

**Meeting Minutes  
September 1, 2020**

*Due to the State of North Carolina's Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.*

**CALL TO ORDER - 6 PM - REMOTE MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, convened in Formal Session on Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

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

Absent until Noted: Commissioner Vilma D. Leake

**INVOCATION/PLEDGE**

Commissioner Scarborough led the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT**

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

20-6261: Commissioner Leake  
20-6308: Commissioner Leake  
20-6313: Commissioner Leake  
20-6317: Commissioner Leake  
20-6322: Commissioner Leake  
20-6324: Commissioner Leake  
20-6326: Commissioner Leake  
20-6327: Commissioner Leake  
20-6332: Commissioner Leake

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Rodriguez-McDowell, and carried unanimously to moved Item No. 20-6344: Meck Pre-K Services forward in the agenda since there were speakers.

**AWARDS/RECOGNITION**

**20-6337: Proclamation - Mother Hester McCardell Ford Day**

Chair Dunlap read the proclamation.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to adopt a proclamation declaring September 1, 2020 as Mother Hester McCardell Ford Day.

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

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**20-6315: Order of the Hornet Induction of Nancy Wiggins (Commissioner Harden)**

Commissioner Harden read Nancy Wiggin's biography and recommended Nancy Wiggins for membership in the Order of the Hornet.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to induct Nancy Wiggins into the Mecklenburg County Order of the Hornet.

Ms. Wiggins made thanked the Board and made remarks.

*Note: The Order of the Hornet was established in 1972. It is bestowed by the Board of County Commissioners on persons who have displayed valor or high order of service uniquely and specifically to the citizens of Mecklenburg County. This is the highest honor bestowed by the Board. The Order of the Hornet was founded in the spirit of the early Mecklenburg patriots who signed the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on May 20, 1775 and proclaimed the County's freedom from Britain more than a year before the U.S. Declaration of Independence was signed. Those early patriots valiantly fought for their independence during the Revolution and gave Lord Cornwallis such difficulties during his occupation of Charlotte that he termed the town a "hornet's nest" of rebellion. Because Nancy Wiggins reflects the honor, strength, and fierce American patriotism that so stung Lord Cornwallis, she is being recommended for membership in the Order of the Hornet.*

*Nancy Bowen Wiggins is a dedicated public servant with more than 35 years of community service to Mecklenburg County. Nancy just completed her tenth and final year on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission (CMPC). Nancy served two terms, each as an appointee of the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners. In her first term from 1994-1999, Nancy served as the Vice Chair of the Zoning Committee and led the Transportation Committee which was significantly involved with the design of the Blue Line. During this time, Nancy also served as an appointee on the Solid Waste Management Board and led the citizen subcommittee of the Recycling Committee which halted the construction of a commercial incinerator. Nancy was nominated to the CMPC again in 2014 and has served faithfully through June 2020. During her second term, Nancy noticed that Mecklenburg County had an alarming number of pedestrian deaths and consequently led the effort for the CMPC to adopt the Vision Zero Action Plan guidance which sets as a community goal "zero" transportation deaths. Nancy also led the CMPD Transportation Policy Initiative that culminated in an adopted resolution on June 20, 2020 to support transportation focused planning and zoning which is multi-modal, connected, safe, environmentally sensitive, and customer focused.*

*In service to the community, Nancy brought a deep knowledge of real estate and a passion for addressing transportation and affordable housing. CEO and Founder of Nancy Wiggins Commercial Real Estate firm, Nancy has a very successful career with certifications in commercial investment, international property, and appraisal. Nancy has also served as a trustee for the Global Housing Foundation, a non-profit organization that works with the United Nations and Habitat for Humanity to combat the proliferation of slums throughout the world by providing innovative solutions for workforce housing.*

*Nancy generously shares her knowledge with others. Nancy has a long history as adjunct professor in our community having taught courses in urban development, public policy, and political science at Johnson C. Smith University, UNC Charlotte, Queens University, Winthrop University, and Wingate University.*

*Nancy is highly engaged in the political life of Mecklenburg County. Nancy is a long-time member of Democratic Women of Mecklenburg County. Nancy ran for County Commission in 1988 and City Council in 2011.*

*Nancy has more accomplishments, too many to mention here. Nancy's colleagues say that she will be remembered for her dedication, concern for others, historical knowledge and experience, courage to shake things up, commitment to inclusive planning, and as a*

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*leader for integrating transportation in our planning processes. We are grateful for Nancy's service.*

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

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**20-6312: Public Appearance**

There were no speakers that addressed the Board during Public Appearance.

**COMMISSIONER REPORTS AND REQUESTS**

**20-6344: Meck Pre-K Services**

Commissioner Harden introduced the item.

The following speakers addressed the Board regarding this agenda item:

- Janet Singerman

**Commissioner Leake joined the meeting at 6:34 p.m.**

- Banu Valladares
- Amanda Thompson
- Yomara Roseboro
- Debra Clark
- Dr. Devonya Govan-Hunt
- Bill Geiger
- Jan Neitzel
- Sadae Sutton
- Dionne Kenan
- Jennifer Harper
- Jared Keaton
- Kimberly Follis
- Latoya Scott
- Amanda Blanton
- Gillian Britt
- Christina Smith
- Justin Perry

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated the creation and implementation of the Meck Pre-K Program was one of the things she was most proud of as County Manager; she said children with the opportunity to participate in a high-quality pre-k experience would reap the benefit of that experience over their lifetime. She said Meck Pre-K was designed to be a 6.5 hour, 36-week, in-person, learning experience. She said the curriculum had five domains: approaches to play and learning; emotional and social development; health and physical development; language development and communication; and cognitive development. She stated there was a study done by Duke University on NC Pre-K and remote learning services during COVID-19. She said that lead teachers and assistant teachers were surveyed about the efficacy of remote-learning strategies. She said there were several findings. First, only 33% of children receive remote learning services on a daily basis; 58% receive remote learning services on a weekly basis. Secondly, the most frequent methods for delivering remote services were [inaudible] text, learning activity packets and email. She said that none of that could take the place of an in-person instruction. She said the teachers felt that while they could provide remote learning in those respective domains, there were two exceptions: emotional/social development and approaches to play and learning. That was because those two required interactions with other children to be meaningful. She said they identified time to engage your remote

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learning and access to technology were the two biggest barriers in remote learning. She said another study from the National Institution for Early Education research study related to public, pre-k students this spring found that only 23% of children previously served in public, pre-k programs continued to receive meals and nutritious snacks, and the same study found that ¼ of public pre-k students with disability received no support and about 40% of pre-k students with disabilities received only partial support. She said based on the study results, remote learning for four-year old children was not high-quality pre-k.

Ms. Diorio said it was designed to be a multi-generational strategy to improve economic mobility and opportunity. First, was to provide a quality educational experience to four-year old's, and second was to provide a safe place for families to place their children when they go to work. She stated that many of the families received before and aftercare that the County paid for so parents could work their full-time jobs. She said the third part of the strategy was to provide professional opportunities and career pathways for those working in childcare centers. She said as the program expanded, they had created opportunities for childcare workers to move up the economic ladder by becoming assistant and lead teachers in the program. She said none of it was impacted by COVID-19; children still need a quality, in-person pre-k experience. Families still need to work and have a place to put their children, and this year, 20 new classrooms were added, which provided professional development opportunities for the workers.

She said they needed to look at the entire pre-k landscape, not just Meck Pre-K; providers in the NC Pre-K program had been given the option to provide in person or virtual instruction. She said the NC Pre-K in CMS classrooms would be virtual in light of the decision of CMS to close its facilities. Currently, the NC Pre-K program had 986 open slots. She said CMS's Pre-K program was operating virtually and as of yesterday still had 927 open slots. She stated it should also be noted that \$10 million of county funds appropriated to CMS each year were directed to support the bright beginnings program and that by virtue of that appropriation. They were funding and supporting a virtual pre-k option for families who want it, as they should not try to be all things to all people and operate the program by exception. She said it was unclear to her the problem they were trying to solve and that there was choice for families in the pre-k ecosystem.

She said the Meck Pre-K program operated out of licensed childcare centers that were operating successfully during the pandemic, and the centers provided quality childcare for families of essential workers and others and will continue to do so. She said they had more demand for their slots than there is supply, which demonstrates that there was a need and desire for the program. She said the children would only be four once and would not get the time back. She stated they were doing a tremendous disservice to the children to place them in a virtual program to which the effectiveness had not been proven when a high-quality, in-person option was available. She said that in FY21, the Board of County Commissioners not only appropriated \$21 million for the Meck Pre-K program but also appropriated \$20 million to fund subsidies to eliminate the childcare subsidy wait list. She said since childcare and Meck Pre-K were provided at the same facilities by the same providers, it was not clear to her why they were only concerned about four-year old children and not childcare in general. In fact, a request had been received from one Boardmember to explore the possibility of allocating some of the federal cares funding to expand childcare opportunities for working families. She asked why it was safe to send a child to childcare but not to pre-k when housed in the same facility. She said that based on the emails she has received, it seemed as though some may be placing a higher value on the safety and well being on teachers than childcare workers.

Trinisha Dean, Smart Start of Mecklenburg County, said they started by giving a quality, pre-k experience to those who had a greater need in order to be better prepared for kindergarten. She said when looking at spring of 2020, they had converted to virtual instruction due to COVID-19, and during that time, they received feedback from families and providers that it was not working, as the families did not have the technology skills in order to support their children virtually. She said that when they converted to virtual instruction in March, by spring break in April, families started to fade away; they no longer participated. She said when a decision was made by CMS to close or no longer open schools for the remainder of the year, families did not participate. She said it was discouraging to the teachers who provided live recordings for the families, and they were

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not actively participating. They had two or three children who were on, which was not the purpose [inaudible]. She said to speak with the contracts with providers, as they contracted with providers to administer the pre-k program, of licensed childcare facilities. She said the teachers were employed by the childcare providers.

Ms. Dean spoke to the safety of the children, saying that during the stay-at-home there was physical and sexual abuse that took place in some of the homes for families who did not have an option. It was reported that there was a family with a father who shot the mother during that time, and the child was removed from the home. She said they knew the support was not there for families, and they were better off being in an environment where they were loved, nurtured, and able to have those developmental screenings provided by their classroom teachers. She spoke on reduced capacity, stating they made the decision to have up to nine children in the classrooms and they brought in the Public Health Director and two licensing supervisors for the Department of Health and Human Services to provide Q & A sessions for the families. She said there has been an opportunity for the teachers to ask COVID-19 related questions. She stated that she stood in support of in-person instruction. She said they would continue to hear from the families in reference to the need of the program. She said she knew the need was there and in order for the families to have and maintain a job, they needed a place to put their kids in a safe environment.

Ms. Dean and Ms. Diorio responded to Commissioners' questions and comments.

Commissioner Harden stated what parents and teachers were asking for is choices and this would add that option. She said there was a reason for all the open slots in pre-k and that was because parents were scared to send their children back. She said they needed to serve the children, with compromised healthcare situations, who were in home. She read that kids were super spreaders and that it was a reasonable concern.

Commissioner Jerrell said there were circumstances where he did not subscribe to a all or none proposition. He did not believe their job was to pick winners and losers; he believed it was an issue where they did not have to accept one proposition over the other one. He believed they all could concede the fact that in person was the most ideal setting for the children and when they were talking about their learning environments. He said he knew many families needed an in-person option, and they were providing that. He stated that he supported providing options for residents of Mecklenburg County.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said one thing she heard in the whole discussion was a fight for children to have in-person learning and she believed that no one was advocating for anything other than that. She believed that some were advocating for not leaving out the children who could not come back in person, whose families were living in fear, and she did not believe the fear should be discounted, as it was not unreasonable. She wanted to know if it was a cost issue. She wanted to know if it was, what the price tag was. She asked why they would not open it up to children who need the learning.

Ms. Diorio responded that today was the first day of school and what they were seeing was not atypical of what they see for the last two years in Meck Pre-K, that not every seat is full on the first day of school but that they knew as they would move forward and continue to keep enrollment open, that they would fill 801 slots with in-person learning. She said if there were children in slots in person and the center decides they wanted to go virtual, those kids would get kicked out of school. She said there were issues around who would get to make that decision and how it would get made. She said the NC Pre-K guidance was very clear, that remote learning was the choice of last resort. She argued that they should provide a service to the people who wanted in person and the people who wanted virtual have the ability to do that, and they would be supporting that through \$10 million appropriation they give to CMS. She did not believe it should be discounted. She stated there were 927 slots of virtual pre-k available today for parents who wanted it; she asked why they wouldn't encourage them to take advantage of the virtual pre-k options and reserve their 801 slots for in-person pre-k, because that was what the centers and families say they want.

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Commissioner Powell requested more details from Ms. Diorio on how difficult it was for the different centers. She found it troubling when people want to get their way and say things that were not true. She said Ms. Diorio had been a champion for Meck Pre-K every step of the way, so when people criticize and villainize her, she found it troubling. She said they wanted to give them opportunities to get ahead and knew the best way to do that was in person; she stated remote was the last resort. She felt it was important to consider options since they were in COVID-19.

Ms. Diorio responded that they were one pre-k program in Mecklenburg County and that there were three: Meck Pre-K, NC Pre-K, and Bright Beginnings. She said they were the ones who had chosen to go with 50% capacity and that NC Pre-K was still doing 18 kids per class. She said they had a unique opportunity to provide a quality, in-person pre-k program and taking extra steps to keep kids safe. She said if there were families who did not want in person, there were many other options they could take advantage of, but to take away their in-person, high-quality pre-k seats to virtual would do a disservice to kids in the community.

Commissioner Cotham stated she was puzzled on why they were even having the discussion. She said that she did not have even one person talk to her about the need to go remote but that suddenly it came up. She stated she was supporting in person.

Commissioner Leake said she did not know that they would have a problem in terms of how and what they would do but that as a working mother herself, she had thought about having to get up and making sure they had somewhere for her son to be. She said they had options and if it was not for the options, she would say no to the process, but that she was appalled that all of a sudden, this had become a major issue for some of the Boardmember. She stated that she supported it 100% and that District 2 was supporting it through her surveys with people.

Commissioner Fuller stated that he was the one who championed universal pre-k in Mecklenburg County and that he did it leading the County to provide the guarantee for all of the people. He stated it was Mecklenburg County's guarantee of universal pre-k, not NC Pre-K or Bright Beginnings. He said that he did not understand that argument, as no one was arguing that they should not do in person for the kids. He said that all they were saying was that they wanted to have more options for people who did not want to have their kids in a in-person environment that they nevertheless would have through the Mecklenburg universal guarantee would have another option. He said it seemed as though they had space to do that. He said the school system was fully remote currently and that meant that there were families who had their children at home. He asked if they were saying to every family that they must make a choice for one or two of their kids being in a in-person environment, when their other children in CMS were not in the same environment? He said he did not believe that families should have to make that choice and did not believe choices needed to be taken away from any family. He said he wanted to provide options and that in their case they were saying that they had to do in person, and he did not think it was right. HE said it was about choice and access, whatever their situation. He said they were in a global pandemic, and it was not business as usual and that they should reflect those circumstances.

Ms. Diorio stated the cost did not change because they were at 50% capacity, that it would cost the same amount of money to serve 800 as it did to serve 1,600. He said if they allowed centers to do that, potentially they would be throwing kids out of an in-person option and wanted that to be clear there was not extra money hanging around to pay for virtual pre-k.

Commissioner Fuller asked why more could not be spent for virtual.

Ms. Diorio responded that it was not what was on the table.

Commissioner Scarborough said they must have pre-k, because if children did not receive learning early, they would tend to lose their ability to want to read in school.

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Chair Dunlap said that they were trying to solve a problem that did not exist, as people had an options. He said secondly, they were trying to dictate to the business community of how they should operate, and it was not the role of government to tell privately-owned pre-k programs what they must offer.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to authorize Meck Pre-K services to be provided through both in-person, hybrid, or full remote classrooms.

Commissioner Fuller asked to make a friendly amendment that the centers which choose virtual classrooms, that the Meck Pre-K program would fund whatever expenses above what they currently fund for in person, to address the County Manager's concern that they would have to turn families away if they chose virtual.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to authorize Meck Pre-K services to be provided through both in-person, hybrid, or full remote classrooms and for Mecklenburg County to provide funding for those centers that choose to offer virtual classrooms, the programs must demonstrate valuable and rigorous instruction outlined in the NC Pre-K guidance.

No vote was taken on this motion due to a subsequent substitute motion that was approved.

Ms. Diorio stated they did not administer the program but that Smart Start administers it. So, when they made the motion that Mecklenburg County would verify the program, that was not what they do. She said Smart Start had to be able take on the responsibility to manage the virtual classrooms. She said they would need an appropriation of funds to fund the excess costs and that currently they did not have that appropriation, so they would not be able to do that unless there was an appropriation of funds, which was not what they were talking about tonight. She said he was talking about an expansion of current services above and beyond the 800 kids they were currently serving.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Cotham and seconded by Commissioner Leake to table this agenda item to a future meeting.

Commissioner Fuller expressed the desire for the item to not be tabled for too long.

The County Manager was directed to contact Smart Start and obtain a time frame of when they could do an assessment regarding the administration and cost of a virtual program and bring back a recommendation at the next meeting.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Harden and Jerrell

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **20-6320: Business Investment Grant - Centene Management Company LLC**

Peter Zieler gave a brief presentation. He stated Centene was a Fortune 500 company with \$74 billion in revenue and that they were the largest provider of government-sponsored healthcare. They currently have 501 state employees with 158 employees in Mecklenburg County. He mentioned they value diversity, stating that 70% of their supervisory positions were held by women and that 50% of the employees were people of color. He said the company embraces multi-modal connectivity, which had attracted them to the market, especially to the University City Area, which is adjacent to greenways and the Lynx Blue Line extension. The project would have over 3,200 new positions, with over 1,000 being in operations, with an average wage of \$63,000. He stated the majority

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of those positions were available to folks with a bachelors or equivalent. He said this project was a little different than their typical business-investment program grant, as it would be done in four phases, and as each phase would be completed, it would kick off a 10-year grant that was tied to that phase. He said at the end of 10 years of phase one payments would cease on that, and while there may be payments going for the 10 years on each of phase two, three, and four. He stated there was a minimum assessed evaluation that would need to be created, of \$662,572.

Mr. Zieler said there were competitive options for the project; York County, South Carolina offered a \$930 million grant, which included over \$447 million in fee in lieu of property taxes, and another site was considered in Tampa, Florida. He said it was with an offer of \$48 million; however, Florida had no payable income tax, and the tax avoidance in that situation was more than \$550 million over a four-year timeframe. He said that the project would have a significant spinoff effect, as within 10 years of creating the project, it will have ramped up to 3,237 jobs, with an additional 2,250 jobs created as secondary jobs. He said by year 10 of the project, the total estimated tax revenue from the project of associated development was at \$13.1 million. He said the estimated fiscal impacts were significant, with the cumulative net over the 20-year lifespan of the project would be more than \$100 million to the County. He said by year 2024, they would expect to be averaging \$1.97 million revenue to the County, and by year 2029, \$4.38 million. He said in the final year of the grant, the County would be netting \$8.9 million of new revenue.

Mr. Zieler stated that in July 2020, the Commissioners approved in close session the Notice of Intent to Approve a grant ranging from \$19.1 million to \$26 million, and the City of Charlotte approved in open session a 12-year grant and that the total incentives between the City, State, and County would be between \$435 million and \$450 million. He reviewed the action before the Board. He said the action was to adopt a resolution approving a business investment program grant to Centene Management Company LLC. for not to exceed the amount of \$26,023,933 and to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute the same. He introduced the Thomas Irwin, the Senior Vice President of Regional Development and Political Affairs for Centene Corporation.

Thomas J. Irwin, Senior Vice President for Regional Development and Political Affairs, Centene Corporation, made remarks.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing to receive comments on a proposed Business Investment Program grant to Centene Management Company LLC (Centene).

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Jerrell to close the public hearing and to adopt a resolution approving a Business Investment Program grant to Centene for an amount not to exceed \$26,023,933 and authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute the terms and conditions of the contract.

Commissioner Powell said that in the middle of a global pandemic they were talking about adopting an investment grant of \$26 million County dollars, which she believed Mecklenburg County needed to do important work. She said \$26 million to a corporation, which was number 42 of the wealthiest Fortune 500 corporations in the United States. She said the corporation brought in \$74 billion in 2019. She believed they needed to be investing in small businesses and asked how they would ever move the needle on economic mobility if they were helping to preserve and protect the wealth of the wealthiest, perpetuated inequities, and she could not support it. She asked Centene to reconsider and reject the \$26 million County dollar business grant.

Chair Dunlap said that was \$26 million they did not have if they were not located here. He wanted the public to understand how investment grants worked, and that was when companies locate, they rebate them a portion of the County tax dollars they provided to the community for education, parks and recreation, and all of the other things. He stated after they had been rebated those dollars, the dollars they continued generating in tax dollars, because they were located here, and because they were building an entire campus which would general tax dollars.



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Commissioner Jerrell said one thing important to the Board was diversity and inclusion and racial equity and after doing his research with the company was that 75% of employees were women; 64% were in advisory positions; 50% identify as people of color, and when you look at their Board, 17% were made up of women, 25% people of color, and when you add them together, you have 42%. He felt the company reflected the values of the Board and what they had been trying to accomplish. He said that he was not trying to make a case for them but felt it was important to point those aspects out.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she struggled with this one. She said the County's portion was the smallest between the three that were investing in it. She wanted the community to be aware that the company was the nation's largest provider of government sponsor healthcare. She felt that getting that business investment grant was taking the tax dollars again; she did not like the system and believed it was screwed up. She did not believe they should be paying a company that kind of tax incentive grant when their CEO in 2019 made the equivalent of what their portion of the grant would be. She said she would vote for it, because it was their structure, and she believed it was how the structure worked. She said until they could change the way the structure was, she felt it was a game they had to play.

Commissioners made remarks in support of the business investment grant for Centene.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Lyles, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 29.

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

## APPOINTMENTS

### 20-6343: Appointments

#### Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee

The Board considered one three-year term expiring July 31, 2023.

The Commissioners cast votes for those candidates that were nominated at the August 18, 2020 meeting, the results are as follows:

- Jennifer Boyce, 1 vote by Commissioner Harden
- Jeronica Cain, 5 votes by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Jerrell, Leake, and Scarborough
- Ryan Lyttle, 2 votes by Commissioners Powell and Rodriguez-McDowell

Ms. Cain was appointed.

#### Women's Advisory Committee

The Board considered one unexpired term expiring November 30, 2021.

The Commissioners cast votes for those candidates that were nominated at the August 18, 2020 meeting, the results are as follows:

- Lilly Raymond, 1 vote by Commissioner Powell
- Deborah Saunders, 1 vote by Commissioner Leake

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- Shekeria Smith-Barnes, 7 votes by Commissioners by Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Rodriguez-McDowell and Scarborough

Ms. Smith-Barnes was appointed.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS – NONE**

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

**20-6357: Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) Pilot Project**

Dena Diorio, County Manager introduced Mark Ethridge and stated no action would be taken for the Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing Pilot Project tonight, the item was for information only.

Mark Ethridge, Ascent Real Estate Capital, provided a presentation for a rental subsidy proposal for Archdale Multi-Family Property. He said the company was a real estate investment company based in Charlotte, and they had been involved in naturally occurring affordable housing preservation for the last few years. He said they had acquired two naturally occurring affordable housing projects in Charlotte in the last 18 months and that they were now partnering with a new endeavor, the Housing Impact Fund. He said their goal was to acquire over 1,200 units and deed restrict the portfolio to set aside 30% of units at 30% of AMI, 50% of units at 60% of AMI and 20% of units at 80% of AMI. He said their Board of Advisors would govern wrap around services which would be implemented with the portfolios to insure they were providing tenants with health and wellness education, technology and career readiness, job readiness, in addition to other services.

Mr. Ethridge said the projects had been the largest well of affordable housing in the community over the years but that over the next 10 years they had become extremely popular with the customers for a variety of reasons. Fortunately, the multitude of those reasons were gentrifying and displacing folks and making it less affordable for folks at 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, and 80% of AMI. He stated that NOAH preservation meant putting long-term deed restrictions on the properties and making sure residents met income qualifications as they moved in in the future. He gave an example of how NOAH preservation had been done in Charlotte in the last few years. He said there had been three NOAH deals executed with the use of private-sector capital and participation with Charlotte's Housing Trust Fund. He said they could buy at a price much cheaper than new construction, so they could reach lower AMI than they could with new construction.

Mr. Ethridge said in terms of County participation, they had not come to them before for the NOAH preservation deals, as they typically would ask the City for Housing Trust Fund money. He said the reason the group was going in front of the Board for the program was because when it was assembled and they started talking to their decision makers and stakeholders on the effort, they wanted to make a dedicated effort to expand access to 30% AMI households in a way that most folks had not done before. He said it was easier for them to do it in NOAH than it would new construction and certainly a better investment in the County's dollars. He said they could think about the money in a creative way since it was there and two, because they were expecting the City to participate in a parallel manner, their cost per unit, per year, on the households was a fraction of what it would be if they were asking to take on the full burden.

Mr. Ethridge responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

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

**20-6354: Grier Heights Economic Foundation Rental Subsidy Program**

Willie Jones, Grier Heights Economic Foundation, provided a presentation for a rental subsidy proposal. Mr. Jones gave background information on the Grier Heights Economic

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Foundation. He said that they owned the land under the property and would have a right of first refusal at the end of 15 years. He said the project was a 72-unit project with 34 one bedrooms and 19 two-bedroom units which currently had two tiers, a less than 50% AMI and a less than 60% AMI tier. He stated that in the less than 50% AMI tier, the rents were \$580 per unit and for 60% AMI for \$715 and \$815. He said the target of the proposal was to take four, one-bedroom units at 60% AMI and make them available to households making 30% AMI. He stated that the problem they ran into was that many long-term Grier Heights' residents, who were seniors, did not qualify for the property due to their low incomes. He said the property closed in 2018 and had been in construction since then and was now fully rented with the exception of the four units set aside for the program. He said the monthly rent for a \$580 was more than some of those residents could afford. He stated there were a flood of applications due to the shortage of housing. He stated they received the applications before realizing the problem of the seniors not being able to afford to live there. He said it was then that they needed to intervene in some way on the behalf of some of those residents, which was when they contacted Commissioner Jerrell's office in July 2020.

Mr. Jones stated the goal was to provide the four units at 30% AMI as opposed to not being able to respond to any of those needs; the eligibility would be that all members of the household must be at least 55 years, a single or two person household, minimum of 75% of the annual income must come from retirement or social security, supplemental security, disability, or VA benefits, and there must be a minimum of \$300 a month in household income. He stated they must reside in the Grier Heights Neighborhood. He stated it already had an existing regulator structure, which was approved in the closing documents, with the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. He stated they included stipulations that the residents could not pay more than 30% of their household income towards the rent and when they looked at the residents who were unable to afford \$225-\$300 per month, depending on where their income came from, they tried to take an average of all of the subsidy from all of the senior programs and got a rough average. He stated on balance, most households in the 30% band could afford about \$262.50 a month, meaning they were roughly \$45.50 a month beneath what was needed to rent the unit.

Mr. Jones stated they were asking the County to subsidize four of those units down to 30% AMI which would \$21,700 a year for 15 years, which would be adjusted by up to two percent per year for inflation. He said for the total appropriation for 15 years would be \$325,800. He said in terms of the program mechanics, that they were trying to mirror the existing rent and management structure. He said the award would be given to the Grier Heights Economic Foundation for the purpose of providing the rental subsidy for the four units. He said they were proposing that the County enters into a grant agreement and the grant defunds to Grier Heights Economic Foundation, and there would be an annual amount of \$21,700, dispersed quarterly. He said a report would be included with the amount spent on each unit and at the end of the year, the developer's annual audit would include a none referencing the amounts funded by the program to the development. He said in terms of timing, there would be a little more construction work to be done and a few more pertinent approvals needing to be issues before people would move into the property.

Mr. Jones responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

Chair Dunlap made a request for staff to bring back to the Board the total impact the current County Commissioners had on affordable housing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to adopt the resolution authorizing the County Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Grier Heights Economic Foundation and to develop terms and conditions under which the County would allocate a total of \$325,800 over a 15-year period.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 30.

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

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**20-6339: Restricted Contingency: \$15 hourly wage for CMS non-certified staff**

Earnest Winston, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent, said they were there tonight because the Board of Education had passed a motion which instructed him to implement the \$15 an hour minimum for non-exempt staff serving in fulltime positions at such time, they can get the \$11 million in contingency released. He believed it met the Board's requirement and requested the funds to be released. He stated they would also make it retroactive to July 1.

A motion was made by Commissioner Harden and seconded by Commissioner Powell to release \$11 million appropriated for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools from restricted contingency being held until Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools provided a \$15 per hour minimum wage to all non-certified staff.

Mr. Winston responded to Commissioner's comments and questions.

Commissioner Leake asked how many people would now earn \$15 an hour.

Mr. Winston responded just over 2,100 employees.

Commissioner Fuller asked if they fired anyone because of this.

Mr. Winston responded that CMS have not and do not anticipate having to initiate a reduction in force.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, stated that for the sake of transparency, as part of the appropriation to CMS for FY21, the appropriated money for psychologists, social workers, and guidance counselors funds would be used to fund the \$15 an hour increase for non-certified staff, and those positions would not be hired. She wanted to make sure that was clear for when they came back next year, for the budget process so the Board would understand why the positions were not filled.

Commissioner Fuller asked for clarification on the Board appropriating money, in the current fiscal year budget, for psychologists and counselors. He asked if it would not be used for them because of the \$15 funding they had just spoken about.

Ms. Diorio responded yes, that it was how the superintendent explained it to her, that he would use those funds to fund the \$15 an hour increase and that he would not be able to hire psychologists, social workers, guidance counselors that the County had appropriated in the budget. She wanted to make sure the Board was aware since it did not come up in the conversation.

Commissioner Fuller stated that the Board did not intend to pit some employees against the other.

Chair Dunlap stated when they adopt an overall budget, the school board would have the right to move those dollars as long as a certain percent of the overall dollars were not moved. He said they were within their right to do that, because the Board did not stipulate that the dollars, which were supposedly allocated for that purpose, must be used for that purpose.

**20-6304: Update on Charlotte Moves Task Force**

Taiwo Jaiyeoba, Assistant City Manager for the City of Charlotte and Director of the Planning, Design & Development Department, provided an update on Mayor Lyles Charlotte Moves Task Force. Mr. Jaiyeoba said that mobility that was integrated that they invest in as a system was really the solution to connecting all the things together. He mentioned that the task force started to meet back in May due to Corona Virus. He said

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in December 2020 they intended to delivery to Charlotte City Council and the community what would pinaudible' the transformation of mobility network, which would be submitted to the public at some point for a vote or decision in terms of how we improve mobility in the region.

Mr. Jaiyeoba explained what the transportation and mobility network was. He said that the network did not focus on one mode movement, as it is an integrated mode of transit. He said it was about six different buckets when you think about it. He said it was an investment in rail, roadways, and pedestrian accessibility. He said the plan was to meet again with the Commissioners September 17 to look at where they were in regard to the six buckets, and when they meet next time, they plan to identify different things with the task force, such as how other communities had funded this. He stated that in October they would be looking at what it would cost and how they would pay for it. He said in December they would present the Transformation and Mobility Network to the community. He said somewhere in November, they would present to them before going to Council and would share the information with the County Manager and Executive Team before going in front of the Commissioners. He said that a few weeks ago, they shared the same thing with the House Delegation of 17 member to let them know where they were headed with the vision.

Mr. Jaiyeoba responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

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

### **20-6356: Taxpayer Assistance Program**

Neal Dixon, Tax Collector, provided a presentation regarding Mecklenburg County's Taxpayer Assistance Program. Mr. Dixon said affordable housing solutions were a priority for Mecklenburg County government, and the Taxpayer Assistance Program was developed to be a component of the County's overall strategy for affordable housing. The creation and development of this program was a collaborative process between the County Manager, Assistant County Manager Bryant, Office of the Tax Collector, the County's Assessor's Office, Financial Services Department, Legal Department, and Office of Management and Budget.

Mr. Dixon reviewed program objectives and illegibility criteria, stating it was to assist qualifying Mecklenburg County residential, homeowners to retain their homes by providing financial assistance. He stated the primary qualification was that applicants must meet income requirements as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. He said the program's funding source was \$250,000, which was in the FY21 restricted contingency budget. He said the request was to release the funds for the program. He said that the County's Assessor's Office would receive and review the applications, and for those who qualify, the office would notify the Financial Services Department to disperse the approved grant funds to the Office of the Tax Collector. After this, the grants would be posted to the taxpayer's bill.

Mr. Dixon said for the illegibility criteria, applicants must live in Mecklenburg County; residents of Charlotte and the other municipalities within the County [inaudible] illegible to apply. They must be owners of residential property or possess the property through a qualified life estate. It must be their primary residence and they must have occupied it as their primary residence at least three consecutive years. He stated there was no age requirement and that the grant recipient may remain in the program for up to 10 years. He said that residents with a limited tax delinquency may apply and may have one delinquent bill in the last three years that remains unpaid at the time of application. Should funds be granted to a resident with a delinquent bill, the granted funds would be posted to the current year, 2020 bill. If the 2020 bill was already paid or had a balance less than the grant amount, the remaining grant funds would be posted to the prior-year bill. He stated that residents with one or more delinquent bills which were three or more years old would not qualify this year. He said that in those instances, they would work with them to determine available options to satisfy the delinquency so they could be considered for the program in the future. He stated being in the program would not relieve the tax pay from

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their obligation to pay taxes nor does it exempt them from collection actions if that became necessary. He stated in terms of household income that it could not exceed 50% of area median income and that applicants would be required to indicate the number of people living in the house, providing their proof of income. He reviewed the exclusions that would make homeowners ineligible for the program.

Ken Joyner, Tax Assessor, discussed the census median value and sales data information, grant amount calculation, application procedures, and the communication and outreach plan.

Mr. Joyner and Mr. Dixon answered Commissioner's questions and responded to comments.

Commissioner Harden asked if it was one-time money or reoccurring.

Dena Diorio, County Manager, responded it was one-time money.

Commissioner Jerrell stated he understood before that they could not abate people's taxes.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, responded that it was one of the components that they were still looking at, as they were trying to structure the program looking at each component. He stated they could clearly assist those that, from a public-benefit perspective, were [inaudible], but they were trying to balance it between whether it would be viewed as an abatement or if there was a way for the County to benefit on the back end. He said they were still assessing as they processed it.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if they were at least at a comfort level to approve this item with confidence.

Ms. Diorio responded that she thought they were.

Mr. Wade said yes.

Chair Dunlap asked how they could ensure those with greater need were the ones who were served first.

Mr. Dixon responded that the best thing they could do would be outreach and work in the community to reach that group.

Mr. Joyner stated they were also looking at a 10-year cap so that new people could be brought in.

A motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to approve the Taxpayer Assistance Program and release restricted contingency funds to be expended for the program.

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

### **20-6336: COVID-19 Response Update**

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, provided an update on the COVID-19 response. Ms. Harris stated she had new information. She stated that to date, Mecklenburg County had 25,773 cases and that over the past week or so they had been averaging about 115 to 150 cases a day, which was stabilized for them. She said that to date they had 300 deaths and half were related to long-term care facility outbreaks. There were currently 30 outbreaks in long-term care facilities that they were tracking and four clusters in childcare settings or schools. She said that included what they saw at UNC Charlotte and Davidson College. The numbers had not changed significantly, though they have seen an uptick in the number of cases in younger adults over the past several weeks and in addition to that, there had been a decline in the percentage of cases among Hispanics, which is now at

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about 25%. She said that number was still high compared to the number of Hispanics in the community. They were continuing to watch that.

Ms. Harris said in terms of the daily hospital census, it continued to decline slowly, and the hospitals report they were stable currently and continue reporting that they have both ICU and regular beds and plenty of ventilators. She stated the daily positivity rate had slowed a bit and flattened out for us over the past week, as it had been 6.7%. She said the millionth mask had been distributed over the week and were now shooting for the next million.

Ms. Harris stated that testing was widely available in Mecklenburg County and the turnaround times had stabilized a bit. In most cases, test results were coming back in 24 to 48 hours. She stated that they had a new partnership in working with the NC Division of Health and Human Services and Starmount Healthcare. She stated they would be providing additional drive through mobile testing in the community. She said that the demand for testing continued to be down a bit but that they still were averaging about 3,100 tests per day.

Ms. Harris said that new State reporting has given the ability to look at testing and positivity rates across various sub groups as well as zip codes and that they were working hard to validate the data but that they had looked at it over the past few weeks and the map showed the per-capital testing rate by zip code but that it would really help. She said there had been a lot of testing over the past week at the National and State level as well as some at a local level. She said the testing guidance had not been modified. She said their current community spread indicated that they needed to continue to test as much as possible and that maximizing their testing availability really helped with contact tracing as they work to control the spread of the virus.

Ms. Harris stated that they were also working with the State with a contractor to implement some community health worker support in the community to address the needs of COVID-10 positive individuals and that they would be providing more information about that as it moved along. She gave an update on the ambassador program, stating they received 62 applications, interviewed 10 candidates and selected seven. She stated six accepted positions. She said the experience of the individuals would help, as some had worked with refugee populations, experience with communication and de-escalation training, knowledge of community resources, experience in community outreach, and some speak multiple languages. She said half would start this week with training and the other half would start the next week. She stated they would be housed in the environmental health program. Ms. Harris said the work they would be doing was visiting establishments and business to educate and assess compliance with the State and Local guidance and that they would work closely with lawn enforcement, especially around those facilities that had proven to be non-compliant. They would engage with universities, colleges, citizens, community groups, and businesses to educate, responding to questions, providing strategies, and reinforce prevention messages.

Ms. Harris said they were still awaiting the death certificate data from the State Center of Health Statistics that was requested to understand deaths seen in the community. She said there were fewer visits to the Emergency Department but that it appeared to have returned to baseline. She stated they were seeing a similar pattern with depression and assault related injuries. She said they had not seen much difference with medication and drug overdoses. She said with alcohol use and dependence that they were seeing fewer visits for 2020 at this point. She said there was a fairly dramatic difference with motor vehicle injuries during the stay at home orders with fewer cars on the road, and the numbers have not caught back up to baseline at this point.

Ms. Harris said there were a lot of people making masks these days and that there were a lot of questions from the community about what kind of mask they should wear, and they want members of the community to choose a mask that are two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric that completely covers the nose and mask. She said they needed to fit snugly. She said they were continuing to reserve the N95 masks for healthcare providers and first responders.

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Ms. Harris said in terms of gaiters and face shields, the evaluation continued on those and that they were unsure of their effectiveness at this point. Most gaiters were one ply and have a hard time staying up. She said the special situations were with the children; if at all possible, people should find masks specifically made for children or to try to find a mask that would fit the child fairly snugly and not putting masks on those two and younger.

Ms. Harris stated that flu season would be here pretty soon and that they were working on an awareness campaign, as well as planning with their community partners to ensure the flu vaccine was readily available in the community. She said they were working with NCDHSS to acquire additional vaccine for uninsured adults. She said they increased their flu vaccine order for their department to have additional available.

Ms. Harris said the Governor put out phase 2.5, which would go into effect Friday, September 4, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. and would stay in affect until October 2, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. She said a few key points to the version was that it had increased the mass gathering limits to 25 indoors and 50 outdoors. Gyms and exercise facilities can open at 30% capacity, and there was some specific guidance on the things they need to do within their walls. She said museums and aquariums were able to open at 50%; playgrounds could open, but bars were still closed, including night clubs, theaters, amusement parks, and other entertainment venues. She said that large venues remain subject to the mass gathering limits. She said the alcohol curfew would still be in place. She said everyone needed to double down on things that they knew worked, in order for places to remain open.

Ms. Harris responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

Commissioner Powell asked for an update on school nurses.

Ms. Harris responded that this was an on-going issue since the County competes for nurses with the hospitals. She said the County has hired 12 nurses since early August although there were several retirements; currently, there were 38 vacancies.

Commissioner Harden asked with the positivity rate hovering around 6% to 7% and the Governor easing up what she thought would happen to the positivity rate.

Ms. Harris stated it depended on what preventive measures were taken.

Commissioner Harden asked what would keep the rate going down.

Ms. Harris responded that unfortunately there was not a vaccine nor herd immunity so wearing masks, social distancing and washing hands.

Commissioner Harden asked if there was more that could be done with the five outbreaks in facilities.

Ms. Harris responded that they have worked with them to increase testing.

Commissioner Harden asked if anything was being done to make sure front-line workers and childcare workers could get free flu shots.

Ms. Harris said they were still developing their plans and were going to do everything they could to get people vaccinated and for free.

Chair Dunlap mentioned that anything that could speed up the test results could be beneficial.

Ms. Harris responded there were a number of rapid tests being evaluated with results in 15 to 20 minutes.

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



**STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE**

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS**

**20-6349: Absentee Voter Ballot Postcards**

Michael Dickerson, Director of Board of Elections, provided an update and explanation on voter options for casting ballots in the upcoming 2020 elections in light of COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Fuller stated his proposal was based on a few things. He said COVID-19 had changed everyone's world, and it was there public health responsibility to make sure their people were protected from becoming infected by COVID-19. He said nationally, they had lost over 170,000 Americans because of COVID-19. He said one thing that people were concerned about, particularly the seniors, was in-person voting and the health risks posed due to it. He said he wanted to make sure there were no barriers as much as possible for people to vote. He stated that there were so many people talking about absentee ballots that they needed to have an authoritative voice and he believed the County voice was an authoritative voice to alert people to the availability to absentee voting. In other words, you could vote by mail. He said he was proposing that the message was sent to all registered voters in Mecklenburg County, by postcard.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Harden to, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, authorize and direct County staff to immediately prepare and send a postcard to every registered voter or every household in Mecklenburg County informing residents that voting by absentee ballot is a safe alternative to the potential health risks posed by in-person voting, and clearly explaining the process for doing so in North Carolina, in advance of the upcoming November 3, 2020 election.

Michael Dickerson said he believed the more knowledge they could have out there for the voters the better off they were and that he was a firm believer they should give voters a choice, making sure they knew they could vote early, by mail, and on election day. He stated they had already had a huge response to absentee by mail process. He said the NC State Board of Elections just launched their online absentee portal.

Mr. Dickerson responded to Commissioners' comments and questions.

Mr. Dickerson stated that he did not see the benefit of this action since the State would already be sending a notice out and that he would rather spend the money elsewhere.

Commissioner Leake stated her concerns were with incapacitated seniors.

Mr. Dickerson said they were currently looking at multi-partisan assistance teams where they could go out to the senior centers, that they couldn't currently go to because of COVID-19, and that they sent letters out to the sites and help them with asking for an absentee ballot by mail.

Commissioner Jerrell thanked Commissioner Fuller for being forward thinking and concerned about voter suppression. He asked Commissioner Fuller to respond to comments by Mr. Dickerson.

Commissioner Harden stated she was for a second postcard.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell stated one thing they needed to recognize was that NC was a swing state and that she received two absentee ballots via mail and did not trust them, so she thought the idea of the County being an authoritative voice was important.

Commissioner Cotham asked if the State was going to do it why didn't they let them pay for it.

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Commissioner Fuller responded he did not think it was an either/or situation and that they could do more than one postcard.

Chair Dunlap stated he did not question the value but did have some concerns as he did not think this was the role of government. He stated that another concern he had was when the Chairman of the Board of Elections tells me he already had 80,000 requests, that was indicative of the fact that the word has already gotten out. He said when the Panthers, Hornets, and churches were sending out this information, it would be indicative of the fact that the word was getting out. He stated that when he heard the State Board of Elections would send out the same information, it was indicative that the word got out. He asked why the County should spend potentially \$500,000 for the initiative. He said he would not typically pit one against the other but if he had a half million to spare, he would be doing something about tent city or the arts community, which was the one group of people the had not done anything for during the pandemic.

Tyrone Wade, County Attorney, stated Mr. Fuller's motion did not include the second part, to also appropriate \$500K. He said that secondly, he wanted to make the Board aware that listening to the Director of the Board of Elections and the comments from the Board, he would want to think carefully about what the County staff is being asked to do. He said the subject-matter experts here would be the staff of the Board of Elections, and he was not sure who the County Manager would designate to prepare the card, what information would be contained on that card, [inaudible], because County staff would not have the [inaudible] of the rules of the election, where and how and all of the circumstances, and if wrong information would be provided, it could be an issue for the County.

Ms. Diorio stated the way the action was crafted was that Commissioner Fuller was directing County staff. She stated she was not comfortable with County staff getting involved in election matters as it was not our role or responsibility. He said if Michael Dickerson agreed that was something his staff wanted to do, that would be fine, but that she was not okay having County staff prepare the postcards and sending them out. She did not believe that was appropriate.

Commissioner Fuller requested to amend his motion to appropriate the funding for this mailing. He believed there would be no reason why County staff couldn't collaborate with Board of Elections; the reason he mentioned County staff was because they because they could not direct the Board of Elections to do anything. He stated it was not his intention to exclude them but just trying to keep cognizant of who they could direct to do anything.

Ms. Diorio state she would recommend that he change his motion as the record would reflect the direction was to County staff. She suggested that he amend the motion to make sure that it was the Board of Elections which would provide the County with the information that we need.

Commissioner Fuller stated that was what he just said.

Commissioner Harden stated she was okay with the amendment.

Ms. Diorio requested that Commissioner Fuller restate his motion as it was not a collaboration, and the County would take direction from the Board of Elections on the language that would be on the postcard but that it was not a collaboration.

Commissioner Fuller said if she was comfortable that they could direct the Board of Election's staff, he was fine to amend the motion that way.

Ms. Diorio stated she was not sure that he could but that she was not comfortable with County staff engaging in the activity with the Board of Elections not being the lead and giving them direction.

Commissioner Fuller inquired about the language for the postcards.

Mr. Dickerson responded that as far as the language went, he understood the County Manager's concerns completely. He said they try to stay out of elections too except for

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administration of it. He said his goal was that he never wants to put anything into question after the election was done. He stated that was why they stick strictly by the book with everything they do. He said they would put together the language of here is what the election is, election date, early voting, absentee by mail portal, but that was all stuff that would come out in a State release in the next couple of weeks anyway.

Commissioner Harden stated the County publishes that information on the website.

Chair Dunlap said it would direct people to the Board of Election's website.

Commissioner Harden asked if they put the information on the County's website, what was the difference between that and putting it on a postcard.

Chair Dunlap stated that every time they had a bond initiative, they had restrictions for what they could share which was why they hired someone else to run the bond. He said it could perfectly be legal but that he did not believe it was the role of government and he did understand the concerns. County Manager has indicated that she did not want staff involved. He asked if he had alternate staff. He said that he could hire contractors and that Mr. Dickerson essentially said the same thing, that he did not want to get involved, because in the end-

Commissioner Fuller said the problem he was having was he said that he wanted to stay out of the election but that the County provided election information all the time. He said he was not advocating that they do anything partisan or advocate for anything. He stated he just wanted people to have the information. He said if they want to contract out, that it would not bother him, as he just wanted the postcard to be sent.

Chair Dunlap asked Ms. Diorio who would do the language for the postcard.

Ms. Diorio stated she would just suggest that they ask Board of Elections staff to take responsibility for doing that, and if Mr. Dickerson was willing to take that on, she would appreciate him doing that, as they understood elections better than the County and that the County does not create the language for the Board of Election's website.

Chair Dunlap asked if Mr. Dickerson was agreeing about creating the language.

Mr. Dickerson said they certainly we could create that language and they would duplicate the language the State sends out if that was the direction of the Board. He stated it would simply be put in as an educational piece for the voters of the County, not necessarily an administrative mailing. He said in his business, when sending out mailing to all voters, it would become an administrative mailing, and if you were list maintenance procedures, that mailing now kicks back another mailing that would have to go out if the card comes back. He said that unfortunately he was in a 90-day deadline, so he could not do some of his list maintenance with this, so that it would not be able to do anything for him except for be an announcement. He said he was hesitant because he already had 80,000, and by the time it got done, he would be up to 100,000/110,000 people. He asked how he would handle those 110,000 people who had already requested an absentee ballot by mail. He asked if he would throw them off the list or kick them out and do not tell them that they also have the option of voting by mail, early, or on election day. He said this was where he started to get concerned. He said to face it that they would get maybe 500,000/520,000 people show up for the election and probably 25% of those people will vote via mail and the rest of them will vote in early voting at one of the 33, early-voting sites and then they will have a smaller number the election day itself because everyone was so keenly aware of early voting and absentee voting.

Chair Dunlap said they were still trying to find a resolution to this issue.

Commissioner Jerrell asked, with respect to what Mr. Dickerson just said, if Mr. Fuller could clarify exactly what he was proposing to be on the postcard so Mr. Dickerson could carve out the folks who had already requested the ballot.

Commissioner Fuller said he was hoping that they wouldn't have to do all that work, that all they would do would be sending a simple post card to all voters. He said even if

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duplicate or not, they were sending it to all voters, so everybody gets it. He said all it would say was that they have the option to vote by absentee ballot in this election: this is how you do it; you could do it online or in the mail. That's it. He said the language should be language that the Board of Elections was comfortable with. He recommended the Board hand it to Mr. Dickerson and pay for it.

Chair Dunlap stated the concern was that Fuller still did not have the information to make his motion effective.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake to end the debate and vote on the matter.

With no second the motion failed.

Commission Fuller asked if it would be better if they said something more general, such as that the County authorized the sending of a postcard to every registered voter with this information, then County staff and the Board of Elections can manage how that is done.

Ms. Diorio said he can authorize it, and they would have to figure out the best way to get it done. She said it was not something they have done before, and she was concerned about potential blow back on the County.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Harden to (A) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, authorize and direct county staff to immediately prepare and send a postcard to every registered voter or every household in Mecklenburg County informing residents that voting by absentee ballot is a safe alternative to the potential health risks posed by in-person voting, and clearly explaining the process for doing so in North Carolina, in advance of the upcoming November 3, 2020 election and (B) appropriate General Fund (0001) balance appropriation up to \$500,000 to sufficiently fund this mailing and any suggestions made by Director Dickerson.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Fuller, Harden, and Jerrell

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

**CONSENT ITEMS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously, to approve the following consent agenda items:

**20-6270: Minutes**

Approve the following Meeting Minutes: June 9, 2020 Budget/ Public Policy Meeting, June 23, 2020 Closed Sessions, June 23, 2020 Budget/ Public Policy Meeting, July 7, 2020 Regular Meeting, July 28, 2020 Special Meeting, and August 5, 2020 Regular Meeting.

**20-6314: Public Auction for Disposal of Surplus Equipment**

Adopt a resolution authorizing sale of surplus personal property by public auction on September 19, 2020.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 48, Document No. 31.

**20-6321: Tax Refunds**

(A) Approve refunds in the amount of \$15,051.70 for registered motor vehicles as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor and (B) approve refunds in the amount of \$13,672.50 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

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*Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes, and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.*

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

**20-6328: Retire Canine Officer Carlos - Sheriff's Office**

Retire and approve the donation of a retired Canine Officer to a Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office Retired Major.

**THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT**

**20-6261: Budget Amendment - Reduce FY2021 Budget Items Associated with The Republican National Convention**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2020 - 2021 Budget Ordinance to decrease revenue of \$682,635 from Federal Revenue to the General Fund (0001) within the Sheriff's Office and decrease expenses in the same amount for operating costs for the Republican National Convention and (B) amend the 2020 - 2021 Budget Ordinance to decrease General Fund (0001) balance appropriation by \$50,000 within Non-departmental for the cost associated with contracted IT security consulting during the Republican National Convention.

*Note: The FY2021 Budget includes funding for two items related to the 2020 Republican National Convention. Funding for operating costs in the Sheriff's Office of \$682,635 was expected to be reimbursed from the Federal Government. Funding for additional IT security consulting in the amount of \$50,000 was included as a restricted contingency pending confirmation that the convention would be held in Charlotte. A large-scale Republican National Convention did not occur in Mecklenburg County. As such, expenses and revenues included in the FY2021 Operating Budget will not be required.*

**20-6308: Set Public Hearing - Grant Application: FY2021 FTA 5307 Urban Area Transportation Grant Application – DSS**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) schedule a public hearing on September 15, 2020 to receive comments on the application for FY2021 FTA 5307 Urban Area Transportation Grant for Fiscal year 2020-2021 and (B) authorize the Clerk to the Board to publish Notice of Intent to hold a public hearing.

**20-6313: Budget Amendment - Health Department (Revenue Increase/Decrease)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of \$164,859 in State revenue from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH) in the General Fund (0001), (B) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to approve a decrease of \$205,861 in Federal revenue from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH) in the General Fund (0001), (C) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of \$14,920 in revenue from the Ryan White Program in the General Fund (0001), and (D) amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of \$1,242,342 in Federal revenue from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), Division of Public Health (DPH) for the Epidemiology/Communicable Disease Branch in the General Fund (0001).

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**20-6317: Capital Reserve Expenditure - Cadillac Golf Ranch Driving Range (Park and Recreation)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to appropriate \$200,000 from the Public Golf Courses Consolidated Capital Reserve Fund (9002) for Infrastructure Repair.

**20-6322: Construction Contract - Security Cameras for Park and Recreation Facilities**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to award a Contract to Security 101 in the amount of \$501,022.75 for installation of new security cameras at Park and Recreation facilities.

**20-6324: Health Department Amended Fee Schedule**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) approve the new fees for Children's Developmental Service Agency - CDSA and Community Alternatives Programs (CAP) due to COVID-19 and (B) approve the new fees for Community Alternatives Programs (CAP).

**20-6326: Resilience in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCast)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the creation of a part-time position funded by the Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) grant. The position is a Health Program Coordinator/Supervisor and is being funded by grant funds already approved.

*Note: The Board of County Commissioners approved the Department to submit a grant application to SAMHSA at the May 2, 2017 meeting. SAMHSA awarded the Department \$5,006,376 over a 5-year period. The funds are being used within the ReCast program to work with community partners to increase community resilience, improve behavioral health, empower residents and reduce trauma. This position will coordinate project management activities, resources, and information related to community engagement for ReCast training and pilot activities and events and will work with individuals and organizations to assist in navigating community systems and engaging in support services. The Health Program Coordinator/Supervisor will perform research related to broad dissemination and communication of trauma informed and resilience approaches.*

**20-6327: Budget Amendment - Sheriff's Office - U.S. Department of Justice – 2019 Justice Assistance Grant - Revenue Decrease**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to rescind October 15, 2019 Board Action (Agenda Item #19-5720) to recognize, receive and appropriate \$141,069 from the U.S. Department of Justice, Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) that originally increased the Sheriff's Office revenues and expenses in the General Grant Fund (G001).

**20-6332: Budget Amendment - Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (Revenue and Expense Increase)**

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate \$4,238.52 from seized assets to the Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund (8521) within the Sheriff's Office.

## COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

### 20-6335: Commissioner Reports

Commissioners shared information with the Board.

Commissioner Jerrell said he wanted to acknowledge Commissioner Leake and Chair Dunlap regarding their work on the \$15 per hour minimum for CMS workers.

Commissioner Harden asked the community to be vigilant with mask wearing and hand washing. She was concerned about the community during the reopening.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell made note that September was National Suicide Awareness Month and Recovery Month. She asked to be aware of those things and to realize they were things the community was struggling with and things that coincide with the County and services the County offers.

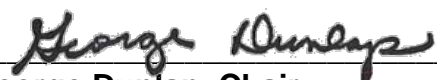
Chair Dunlap stated they could not overlook the good that had been done with so many positive things and that the Board was to be commended for supporting those things. He stated that the hospitals would create some new strategies to go where the problems were.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 12:39 a.m.

  
Emily A. Kunze, Clerk

  
George Dunlap, Chair