

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

Tuesday, September 2, 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, Commissioners Michelle Burton,
Wendy Jacobs and Stephen Valentine

Virtual:

Presider: Chair Nida Allam

Zoom Hybrid

Participants: 1

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, virtually or via email to the Clerk no later than Sunday, August 31st at 12 noon.

DeWarren Langley attended the meeting virtually but due to technical difficulties he submitted his written comments below.

Good Morning! I am DeWarren Langley and I serve as the Executive Director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Foundation, Inc. is an impact-driven nonprofit organization committed to advancing equity and opportunity for boys and young men of color through competency-based learning, strategy-centered mentorship, and career-focused skill development. Our mission is to dismantle systemic barriers and expand pathways to academic achievement, economic mobility, and leadership.

I am in strong opposition to the pause of the My Brother's Keeper Initiative in Durham. To end this work now would be to step away from our responsibility to boys and young men of color at a moment when their success is more vital than ever to the future of Durham County.

The economic landscape in Durham is changing rapidly. Industries are demanding higher levels of skill, innovation, and adaptability. If we do not have a clear vision, a bold plan, and the capacity to lead, our boys and young men of color will be left behind - without the preparation, opportunities, or support they need to compete. Without intentional investment, too many will seek alternatives in gangs, drugs, and other pathways that erode both their potential and the safety of our community.

The six priority areas of My Brother's Keeper remain as urgent today as when this work began:

- 1. Ensuring every child enters school ready to learn.*
- 2. Supporting all students to read at grade level by the third grade.*
- 3. Guaranteeing that every young man graduates high school ready for college and career.*
- 4. Expanding opportunities to complete post-secondary education or training.*
- 5. Preparing them to successfully enter and remain in the workforce.*
- 6. Ensuring they remain safe from violent crime and, when needed, are given a real second chance.*

Each of these milestones represents a building block for long-term success. To abandon them now is to risk the well-being of an entire generation and with it, the shared prosperity of Durham.

What is needed is not retreat, but renewed commitment. We call on the County to formally establish the MBK Steering Committee and authorize the creation of a Boys & Young Men of Color Local Action Plan - one that is data-driven, forward-looking, and accountable. We further recommend that annual reports be submitted to the Durham Board of County Commissioners documenting activities, progress toward goals, and measurable outcomes accomplished.

Now is the time for us - as educators, business leaders, policymakers, and community members - to act together. The cost of inaction is too high, but the return on investment in our young men is limitless.

Durham's future depends on whether our boys and young men of color are prepared to thrive in the classroom, succeed in the workplace, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. We cannot afford to fail them - and we cannot afford to fail Durham.

I look forward to your response.

Consent Agenda

The Board reviewed the following Consent Agenda items for the September 8, 2025, Regular Session meeting.

25-0483 Approve Acquisition of Three Conservation Easements: Sandra and Jerry Wrightenberry for 119 acres, Frances Cook for 147 acres, and Tom Washington for 76 acres for a total estimated County cost of \$1.8 million.

Celeste Burns, Durham County Open Space Manager, stated that they recognized conservation easement participants during farm tours, stopped by farms to thank landowners personally and worked with public relations to make public announcements. She also stated that some of the participants were private and wanted to remain anonymous.

There were no questions regarding the items below:

25-0392 Approve a Resolution Delegating Authority to the County Manager to Sign Real Estate Leases of County-Owned Property for up to a One-Year term as Allowed by State Statute.

25-0448 Approval of Contract with Boundtree Medical for the Purchase of UEScope Video Laryngoscopes not to exceed the amount of \$146,073.12.

25-0449 Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC010 for the Department of Social Services to Recognize Durham County's FY 2025-26 Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) Funding Plan in the Amount of \$932,221, Which Includes the Required Durham County DSS Local Match of \$86,123 to be Appropriated via General Fund Fund Balance.

25-0466 Approval to Enter into Contract with Runbeck Election Services LLC an Arizona Limited Liability Company for Ballot Printing Services in the Amount of \$105,000.00.

25-0468 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC011 Public Health to Recognize \$212,893 from NC DHHS Division of Public Health for the Prevention of Communicable Diseases

25-0469 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC012 Public Health to Recognize \$3,200 from the NC DHHS Division of Public Health Chronic Disease and Injury Section/ Cancer Prevention and Control Branch.

25-0470 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC013 Public Health to Recognize \$13,826 from the NC DHHS Division of Public Health Epidemiology Section Communicable Disease Section Branch for Health Screenings.

25-0471 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC014 Public Health to Recognize \$9,081 from the NC DHHS Division of Public Health Epidemiology Section /Communicable Disease Branch for STD/HIV Care.

25-0472 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 26BCC015 Public Health to Recognize \$17, 500 from the Communicable Disease Branch of the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services for HIV Prevention.

25-0476 Approval of Contract Amendment with Carolina Civilworks, Inc. for Emergency and Scheduled Collection System Repair Services in the Amount of \$210,289.02, Bringing the Contract Amount from \$400,000 to \$610,289.02 and to Execute Amendments Not to Exceed \$700,000.

25-0477 Approval of McGill Environmental Systems of NC, Inc. Contract Amendment for Triangle Wastewater Treatment Plant Residuals Transport and Disposal in the amount of \$142,000 Bringing the Contract Amount from \$408,600 to \$550,600

Discussion Items

Farmland Protection Advisory Board Update

The Board received an update from Nicole Connelly, Durham Farmland Protection Advisory Board Chairperson, regarding the Farmland Protection Advisory Board's (FPAB) past year's accomplishments and the implementation of FPAB's goals for all of Durham agriculture.

Ms. Connelly highlighted key programs administered through the FPAB that were vital to the preservation and recognition of farmland in Durham. The Farmland Protection Program led by Durham County's Open Space Division preserved farms and forestland by purchasing development rights through conservation easements that permanently protected the land. The Voluntary Agriculture District Program provided recognition and public education of Durham's farms and encouraged the economic and financial health of farming areas.

The Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program was funded by Durham County since 2018. Funding increased over the years with a 2025 allocation of \$250,000. The program was administered by Durham Soil and Water Conservation. The purpose of the program was to offer cost share and financial support to farms, new and beginning entrepreneurs and supported agriculture education in schools.

Program goals for calendar year 2026 were as follows:

- Continue to support and promote the Voluntary Agriculture District Program, Conservation Easement Program, and the Agricultural Economic Development Grant Program.
- Continue to support agricultural education through adult programming and in Durham County Schools.
- Update the 2009 Farmland Protection Plan, including ordinance, through grant funding.
- Continue to Engage in the new Unified Development Ordinance process, ensuring agriculture is included in the Use Table.
- Investigate Durham's Present-Use Value Rollback payments and the opportunity of funding agriculture programs.

Directive:

- **The Board requested that Farmland Protection Advisory Board present an update annually.**

2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey and 2024 State of the County Health Report Data

The Board received the Durham County Department of Public Health presentation on recent health data and health outcomes.

Savannah Carrico, Public Health Epidemiologist, presented information pertaining to the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). This was a national survey conducted in each state by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey was administered every two years and the most recent survey data contained in this report was from 2023. The survey asked about many aspects of middle and high schoolers' lives that included mental health, substance use, nutrition, physical activity, bullying, and more.

Bria Miller, Public Health Education Manager, shared a presentation on the State of the County Health (SOTCH) report. The 2024 SOTCH report was an update on data from the 2023 Community Health Assessment (CHA) and the County's top five health priorities which were affordable housing, access to healthcare and health insurance, community safety and wellbeing, mental health, and physical activity/nutrition/food access. Mrs. Miller noted that the full SOTCH report was available online at <https://healthydurham.org/>.

Mrs. Carrico answered questions pertaining to the 2025 YRBS Survey. She stated that due to administration changes within the Center for Disease Control the 2025 YRBS Survey was an opt-in survey, meaning that parents were required to give consent for their children to take the survey. She explained that the report was distributed to all Public Schools in Durham, Durham Office of Youth and the report was also available online at <https://healthydurham.org/>.

Directives:

- **The Board requested the YRBS Trend Report to be provided.**
- **Staff to research if Durham County can offer their version of an opt-out YRBS survey for Durham Public School Students.**
- **The Board requested to receive annual presentations on the YRBS and SOTCH Reports.**

Tax Revaluation Update

The Board received an update from Keyar Doyle, Tax Administrator regarding the 2025 Revaluation process and upcoming steps.

State law requires each jurisdiction to conduct a property reappraisal at least once every eight years. Durham County's previous reappraisal was effective January 1, 2019. Between 2019 and 2025, Durham's median home sale price increased dramatically from \$240,000 to as high as \$445,000 in early 2023. The county experienced an average property value increase of 72%, with some properties seeing increases exceeding 200%. Given the significant market changes identified through ongoing analysis by the Department of Tax Administration, extensive preparation and communication with property owners was essential. Durham County provided comprehensive information about the reappraisal process, property owner rights, and available tax relief options at www.dconc.gov/tax. Additionally, inserts were included in each "March 2025 Change of Value Notice" mailing and the Tax Administration hosted various informational meetings for the community.

The Tax Administration processed appeals submitted by the June 16th deadline. The Board of Equalization & Review conducted weekly hearings to address more than 10,000 appeals received. Property owners who missed the June 16th deadline retained the right to submit untimely appeals and the Board of Equalization & Review had discretionary authority to accept or decline the submissions.

Tax bill notifications were mailed on August 12, 2025. Property taxes were due September 1, 2025. Property taxes were delinquent after January 5, 2026, no matter the circumstances. Appeals prohibited collection actions but did not forgive interest or penalties accrued. Tax payments made by appellants awaiting appeal results was refunded if adjustments to values occurred. Payment coupons were included in the August 2025 mailing, that created equal payments to achieve a timely payment completion. Citizens who needed assistance were encouraged to contact the Tax Administrative office before January 6, 2026.

Mr. Doyle shared a brief overview of State and local programs to assist citizens with tax liability. Tax relief information was disbursed to the community via handouts, flyers, videos, brochures, and inserts added to mailings of change of value notices and tax bills. This information was

incorporated in all Community Outreach sessions and made available on the Tax Administration website.

The Board spoke on the importance of considering the context of what rising property values meant in terms of the economic well-being of Durham, but also understood the frustration voiced by residents. In addition, they pointed out the inability to stay tax-neutral due to the changes being made at the Federal level.

Directives:

- **The Board requested a 2024/2025 year-end report for the Low-Income Homeowner Relief Program.**
- **County to partner with the City to promote the Low-Income Homeowner Relief Program in the water bill mailing.**

Adjournment

Commissioner Burton moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Lee, to adjourn the Work Session meeting at 11:09 a.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Georgina Nicole Moreno
Administrative Assistant