

**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 remotely for an Informal Session on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 5:03 p.m. with Chair George Dunlap presiding.

**ATTENDANCE**

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

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Jerrell 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:

**21-6686: Pulled Consent Items**

21-6644: Pulled by Commissioners Rodriguez-McDowell and Leake  
21-6665: Pulled by Commissioners Leake & Powell  
21-6668: Pulled by Commissioner Leake  
21-6672: Pulled by Commissioner Leake  
21-6675: Pulled by Commissioner Powell

**MOVE PROCLAMATION TO AWARDS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to move the Social Work Appreciation Month Proclamation from the Consent Agenda to Awards and Recognitions.

**CLOSED SESSION**

**21-6681: Closed Session**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to Discuss Land Acquisition, Economic Development and to Consult with Attorney.

Meeting Minutes  
March 2, 2021

The meeting was recessed at 5:17 p.m. to move into closed session and returned to open session at 6:33 p.m.

### **FORMAL SESSION**

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of Tax Parcels 159-011-01 (+/- 2.56 acres) in the City of Charlotte from 2819 Monroe, LLC for a purchase price of \$1,400,000.

### **AWARDS/RECOGNITION**

#### **21-6644: Social Work Appreciation Month Proclamation**

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring March 2021 as "Social Work Appreciation Month."

Commissioners made comments.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded unanimously.

### **PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

#### **21-6687: Public Appearance**

- Megan Dunn - CMS After School Enrichment Program closures
- Virginia Gregory - CMS After School Enrichment Program closures

### **APPOINTMENTS**

#### **21-6693: Nominations/Appointments to Information Services and Technology Advisory Committee**

The Board considered eight reappointments to terms expiring February 28, 2024.

A motion was made by Commissioner Meier, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to reappoint Travis Burgess, Erica Frazier, Nathaniel Lewis, Unithia McGruder, Elyas Mohammed, Jesse Newsom, Jermaine Scott, and Steve Wainstead

Travis Burgess, Erica Frazier, Nathaniel Lewis, Unithia McGruder, Elyas Mohammed, Jesse Newsom, Jermaine Scott, and Steve Wainstead were reappointment.

#### **21-6712: Nominations/Appointments to the Library Board of Trustees**

The Board considered extending the second term of Library Trustees Gloria Kelley and Rob Harrington by one year, expiring June 30, 2022.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Cotham, and carried unanimously to approve extending the second term of Library Trustees Gloria Kelley and Rob Harrington by one year, expiring June 30, 2022.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS – NONE**

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE**

### **MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### **21-6685: Interim Report from BOCC COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force**

Dena Diorio, County Manager, explained the reason behind the creation of the BOCC COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force.

Victoria Avramovic and Dr. Jerome Williams, Co-Chairs, presented an interim report on the activities of the COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Task Force.

Commissioners made comments thanking the Task Force for their work.

Ms. Diorio answered Commissioners' questions.

*The presentation is on file with the Clerk.*

#### **21-6688: COVID-19 Response Update**

Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN, Health Director, presented an update on data and the response to COVID-19 in Mecklenburg County. Ms. Harris said Mecklenburg County had a total of 96,627 cases and that they were about where they were in July. She stated they were improving. Ms. Harris said with hospitalizations they were also about where things were in July. She said they were currently at a place right now where few, if any, of the deaths were occurring in long-term care facilities; they were down to 39 outbreaks in the long-term care facilities. She said they believed some of that was due to the fact that many of the individuals had been vaccinated and were fully vaccinated at this point. She said it was a good sign that the vaccine was having an impact where sufficient numbers of people are able to be vaccinated.

Ms. Harris stated that testing numbers went down but that she wanted to ensure that those who were exposed or had symptoms were following through with testing. She stated testing for both PCR and rapid antigen testing was still readily available with no out-of-pocket cost. She stated that Novant; Atrium; Walgreen; CVS all had appointments, and StarMed had testing available with no appointment needed.

Ms. Harris spoke about the ambassador program, stating they completed over 75,000 visits since the program was started in the fall. She said what was seen over the past week was that 19% of the bars; 7% of restaurants; and 5% of retail stores inspected were out of compliance. She said there was 100% compliance with gyms, hotels, and private clubs. She said that with the Governor's order they had over 60 visits Friday and Saturday in the community with no need to involve CMPD. She said what they did experience through the ambassadors were that many of the businesses had ramped up their cleaning and were implementing fairly successfully around masking and social distancing and occupancy limits. She stated they continued to partner with CMPD and other law enforcement when there were violations.

Ms. Harris said they were still vaccinating Group 1 and Group 2 and now providing vaccine for Group 3, the initial group which would include pre-k-12<sup>th</sup> grade educators; school staff; and childcare providers. She said they would continue to provide the vaccine to them and were working hard to get as many of those done before March 10<sup>th</sup>, as that was the date that was set for the remainder of Group 3 to open up. She said the Governor made adjustments to the timeline to allow for the remainder of Group 3 to begin receiving vaccination as early as March 3<sup>rd</sup>. She stated they had not come close to vaccinating all of those pre-k-12<sup>th</sup> grade educators; school staff; and childcare providers. She said that Group 4 would be opened March 24<sup>th</sup>. She said the County was expecting some Johnson and Johnson vaccine over the week and that the one-shot vaccine would make vaccinating individuals less complicated. She stated the State was providing Mecklenburg

Meeting Minutes  
March 2, 2021

County with 10,000 doses of Johnson and Johnson and an additional 5,850 of Pfizer. Ms. Harris spoke about the issue of people making appointments without canceling.

Ms. Harris said there was 28,176 doses given through the County with a second dose of 16,207. She said for the entire county there have been 108,739 first doses given in Mecklenburg County, which was 9.79% of Mecklenburg County's population. She said there were concerns voiced about the low percentage of the population that has been vaccinated. She mentioned that those who were being vaccinated in Mecklenburg County who were not living in Mecklenburg County were not counted in the total vaccination population. She said that 5.98% of those vaccinated were African American, and they had work to do in that area.

Ms. Harris stated they were still nowhere below the July peak despite numbers falling; they were still too high. She said the CDC Director made the point that with the new variant that may be within the community and lessening of movement restrictions, everyone should be cautious.

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

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

### **21-6698: COVID 19 Spend Plan Update: Coronavirus Relief Fund & Emergency Rental Assistance**

Michael Bryant, Deputy County Manager, presented an update on the COVID-19 Spend Plan. Mr. Bryant provided an overview of the Emergency Rental Assistance Fund followed by a refresher of the Corona Virus Relief Fund and ended with next steps. He reviewed the County Manager's recommendations.

Daniel Diehl, Public Information Director, presented recommendations on the COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign. Mr. Diehl provided a detailed overview of a new, vaccination marketing plan that responded to some of the valid concerns that some of the Commissioners have past highlighted. The presentation targeted the populations that were severely impacted by COVID-19 and promoted the importance of getting vaccinated.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake and seconded by Commissioner Cotham to appropriate the entire amount of \$6.8 million of the Emergency Rental Assistance to the Dream Key Partners (formerly Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership) and \$4,551,200 from Coronavirus Relief Fund (\$39.2 million) for mental health, medic, online tax payments, vaccination marketing plan, senior services, criminal justice services and trac-phones.

Mr. Bryant and Mr. Diehl answered Commissioners' questions.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded unanimously.

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

### **DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS' MONTHLY REPORTS – NONE**

### **STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE**

### **COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS**

#### **21-6689: Response to Homelessness in Mecklenburg County**

Commissioner Leake made comments.

Meeting Minutes  
March 2, 2021

Stacy Lowry, Community Services Director, presented information that clarified the role of the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to provide housing to the homeless; the pros and cons of purchasing and using older hotels to provide housing to the homeless population; using empty City and County buildings to house the homeless on a short term basis; providing social worker support to assist the homeless; and the role of shelter leaders and/or the Red Cross in this effort.

Ms. Lowry responded to Commissioner comments.

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

### **21-6690: Resolution in Support of NCACC Presidential Initiative to Promote Food System Resiliency**

*Note: North Carolina Association of County Commissioners President, Ronnie Smith, has been leading an initiative to address food-system resiliency in North Carolina with the goal of identifying ways in which counties could help ensure all North Carolinians have access to high-quality, affordable food and that local producers would be able to help meet this need. In Mecklenburg County, the Board of County Commissioners acknowledged this as a critical issue and allocated \$3 million in the FY2021 budget to develop solutions that addresses food deserts in the county.*

Chair Dunlap read the resolution.

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough and seconded by Commissioner Altman, to adopt a Resolution in Support of NCACC Presidential Initiative to Promote Food System Resiliency.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, answered Commissioner questions.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded unanimously.

Resolution is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #83.

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously approve items not pulled from the Consent Agenda.

#### **21-6627: Minutes**

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: January 5, 2021 Regular Meeting, January 12, 2021 Budget/Public Policy Meeting, January 20, 2021 Regular Meeting, January 22, 2021 Special Meeting, and January 27-29, 2021 Annual Retreat.

#### **21-6673: Budget Amendment-LUESA Auction Revenue**

Amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase of \$6,266.23 to the General Fund (0001) within the Land Use and Environmental Services Agency budget from the January 2021 vehicle auction proceeds.

#### **21-6677: Tax Refunds**

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of \$3,813.67 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of \$122,165.81 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

**21-6682: Grant Funding: FEMA AFG Fire Prevention & Safety Grant**

(A) Affirm submission of a grant application to FEMA for an AFG Fire Prevention & Safety Grant up to \$226,000 for fire prevention and education program materials and equipment and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within the Code Enforcement Division of LUESA for the duration of the grant.

**THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.**

**21-6665: Grant Application - Diesel Emission Reduction Act funding**

Commissioners Leake and Powell pulled the item for clarity and/or public awareness.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Powell, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application for up to \$1,000,000 to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for Diesel Emission Reduction Act grant funding to support Mecklenburg County's Grants to Replace Aging Diesel Engines (GRADE) program and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within LUESA for the duration of the grant.

**21-6668: Budget Amendment - Department of Social Services (Revenue Increase)**

Commissioners Leake pulled the item for clarity and/or public awareness.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in federal revenue of \$241,300 from the North Carolina Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services in the General Fund (0001) and (B) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate an increase in revenue and expenses of \$768 from Federal childcare allocations within the Department of Social Services in the General Fund (0001).

**21-6672: Awarded Grants for HUD Continuum of Care 2020**

Commissioners Leake pulled the item for clarity and/or public awareness.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to recognize, receive, and appropriate the HUD Continuum of Care 2020 amount awarded of up to \$3,684,943 for the duration of the grant periods to the General Grants Fund (G001) within Community Support Services Department.

**21-6675: Grant Application - Air Awareness Funding**

Commissioners Powell pulled the item for clarity and/or public awareness.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Powell, seconded by Commissioner Leake, and carried unanimously to (A) approve submission of a grant application for up to \$70,000 to the N.C. Division of Air Quality for funding to support local Air Awareness activities and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) within LUESA for the duration of the grant.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

**21-6697: Commissioner Reports**

Meeting Minutes  
March 2, 2021

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell announced that she and Commissioner Meier were participating in an art project in the community which was a story-telling event called Chasing Home. She stated she and Chair Dunlap were going to be part of a discussion that Hugh House was doing in regard to arts funding in response to the City's decision to change the way they would support the arts.

Commissioner Jerrell spoke about the increase need for mental-health trauma within the community which was caused by COVID-19.

Commissioner Leake spoke about the need for Commissioners to work together and requested that seniors go to get their COVID-19 vaccination.

Commissioner Powell mentioned that she went to look at a storm-restoration project with the Mayor of Cornelius and that as the Board moves forward they needed to be supportive of all that goes into stream restoration and the protection of water quality.

Commissioner Cotham reminded everyone that there were still many people who were not making progress from COVID-19 or who were grieving despite things gradually getting better. She stated that a lot of people would need mental health services and to be checked on.

Commissioner Altman reported out feedback she received at a public workshop hosted by Park and Recreation in Elderly Park.

Chair Dunlap invited everyone to watch his upcoming State of the County address. He announced that it was the last meeting with Emily Kunze, Clerk to the Board and said that she would be missed. He mentioned that staff members were excited about her leadership, appreciated her valuable service, and hated she was leaving. He said her service was instrumental in the County moving forward throughout the pandemic and hoped many of the recommendations that Emily made would still be implemented.

Emily Kunze, Clerk to the Board, thanked Commissioner Dunlap for his kind words and thanked the Board, staff, County Manager for all of their support. She said it had been awesome to be part of the organization and that they were an amazing group of people who truly cared about the community and about making a difference for the residents of Mecklenburg County, and she was grateful to be a part of that. She stated that while she was there for a short tenure, she was very appreciative for the opportunity with hopes of future collaboration. She wished everyone the best of luck.

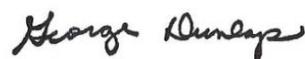
**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:34 p.m.



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Emily A. Kunze, Clerk



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George Dunlap, Chair