

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Monday, June 11, 2026

7:00 P.M. Regular Session

**MINUTES**

Place: Commissioners' Chambers, Second Floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 East Main Street, Durham, North Carolina

Present: Chair Dr. Mike Lee, Vice Chair Nida Allam and Commissioners Michelle Burton, Wendy Jacobs and Stephen Valentine

Presider: Chair Dr. Mike Lee

Zoom Hybrid  
Participants: 6

**Closed Session – 5:30 PM**

The Board requested to adjourn to Closed Session for the following:

- 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 G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3).

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to adjourn into Closed Session.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Reconvene to Open Session**

Chair Dr. Lee announced the Board met in Closed Session and no action was taken.

Chair Dr. Lee read the following statement:

*“The County Commissioners, wish to express our unanimous and unequivocal support for every member of our community. As a Board and as a county, we stand behind the celebration of Pride and the display of materials that honor it.*

*In the coming weeks, the Board will develop guidance and clarity for staff to protect these celebrations in Durham County so that situations like the one we saw this past week cannot happen again.”*

## Regular Session – 7:00 PM

### Opening of Regular Session - Pledge of Allegiance

### Agenda Adjustments

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to approve the agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

### Announcements

Monica Wallace, Clerk to the Board read the following announcements:

1. **Women Veterans Recognition Day Celebration** – Durham County Veteran Services invites the community to its annual Women Veterans Recognition Day Celebration at 11 a.m., on Friday, June 12, 2026. The event, honoring the service and contributions of women who have served in the United States Armed Forces, will be held in the second-floor conference rooms of the Durham County Human Services Building at 414 E. Main Street. The program will feature guest speaker retired U.S. Army Chief Warrant Officer 5 Traci Goodwin. Attendees will also have opportunities to network with fellow veterans and connect with local vendors offering information about community resources and support services. For more information about this event, call 919-560-8387 or email [veteranservices@dconc.gov](mailto:veteranservices@dconc.gov).
2. **Get Ready to Unearth a Story This Summer!** – Summer is just around the corner, and so is Durham County Library’s annual Summer Reading Program. This year’s theme, “Unearth a Story”, invites readers of all ages to explore dinosaurs, and archaeology through a variety of free programs and special events hosted at all seven Durham County Library locations. From June 15 through August 8, residents can stop by any library location to pick up a paper reading log. Completed logs may be returned through August 15 for a chance to be entered into raffles for a grand prize. Learn more about this year’s Summer Reading Program here: <https://dconc.gov/DurhamCo-News/Durham-County-Library-Invites-Everyone-to-Unearth-a-Story-During-Annual-Celebration-of-Summer-Reading.htm>.
3. **Stay Connected, Stay Informed, Stay In Touch!** – Watch the June episode of “In Touch with Durham County”! In this episode, host Deborah Craig-Ray, Durham County’s Chief Communications Officer, welcomes first-time guest Krystal Harris, Director of Community Intervention and Support Services, and introduces Seth Komansky, Durham County’s new Chief EMS Paramedic. Watch the full episode on our YouTube Channel here: <https://youtu.be/OL-eJjSjLg4?si=-N-IPk4ZNVKXo8KA>.
4. **County to Observe Juneteenth Holiday** – Durham County Government will close most offices on Friday, June 19, 2026, in observance of the Juneteenth holiday. All offices will reopen with normal operating hours on Monday, June 22. More information on how the holiday will impact specific services here: <https://dconc.gov/DurhamCo-News/County-to-Observe-2026-Juneteenth-Holiday.htm>.

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The Board highlighted the following announcements:

- Durham’s Third Friday would feature a Juneteenth Flag Raising Ceremony at the CCB Plaza on Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual NC Juneteenth Celebration was scheduled to take place on Saturday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, at the CCB Plaza.
- The Alma Street Commons Groundbreaking Ceremony took place on June 5<sup>th</sup>, marking the commencement of a significant affordable housing initiative grounded in sustainability, equity, and community engagement.
- The Civic Action Project Expo was held at Hillside High School and was coordinated by Ms. Annabelle Webb, Hillside High School Teacher.

**Minutes**

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Burton to approve the May 26, 2026 Regular Session minutes.

The motion carried unanimously.

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**Ceremonial Items**

**To Be Recognized**

**26-0319 Resolution - Honoring the Life, Service and Sacrifice of Richard “Ricky” Christopher Dorsey**

Chair Dr. Lee read the following resolution:

**HONORING THE LIFE, SERVICE, AND SACRIFICE OF RICHARD “RICKY” CHRISTOPHER DORSEY**

**WHEREAS,** Richard “Ricky” Christopher Dorsey dedicated himself to serving the Bahama community through the Bahama Volunteer Fire Department beginning at the age of eighteen; and

**WHEREAS,** Ricky Dorsey embodied the highest ideals of public service through his courage, devotion, selflessness, and unwavering commitment to protecting others; and

**WHEREAS,** on September 5, 1996, Hurricane Fran made landfall in North Carolina, bringing devastating weather conditions across Durham County and the Bahama community, prompting emergency responders to answer calls for assistance throughout the storm; and

**WHEREAS,** during the height of Hurricane Fran, Ricky Dorsey responded to emergency calls alongside fellow firefighters and emergency personnel in service to the residents of Durham County; and

**WHEREAS,** while en route to an emergency call during the storm, a red oak tree fell onto the cab of the fire truck in which Ricky was riding, tragically taking his life just ten days before his twentieth birthday; and

**WHEREAS,** Ricky Dorsey made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty while protecting the people and community he loved and is remembered by his family, fellow firefighters, friends, and the countless community members impacted by his life and service.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Durham Board of County Commissioners hereby honors the life, service, bravery, and sacrifice of Richard “Ricky” Christopher Dorsey and recognizes his enduring legacy as a dedicated firefighter who gave his life in service to the people of Durham County.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that a copy of this resolution be presented to the Dorsey family and preserved as a lasting tribute to Ricky Dorsey’s courage, dedication, and sacrifice.

This the 8<sup>th</sup> day of June 2026.

_____ Dr. Mike Lee, Chair	_____ Nida Allam, Vice Chair
_____ Michelle Burton, Commissioner	_____ Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner
_____ Stephen Valentine, Commissioner	

Brian Eaton, Assistant Fire Chief, Bahama Volunteer Fire Department thanked the Board for the resolution honoring Richard Dorsey. Mr. Eaton stated Mr. Dorsey dedicated his life to serving the community through work he was passionate about.

The Board thanked the Bahama Volunteer Fire Department as well as Mr. Dorsey's family and friends.

**26-0325 Proclamation – National Pride Month**

Vice Chair Allam read the following resolution:

**NATIONAL PRIDE MONTH | 2026**

**WHEREAS,** the Stonewall Riots, a period of protests and violent clashes with law enforcement in June 1969, is referred to as the genesis of the LGBTQ+ rights movement in this country and National Pride Month is the result; and

**WHEREAS,** the anti-gay assault and murder of Ronald “Sonny” Antonevitch in Durham, North Carolina led to several subsequent social demonstrations, including “Our Day Out,” North Carolina’s first LGBTQ+ march on June 27, 1981; and

**WHEREAS,** this year’s theme, “ALWAYS FORWARD, NEVER STRAIGHT: Preserving History, Coming Home,” as selected by the Pride: Durham, NC Organizing Committee, alongside the observation of National Pride Month, presents opportunities for community members to protest peacefully, to push efforts for

justice forward, and to raise political awareness of social issues, and to celebrate the history, culture, and contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals; and

**WHEREAS,** over the years, we have seen strides made to value and affirm members of the LGBTQ+ community, as well as the work to improve their quality of life by first acknowledging the challenges that are faced in all areas of life; and

**WHEREAS,** despite extraordinary progress, LGBTQ+ people still face various forms of discrimination, mistreatment, and violence, simply for being who they are, and the County of Durham stands with the community in the struggle to ensure equal treatment for all, while also defending and advocating for LGBTQ+ rights as human rights; and

**WHEREAS,** Durham County Government continues to advocate for local and statewide protections for all LGBTQ+ individuals to make our state a place where all people – regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression – are treated with dignity and respect; and

**WHEREAS,** like many progressive communities, the support of LGBTQ+ rights is illustrated by the fact the Durham County Non-Discrimination Ordinance was approved by the Board of Commissioners to establish protections, to promote the equal treatment of all individuals, to provide freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, creed, color, sex, pregnancy, marital or familiar status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin or ancestry, language, military status, religious belief or non-belief, age, disability in employment and access to all places of public accommodation.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** I, Dr. Mike Lee, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the month of June 2026, as

**“NATIONAL PRIDE MONTH”**

in Durham County. We call upon the people of Durham County to recognize the contributions and achievements of LGBTQ+ community members and to help to improve the attitudes of society and encourage inclusiveness in and across Durham County.

This 8th day of June 2026.

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Dr. Mike Lee, Chair  
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Jesse Huddleston, Chair of Pride: Durham NC, requested County Leaders to continue supporting and partnering with Pride Durham with an emphasis on the need for funding. Raye Dooley, Co-Executive Director of the LGBTQ Center of Durham gave an overview of Pride's 40-year history and asked for ongoing support and funding for the community.

The Board thanked Jesse and Raye for their leadership with Pride and the LGBTQ Center of Durham. They affirmed everyone in the community deserved to prosper and expressed commitment to repairing past harm. The Board inquired about upcoming Pride events. Jesse provided an overview of plans for Pride Month.

**To Be Recognized**

**26-0197 Resolution – Women Veterans Day 2026**

**WOMEN VETERANS DAY 2026**

**WHEREAS,** women in North Carolina have been involved in military-related activities since the Revolutionary War; since June 12, 1948, women have been officially allowed to serve in the U.S. Military and now serve as regular and permanent members of the armed forces in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force; and

**WHEREAS,** women began serving with the Army Nurse Corps in 1901 and the Navy Nurse Corps in 1908; during World War I, women left their domestic duties to serve in Europe from 1917-1918; and

**WHEREAS,** during World War II, the role of women in the military expanded to include women serving in additional jobs including stenographers, clerks, cooks, telephone operators, mechanics, draftsmen, interpreters, and weather observers; and

**WHEREAS,** more than 50 members of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPS), the first women to fly American military aircraft, trained in North Carolina, transporting every type of military aircraft and cargo; they logged over 60 million miles in the air and lost 38 members during the way; and

**WHEREAS,** women during the Vietnam War served on the front lines as doctors and nurses, and a total of eight female members of the military and 59 civilian women lost their lives during the conflict; and

**WHEREAS,** during the Gulf War, women served in multiple positions that has previously been reserved for men, flying helicopters, driving, manning missile placements and leading convoys; and

**WHEREAS,** for many years, women in our military were largely invisible and underappreciated; we owe deep gratitude to our current and past servicewomen who have selflessly served to protect our nation and our way of life.

**NOW THEREFORE,** we, the Durham County Board of Commissioners, resolve that June 12, 2026, is

**“WOMEN VETERANS DAY”**

in Durham County and commend its observance to all citizens.

This the 8<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2026.

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Dr. Mike Lee, Chair

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Nida Allam, Vice Chair

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Michelle Burton, Commissioner

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Wendy Jacobs, Commissioner

Hellen W. Jaurez-Ruiz, Durham County Veteran Services Officer thanked the Board for recognizing Women Veterans Day. She stated the resolution celebrated the bravery and insight of both current and former women veterans.

The Board thanked Ms. Jaurez-Ruiz and the Veteran Services Department for leading Women Veterans Day celebrations.

**26-0279 Proclamation – Gun Violence Awareness Month 2026**

**GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH | 2026**

**WHEREAS,** the Durham County Board of Commissioners gathers in solemn recognition of the profound and enduring impact that gun violence has on families, neighborhoods, and communities across our nation taking more than 40,000 lives each year and injuring tens of thousands more; and

**WHEREAS,** the month of June has been designated as Gun Violence Awareness Month, a time when communities across the United States join together to honor the lives taken too soon, uplift survivors, and reaffirm a shared commitment to fostering safer, more peaceful communities; and

**WHEREAS,** the tradition of wearing orange—first inspired by friends of Hadiya Pendleton, a Chicago teenager whose life was tragically cut short—has become a unifying symbol of hope, remembrance, and the belief that every life is precious; and

**WHEREAS,** the Board recognizes that preventing gun violence requires not only effective public safety strategies, but also compassion, collaboration, and the collective will of residents, civic leaders, educators, faith communities, and organizations dedicated to healing and prevention; and

**WHEREAS,** it is both fitting and necessary that we, as a county, stand together to raise awareness, support evidence-based solutions, and honor those whose lives have been forever changed.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** I, Dr. Mike Lee, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the month of June 2026, as

**“GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH”**

in Durham County and encourage all residents to participate in observances, educational programs, remembrance events, and community initiatives that promote safety, unity, and resilience; and

**BE IT FINALLY PROCLAIMED,** that the Board of County Commissioners stands with survivors, honors the memory of those lost, and reaffirms its dedication to working alongside community partners to build a future free from the shadow of gun violence.

This 8<sup>th</sup> day of June 2026.

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Dr. Mike Lee, Chair  
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Krystal Harris, Director of Community Intervention and Support Services, thanked the Board for the proclamation and raising awareness about gun violence in Durham. Ms. Harris gave an overview of the programs and services offered by Intervention and Support Services Department.

The Board thanked Ms. Harris and stated gun violence should be discussed and addressed by the community.

**26-0306 Proclamation – National Re-Unification Month**

**FAMILY RE-UNIFICATION MONTH | 2026**

**WHEREAS,** the family is the primary source of love, identity, belonging, and support for children and provides the foundation of healthy and thriving communities; and

**WHEREAS,** children are best served when they can safely remain connected to their families, communities, culture, and support systems; and

**WHEREAS,** family reunification recognizes the importance of preserving and strengthening family bonds whenever it is safe and possible to do so, and acknowledges that families can overcome challenges with appropriate support, advocacy, and resources; and

**WHEREAS,** parents, relatives, foster caregivers, attorneys, social workers, service providers, judges, advocates, and community organizations throughout Durham County work every day to support children and families involved in the child welfare system and to help families reunify safely and successfully; and

**WHEREAS,** Family Reunification Month is a time to celebrate the resilience of families, honor the dedication of those who support them, and recognize that children, families, and communities are stronger when families are kept together whenever safely possible; and

**WHEREAS,** Durham County is committed to promoting policies and practices that strengthen families, reduce unnecessary family separation, and ensure that all children have the opportunity to grow up in safe, stable, and loving homes;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** I, Dr. Mike Lee, Chair and on behalf of the Durham Board of County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim the month of June 2026, as

**“FAMILY RE-UNIFICATION MONTH”**

in Durham County, North Carolina, and encourage all residents to recognize the importance of supporting families, strengthening communities, and celebrating the successful reunification of children and families.

This 8<sup>th</sup> day of June 2026.

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Dr. Mike Lee, Chair  
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Chair Dr. Lee stated citizens were signed up to make comments on the item.

Amanda Wallace, Citizen

Ms. Wallace stated Durham County was ranked as the second slowest county in North Carolina for reuniting children with families and requested one percent of the budget to support families.

Antoinette Hawes, Citizen

Ms. Hawes stated Child Protective Services (CPS) took her son in 2016 and he was adopted. She added she located him herself ten years later.

Sharrocka Pettiford, Citizen

Ms. Pettiford stated CPS took her children, and she has not reunited with them.

Walidah Burns, Citizen

Ms. Burns asked about the purpose of the County's reunification funds and stated families were not being reunited with their children.

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Maggie Clapp, Social Services Director, thanked the Board for the proclamation and ongoing support. She stated the County promotes community backing for reunified families and continued work to strengthen family bonds.

The Board thanked Ms. Clapp and the Social Services Department for their dedicated work to reuniting children and families in the community.

**Consent Agenda**

Chair Dr. Lee asked the Board if they requested to pull or comment on any items on the Consent Agenda.

Hearing none, Chair Dr. Lee entertained a motion for approval.

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

26-0261 Receive Keep Durham Beautiful's 2025 Annual Report

\*26-0263 Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC084 for the Department of Social Services to recognize Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC "Share the Light" (STL) funds in the amount of \$16,909

26-0264 Approval of Board Review of the FY 2026-27 County Funding Plan for the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) for Aging Adults

26-0266 Approval to enter into a contract with Southern Elevator Company, Inc. in the amount of \$148,200.00 to provide elevator maintenance and repair services across Durham County Government facilities and parking decks

26-0278 Authorize the County Manager to enter into a \$219,735 contract with Triad Roofing, subject to the review and approval of the County Attorney’s Office, to install a new roof at Durham County North Library. The approved funding to support this project uses Pay-As-You-Go capital funds from the ongoing roof replacement CIP program DC073 (4190420030073301) allocated to support the County’s Roofing Life Cycle Replacement program. Also, that the board authorizes the County Manger to approve any change orders or amendments as long as funding is available.

26-0283 Approve and Authorize the Manager to Execute A Resolution and Lease Agreement with Bull City Slabs, LLC for a suite at Shoppes of Hope Valley

26-0284 Approve Durham County’s Support for and Participation in Triangle Land Conservancy’s Purchase and Protection of 145 acres of Farmland at 4209 and 4310 Hall Road, Including a \$750,000 County contribution, and the Conveyance of a Conservation Easement to Durham County for Permanent Land Protection

26-0286 Approval of the Final Recommended FY27 Durham Annual Transit Work Program

26-0298 Library Requests to Award Contract for Sole Source Purchase of Digital Content Management Services and for eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and Streaming Content from OverDrive

26-0308 Authorize the County Manager to amend the contract with GFL Environmental beginning July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, to provide Curbside Recycling Services to Households in Unincorporated Durham County in an amount not to exceed \$513,874.36

26-0324 Approval to enter a contract with NWN in the amount of \$1,729,707.12 to renew support for Cisco Enterprise, Cybersecurity and Network Management Software.

Consent Agenda Item #26-0263

**Durham County, North Carolina  
2025-2026 Budget Ordinance  
Amendment Number 26BCC084**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF DURHAM COUNTY  
That the 2025-2026 budget ordinance is hereby amended to reflect budget adjustments.

<u>Fund Name</u>	<u>Current Budget</u>	<u>Increase/Decrease</u>	<u>Revised Budget</u>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>			
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Human Services	\$120,831,817.77	\$16,909.00	\$120,848,726.77
<u>Revenue</u>			
Intergovernmental	\$80,664,439.47	\$16,909.00	\$80,681,348.47

All ordinances and portions of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Approved June 8, 2026

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**Other Business**

**26-0320 Adoption of the FY 2026-27 Budget Ordinance**

Chair Dr. Lee stated citizens were signed up to make comments about the FY 2025-26 Budget.

The following citizens requested full support of the Durham Public Schools funding request: *Heidi Jo Hetland and Christie Clem*

The following citizens requested restoring Pride funding, Library Programs and the LGBTQ Committee: *Jack Turnwald and Laura Phoenix.*

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Claudia Hager, County Manager, thanked the Board for their dedication. She also thanked Keith Lane, Budget Director; the Budget Department staff; Keyar Doyle, Tax Administrator; the Tax Department; County staff; and community partners for their support with the budget.

Keith Lane, Director of Budget and Management Services, thanked County Manager Hager for her budget expertise and acknowledged the Budget Department's commitment this year.

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Vice Chair Allam stated she supported additional half-cent property tax increase for Durham Public Schools (DPS). Commissioner Burton stated she would support an additional half-cent or quarter-cent increase. Commissioner Jacobs stated she would not support any additional increases in property taxes due to budget cuts and future funding uncertainty. She asked for County Manager Hager's input. County Manager Hager stated residents expressed concerns about the effects of property tax increases. She added she was apprehensive about an additional property tax increase for residents; although the Board would make the final decision.

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Commissioner Valentine stated he was reluctant for an additional increase in property taxes to protect the vulnerable. Chair Dr. Lee stated he supported a 2.5 cent property tax increase but would not support adding any additional increases. Commissioner Jacobs stated the Board was requesting for the 2.65 million to be used to increase classified workers' pay and asked the Board of Education to match that amount. Commissioner Burton highlighted classified workers' dedication and the Board's concern for them.

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Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to approve the FY2026-27 Budget Ordinance.

The motion carried unanimously.

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Commissioner Jacobs read the following statement:

*"I am proud to support this Durham County Budget. This is my 14th budget and this was by far the most difficult budget process, not because of all the choices we had to make but in fact, because of the few options we had to address the many needs in our community. I want to thank our community members for all your engagement-from showing up at our public hearing, to phone calls, texts, emails and submitting comments to our online budget survey. Your input matters and is what makes Durham the caring, fierce, vibrant community we all love.*

*Thank you to my commissioner colleagues. We have had thoughtful, deliberative and respectful conversations throughout the budget process. It is truly an honor to learn from and work alongside each of you.*

*I want to thank our County Manager Claudia Hager, all the Durham County staff leadership team, Budget Director Keith Lane and his budget team, Clerk Monica Wallace and our clerk's office staff, every department head of our 32 County Departments, and all our Durham County employees.*

*It is you who have put in the hard work in the many months leading up this formal budget. When this proposed budget was presented to us, you had already gone through the very difficult work of cutting an average of 2% of your budgets to come up with an additional \$6.2 million. This funding, in addition to the 2.5 cent increase in the property tax rate, will allow us to provide the core services and programs that our community depends on and values.*

*I wish we did not need a 2.5 cent tax increase. I hear the voices of our Durham residents who are living on fixed incomes, who are struggling with rising food and gas prices, housing costs. I hear the voices of our DPS classified staff who are struggling with low hourly wages due to the lack of funding from our state government. I hear the voices of our EMS, DSS and PH staff who are worried about their ability to take care of residents.*

*As we know, budgets are a reflection of our values. I believe this budget represents a balance of all these challenges and competing needs in our community in the face of harmful policies and reduced state and federal funding, slowing sales tax revenues and unexpected impacts from our recent property tax appeals process.*

*There is much to celebrate in this budget. We are keeping Durham County moving along strongly in the right direction. We are prioritizing investments in EMS- more than \$3 million for new and replacement ambulances and \$1.23 million to staff a new 10-person unit. We are continuing to invest in our best and brightest with \$10.6 million for Durham PreK. Our children are our future. We are still providing strong support for Durham Public Schools-with \$10.9 million in new funding to cover increased personnel costs, an additional \$1 million for technology improvements and \$2.65 million targeted for increasing classified salaries, more than \$14.5 million in new funding, for a total of more than \$239 million in funding for DPS- the single largest recipient of Durham County funding. I am grateful to DPS staff leadership for your proposed plan to match Durham County's investment with*

*your own internal adjustments. This proposed joint effort can result in the lowest paid classified hourly wage increasing to \$18.22 per hour.*

*Also included in this budget is grant funding for key Durham County priorities: \$320k for food security, \$312k for early childhood, \$250k for the Violence Prevention Plan, \$500k for the Strategic Framework to End Homelessness, and \$500k for Youth Program investments. This budget will also include creation of a Family Court and a \$50k DSS fund to further support family reunification. This budget also covers all the increased healthcare and pension costs for our Durham County staff, and a 2% COLA salary increase. We know our staff deserve much more than this and I wish we could do more.*

*We will face many frightening uncertainties in the coming year. How many of our residents will lose their food and medical care due to the cruel policies of this federal government? Durham County alone will not be able to stand in the gap. It is going to take our entire community and our collective care and resources.*

*We are going to have to do things differently. Charter schools are receiving \$60 million in Durham County funding in the budget allocation for DPS. Nearly \$53 million in state voucher funding- public funding- has been funneled to private and religious schools in Durham over the past several years. I have strongly supported the more than \$100 million in increased local funding to DPS over the past ten years, but this is no longer financially viable or sustainable for Durham County Government and Durham taxpayers.*

*I look forward to working together with our Durham Board of Education partners over the coming year to find ways that Durham County and DPS can remain on stable financial ground but also prioritize the salaries of our classified staff and all our lowest paid workers. We must plan for a different funding future- especially one that could mean restrictions on Durham County's ability to levy property tax- our most critical source of revenue to cover the cost of essential services and programs for residents.*

*The good news is that Durham County continues to move forward. We have a strong economy. Our property tax revaluation process reflected an overall record increase in our property values of more than \$26 billion dollars. We recently received again the coveted AAA bond rating which helps us borrow money at the best rates possible and save our residents money. The next year will indeed be a challenging one and the ONLY way we can get through it, will be together. I believe in our community and the people of Durham. We CAN take care of everyone, especially our most vulnerable residents, by doing what we know works- collaboration, coordination, communication and working together."*

Commissioner Burton read the following statement:

*"I want to thank all the Durham County Staff that worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help make this budget process run smoothly and to answer the myriads of questions that we commissioners have.*

*We are facing a lot of financial pressure due to state and federal constraints that are being placed on all counties, as many of you know. However, despite these constraints, this budget continues to make key investments in our residents.*

*This FY 27 budget funds 2 key staff members to restart Family Treatment Court, which was cut from state funding in 2012. This will help with family reunification efforts, which is important to this board.*

*We are funding \$500,000 to provide support for the homelessness strategic plan, we are investing half a million dollars into programs to build up youth in our county, and \$320,000 into food security grants because we know with restrictions on SNAP benefits we will need to shore up our non-profits who do the important work of providing food to people in Durham County. Violence is another systemic problem that we are dealing with in Durham, and in the FY 27 budget we are investing \$250,000 in the development and implementation of a violence reduction plan, along with the City of Durham, again, to help our young people.*

*And finally, this budget continues to invest in Durham Public Schools, an increase of \$15.8 million to invest in classified staff who do important work serving our youngest Durham County Residents. We are keeping our fingers crossed that a state budget is passed so this money is used for that purpose. I know there are some who wanted more, but this is a first step as we continue to towards a livable wage for Durham County Government employees as well as DPS employees.*

*We have a tough year ahead of us, that is why it is crucial that all three government bodies, the school board, city council, and county commissioners as well as community members work together to come up with solutions as these federal laws begin to take effect in July. And we must push back on this constitutional amendment that will limit the County's ability to raise revenue. Thank you and I yield back to Chair Lee."*

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Vice Chair Allam read the following statement:

*"The Board acknowledged that this has been a particularly challenging budget year. No Board member received everything they wanted, or even half of what they hoped for. I want to express my gratitude to County Manager Hager for her guidance during such a difficult budget cycle, and for considering all our priorities—even though you asked each of us to provide four priorities and we responded with ten priorities each. Thank you also to Keith Lane and the entire Budget Department; the Budget team is among the hardest-working employees, collaborating across County departments throughout the year to ensure responsible financial management of allocated funds.*

*The County will continue to face tough years ahead, but I am proud of what the Board has managed to fund, especially as the Federal Administration implements cuts affecting families and vulnerable communities who may struggle to access food and necessities. The Board was able to secure resources for vital programs and is working toward raising DPS classified staff to a living wage, aiming to achieve this next year. The County shares responsibility with DPS and has engaged in difficult conversations to promote transparency and avoid ongoing challenges. Chair Dr. Lee and Chair Umstead are developing an updated MOU between the County and DPS to address goals and needs.*

*The State will soon surpass 1,000 days without passing a budget. Our most vulnerable community members continue to struggle daily. Although the budget has passed, this conversation is far from over. The County will keep engaging with DPS and other departments to improve services. We hope for better days ahead, supported by property and sales tax revenues. I encourage everyone to shop locally to boost Durham County's sales tax revenue and to urge residents to pressure legislators to act—if the constitutional amendments pass, both City and County will face significant difficulties.*

*Finally, I propose beginning discussions with the city about potential City-County mergers to sustain the wide range of services offered to residents.”*

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Vice Char Lee read the following statement:

*Thank you to County Manager Hager, the Budget staff, County Leadership, Department Heads, and all County staff for your hard work, responsiveness, and dedication throughout the budget process.”*

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**Adjournment**

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Vice Chair Allam, to adjourn the Regular Session meeting at 9:16 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Macio Carlton  
Deputy Clerk to the Board