



Legislation Text

File #: 21-0117, Version: 1

Item:

Budget Ordinance Amendment No.21BCCC000084 Increasing Youth Home Expenditure Budget to Offset Unplanned Expenses for the Durham County Youth Home due to Increases in County Juvenile Out-of-County Placements

Date of BOCC Meeting: March 8, 2021

Request for Board Action:

The Board is requested to approve Budget Ordinance Amendment No.21BCCC000084, increasing the Youth Home expenditure budget by \$30,000, for unplanned expenses for the Durham County Youth Home due to increases in county juveniles being detained at out-of-county facilities. Funding for this need will come from funds that were set aside at the outset of FY 2020-21 to address potential revenue shortfalls and/or address expenditure overages due to the pandemic. A budget amendment is required because the County's expenditures are adopted by the Budget Ordinance at the functional area level. This funding approval requires a transfer from General Government to Public Safety functional areas.

Due to unanticipated circumstances caused by COVID-19, as well as recent legislative changes, the number of County juvenile residents sent to out-of-county facilities has exceeded the estimated projection used during FY 2020-21 budget development. Counties with juveniles housed in other counties are charged an initial rate of \$244 per day per juvenile, with NCDPS paying half of the per day cost.

In November 2020, the Youth Home requested and received a fund balance appropriation of \$100,000 to cover unplanned out-of-county placement expenses. Placement costs for Durham juveniles is projected to exceed that amount before the end of the fiscal year. There is little room in the rest of the Youth Home budget to realign dollars; therefore, the Youth Home will need an increase in its expenditure budget in the amount of \$30,000 to cover anticipated remaining monthly costs. This expense is not eligible for FEMA reimbursement.

In 2008, the NC Department of Public Safety developed a new strategy and assessment tool to use the least restrictive environment for juveniles, thus reducing the number of youths placed in detention facilities and providing services and programs in the community. After implementation of the assessment tool, the Youth Home's budget was reduced due to a decline in Durham's juveniles being detained in other facilities.

On December 1, 2019, the "Raise the Age" legislation became effective, which allows 16- and 17-year-olds to be placed in juvenile detention rather than local jails. With this new legislation, staff continued to work on a capital improvement project to build a larger 36-bed facility to meet the growing demand. In addition, on August 1, 2020, new legislation (H.B. 593) was passed removing all minors from local jails. Subsequently, these laws affect the County's ability to maintain all its youth at the current 14-bed facility.

Currently, most juveniles who are being detained have serious class A-G felony charges and are being held for longer periods of time, including seven juveniles at the Youth Home whose cases were transferred to Superior Court (adult court) and are awaiting trial.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: This item aligns with Goal 3: Safe Community and Goal 5: Accountable, Efficient, Visionary Government.

Resource Persons: Angela G. Nunn, Youth Home Director, Jodi Miller, General Manager, David Ades, Assistant Director, Budget and Management Services.

County Manager's Recommendation: The County Manager recommends that the Board approves Budget Ordinance Amendment No.21BCCC000084, increasing the Youth Home expenditure budget by \$30,000, to offset unplanned expenses for the Durham County Youth Home due to increases in county residents being detained at out-of-county facilities.

County Manager: _____