

**MINUTES OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'
SPECIAL MEETING OF APRIL 16, 2020 AT 12 P.M.**

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met in special session on April 16, 2020, in the Commission Chambers, 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 12 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
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Commissioner
Joe Belcher, Commissioner
Amanda Edwards, Commissioner
Anthony Penland, Commissioner
Robert Pressley, Vice Chair
Al Whitesides, Commissioner

Staff present: Avril Pinder, County Manager; Sybil Tate, Assistant County Manager; Dakisha Wesley, Assistant County Manager; Jennifer Barnette, Budget Director; Lamar Joyner, Clerk to the Board; Michael Frue, Senior Staff Attorney;

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:00p.m.

- **Community Testing Resolution**

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara, presented a PowerPoint that expressed the need to scale-up COVID-19 testing in order to save lives and safely reopen the local economy and community. Expanded community testing, contact tracing, and isolation and care was supported with case studies from other countries, states and cities.

Chairman Newman read the resolution acknowledged the work being done across Buncombe County and the region to fight against COVID-19. He also stated that the authorization of funds in the resolution should be removed because the following budget amendment would satisfy the funding need. The Board had a discussion for the need of the resolution for community testing and the logistics of presenting the resolution.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to approve the resolution with the acceptance of a friendly amendment from Commissioner Beach-Ferrara to remove the authorization of funding language. Commissioner Edwards seconded the motion.

Commissioner Belcher offered a friendly amendment to the motion to change the resolution to read:

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic poses a significant public health risk, with more than 640,000 documented cases in the United States and more than 30,000 documented fatalities;

WHEREAS, the elderly and individuals with chronic conditions are especially vulnerable;

WHEREAS, the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in more than 10,000 local residents in Buncombe County losing their jobs;

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners seeks to restore operations of local business sectors, community organizations, schools and other education institutions as soon as possible when it can be done in a safe manner and community testing ~~is~~ **can be an effective essential** component in that process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of Buncombe County, North Carolina, as follows:

1. This Board requests staff to:
 - a. Develop short-term and long-term plans for expanded Covid-19 community testing in Buncombe County to include but not limited to front-line medical and first responder staff, employees in Essential jobs that require a high degree of interaction with the public, such as cashiers at grocery stores and staff in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, and residents with documented symptoms of Covid-19;
 - b. Develop protocols regarding the types of tests we will use and how they will be used with the goal of accessing Covid-19 tests that can provide accurate, same-day results, while recognizing that tests that require more time for laboratory analysis may need to be utilized in the interim due to supply constraints,
 - c. Prepare strategies to secure access to antibody testing, which can ascertain which individuals have already experienced Covid-19 and may have immunity, as the technology is scientifically validated and supplies become available;
 - f. Expand prevention and early detection efforts among high-risk individuals and vulnerable communities;
 - h. Seek collaborations with entities including but not limited to NCDHHS; local governments in Western NC; funding entities; health care providers and systems; ~~and~~ community-based organizations **and private sector**.

Commissioner Whitesides did not accept this friendly amendment and the original motion passed 4-3. (NOES-Belcher, Pressley, Penland)

- **Budget Amendment for Appropriation of Funding Related to the Emergency Operations/ COVID-19 and Ambulance Purchase**

Jennifer Barnette, Budget Director, presented and explained the budget amendment. The budget amendment will fund additional emergency operations and the purchase of a replacement ambulance truck. Currently, COVID-19 spending to date has totaled \$468,492 for various supplies and services.

Commissioner Belcher moved to approve the Budget amendment as presented. Commissioner Penland seconded the motion and it passed 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:42 p.m.

LAMAR JOYNER, CLERK
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BROWNIE NEWMAN, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS