

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

Monday, May 5, 2025

9:00 A.M. Work Session

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Chambers, Second Floor, Durham County Government
Administrative Complex, 200 E. Main Street, Durham, NC

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

Presider: Chair Nida Allam

Zoom Hybrid
Participants: 4

Citizen Comments

The Board of County Commissioners provided a 30-minute comment period to allow Durham County citizens an opportunity to speak. Citizens were given the option to deliver their Citizen Comments in-person or virtually via email to the Clerk no later than Sunday, February 2nd at 12 noon.

DeWarren K Langley, asked the Board to contribute funding to invest in the youth to create jobs for them to be successful.

Jessica Patrick Taylor stated Spring Valley Elementary School did not have running air conditioning for three (3) days. She explained that the schools did not release children until 12:30 p.m. and questioned how funds were being allocated and used.

Shanesi Hamilton, requested full expansion of the HEART Program. She expressed the program should not stop at City limits and asked to meet with the Commissioners personally to discuss the needs.

Consent Agenda

The Board was requested to review the following Consent Agenda items for the May Regular Sessions.

25-0201 Authorize the County Manager to Execute a Contract with Design Workshop, Inc., for Framework Planning Design Services, Including Community Engagement Services, for the Orange Factory Road Nature Preserve and Farm Campus Totaling an Amount Not-To-Exceed \$295,685.00

Commissioner Jacobs requested a tour of the Orange Factory Road Nature Preserve and Farm Campus.

Directive:

- **Staff to provide a poll to the Board with dates and times to tour the Orange Factory Road Nature Preserve and Farm Campus.**

25-0211 Authorize the County Manager to execute a contract amendment for radio tower design services in the amount of \$136,304 with O'Brien Atkins Architects, for a total revised amount not to exceed \$4,956,814 for the Emergency Operations Center, Backup 911, and Sheriff's Backup Call Center

Peri Manns, Deputy Director of Engineering and Environmental Services, confirmed the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) would replace the existing center located on Broad Street.

25-0223 Informational Item- Page/Miami Design District is a staff initiated zoning map change for the area southwest of Research Triangle Park (RTP) between NC Highway 54, Davis Drive, Hopson Road, Page Road, and South Miami Boulevard. The proposal also includes a staff initiated text amendment, both the zoning map change and text amendment focus on encouraging multimodal transit-oriented development and supporting future publicly funded transportation projects.

Kayla Seibel, AICP, Senior Planner, explained the amendment was initiated by members of the Joint City-County Planning Committee. They expressed interest in zoning that would support future public projects that were along the Triangle Bikeway and future railroad. She continued to say proposals were modified to alleviate neighbors' concerns.

25-0224 Ordinance – TC2400003: A Privately Initiated Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Text Amendment

Robin Schultz, Principal Planner, shared the current UDO did not allow changes to tree coverage. The text amendment was needed to change the shifts through a statutory development agreement.

25-0225 Approval of the FY25 Durham Transit Plan Q4 Work Program Amendment in the amount of \$158,000.000

Ellen Beckmann, AICP, Transportation Director, stated the amount of \$158,000.00 was requested from GoTriangle to increase funding for the Transit Assistance Program. This would allow eligible riders to receive free passes due to the number of people who were qualified for the program.

25-0249 Approval to Allow the County Manager to Enter into a Service Contract with Sunland Fire Protection, Inc. to Remove and Install New Fire Pump and Control Panel at the Durham County Detention Center in the amount of \$266,985.00.

County Manager Hager stated tours of the Detention Center could be held and reminded Commissioners issues and routine maintenance were ordinary due to the center being 30 years old with a 24 hour/7 day per week utilization rate.

There were no questions regarding the items below:

25-0176 Letter of Support for Application for Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grant

25-0177 Approve Membership Agreement Memorandum of Understanding in the amount \$3,537 with the Clean Water Education Partnership (CWEP)

25-0248 Approval of Durham County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) Local Funding Plan Recommendation for FY 2025-2026

25-0250 Approval to Allow the County Manager to Enter into a Contract with Pipe Techs Plumbing, LLC to Removal and Installation Backflow Preventers at the Durham County Detention Center in the Amount of \$122,359.00.

25-0252 Transfer of \$18,000 Between Approved ARPA Awards from Knox Street Studios to Forward Cities to Provide Additional Small Business Counseling Services

Discussion Items

25-0142 Presentation from Urban Ministries of Durham

The Board was requested to receive a presentation from the Urban Ministries of Durham (UMD).

UMD was proud to be the lead partner launching a transformative Collaborative Impact Project (CIP)-The Homeless Services Center-to directly address Durham's deepening homelessness and housing insecurity crisis. With decades of trusted service and collaboration, CIP partners were ready to take the next bold step: reimagining and expanding physical and service infrastructure to meet growing needs and create lasting impact.

Today, homeless service providers in Durham are at a critical point as we respond to the growing needs of Durham's unhoused, hungry, and impoverished. With a shared vision for the Collaborative Impact Project, UMD is working with partner organizations like Families Moving Forward, Project Access, Lincoln Community Health Center, Entry Point, and others to reimagine a model of care that includes easier access to vital resources-all under one roof. Thanks to the generosity and continued support of St. Philip's Episcopal Church, this vision is beginning to take root.

The Collaborative Impact Project included plans for a new multi-story Services Center along East Main Street, adjacent to the Department of Social Services (DSS). This state-of-the-art facility was projected to cost \$72 million in pre-development and construction-but the true cost of homelessness was far greater.

Sheldon Mitchell, Executive Director of Urban Ministries of Durham, shared that UMD strived to service at least 150 people with those numbers increasing daily. However, due to funding and space the number was reduced. He added a partnership with Veterans Affairs (VA) was leveraged by working onsite at Urban Ministries and being able to provide resources directly to the citizens.

Mr. Mitchell shared conversations were held with partners to look at additional landscapes for a new UMD site that would be near wrap around services; however, alternative sites were not identified.

The Board requested that Urban Ministries of Durham present at a future Budget Work Session to show short term investments, as well as to hear a proposal from Open Table Ministries for their pilot day center and pallet homes. The Board also requested a breakdown of the planning process and cost.

Questions were raised regarding whether the cost could be shared with the City of Durham. Mr. Mitchell clarified Urban Ministries of Durham did not receive direct funds towards the operation budget from the City of Durham but was open to conversations.

Directive:

- **UMD to present at a future Budget Work Session to show short term investments, as well as to hear a proposal from Open Table Ministries for their pilot day center and pallet homes.**
- **UMD to provide breakdown of the planning process and cost.**

25-0241 Presentation on the HEART Framework and De-escalation Practices

The Board was requested to receive a presentation regarding de-escalation practices, training and information on the City of Durham's HEART Program. The Durham County Sheriff's Office had previously discussed its current de-escalation practices and training, and staff would be available for further discussion and questions. Part of the discussion would lead to a framework for the next steps for HEART in Durham County.

Questions were raised regarding whether the burden was lifted off police when HEART responded to calls and would the program expand through the County 911 infrastructure. Ryan Smith, Director of the City of Durham Community Safety Department, shared that the Chief of Police stated through meetings with police officers there was an increase in needing the presence of the HEART Program. A RTI survey showed that 37 percent of officers stated it would be helpful for those experiencing a mental health crisis and that the number doubled to 67 percent within the first year of operation. He continued to say meetings would need to be held to determine if the program would expand into the County. Mr. Smith added that the challenges were routing the calls properly through the telecommunicator. If the call was for fire or EMS the HEART program could be used; however, if the call was for law enforcement the call would be transferred to the Sheriff's Office call center and the Sheriff's Office was not trained in the protocol for the HEART Program.

Dwane Brinson, Assistant County Manager, shared a request for proposal (RFQ) would be created for a professional assessment of the needs of the HEART Program. County Manager Hager added the data analysis was important to ensure the program remained effective throughout the County.

The Board inquired whether other jurisdictions utilized the same model and requested data on the 911 calls which occurred in the County. Mr. Smith stated that Harris County, Texas utilized the same model countywide.

Mr. Smith shared that the City was open to working with the Sheriff to enforce the HEART Program countywide. Sheriff Clarence Birkhead added they were working for the public safety and since there was a model in place, it could be possible to replicate it on a larger scale.

Mr. Brinson explained the RFQ came from the challenges of the call center and would go through the engineering department. He continued to say the RFQ was required to be published within 30 days and was in the final stages of completion.

Sheriff Birkhead shared School Resource Officers (SRO) were in contact with members of the HEART Program to address issues within the schools.

Mr. Smith stated internal work was done to determine cost saving; however, a deeper dive with RTI would be more effective.

The Board requested data tracking of the difference in response time between the City and outer County limits.

Directive:

- **Staff to provide data on the 911 calls which occurred in the County parts of Durham**
- **Staff to provide data tracking the difference in response time between the City and outer County limits.**

25-0222 Proposed City-County Planning Department FY26 Work Program Discussion

The Board was requested to review and provide comment on the proposed FY26 Work Program in preparation for its approval at a regular business meeting.

Sara Young, AICP, Planning Director, clarified that the Open Space Plan and Multimodal Traffic Impact Analysis Plan were subject to department budget approval for consulting funding due to not being able to be completed within the department. She continued to say the Planning Department would manage and participate with the consultants.

The Board suggested changing the name of the Open Space Plan to Durham City-County Open Space Plan due to it being jointly funded.

Ms. Young stated additional staff were not needed due to being in a good space to deliver expectations, with no extended timeframes.

Scott Whiteman, AICP, Senior Planning Manager, shared work with Preservation of Durham was done to create an architectural inventory survey. He added that a letter was written to the National Register of Historic Places nominating Emorywood Estates, a historically Black neighborhood located between Fayetteville Road and Highway 55 off Riddle Road. Mr. Whiteman added the department could only get funding through the State Preservation Office.

25-0203 County Stormwater Update Presentation

The Board was requested to receive an update presentation on the activities of the County Stormwater Program.

Since the adoption of the County Stormwater Utility Fee, the County Stormwater Program had expanded its efforts in complying with the Falls, Jordan, and Neuse Nutrient Management Strategies through capital projects and enhanced education and outreach. This brief update provided Commissioners with a look at these expanded efforts.

Ryan Eaves, PE, Stormwater and Erosion Control Division Manager, shared sediment basins were formed as new developments were being built and after they were built some stormwater was retained or a wet pond was created to control the runoff.

Elizabeth Kinsey, Stormwater Education Specialist, shared stormwater education reached all ages. A panel was created for adults and visits to primarily upper elementary students; however, staff were able to cater to any grade level. She continued to say staff attended summer camps with mid-grade level students as well as Durham Bull Education Days.

Ms. Kinsey highlighted the importance of not leaving leaves raked by the curb as it was one of the biggest pollutants and would clog the driveway culverts.

Mr. Eaves shared the intended goal was to partner with Neal Middle School for the bioretention project with Southern High School; however, schedules were not aligned. He continued to say land conservation like the Farm Campus and Orange Factory Road was a potential Interim Alternative Implementation Approach (IAIA) for stage two (2). Due to the commitment Neal Middle School, Southeast Durham Watershed, and Whispering Pines the County met and exceeded the IAIA requirements for stage one (1).

Mr. Eaves noted that due to the change in the Agriculture State Law, the stormwater revenues were impacted by \$250,000 in FY25 and would be impacted the same going forward should the rates not change.

25-0166 Durham County Farm Campus Feasibility Study Report and Discussion

The Board of County Commissioners requested to receive a presentation of the completed Farm Campus feasibility study and recommendations from representatives of HR&A Advisors and County staff; to engage in discussion; and to provide feedback.

A Durham County Farm Campus aimed to support a more resilient food system that systemically addressed the root causes of food insecurity and supported entrepreneurship and workforce development for prospective users of the campus. The feasibility study examined partnerships, priorities, and phasing of a Durham County Farm Campus, as well as an in-depth study of how the Farm Campus can best meet community needs and goals. Conducted by HR&A Advisors beginning in 2023, the study evaluated the concept through three workstreams-Land Feasibility Analysis, Design & Development, and Implementation. While the concept of a Durham County Farm Campus had been under discussion for several years, this study enabled Durham County to thoroughly examine the feasibility of the idea and consider possible plans for implementation.

Derek Fleming, HR&A Advisors, shared transit access to the farm campus was a concern; however, work with transit agencies would be conducted to look at transit expansions by adding additional shuttles.

Discussion was held regarding the plan for growth in personnel and whether the number of staff was adequate to run the campus. Mr. Fleming stated the four (4) employees were sufficient to manage the campus due to the cost of living adjustment being allocated for each year. He continued to say robust growth could bring additional staff in future years.

Donna Rewalt, County Extension Director, explained the campus was expected to apply for USDA grants and having a Farm Manager on site would offset day-to-day operational costs. She continued to say the first step in the process would be to hire a full-time Farm Manager.

Ms. Rewalt explained partnerships with the schools were present in the case studies and the technical assistance in the educational components played a huge part in the Incubator Program and the Early Start Farmers Program, as well as the HUB Farm.

Outreach was conducted with immigrants and refugees with special skills related to farming; however, those conversations were harder to have.

25-0227 Presentation on the Final Recommended FY26 Durham Annual Transit Work Program

The Board was requested to receive a presentation on the Final Recommended FY26 Durham Annual Transit Work Program (“Work Program”).

As part of the appropriations process for the Durham County Transit Plan, an annual Work Program was developed and included a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The 2023 Transit Governance Interlocal Agreement (“ILA”) determined the process by which the annual budget was developed and approved. Under the guidance of the ILA, the Work Program required approval by the Durham Board of County Commissioners (“BOCC”) and the GoTriangle Board of Trustees.

Steven Schlossberg, Director of Finance and Budget with GoTriangle, shared the decrease in revenue was always monitored, and even though sales tax were slightly below what was anticipated, the budget would still be met as funds were evaluated.

The Board requested that a link be created between the City and GoTriangle website to highlight the transit tracker.

Curtis Scarpignato, Transportation Planner, stated during the upcoming update of the transit tracker with the Bus Stop Improvement Program, the total of buses built by fiscal year data would be collected and compared to the goal that was presented in the work program.

Sean Egan, City of Durham, Transportation Director, explained the best way to support low income fare assistance would be to create a policy to apply consistently to riders in Durham County.

The Board expressed the need to reintroduce the Transit Advisory Committee. Mr. Egan stated every other month an engagement event hosted at the Durham Station was held with riders – not a formal body with representatives. However, the same participants would provide feedback on improvements.

Directive:

- **Staff to create link between the City and GoTriangle website to highlight the transit tracker.**

25-0240 Naming Committee Request for William V “Bill” Bell – Former Durham County Commissioner

The Board was requested to receive a brief update from the Durham County Naming Committee on the request for William V. “Bill” Bell, former Durham County Commissioner, and provide feedback on the recommendations.

The Board questioned why the naming policy was created. Because of her time on the Board, Commissioner Jacobs stated the naming policy was created when the Durham County Memorial Stadium was requested to be renamed for an individual. The decision was made to allow naming of rooms or features of buildings to honor individuals. Commissioner Jacobs stated that County buildings were named to reflect their purpose to serve the public, i.e. Durham County Health and Human Services, Administration II Building, Main Library, etc. and the buildings belong to the people of Durham and paid for by taxpayers. At times, when buildings were named after people, issues could also possibly arise involving politics and beliefs.

Commissioner Valentine and Commissioner Burton expressed support to make an exception to the policy so that the Administration I Building could be named after William V. “Bill” Bell.

Vice Chair Lee expressed concerns with the approach of naming three (3) separate buildings after William V. “Bill” Bell; however, he would support the naming the Administration I Lobby if there were no additional request from the Board to support other naming’s.

Dr. Kristen Bell, the daughter of William V. “Bill” Bell, informed the Board that she proposed the naming of the building and expressed the process was rather difficult. She noted that her father meant a lot to the people of Durham and would like the support from the Board to move forward.

25-0255 Review of Commissioner Directives

The Board was requested to review staff follow-up regarding previously issued directives.

Board directives from previous meetings as well as staff follow-up were reviewed at monthly work sessions. Staff strive to have all directives input into the system as accurately as possible as soon as they are issued and to follow up with the board and/or with other relevant parties in an appropriate time frame.

Commissioner Jacobs inquired about the directives that were not followed up on be highlighted and to remove directives that were completed. County Manager Hager stated adjustments could be made to the framework.

25-0257 Closed Session

The Board was requested to adjourn into Closed Session to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1).

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

The motion carried unanimously.

Reconvene to Open Session

Chair Allam stated the Board met in closed session and provided directions to staff.

Adjournment

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Burton, to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sk. Wardrick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shaunecie Wardrick
Administrative Assistant