

Buncombe County Government

2023 Legislative Agenda

November 1, 2022



Background and 2023 Planning

Background

- Ward and Smith was retained by Buncombe County at the May 10 meeting of the Board of Commissioners
- Ward and Smith represented Buncombe County during the 2022 Short Session
- During the Short Session, Ward and Smith monitored and advocated on the numerous bills including the below.
 - Mitchell/Hickory-Conover/Buncombe Occupancy Tax Changes (HB1057)
 - 2022 Appropriations Act (HB103): including Non-Certified K12 State Personnel Supplemental Funding, Affordable Housing
 - Short Term Rentals and County Authority
 - GREAT Broadband Expansion (HB1059)

2023 Planning

- The 2023 Long Session begins in January.
- To prepare for the Long Session, Buncombe County worked with Ward and Smith to develop a draft legislative agenda
- The agenda was developed using input from Commissioners, State Representatives and Department Heads
- The goal of today's session is to discuss, refine and prioritize the existing list



Tier 1 – Policy and Appropriations



Legislative Agenda - Policy - Tier 1

Educated and Capable Community

- Seek additional state funding support for early childhood education and Pre-K programs including simplifying or modifying subsidy formula for Buncombe County *
- Seek to expand the county's ability to use tax revenue for early childhood education capital needs

Vibrant Economy

- Seek changes to Buncombe County's occupancy tax law

Resident Well-Being

- Oppose any proposals that would limit Buncombe County's ability to regulate short-term rentals or online marketplaces
- Seek legislation to allow differential property tax treatment of owner-occupied properties versus second homes or income producing properties

* Note Indicates an item considered critical to Department operations or high-priority by Department Heads.



Legislative Agenda - Appropriations - Tier 1

Educated and Capable Community

- Seek state funding for school personnel salary increases and bonuses
- Restore supplemental pay for educators with Master's Degrees
- Seek state funding for K-12 and Community College education and related capital needs
- Extend funding for early childhood/childcare stabilization subsidies –permanent funding *

Resident Well-Being

- Seek state funding for affordable housing initiatives/support continued or additional funding of NC Workforce Housing Loan Program
- Seek and advocate for additional state funding to address the Innovation Waiver slots waiting list for IDD individuals in the Buncombe community

Environmental and Energy Stewardship

- Seek state appropriations to fund local water/sewer extension projects (e.g., Ferry Road) *
- Seek state funding for French Broad River water quality improvements *
- Seek additional state funding support for local stream and river debris removal programs
- Seek additional state funding and/or direct earmarks for flood resiliency, stormwater mitigation projects in flood prone areas

Vibrant Economy

- Seek state investment in broadband grant funding and simplification of broadband grant process *
- Seek state funding resources for repairs and improvements to McCormick Field



Tier 2 – Policy and Appropriations



Legislative Agenda – Policy – Tier 2

Educated and Capable Community

- Support legislation which establishes or promotes high level community college workforce programs

Vibrant Economy

- Seek legislation to require more data sharing and transparency from recipients of state broadband grants
- Seek legislative policy change to allow rural census tracts within tier 3 counties to become eligible for state level grants

Environmental and Energy Stewardship

- Seek county authority to finance green energy projects/green banking
- Seek legislation to modify state commercial building code, especially around energy efficiency *
- Seek legislation, in coordination with SWANA, to establish state level bottle exchange program
- Seek legislation to increase enforcement of litter statutes *



Legislative Agenda – Policy – Tier 2 (cont.)

Resident Well-Being

- Preserve or enhance local government authority to regulate short-term rental properties
- Ensure the passage of a local bill to transfer state property to Buncombe county for the development of affordable housing
- Seek legislation to authorize a Civilian Traffic Crash Investigator program for the City of Asheville
- Expand Attorney General's authority to include oversight of hospital mergers
- Seek changes to G.S. 143-129 regarding procurement of emergency vehicles and additional EMS equipment
- Seek changes to G.S. 105-277 to establish an elderly or homestead exemption on property tax for certain citizens in
- Seek legislation to establish EMS as an essential service *

Resident Well-Being

- Seek changes to Medicaid reimbursement policy for EMS
- Seek legislation to modernize 911 statutes *
- Seek legislation to modify policy regarding wet signature requirements for Medicaid applicants
- Seek legislation to clarify role of Clerk of Court and Buncombe County within the area of automatic expungement *
- Seek legislation to remove restrictions on certain drug-related felons' ability to access food stamps *
- Support legislation to make changes to Chapter 160D to restore minimum housing standards enforcement to local governments
- Support legislation that would raise the minimum wage for essential workers



Legislative Agenda – Appropriations – Tier 2

Educated and Capable Community

- Seek legislation and state funding to establish Community College program around essential and emerging technologies

Resident Well-Being

- Seek permanent state funding to continue Childcare Stabilization Grants in perpetuity
- Seek state funding to establish an active aging facility in Western North Carolina
- Seek funding to establish a Western North Carolina History Museum

Environmental and Energy Stewardship

- Seek additional state funding for local soil and water districts, including NCDA cost-share programs
- Advocate for additional staff positions at Pisgah View State Park through DNCR
- Seek state funding sources for electric vehicle charging stations
- Seek state funding for NCDA Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, specifically for WNC

Vibrant Economy

- Seek support for the development of a meat processing facility in WNC with EDPNC and beyond
- Seek additional state funding and collaboration with EDPNC for assistance to small business development



Next Steps

- **Commissioner Prioritization:** now – January 2023
- **Adopt Legislative Agenda:** January 2023
- **2023 Legislative Session:** begins end of January 2023



Appendix



The Policy Development Process

