

**MINUTES OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'
REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 21, 2017 AT 5 P.M.**

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met in regular session on February 21, 2017, in the Commission Chambers, 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 5 p.m. where and when the following business was transacted:

The Chairman called the meeting to order with the following members present:

Brownie Newman, Chairman
Ellen Frost, Vice Chair
Joe Belcher, Commissioner
Mike Fryar, Commissioner
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Commissioner
Robert Pressley, Commissioner
Al Whitesides, Commissioner

Staff present was: Wanda Greene, County Manager; Jon Creighton; Assistant County Manager/Planning Director; Mandy Stone, Assistant County Manager/HHS Director; Tim Flora, Finance Director; Robert Deutsch, County Attorney; Kathy Hughes, Clerk to the Board.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sherry Barker from Candler had a daughter who died of a heroin overdose in January of this year. She spoke about a program that works for addicts and getting them into treatment. *At the request of Commissioner Belcher, her comments are attached in full to the minutes of the meeting.*

Jerry Rice asked the Board to stick with issues instead of politics. He did not want any deals done behind closed doors and pointed out that the County Manager worked for the Board not the opposite. He wanted a copy of the budget to be made public when it was presented to the Board.

Todd Williams, District Attorney, thanked the Board for the support for the court system saying he was excited about a new program of diversion and the justice resource center that would be beneficial to the community and he hoped the Board would support that model.

Deborah Miles told a story about social networks and how they work.

Don Yelton commented on his taxes going up and complained about the County's cell towers.

Bill Murdoch with Eblen Charities reported that the dental sealant program was in its 18th year and had helped 10,000 students get sealants at no cost to the students. He said that many of the teachers bringing their students were once students who got sealants. He report that the teacher housing project was ahead of schedule and under budget and would be a model across the state when it was completed in May of this year.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Belcher read the **Resolution in Support of the Construction of Turn Lanes at Intersection of NC 191 and Brevard Road** and moved to approve it along with the remainder of the consent agenda items.

Vice Chair Frost seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Approval of the Minutes of the January 17 and February 7 Meetings**
- **Release Report**
- **Resolution Accepting Bid for the Sale of Surplus Property on Mardel Circle**
- **Road Petition: Glen Coe Subdivision**
- **Resolution in Support of the Construction of Turn Lanes at Intersection of NC 191 and Brevard Road**
- **Vaya Health (formerly Smoky Mountain) Financial Report**
- **Capital Projects Ordinance**
- **Resolution Authorizing Execution of Deed to the Buncombe County Board of Education**

GOOD NEWS

- **Proclamation of Southern Conference Basketball Championships Week**

Commissioner Whitesides read the proclamation and presented it to Greg Duff, Chairman of the Asheville Buncombe Sports Commission.

COUNTY MANAGERS REPORT

Keith Miller, Reappraisal Manager, reported that they were currently accepting property valuation appeals as a result of the notices that were mailed out in January. He outlined the ways to appeal property values stating that Tax Office staff were available to assist citizens with the process. He reviewed the programs available for tax relief for seniors, the disabled and for farmers. Commissioner Belcher said that he would be willing to work with the State to find additional discounts for tax payers.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Economic Community Investment Model**

Commissioner Frost introduced Dr. Dwight Mullen who was part of the Equality Task Force that included some of the commissioners, community members and staff who had prepared the economic community model.

Dr. Dwight Mullen presented a drawing of Isaac Coleman that had been a member of the community working for equality. Gene Bell with the Asheville Housing Authority and friend of Mr. Coleman, said that naming this initiative after Mr Coleman would be an appropriate memorial to his work in the community.

Dr. Mullen gave a report on the history and current state of black Asheville including data of that showed a decrease in the number of African Americans coming to the area. He said that African Americans lived shorter lives; have lower birth weight babies; had students not at grade level and had lower levels of college achievements; lower annual earnings; and that the median incomes for black families were just over the poverty level. He said that 34 percent of all black people in the county were living in poverty with a 17 percent unemployment rate.

Lisa Eby, Health and Human Services, presented the Economic Community Investment Model that would address the problems facing this community. She said that they had meet with the community and found that race, poverty and trauma limit childhood potential. The model supports communities addressing their problems inside the communities.

Green Opportunities representative spoke about sustainable employment and a job training program for the community that was working out of the Eddington Center where they help the homeless and hard to employ.

Dwayne Barton talked about his work in the community.

Tamika Ambrose Murray with Word on the Street said she worked with students to create a documentary video project that was presented. Some of the students that made the video spoke about what they had learned from working on the video project.

Susanne Swanger with the County Schools and David Thompson, Students Services Director, said that they received a federal grant to increase and enhance student learning and the impact of trauma on students. Trauma is cumulate effect of many things some of those being economic despair and bias in the culture. He outlined the ways that they were trying to address these trauma problems in the students.

Charlotte Hips, Principal of Johnston Elementary, said her school had 300 students from 9 different counties and over 90 percent of the students received reduced lunch. She said that her staff work to understand who they serve and how best to address the problems in that community including having teachers instructed on how to deal with the environment of crisis that the children face.

Mandy Stone, Assistant County Manager/Health and Human Services Director, presented the recommendation as outlined in the documents attached to the minutes. She said that this model would need a three year commitment to see if it would succeed.

Vice Chair Frost moved to approve the recommendation of the Isaac Coleman Economic Community Investment Model including the budget amendment at attached. Commissioner Whitesides seconded.

Ms. Stone explained that the \$325,000 was a one-time offset of the investment for the hard to house. This funding was not needed at this time. Ms. Stone said that these contracts would be monitored through a dashboard showing how they were impacting the communities.

Vice Chair Frost and Commissioners Belcher and Whitesides thanked the Health and Human Services Department and community for working for this model.

Jerry Rice wanted the focus to be on the education of the kids and he felt that the schools were not doing their job. He wanted the money put into the schools and not into the HHS.

Marvin Chambers thanked the Board for the project which he felt had great potential. He said there needed to be more skilled labor training for trade or skilled jobs.

A representative of Asheville Buncombe Institute for Parity Achievement spoke about the disparity of the area. She thanked the Board for the support.

Ianna Pearson asked for the support and encouraged relationship building within the community.

Don Yelton asked for public reporting on a regular basis on this model. He also spoke for trade education for students.

Basil Mills talked about her experience as an African American student at Enka Middle School. She also wanted more sidewalks.

Dwanna Little said that the students need examples that they can follow to find a way out and up.

Lisa Blackman thanked the Board for the model that she felt would bring empowerment to a group that needs the support.

Cindy McMahan, County School Board member, thanked the Board for their work to try and tackle this problem.

Alma Atkins endorsed a program of engagement, education and empowerment for everyone.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara thanked the community saying she would proudly support the effort and would anxiously await what happens in the community.

Commissioner Pressley thanked the staff and school personnel.

The motion passed 7-0.

- **Justice Resource Coordination**

Mandy Stone, Assistant County Manager/Health and Human Services Director, outlined the Justice Resource Coordination Program that she said had been put together with the help of District Court judges, the District Attorney, Public Defenders, the Sheriff, probation, parole and pre-trial release staff. She said that Rachel Nygaard and Leigh Creighton on County staff would work on this program. She gave the power point that is attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Commissioner Belcher asked for benchmarks for the expected results as outlined in the presentation. Ms. Stone said that a dashboard would be created to monitor all of the programs daily.

Commissioner Belcher said that the payment on a new jail would be about \$8 million and he would like to see jail diversion prevent the need of another jail. He suggested that the oversight council set crazy goals.

Judge Hill thanked the Board for the model and support of these efforts. He felt it could keep the county from having to spend money on an additional jail module.

Todd Williams, District Attorney, suggested that the County communicate to the public the programs that are available to help citizens stay out of jail.

LeeAnn Melton, Public Defender, spoke in favor of this program and for more pre-trial release funding.

Van Duncan, Sheriff, said he was excited about this program and but also aware that this must in no way compromise public safety. He supported the close monitoring of this program.

Jerry Rice commented on the problems of the school system that he felt caused the jails to be full.

Commissioner Belcher moved to approve the Justice Resource Coordination Program as outlined including Budget Amendment 10 and the positions as outlined. Commissioner Pressley seconded the motion.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrera thanked everyone that was involved in this effort. She said that she looked forward to being involved in this work.

Commissioner Fryar and Whitesides thanked the criminal justice community working to make life better in the future. This is a great pro-active effort.

Vice Chair Frost and Commissioner Whitesides said that the schools cannot be treated as the scapegoat as it takes a community to raise a child.

The motion passed 7-0.

- **Grant Projects Ordinance**

Gary Higgins, Soil & Water Conservation District, explained his budget amendment as outlined in the Grants Ordinance attached to the minutes. Commissioner Belcher moved to approve this ordinance. Vice Chair Frost seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Kim Moretz, with Pre-Trial Release, explained the grant they received as outlined in the ordinance. Commissioner Whitesides moved to approve the grant funds. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Sheriff Duncan commented on the DWI Task Force grant that was received for a fourth year of funding. Vice Chair Frost moved to approve the grant as outlined. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College Capital Update**

The County Manager gave a presentation as outlined in the power point attached to the minutes. She said that she had asked Nathan Ramsey, with Workforce Development to come to the March 7 meeting to talk about jobs in the region and what type of training would be needed to fill the jobs.

Dennis King, President of A-B Technical Community College, gave a power point that is attached to the minutes of this meeting. He recommended the construction of the Arts and Science and Engineering Building and no action on the remaining projects.

Vice Chair Frost asked the number of AB Tech students and staff that were African American and if the College had a plan to remedy the 17 percent unemployment of African Americans. Mr. King said that the College had 18 percent minority students and wanted the minority enrollment figures to increase. He said that 6 percent of the 18 percent were African American students. Vice Chair Frost said the vet-tech program at the College takes two years to complete and the Humane Alliance had found it difficult to get the program reduced to a 12 week program to get students trained faster. Dr. King said that the College is always looking for new job training opportunities and try and make it easy.

Following further discussion, Commissioner Fryar showed a power point that is attached to the minutes of this meeting.

Vice Chair Frost moved to continue the discussion to March 7 meeting. Commissioner Pressley seconded. The motion passed 7-0.

The Chairman asked for cost estimates for the immediate plan and the long range plan. What are the total capital projects that are currently being planned over the next 5 years.

Dr. King asked that all of the questions that the Commissioners had be presented to him before the next meeting.

- **Warren Wilson College Pool**

Warren Wilson College representatives gave a power point presentation that is attached to the minutes of this meeting outlining a plan to repair and reopen a pool on campus. The pool would open within 6 to 8 months and asked for \$300,000 from the County.

Vice Chair Frost asked about how much access the east end community would have to the pool as to teams and organized swimming. They said it would be a resource for the east buncombe community and could be used for emergency response training as it has a deep end for diving.

The Chairman said that this was a small investment to get a great opportunity for the community.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to approve this investment. Vice Chair Frost seconded asking that the County have assurance that Owen High swim team and Black Mountain swim teams be able to use the pool and the County's money be the last used to finance the project. *The County Manager agreed to have legal draft a usage agreement outlining the requirements for the funding.*

Doug Thigpen who lives close to the college and used the pool before it was closed, said that accessibility and usage were outstanding and that swim teams used to use it in the afternoon.

Don Yelton thanked the Board for asking questions and for taking comments before votes.

Jerry Rice wanted more information on the agenda.

The motion passed 7-0.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Vice Chair Frost moved to appoint **Commissioner Beach-Ferrara** as liaison to the **Women's Commission**. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Vice Chair Frost moved to appoint **Jacquelyn Hallum, Yvette Jives, Dwight Mullen Rachel Keener** and **Lucy Lawrence** to the **Health & Human Services Board**. Commissioner Fryar seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to appoint **Mike Kneppshield** to the **Audit Committee**. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Belcher moved to appoint **Miriam McKinney Michael Kryzaneck, Mark Morris, Jim Edmonds** and **Debbie Lane** to the **Board of Equalization & Review**. Commissioner Fryar seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Belcher moved to appoint **Joel Mazelis, Slater Solomon** the **Land Conservation Advisory Board**. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Vice Chair Frost moved to appoint **Tobias Weas** to the **Downtown Commission**. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Belcher moved to appoint **Susan Schiemer** and **Eva Cheng** to the **Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee**. Vice Chair Frost seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Fryar moved to appoint **Bennett Lincoff** and **Phoebe Husar** to the **Adult Care Home Community Advisory Committee**. Vice Chair Frost seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Vice Chair Frost moved to appoint **Brandon Hensley** to the **Agriculture Advisory Board**. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcement and adjourned the meeting:

- *March 7 -- 5 p.m. Regular Meeting Board of Commissioners in Room 326 @ 200 College Street in downtown Asheville*

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

KATHY HUGHES, CLERK TO THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BROWNIE NEWMAN, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS