provide temporary construction access for the County's Long Creek Greenway project.

**21-6718: Minutes**

Approve the February 2, 2021 Regular Meeting and February 9, 2021 Budget/Public Policy Workshop meeting Minutes.

**21-6738: Budget Amendment (Transfer of Funds) #2 – DSS**

Rescind action taken on August 5, 2020 (Agenda Item 20-6295 Action A.), that recognized, received, and appropriated \$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; and instead (B) Amend the 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in revenue and expense of \$575,004 from the Coronavirus Aide, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) in the General Fund (0001) within the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services. (C) Recognize, receive, and appropriate \$445,514 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.

**THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.**

**21-6706: Budget Amendment (Transfer of Funds) – DSS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, Seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to: 1. Rescind action taken on June 2, 2020 (Agenda Item 20-6156), that recognized, received, and appropriated \$506,103 from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to the General Grants Fund (G001) within the Department of Social Services; and instead 2. Amend the 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase in revenue and expenses of \$506,103 from the Families First Coronavirus Act in the General Fund (0001) within the Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services.

**21-6711: Assignment of Lease - OurHealth, LLC**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute an "Assignment of Lease and Consent Agreement" by and between OurHealth, LLC, Marathon Health, LLC, and the County for lease space at the Government District Parking Deck (901 E 4th St, Suites C & D, Charlotte, NC)

**21-6739: Resolution Appointment of Interim Clerk to the Board**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, Seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to accept the resignation of the Clerk to the Board and approve the recommendation for the Deputy Clerk to temporarily serve in that capacity.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #85.

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**COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

**21-6719: Commissioner Reports**

Commissioner Altman gave a shoutout to those with the Water Quality Program of Mecklenburg County who gave her a her a tour. She spoke about her desire to make the Charlotte Moves to Mecklenburg County Moves work.

Commissioner Cotham spoke about mental health in relation to incarceration.

Commissioner Powell spoke about the work that went into the unanimous support for the environmental leadership action plan and resolution and thanked those who helped. She spoke about her environmental journey.

Commissioner Leake implored seniors to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

Commissioner Jerrell spoke about community conversation he had on mental health and gave thanks to staff.

Commissioner Meier expressed her joy watching the environmental leadership action plan come to fruition. She stated she would be having a town hall in May for teen substance abuse.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked the Board to stay on course moving forward with the environmental action plan.

Chair Dunlap recommended the State Association's Leadership Program and Professional Development Program sponsored by Macco.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to adjourn the meeting.

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

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

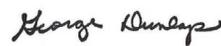
No: Commissioner Leake

The meeting was adjourned at 9:57 p.m.



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Kristine Smith, Interim Clerk



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George Dunlap, Chair