

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

Monday, March 23, 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: 7

**Regular Session – 7:00 PM**

**Opening of Regular Session - Pledge of Allegiance**

**Agenda Adjustments**

Commissioner Valentine moved, seconded by Vice Chair Allam to approve the agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Announcements**

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

1. **Building Safer Communities: Community Learning Session on Violence Reduction** – The next Joint City-County Violence Reduction Learning session will be held on Tuesday, March 24, from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Holton Resource Center located at 401 North Driver Street. Latisha McNeill, Greensboro Director of Community Safety, will be the keynote speaker for the session. This collaborative effort brings together key departments from both local government organizations to ensure a unified, strategic approach to reducing violence. The initiative is jointly led by Durham County's Justice Services Department and Community Intervention & Support Services Department, along with the City's Police Department and Community Safety Department. To learn more, please visit: <https://www.durhamnc.gov/5490/Violence-Reduction>
2. **Durham County Virtual Budget Discussion** – Attend Durham County Government's moderated virtual community conversation to hear directly from key County staff about

operations and budget priorities on Monday, March 30, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. The session will include a live Q&A. Registration information will be shared in the coming weeks and posted on the County's website at <https://dconc.gov/>.

3. **2026 Durham 4-H Summer Camps** – Registration is now open for the 4-H Summer Camps. The Durham 4-H Summer Camps empower youth through meaningful connections, hands-on experiences, and essential life skills that support their growth. This camp offers low-cost day experiences and some of the most affordable residential camps in the area for youth ages 6–18. A limited number of scholarships are available to help cover costs. Learn more and apply here: <https://durham.ces.ncsu.edu/news/durham-4-h-summer-fun-programs-2026-now-open/>. Deadline to register is April 17.
4. **Breastfeed Durham's Pregnancy Expo & Family Festival** – Join Breastfeed Durham for a free community celebration on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 3-6pm at Hillside Park located at 1301 S. Roxboro St. This celebration bringing families, health professionals and local organizations together to support the well-being of pregnant families and young children will also include live entertainment, food trucks, children's activities, health information, and community resources. Special guest Pierce Freelon, Emmy-award winning producer and Durham native, will join us for a live reading and performance featuring his books Daddy Daughter Day and Daddy & Me: Side by Side. For more information, please visit [www.breastfeeddurham.org/festival2026/](http://www.breastfeeddurham.org/festival2026/).
5. **Measles Education and Prevention** – Measles can cause serious illness, especially in young children, adults over 20, pregnant individuals, and those who are immunocompromised. Protect yourself and others by staying up to date on measles vaccination. As cases rise, now is the time to make sure you're vaccinated. Measles vaccines are available at the Durham County Public Health Immunization Clinic. Call 919-560-7608 for more information.
6. **Free Tax Filing Help Available** – Durham County is partnering with the Durham Benefits Access Coalition to promote free and accessible tax filing options. You may qualify for valuable tax credits that help with housing, food, childcare, and more. Households earning \$89,000 or less can file online with chat/email support or virtual assistance from IRS certified preparers. It is important to know that tax refunds do not count against SNAP, WIC, SSI, Medicaid/Medicare, TANF, or most other benefits.  
File by April 15, 2026, at [www.GetYourRefund.org](http://www.GetYourRefund.org).
7. **William V. Bell Building** – Durham County has officially renamed the former Admin II Building at 200 E. Main Street as the William V. Bell Building. A dedication ceremony was held on Friday, March 20, celebrating the legacy of former commissioner and mayor William V. "Bill" Bell, whose decades of leadership and service have left a lasting impact on the community.

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The Board highlighted the following announcements:

- The Board thanked the Naming Committee, staff and residents for the naming of the William V. Bell Building.

- Raleigh-Durham International Airport did not receive Transportation Security Administration (TSA) assistance from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during staffing shortages.
- Welcome Baby was accepting new and gently used items to directly support Durham families through the Giving Closet Program.
- The County Main Library offered tax assistance to residents until April 13<sup>th</sup> and new baby parents or guardians could claim a \$1,000 tax credit with a 530A Trump Account.
- The County Manger’s Office weekly newsletter *This Week Online* provides updates on County services, new items, video releases, events, and job listings.

## Minutes

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Commissioner Burton to approve the February 2, 2026, Work Session minutes.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jacobs inquired about the status of the Commissioner’s directives list. County Manager Hager replied that she would follow up and present an update to the Board at an upcoming Work Session meeting.

## Ceremonial Items

### To Be Recognized

#### **26-0136 Resolution – Recognizing 25 Years of Farmland Protection in Durham County**

The following resolution was read by Commissioner Jacobs:

#### **25 YEARS OF DURHAM COUNTY’S COMMITMENT TO FARMALND PRESERVATION**

- WHEREAS,** Durham County recognizes farmland as essential for local food production, water quality, wildlife habitat, and the rural landscapes that define the community; and
- WHEREAS,** preserving farmland supports a resilient food system, sound agricultural practices, and access to healthy, locally grown food for future generations; and
- WHEREAS,** the County’s farmland preservation efforts began in 2001 with the Herndon family’s first conservation easement, establishing a model of voluntary conservation; and
- WHEREAS,** 2026 marks the 25th anniversary of this work, during which the County has completed 30 easements protecting 2,491 acres and ensuring the viability of 20 family farms; and
- WHEREAS,** these efforts strengthen the agricultural economy, support farmers, and enhance environmental resilience by maintaining open space and protecting natural resources; and
- WHEREAS,** strong fiscal partnerships, especially with the United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resource Conservation Service, have enabled the County to secure \$6.28 million in grants, \$5.14 million in landowner donations, and invest \$3.58 million to protect easements valued at \$15 million; and

**WHEREAS,** the program continues to grow, with five additional farms totaling 137 acres and \$706,000 in secured funding scheduled to close soon; and

**WHEREAS,** Durham County remains committed to advancing farmland preservation through strategic partnerships, innovative policies, and voluntary conservation programs.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Durham County Board of Commissioners:

- Celebrates 25 years of farmland preservation leadership;
- Expresses gratitude to landowners, partners, and fiscal supporters;
- Reaffirms its commitment to protecting farmland as a foundation of the County’s economy, environment, and heritage; and
- Commits to expanding preservation efforts and supporting the next generation of farmers.

This the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March 2026.

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

Nicole Connelly, Chair, Durham County’s Farmland Protection Advisory Board thanked the Board for their continued support, thanked past and present Farmland Board members, Open Space Board members and past and present County staff. Celeste Burns, Open Space and Real Estate Division thanked Durham landowners and stated she would provide the landowners with a copy of the resolution.

The Board thanked all County staff involved in Farmland Protection and briefly reviewed the loss of farmland in Durham County.

**To Be Acknowledged**

**26-0133 Proclamation – National County Government Month**

**NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH | 2026**

**WHEREAS,** the nation’s 3,069 counties serving more than 330 million Americans provide essential services to create healthy, safe and vibrant communities; and

**WHEREAS,** counties fulfill a vast range of responsibilities and deliver services that touch nearly every aspect of our residents’ lives; and

**WHEREAS,** counties as intergovernmental partners enact local, state and federal programs to address the needs of all residents; and

**WHEREAS,** Durham County and all counties take pride in our responsibility to protect and enhance the health, wellbeing and safety of our residents in efficient and cost-effective ways; and

**WHEREAS,** the nation is celebrating 250 years of independence this year, and counties have a long and rich history of serving residents; and

**WHEREAS,** each year since 1991 the National Association of Counties has encouraged counties across the country to elevate awareness of county responsibilities, programs and services; and

**WHEREAS,** this year’s activities will be both interactive and informative; inviting all to learn more about the work Durham County Government does to support a community where all can live, grow, and thrive.

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

**“NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH”**

in Durham County, North Carolina, and encourage all county officials, employees, schools and residents to participate in county government celebration activities.

This the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March 2026.

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Dr. Mike Lee, Chair  
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Deborah Craig-Ray, Chief Communications Officer, shared a brief background and overview of National Government Month and stated she was working with Dawn Dudley, Senior Public Information Specialist and Brent Lewis, Human Resources Assistant Director, to plan month-long celebration events.

The Board thanked Ms. Craig-Ray for highlighting National County Government Month and emphasized the importance of celebrating the month and County employees.

**26-0133 Resolution – Proclamation – Second Chance Month 2026**

**DURHAM COUNTY SECOND CHANCE MONTH | 2026**

**WHEREAS,** Durham County Government and its Board of County Commissioners have been supporting reentry and rehabilitation efforts in Durham County for more than 30 years; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2017 Durham County joined with the Department of Adult Correction to create the Durham Local Reentry Council; and

**WHEREAS,** in 2025 the average daily population of the Durham County Detention Center was 426; and the Department of Adult Correction released 464 individuals to Durham County; and

**WHEREAS,** North Carolina continues its commitment to the national initiative Reentry 2030, a movement committed to systemic changes through four overarching goals. These goals are to improve economic mobility, mental and physical health for justice involved individuals, expand housing opportunities, and remove barriers to successful community reintegration; and

**WHEREAS,** effective reentry programs offer the chance for a better life for those who return from our nation’s correctional facilities; and

**WHEREAS,** Durham County recognizes that April is **Second Chance Month**, a time dedicated to recognizing the collateral consequences of a criminal record and advancing efforts that promote fairness and access to opportunities for people who have been directly impacted by the criminal legal system; and

**WHEREAS,** Durham County Board of County Commissioners understands the investments we make today through resources we dedicate, and the enthusiasm we generate will greatly benefit the returning citizens and the overall public safety in Durham County; and

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

**“SECOND CHANCE MONTH”**

in Durham County and urge all citizens to join in recognizing how important it is to help justice involved individuals to become responsible, engaged, and contributing community members.

This 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March 2026.

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Dr. Mike Lee, Chair  
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Robin Heath, Assistant Director, Justice Services Department thanked the Board for recognizing Second Chance Month and introduced Rasheda Royster, Local Reentry Council Coordinator, Justice Services Department. Ms. Royster distributed the Second Chance Month Calendar of Events to the Board and gave a brief overview of the events.

The Board thanked the Justice Services Department for providing supportive services and programs to justice-involved residents and families in Durham. The Board inquired about Duke University hiring justice-involved individuals. Ms. Royster responded that Duke was in contact with the Justice Services Department and Economic Development Department to learn more about the County’s programs.

**26-0150 Proclamation – Fair Housing Month**

**FAIR HOUSING MONTH | 2026**

**WHEREAS,** The Fair Housing Act, enacted on April 11, 1968, enshrined into federal law the goal of eliminating racial segregation and ending housing discrimination in the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, religion, sex, familial status, national origin, and disability, and commits recipients of federal funding to affirmatively further fair housing in their communities; and

**WHEREAS,** Durham County is committed to the mission and intent of Congress to provide fair and equal housing opportunities for all; and

**WHEREAS,** our social fabric, the economy, health, and environment are strengthened in diverse, inclusive communities; and

**WHEREAS,** more than fifty years after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, discrimination persists, as many communities remain segregated; and

**WHEREAS,** acts of housing discrimination and barriers to equal housing opportunity are unacceptable to a common sense of decency and fairness.

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

**“FAIR HOUSING MONTH”**

in Durham County, North Carolina; an inclusive community committed to fair housing, to promoting appropriate activities by private and public entities, and to provide and advocate for equal housing opportunities for all residents and prospective residents of Durham County.

This 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March 2026.

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Dr. Mike Lee, Chair  
Durham Board of County Commissioners

Sondra Trice-Jones, 2026 President of the Durham Regional Association of Realtors stated the association was thankful for the Board’s recognition of Fair Housing Month and grateful for the continued support.

The Board thanked Ms. Trice-Jones for the association’s efforts in promoting fair housing in Durham and educating residents about housing opportunities.

**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.

Vice Chair Allam moved, seconded by Commissioner Burton to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

26-0126 Approve Durham City-County Interlocal Agreement in the Amount of \$25,000.00 to Fund Consultant Work on the Creation of a Strategic Framework on Homelessness

\*26-0129 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC070 Transferring \$82,500.00 from the Public Safety Functional Area to the General Government Functional Area to Purchase a Replacement SUV for the Fire Marshal’s Office

\*26-0147 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC073 - Transferring \$117,630.96 of General Fund Fund Balance to the Capital Financing Fund in Recognition of Final Sales and Occupancy Tax Collection from the Prior Year in Adherence to Board Policy

\*26-0153 Approval of Property Tax Releases and Refunds for February 2026

\*26-0157 Approve Budget Ordinance Amendment No.26BCC074 Appropriating General Fund Restricted Fund Balance Totaling \$538,727 to Increase Expenditure Authority for Public Health

26-0159 Removal of Citizen Board Member Due to Poor Attendance

Consent Agenda Item #26-0129

**Durham County, North Carolina  
2025-2026 Budget Ordinance  
Amendment Number 26BCC070**

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><u>GENERAL FUND</u></b>			
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
General Government	\$203,923,665.88	\$82,500.00	\$204,006,165.88
Public Safety	\$97,413,833.92	(\$82,500.00)	\$97,331,333.92

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

Approved March 23, 2026

Consent Agenda Item #26-0147

**Durham County, North Carolina  
2025-2026 Budget Ordinance  
Amendment Number 26BCC073**

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><u>GENERAL FUND</u></b>			
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
General Government	\$204,006,165.88	\$117,630.96	\$204,123,796.84
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>			
Other Financing Services	\$47,862,336.89	\$117,630.96	\$47,979,967.85
<b><u>CAPITAL FINANCING FUND</u></b>			
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>			
General Government	\$126,101,344.00	\$117,630.96	\$126,218,974.96
<b><u>Revenue</u></b>			
Other Financing Services	\$60,944,218.00	\$117,630.96	\$61,061,848.96

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

Approved March 23, 2026

Consent Agenda Item #26-0153

Releases and Refunds – February 2026

<b><u>Current Year 2025 Taxes</u></b>	<b><u>Releases</u></b>	<b><u>Refunds</u></b>	
Real Property	\$ 3,890,084.70	\$2,272,927.28	
Personal Property	\$ 11,273.43	\$ 42.91	
Motor Vehicle	\$ 0.00	\$ 50.12	
Solid Waste	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
Stormwater Utility	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
Public Service	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
VTS Refunds	\$ 0.00	\$ 15,777.75	
Gross Rec./Bev. Lic.	\$ 0.00	\$ 8.55	
<b>SUB – TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,901,358.13</b>	<b>\$2,288,806.61</b>	<b>\$6,190,164.74</b>
<b><u>Prior Year 2015-2024</u></b>			
Real Property	\$ 20.75	\$ 11.17	
Personal Property	\$ 2,239.60	\$ 5,396.00	
GAP Vehicles	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
Motor Vehicle	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
Solid Waste	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
Stormwater Utility	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
VTS Refunds	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	
<b>SUB - TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,260.35</b>	<b>\$ 5,407.17</b>	<b>\$ 7,667.52</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,903,618.48</b>	<b>\$2,294,213.78</b>	<b>\$6,197,832.26</b>

Consent Agenda Item #26-0157

Durham County, North Carolina

**2025-2026 Budget Ordinance  
Amendment Number 26BCC074**

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>
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>			
<u>Expenditure</u>			
Human Services	\$119,121,491.77	\$538,727.00	\$119,660,218.77
<u>Revenue</u>			
Other Financing Services	\$47,979,967.85	\$538,727.00	\$48,518,694.85

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

Approved March 23, 2026

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**Public Hearings**

**26-0144 Public Hearing to Consider an Economic Development Agreement with Welcome Venture Park, LLC**

Matthew Filter, Economic Development Manager stated the Board was requested to hold a public hearing to consider a potential Economic Development Agreement (“Agreement”) with Welcome Venture Park, LLC (“Company”). He added the Agreement would be negotiated and executed by the County Manager included: (a) a payment from the County to the Company of \$1,000,000 following satisfactory completion of sewer utility infrastructure necessary to enhance the business prospects of the County; (b) a real estate option provided by the Company to the County permitting acquisition of 1420 Old Oxford Road [7.81 acres; REID of 177731; “Parcel”] for \$1,000,000 following a six-month due diligence period, after which the County could ultimately decline to purchase for any reason or no reason at all; and (c) a community benefits package including Company commitments to internships and workforce development programming.

Chair Dr. Lee opened the public hearing

With no one signed up to speak, Vice Chair Dr. Lee closed the public hearing.

The Board asked about the potential companies and jobs that could result from the agreement. Randy Warren, Listing and Landlord Broker/Agent, RW2 Development Company replied that current tenants included home improvement businesses, storage and transfer companies, biopharma service companies and the Food Bank of Central NC. He added the existing businesses employ around 60 full-time workers.

The Board inquired about public transportation in the area. Mr. Warren responded that bus services were not yet available in the area; however, Welcome Venture Park was prepared to assist with providing five bus stops once service began. The Board asked Ellen Beckman, Transportation Director, about Go Durham On-Demand services. Ms. Beckman confirmed GoDurham provided On-Demand services to the Welcome Venture Park and surrounding area. Mr. Warren stated he would share the information with companies in the Welcome Venture Park.

Vice Chair Allam moved, seconded by Commissioner Burton, to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute an Economic Development Agreement with Welcome Venture Park, LLC.

The motion carried unanimously.

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## **Other Business**

### **26-0146 Advance Public Comments on the FY 2026-27 Budget**

Claudia Hager, County Manager and Keith Lane, Budget Director shared the *Durham County Government Advance Public Comments on the FY 2026-27 Budget* presentation which highlighted the following: Budget Development Guiding Principles, Expenditure and Revenue Key Highlights, Public Input and Next Steps.

The Board thanked County Manager Hager and Mr. Lane for presenting the budget information to residents, providing the survey and holding a virtual meeting. The Board asked about the property taxes and State lawmakers' consideration of a constitutional amendment to limit property tax increases. Mr. Lane responded Durham County could not naturally support Durham Public Schools' budget request and the County would need to raise taxes annually. He added the County was not incorporating the State-level discussion since state lawmakers were considering an amendment.

The Board asked about counties being required to share a portion of the cost associated with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) administration. Mr. Lane replied the requirement would impact the County's financial responsibilities and Durham County could meet its obligations while other counties might not, which could still impact Durham County. The Board asked that the Commissioner's prioritized budget document be added to the budget presentation.

### **Public Comment**

Carl Newman, Durham County Library Board of Trustees member and the member of the Durham Library Foundation Board of Directors stated he supported the Durham County Library's budget request.

**Directive: Chair Allam requested that the Commissioner's prioritized budget document be added to the budget presentation.**

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## **Board and Commission Appointments**

Larissa Williamson, County Attorney announced the voting results.

The Board made the following appointments (incumbents are identified with an (i). Individuals who are recommended by a Board are underlined.) Individuals listed in bold print were appointed.

### **Alliance Board of Directors**

(i) **Vandna Munshi** (Allam, Burton, Jacobs, Lee, Valentine)

Durham Convention Center Authority

**Kamala Uzzell** (Allam, Burton, Jacobs, Lee, Valentine)

Durham County Women's Commission

**Valerie Parham-Thompson** (Allam, Burton, Jacobs, Lee, Valentine)

**Sarah Cunningham** (Allam, Burton, Jacobs, Lee)

Kayla Keels (Valentine)

Durham Cultural Advisory Board

**Marylou Flowers-Schoen** (Allam, Burton, Jacobs, Lee, Valentine)

Historic Preservation Commission

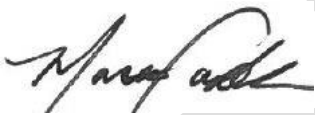
**Nicolas Chrapliwy** (Allam, Burton, Jacobs, Lee, Valentine)

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine to adjourn the Regular Session meeting at 9:07 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Macio Carlton  
Deputy Clerk to the Board