

**MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'**  
**REGULAR (REMOTE) MEETING OF OCTOBER 15, 2024, AT 5:00 p.m.**

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met virtually in regular session on October 15, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Brownie Newman; Vice-Chair Parker Sloan; Commissioner Terri Wells, Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Amanda Edwards; Commissioner Martin Moore; and Commissioner Jasmine Beach-Ferrara.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and provided opening statements.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Edwards moved to approve the Consent agenda as presented, Commissioner Moore seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

1. Approval of the September 17 Combined Special meetings and Regular meeting minutes
2. Approval of the August 2024 Tax Collection Report
3. Budget Amendment for Estate Settlement with NC Department of Commerce
4. Budget Amendment to accept donations made to Buncombe County Libraries
5. Revised Resolution authorizing the amendment of an interlocal agreement between Buncombe County and the City of Asheville expanding the availability of emergency shelter beds and the approval of COVID Recovery Funding project reallocations
6. Proclamation proclaiming October as Domestic Violence Prevention and Awareness Month

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chairman Newman acknowledged the two Public Comments received via email to the Clerk for this remote meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Resolution continuing the January 1, 2025 re-appraisal until January 1, 2026**

Eric Cregger, Interim Tax Assessor, presented background information. He explained that the proposed resolution delays the 2025 reappraisal deadline until January 1, 2026. Due to the known and anticipated severity of damage to real estate and personal property caused by Hurricane Helene it is unknown how market values will be affected across the county. The timing and severity of the storm has pivoted the responsibilities and assignments of nearly all commercial, residential, business, and individual personal property staff. The entire Assessment team is in the data collection and analysis phase and will be spending the remainder of the year working diligently to ensure damaged properties, whether real estate or personal, are assessed as accurately and equitably as possible. On January 1, 2023, the county received a notice for mandatory advancement of reappraisal under § 105-286 (a)(2) which states we must perform a reappraisal within three years of receiving such notice. This continuance is within the guidelines of current general statutes and any further continuance requires action by the General Assembly.

Chairman Newman asked if the 12 months would be enough time, and if there was the capability to extend if needed. Manager Pinder confirmed that Staff will be evaluating and would come back to the Board to extend the deadline, if needed.

Commissioner Wells made the motion to approve the resolution continuing the January 1, 2025 re-appraisal until January 1, 2026. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously by roll call vote.

**Budget Amendment to the FY 2024-2025 Grants Project for anticipated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/State of North Carolina for Hurricane Helene grant funding**

John Hudson, Budget Director, explained the community recovery from the Hurricane Helene (HH) disaster will take a concerted effort. Financial transactions have already and will continue to take place. This amendment establishes an anticipated FEMA award for Buncombe County. Once this budget is in place, expenses already incurred in the General Fund will be moved to this grant and all future activity related to Hurricane Helene will be placed in this budget. The amount of \$29,000,000 is based on current spending and projections to set a budget for response and recovery to ensure the budget is available for needed expenditures. Also, future amendments will take place to reconcile the budget to the full amount of the award or reflect the full scope of activity taking place when required.

Commissioner Wells asked if the County would have the ability to add more in the future, if needed. Hudson explained that yes, there are two types of emergency funds and staff would continue to monitor and add funds if needed. He stated there was the expectation that these funds would be reimbursed by FEMA.

Commissioner Wells made the motion to approve. Commissioner Sloan seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**Budget Amendment for Solid Waste Department purchase of a compactor**

John Hudson, Budget Director explained that after working with the Finance Department on a financial analysis of long-term costs and landfill needs, the Solid Waste Department is requesting to amend their budget to purchase a new Compactor. Historically, this equipment has been leased but with increased leasing fees proposed for new equipment going forward, the analysis has found that it is more fiscally sustainable to purchase a compactor. This is a new addition to the FY25 budget and the purchase price is \$1,755,328. This purchase will be debt funded, so next year's Solid Waste budget will show those payments. However, in order to purchase in the current year with the debt proceeds, the current year's budget will still need to be amended.

Commissioner Edwards made the motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Commissioner Wells seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**Resolution designating official banking depositories of Buncombe County**

Melissa Moore, Finance Director, explained that Finance continues to diversify the County's investment of idle funds and new accounts have been opened. Three new financial institutions have been added to the list of depositories in the supporting resolution (First National Bank,

Pinnacle Bank, and Bank OZK) and they meet all statutory requirements of the LGC and conduct business in North Carolina.

The list of depositories already included US Bank, but she wanted to bring their attention to additional movement of County funds. The Counties Trustee is transitioning from Regions Bank to US Bank effective November 15, 2024. The Trustee's function is to pay our bond holders and oversee bond proceeds.

Commissioner Wells asked about the process for selecting these banks. Moore explained that staff went out for solicitations, and these had the highest returns. They came out to be the most competitive and favorable.

Commissioner Sloan made the motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Commissioner Whitesides seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

**Budget Amendments to the General Fund, 911 Special Revenue Fund, and the Mountain Mobility Special Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year 2024 Budget carryforwards**

John Hudson, Budget Director explained the attached Budget Carryforward Ordinance for General and 911 Special Revenue Fund and the Budget Carryforward Ordinance for Capital Projects Fund provide information regarding departments that have requested FY2024 budget in the amounts indicated to be carried forward into FY2025 for the following reasons:

- Purchases in FY2024 not delivered prior to June 30, 2024 due to shipping or vendor delays;
- Services obligated in FY2024 however were unable to be completed prior to June 30, 2024;
- School Consolidation feasibility study will not be completed until December 2024;
- Economic Development project to be completed in FY2025
- Prepaid purchases made in FY2023 and FY2024 not in service prior to June 30, 2024

Total Annual budget requested to be carried forward by fund are as follows:

- General Fund: \$3,976,304
- 911 Special Revenue Fund: \$516,758
- Mountain Mobility Special Revenue fund: \$2,043,359

In FY2025, the purchase of FY23-24 ambulances not yet received due to delays in vendor availability will be moved to the Capital Projects fund. Additionally, certain purchases and services obligated in the General Fund in FY2024 that were not delivered or completed prior to June 30, 2024 due to vendor delays will be moved to the Capital Projects fund as they are related to County capital projects. These purchases and services will be funded from savings from closing an older existing capital project. Total Capital projects budget requested to be carried forward are as follows: FY23-24 Ambulances \$854,640 Total Amount to be carried forward: \$7,391,061

Commissioner Wells asked for more information about annual carryforward funds. Hudson explained that the fiscal year closes on June 30 each year and that some purchases were not

received until after the fiscal year close; these purchases are for pay upon receipt. Therefore, the allocated funding is carried into the appropriate fiscal year for payment.

Commissioner Whitesides made the motion to approve the budget carryforward ordinance for general and 911 special revenue as presented. Commissioner Sloan seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Whitesides made the motion to approve the budget carryforward ordinance for capital project fund as presented. Commissioner Sloan seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**Resolution authorizing the County Manager to enter into a purchase contract with Southeastern Specialty Vehicles, Inc. For the purchase of three (3) ambulances**

Jaime Judd, EMS Division Manager, explained Buncombe County Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Finance, Budget, and General Services has developed a unified, long-term ambulance replacement plan in order to maintain an adequate fleet that aligns with its operational needs. Unfortunately, there have been challenges to timely delivery of units due to the lack of availability of ambulance chassis. EMS has located three (3) ambulances that are pending construction through Southeastern Specialty Vehicles (SSV). In order to secure these units, the County must enter into a purchase agreement with SSV to purchase the ambulances with delivery and payment in FY2027 for an amount not to exceed \$1,225,560.00. This agreement is structured as a multi-year agreement containing non-appropriation clause. Since there are no funds currently appropriated for the first year of the purchase agreement, the agreement will not be pre-audited until funds are appropriated and available.

Commissioner Wells made the motion to approve the budget amendment as presented. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

**Closed Session**

Curt Euler, Senior Attorney informed the Board and read that motion to go into Closed Session to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged to consider and give instructions to an attorney concerning the handling or settlement of a claim for Workers Compensation Claim No. NCIC 20-045914 and a lawsuit in Federal District Court, Western District of North Carolina 1:23-cv-282. There will be no formal action taken at this time. The statutory authority is contained in G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3). Commissioner Edwards made the motion to go into closed session for the reasons provided. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned after closed session at 6:13 p.m.