

**MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS’
BRIEFING MEETING OF JUNE 4, 2024, AT 3:00 P.M.**

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met in Agenda Briefing on June 4, 2024, in the First Floor Conference Room, 200 College Street, in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 3:00 p.m. where and when the following business was transacted:

Present: Chairman Brownie Newman; Vice-Chair Parker Sloan; Commissioner Terri Wells, Commissioner Al Whitesides; Commissioner Amanda Edwards.

Absent: Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Commissioner and Martin Moore, Commissioner

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

During the meeting, the Board and staff reviewed and discuss agenda items and receive staff updates with discussions as noted:

A. Novant Health Letter of Support Request

Chairman Newman discussed sending a Letter of Support for Novant Health’s proposed 26-bed, cancer-focused hospital in Asheville. He noted that both were strong applications and would both bring value to the community and that competition is needed. By consensus, the Commissioners expressed their support for the letter.

B. Strategic Plan Work Session

Rafael Baptista, Strategy & Innovation Director opened the second 2030 Strategic Plan work session with the Commissioner’s. He provided a recap of the community and staff input to date. It was noted that there has been a total of 20 community input events, held in 9 different zip codes in Buncombe County and 407 total participants. The Commissioner’s participated in a workshop to establish goal priorities in the development areas that surfaced from the input: 1) Health and Public Safety; 2) Energy and Environment; 3) Economic Development; 4) Education; and 5) Grown and Development.

C. Agenda Review

Manager Pinder requested that the Board adjust their upcoming regular meeting Agenda to move the Presentation and County Manager’s Update sections on the agenda to be heard before the Public Comment section. There was consensus from the Board.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31p.m.

Board of Commissioners
June 4, 2024

**MINUTES OF THE BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS’
REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 4, 2024, AT 5:00 P.M.**

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met in regular session on June 4, 2024, in the Commission Chambers, 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 5 p.m. where and when the following business was transacted.

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

Absent: None.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Newman led the Commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Moore made the motion to approve the Consent agenda as presented and to amend the Agenda to move Presentations and the Manager’s Report above Public Comment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sloan and the motion passed 7-0.

- Approval of April 16, 2024 Briefing Minutes
- Approval of April 16, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
- Approval of May 7, 2024 Briefing Minutes
- Approval of May 7, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
- Approval of the April 2024 Tax Collection Report
- Resolution Authorizing a Design Contract with WSP USA, Inc. (Ferry Road)
- Budget Amendment - Fund 327 - Behavioral Health Planning Grant
- Resolutions Authorizing Public Safety Systems Intergovernmental Agreements (PSIP & CDE)
 - Resolution - PSIP & CDE - Municipalities
 - Resolution - PSIP - County Fire Departments
- Resolution Approving a TDA Grant Amendment - Woodfin Greenway and Blueway
 - Resolution
 - Grant Agreement - Third Amendment

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT

Manager Pinder introduced Taylor Jones, Emergency Services Director who thanked the USAR Task Force 2 and partners for their service and deploying on two swift water rescues and humanitarian deployments in FY24: in May 2024 to Texas and in July 2023 to Vermont. Manager Pinder and Chairman Newman thanked the Chief's and the various teams for their hard work and representing Buncombe County across the Country.

PRESENTATIONS

- **Gun Violence Prevention and Awareness Month Proclamation**

Commissioner Edwards read and presented the proclamation to Tiffany Iheanacho, Director of Justice Services. The proclamation was accepted with appreciation by community organizers who also announced an event on June 7 from 2:00 -6:00 p.m. in Pack Square Park to promote safe firearm storage and educate the public, particularly the youth, on the importance of gun safety.

- **Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority - State of the Airport**

Lew Bleiweis, Executive Director of the Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority provided an overview of the status of the Authority in the Annual Report.

- **Community Child Protection Teams (CCPT)/Child Fatality Prevention Team (CFPT) Annual Report**

Dr. Jennifer Mullendore, Health and Human Services Director provided an update on the Community Child Protection Team and Child Fatality Prevent Team annual report. The duties of the joint local team are to: review selected active cases in which children are being served by child protective services; review cases in which a child died because of suspected abuse or neglect.; review the records of all additional child fatalities; and submit annually to the board of county commissioners all recommendations, and advocate for system improvements and needed resources where gaps and deficiencies may exist.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Due to the number of speakers signed up in advance, Chair Newman announced that Public Comment would be limited to one-hour. Ken Kahn, Woodfin Councilmember, spoke on behalf of the Town of Woodfin and the Town Council thanking Commissioners and Manger Pinder for their support and partnership in the Greenway/ Blueway project. Fifteen speakers spoke against 5G (the fifth generation of wireless cellular technology) citing negative affects to humans. Six individuals spoke in support of school nurses, requesting that funding not be cut. All speakers that signed up were able to speak.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- **FY2025 Recommended Budget Public Hearing**

John Hudson, Budget Director provided a detailed overview of the FY25 Recommended Budget. Chairman Newman opened the public hearing at 6:50 p.m. there were no speakers, and the hearing was closed at 6:51 p.m. Chairman Newman noted that the Commissioners will consider and vote on the proposed budget at the next meeting on June 18, 2024.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Determination of Critical Need for Capital Improvement Project**

Michael Frue, County Attorney explained the request for a formal public-private partnership under N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-128.1C(b). In order to engage in such a public-private partnership, the Board must first make an affirmative determination that there is a critical need for a capital improvement project to include affordable housing. Staff noted that adoption of this resolution will fulfill that requirement and allow the County to consider the option of entering a public-private partnership with a qualified developer to increase affordable housing.

Commissioner Moore moved to adopt the proposed resolution determining that there is a critical need in Buncombe County for a capital improvement project to include affordable housing. Commissioner Edwards seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Funds 224 and 343 - Conservation Easements: Warren Wilson/Okoboji Farm**

Ariel Zijp, Farmland Preservation Manager introduced Jill Carter, Open Space Bond Project Manager reviewed the Agriculture Advisory Board request for the easement purchase funds in the amount of \$511,500 for Okoboji Farm from the Open Space Bond funds. Staff noted that the transaction costs have already been allocated for this easement from the FY24 Conservation Easement Funding in the Special Projects Fund. Additionally, the Land Conservation Advisory Board requests transaction costs for four conservation easements on 600 acres protecting Warren Wilson College Farm and forestland. The total amount requested is \$310,000 and will come from the Special Projects Fund - FY24 Conservation Easement Funding.

Commissioner Wells expressed her enthusiasm around the project and noted the long-term benefits, she then moved to adopt the motion to approve the budget amendments establishing the proposed easements as projects, as proposed. Commissioner Sloan seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Capital Improvement Policy**

Melissa Moore, Finance Director reviewed the proposed Capital Improvement Policy which was updated to include reserve language that establishes and prescribes how the capital reserve will be funded. Highlights of the policy include: Board of Commissioner adoption of a seven-year Capital Improvement Plan; formal submission and review process of County capital projects by a cross-departmental Capital Review Team; establishing an on-going annual transfer from the General Fund to build a reserve for the Capital Improvement Plan.

Commissioner Edwards thanked staff for the proposed updates and made the motion to adopt as presented. Commissioner Whitesides seconded the motion. The Commissioners continued to discuss the proposed updates. Chairman Newman raised concerns for future budget planning processes, binding future Commissions and noted the Commission needs flexibility in tough budget years. Commissioner Moore agreed that the policy should be nimble. Commissioner Whitesides said the dedicated CIP funding would prepare the County for future capital needs. Commissioner Wells said she still had questions about the specific changes. Manager Pinder noted that previous policies were not officially adopted and went on to explain that staff could add a section to the proposed policy to create flexibility. Pinder clarified the need for the dedicated CIP funding for County properties, which does not have a current dedicated funding source and noted major projects and feasibility studies that would be upcoming. Commissioner Wells said she would prefer staff bring back the proposed policy with language to provide flexibility. Commissioner Sloan expressed support for the multi-year funding plan and thinking about infrastructure needs holistically. He asked about the specific need for a written policy. Finance Director Moore explained that having the policy in place allows the County to set a funding ceiling based on the capacity to issue and pay debt and it would help to reduce the dependency on having to issue debt for capital planning. She explained the benefits of having the dedicated funds set aside for future capital needs. There was additional discussion around the fund reserves and strategic utilization. Commissioner Edwards withdrew the motion. The Commissioners discussed bringing the proposed policy back with the additional language to provide flexibility in the future.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Chairman Newman moved to appoint **Mark Brooks** to the **Health and Human Services Board**. The motion was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara moved to appoint **Jordyn Dezago** to the **Community Child Protection Team/Child Fatality Prevention Team**. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Edwards and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Edwards moved to appoint **Mark Feldman** to the **Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee**. Chairman Newman seconded the motion and it was carried unanimously.

Commissioner Sloan made the motion to reappoint **John Noor, Anthony Coxie and Michael Fisher** to the **Planning Board**. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Wells made the motion to reappoint **HP Patel** to the **Tourism Development Authority**. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Edwards recommended scheduling interviews for the Strategic Partnership Grants Committee applicants. The Commissioners agreed to interview the five candidates at 2:00 p.m. on June 18. Applicants to be interviewed are Dede Style, Tracy Swanson, Wendy Owen, Abigail Sturgill and Julie Taylor.

REPORTS ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Commissioner Moore thanked the committee members that are rolling off the Early Childhood Education and Development Committee for their service and encouraged the public to apply to the various seat openings on the Committee.

Commissioner Sloan moved to adjourn the meeting. Chairman Newman seconded and the motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m.