

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

Monday, February 3, 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: 6

Vice Chair Dr. Mike Lee spoke briefly about victims on the flights that crashed on January 29, 2025, in Washington, DC. He shared his deepest sympathies with those who were involved in the crash as well as the Durham County native Rebecca Lobach. Vice Chair Dr. Lee asked the public for a moment of silence to show honor and respect to those involved in the crash and their families.

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.

James Chavis, addressed the importance of black history month and honored local civil rights leaders. He requested the presence of the County Manager and available Commissioners at the townhall meeting at Holton Resource Center on February 20, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Rafiq Zaidi, spoke about civil rights leaders and requested public records pertaining to the investigation of the carbon monoxide found at the Durham Social Services (DSS) facility.

Amanda Wallace, spoke about children being sold by way of the family policing system in Durham. In December 2024, 189 children were in DSS custody, 148 were Black and 111 children were in DSS custody for over 25 months. She stated children were taken from families due to neglect and not abuse and she contacted DSS about four (4) families who had been impacted.

Consent Agenda

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

25-0005 Approval of Purchase of Goods and Services Contract with Batteries of NC & S.W.S. LLC in the Amount of \$385,485.54 for the Sheriff's Office FY25 Vehicle Equipment

Acting County Manager Jones clarified funds were already budgeted and the Board was approving the contract.

25-0012 Budget Ordinance Amendment No. 25BCC070 Public Health to Recognize \$15,000 from Duke University's Division of Community Health to Conduct the 2026 Durham County Community Health Assessment Survey with Durham County Residents

Commissioner Jacobs requested a presentation be made before the Board about the Community Health Assessment once it was completed.

Directive:

- Staff to provide a presentation to the Board about the Community Health Assessment once it was completed.

25-0017 Authorize the County Manager to Sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) for the Durham County Youth Home

Angela Nunn, Youth Home Director, stated Durham County was one (1) of eight (8) facilities operated by Counties in NC and was compensated at a subsidy rate for every child who came into the facility. She continued to say Durham County received \$309 from the State for every juvenile who was housed at the youth home and would provide additional information on the actual cost to operate the youth home.

Directive:

- Staff to provide additional information pertaining to the actual cost to operate the youth home.

25-0036 Durham County Matching Grants Program - Approval of FY 2024-25 Grant Cycle Recipients in the Amount of \$100,000

Brendan Moore, Open Space Land Manager, clarified all grant applications were funded for FY24-25.

25-0037 Approval of Budget Ordinance Amendment No.25BCC072 Appropriating \$53,240 of General Fund Balance to the County Matching Grants Program for previously approved 2023-24 FY Grant Recipient

Acting County Manager Jones stated with various expenditures encumbered, funds normally would be extended. However, due to issues throughout the process, the contract approval was delayed.

25-0038 Approval of Addendum to Property Management Agreement between Durham County and TradeMark Properties, Inc. to incorporate the retail spaces at 201 E. Main Street, Durham, NC 27701 into the Property Management Agreement and increase the annual contract to a total annual amount of \$36,000.

Commissioners questioned how retail spaces were occupied (who reviewed applicants, etc.). Nancy Mitchell, Senior Real Estate Officer, stated Trademark Properties held a listing agreement for retail spaces. They provided a letter of intent from tenants who sought to lease the space and

Durham County determined if it met their objectives. Ms. Mitchell stated pertaining to the Subway on the ground floor of the Admin I Building, the County Manager would determine what would happen to the retail space since Subway opted not to renew their lease.

There were no questions regarding the items below:

25-0018 Approval of Purchase of Goods and Services Contract with eGroup Holding Company, LLC in the Amount of \$302,273 to provide Data Protection and Disaster Recovery for the Sheriff's Office

25-0034 Approval to provide blanket authorization for the Manager's execution of the documents required by the North Carolina Department of Transportation as part of the Triangle Wastewater Treatment Plant Utilities Administration Building II Project.

25-0035 Lease Amendment for China Wok at 3825 S Roxboro Rd. Suite 124 at the Shoppes of Hope Valley Shopping Center to extend the current lease through February 28, 2027, with a monthly base lease rate of \$3,019.02, plus monthly Common Area maintenance costs estimated to be \$400.00 per month for CY2025

Discussion Items

25-0041 Request that the Board suspend the rules and delegate authority to the County Attorney to Execute a Contract Amendment with Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Company, LLC for Insurance Brokerage and Risk Management Services through January 9, 2026, in the Amount of \$42,000.00

The Board was requested to suspend the rules and delegate authority to the County Attorney to execute the Amendment to execute a Contract Amendment with Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Company, LLC for Insurance Brokerage and Risk Management Services through January 9, 2026, in the amount of \$42,000.00 and to sign any future amendments to this contract.

Vice Chair Dr. Mike Lee moved, seconded by Commissioner Valentine, to suspend the rules.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Jacobs moved, seconded by Vice Chair Dr. Mike Lee, to delegate authority to the County Attorney to execute the Amendment to execute a Contract Amendment with Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Company, LLC for Insurance Brokerage and Risk Management Services through January 9, 2026, in the amount of \$42,000.00 and to sign any future amendments to this contract.

The motion carried unanimously.

25-0039 Durham Convention Center and Headquarter Hotel Market and Financial Feasibility Study

The Board of County Commissioners was requested to receive a presentation of the completed feasibility study and recommendations from representatives of Hunden Partners, the City of Durham General Services Department and Durham Next; as well as to engage in a question-and-answer session with the presenters and to provide feedback on the next phase of project assessment.

The initial study was funded by the City of Durham. The next phase of the project was expected to be funded by Durham Next.

Shaun Gustafson, Project Manager, Hunden Partners, shared there were active engagements with local restaurants to ensure their comments and concerns were heard throughout the study.

Mr. Gustafson stated the convention center would host up to at least 2,000 people. He continued to say the ratio of guests who would stay overnight after an event was around 60 percent with the hotel capacity being around 1,100. Mr. Gustafson added that throughout the engagement process, it was found that citizens chose Durham over Raleigh because of the atmosphere and destination appeal.

The Board requested data pertaining to how the housing market was impacted from other large convention centers in the country.

Mr. Gustafson confirmed residents would be involved in the process of designing the facilities and public outdoor spaces involving the arts. Most of the jobs that would be available would revolve primarily around hospitality, food and beverage, and some entertainment. Susan Amey, President & CEO of Discover Durham (Acting Interim Executive Director of Durham Next), stated that research was conducted on how convention centers were changing to embrace activities and functions that residents could embrace.

The Board expressed concern about current Durham convention center being one of the smallest in the state and losing out on opportunities to host large events and conferences. Discussion was held regarding the potential for a larger facility to help generate increased sales and occupancy tax revenues and support downtown businesses and host local events.

The Board suggested utilizing tax increment financing – a prepared meal tax, which other counties used for funding to build convention centers. They also expressed concerns about where the 5-acre site would be housed downtown and if the hotel could be built on top of the convention center.

Ms. Amey shared that this investment was based on creating an economic driver and identified the projected incremental spending of \$5 billion over 30 years.

Directive:

- **Staff to provide data pertaining to how the housing market was impacted from other large convention centers in the country.**

25-0028 Draft FY26 Durham Annual Transit Work Program Presentation

The Board was requested to receive a presentation on the Draft 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 which included a budget for the following 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 and the GoTriangle Board of Trustees.

The Durham Board of County Commissioners received an informal presentation at the February 3 work session. After a final recommendation was made by the Staff Working Group, the Board would be requested to adopt the Final Recommended FY26 Durham Annual Transit Work Program in April 2025.

Ellen Beckmann, AICP, Transportation Director, shared concerns were raised dealing with budget transparency and stated the City would not consider making changes, however the presentation would be brought before the Staff Working Group (SWG) again before being brought before the Board in April. Sean Egan, Transportation Director, City of Durham added that the City was not able to provide information due to being behind schedule in production of design plans for the Holloway St. and Junction Rd. projects.

The Board inquired about the number of staff currently employed by the County. Ms. Beckmann confirmed there were currently four (4) Durham County transportation staff.

The Board requested data pertaining to last year's work plan metrics, the project delivery and costs.

The Board asked if the City adopted a transportation plan. Mr. Egan confirmed the City adopted a "Move Durham Plan" in 2020 which focused on transportation needs in Central Durham and the City participated in the Triangle West TPO Board meetings in Regional Transportation Planning. He continued to say staff were aware that Durham residents traveled beyond the region, and it was critically important to work with regional partners and plan transportation across the region.

Mr. Egan stated \$18 million was allocated for transit funding and the City would meet in the future to determine funding challenges and look at opportunities to address funding needs.

The Board requested that concerns and issues raised in the staff memo be addressed by the City transportation staff before the Durham County Transit Work Plan was approved.

The Board requested performance measure data on: *Durham Access project data, Durham County employment and community access days and the number of bus stops built in 2024 in comparison to the initial number.*

Directive:

- **Staff to provide data pertaining to last year's work plan metrics, the project delivery and costs.**
- **Staff to provide performance measure data on Durham Access project data, Durham County employment and community access days and the number of bus stops built in 2024 in comparison to the initial number.**
- **Staff to provide concerns and issues to the City transportation staff before the Durham County Transit Work Plan was approved.**

252-0031 County Food Security Initiatives Implementation Update

The Board was requested to receive an annual update on County Food Security initiatives and the impact in Durham County and provide input on upcoming food security plans and initiatives.

This annual update was focused on the County's commitment and efforts to target initiatives and investments in collaboration with the Durham community to improve food security for food insecure residents. Durham County's collaborative approach to its food security work, investments, and initiatives had strengthened internal and external capacity to make progress toward equitably and innovatively improving food security for all residents in Durham County during a period of increasing food insecurity post-COVID.

Raina Goldstein Bunnag, County Food Security Coordinator, shared the number of food pantries decreased due to COVID and some consolidations. She stated some food pantries grouped together to share ideas and challenges they faced and encouraged each other to work together.

Discussions were held regarding the "Double Bucks Program". The program was created to assist residents who received food stamps and allowed them to earn double the amount of money they spent on healthy foods at the Farmers' Market. The program utilized the Farmers' Market where local food would be sold and the prices of food could increase due to the economy, but it would not be priced as high as the grocery stores.

Ms. Bunnag clarified food pantries were used to cover the emergency needs of residents who did not benefit from food stamps, WIC or other programs and services. She added there were some creative programs who specialized in medical or dietary needs and at home distributions.

The Board requested data pertaining to the following: *Grocery Store Investment, Senior Meals on Wheels, and Food Security Grants.*

Ms. Bunnag stated there was a long waitlist for citizens being served through Meals on Wheels but was not aware of the number of people currently being served. She would collect additional information to bring before the Board.

Directive:

- **Staff to provide data on the Grocery Store Investment, Senior Meals on Wheels, and Food Security Grants.**
- **Staff to provide number of people currently serviced by Meals on Wheels.**

25-0032 Durham PreK and Early Childhood Action Plan Implementation Update

The Board was requested to receive and discuss an annual update on County early childhood initiatives and the impact in Durham County.

This annual update was centered on the County's commitment to nurturing the youngest members of our community through the collective efforts of Durham's Early Childhood Action Plan (ECAP). ECAP, developed through a three-year process led by the community based Grown in Durham Steering Committee, reflects community strengths, challenges and opportunities.

Dr. Linda Chapell, Senior VP of Early Years, shared 658 out of 1700 funded seats received direct local dollars; however, all preschool classrooms in the public sector benefited from the investment due to unified enrollment. She added currently at least five (5) schools utilized Durham PreK and Durham Public Schools (DPS) overtime would commit to having preschools at every elementary school.

Durham PreK required all teachers to be licensed and certified to be in the lead teacher role even at private sites. Private sites would be reimbursed to support salary costs, due to teachers being required to use the DPS salary scale. Lead teachers who were not currently certified were required to be enrolled in school, and received mentoring support; however, there was a time limit to meet to receive their licensure. Instructional Assistants in the classroom were required to have additional rigorous educational credentials that were often found in preschool classrooms.

Ms. Chappel stated the goal was to track all children's metrics over multiple years as they moved through their school years. Metrics were viewed at how a child progressed compared to the national standards in 4-5 year old preschoolers. There was no current external evaluator, but the State NC PreK Program was evaluated for many years and Durham PreK followed higher standards than NC PreK.

The Board suggested an update on the data sharing agreement with DPS and the agreement needed to be in place before budget approval.

Meytal Barak, County Early Childhood Coordinator, shared staff would meet with over 20 foundations in hopes to make connections to have conversations pertaining to universal PreK work within the community.

The Board inquired about the role of doing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screenings and how it could be incorporated into Early Childhood work. Ms. Chappel stated every child was screened prior to enrollment and part of the screenings touched some of the factors of ACEs. She continued to say all staff were trained in child informed practices; however, true ACEs screenings dived deeper into the family engagement component.

Directive:

- **Staff to provide an update on the data sharing agreement.**

25-0042 Presentation on the Resources for Youth Success and Empowerment (RYSE) Assessment Center at the Youth Home

The Board was requested to receive the Resources for Youth Success and Empowerment (RYSE) Assessment Center presentation. This presentation would provide an update and overview of the center's operation and processes.

Jennifer McRant, Program Manager RYSE, shared the Assessment Center was formed with active involvement of community stakeholders, aiming to create a more connected community where youth and families could easily access the rich resources and services in Durham. She continued to say the center provided a portal of entry to a wide range of services, including mental health, pro-social, recreational, mentor, academic, substance use, life skills, and workforce development for youth aged 10-17.

RYSE Assessment Center utilized a self-screener called the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Based on the screening scores, staff worked with youth and families to create an individualized case plan that aids their growth and meets their needs. The case plan also directed families to organizations within the Durham community.

Ms. McRant clarified the extended operating hours for the center would be Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 7: 00 p.m., normal operating hours on Friday and from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays. She added that the public could reach the center at (919) 560-7661 during business hours and for additional information, the public can view their website and brochures.

The RYSE center accepted referrals from partners and programs within the community as well as accepted walk-ins to conduct screenings for the youth. The RYSE center also partnered with a guidance counselor to offer additional help and resources to look at different aspects of trauma with the youth.

25-0044 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.

Chair Allam asked if the planning department would provide a map/chart showing the growth of Durham County, including the number of new houses being built, the number of people relocating here, as well as the service capacity, i.e. the number of available school seats, the number of residents being served through Emergency Medical Services, the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Burton inquired about the Boys and Girls Club old facility located on Pettigrew Street and what the County planned on doing with the property.

Commissioner Jacobs inquired about bringing back Commissioner Comments to share information from conferences. She continued to say she attended the NACo Intergovernmental Roundtable on Local Crisis Behavioral Response and stated counties who made progress received Medicaid Expansion to create a comprehensive behavioral health system. Commissioner Jacobs also shared information pertaining to communities who utilized trauma informed screenings and ACEs. She added the City and County Partnership with Youth created a magazine called "Nuevo South" and would like for the libraires to have copies.

25-0020 Closed Session

The Board was requested to adjourn into Closed Session 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 Allam stated the Board met in closed session and provided directions to staff.

Adjournment

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

The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Shaunecie Wardrick
Administrative Assistant