

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL STAFF WORK TO DEVELOP A SCOPE OF  
WORK FOR AN OFFICIAL AUDIT TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE  
REGULATIONS, STATUTES, AND LOCAL REQUIREMENTS TO CEASE HARM IMPACTING  
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

WHEREAS, there has been increased attention to Racial Equity by Buncombe County Government – including adoption of the Racial Equity Action Plan and declaration of racism as a public health and safety crisis; and

WHEREAS, on August 4, 2020, the Board of Commissioners of Buncombe County adopted a resolution supporting community reparations for Black People in Buncombe County, apologizing to the Black community - including descendants of people who were enslaved in Buncombe County - and seeking to make amends for Buncombe County’s participation in and sanctioning of the enslavement of Black people; enforcement of segregation and racist, discriminatory policies and practices during that era; urban renewal program that harmed multiple, successful black communities; appoint representatives to and fully participate in the new Community Reparations Commission created by the City of Asheville; and

WHEREAS, that August 2020 Board resolution directed county staff, including the then newly-formed Equity and Inclusion Workgroup, to continue prioritizing racial equity in the implementation of the Buncombe County Strategic plan, including but not limited to the following urgent priority areas for Black residents of Buncombe County:

- Expanding access to quality early childhood education and taking other steps to reduce the opportunity and achievement gap in the local public school systems;
- Increasing Black home ownership, business ownership and other strategies to support upward mobility and build generational wealth within the Black community;
- Reducing health disparities, including infant mortality;
- Reducing racial disparities in the justice system.; and

WHEREAS, on December 5, 2022, the Community Reparations Commission, unanimously approved an immediate recommendation for the City of Asheville and Buncombe County to

stop further harm by ceasing the repetition of institutional processes that lead to racially disparate outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the immediate recommendation included conducting an official audit to ensure compliance with federal and state laws, regulatory bodies, codes of conduct, court orders, and consent decrees to allow for the acceptance of guarantees that the City and County have ceased to inflict further harm on the African American community; and

WHEREAS, the City and County acknowledges compliance does not, in full, eliminate negative impacts to the African American Community and the City and County have implemented measures intended to cease further harm on the African American community to include the creation of the Equity & Inclusion Department and Equity and Human Rights Office, respectively; and utilization of equity analysis tools to evaluate policies, procedures and decisions; and

WHEREAS, the magnitude of the effort and the intent from the Community Reparations Commission, an independent third-party firm (s) will need to be selected to conduct the audit as described by the immediate recommendation;

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

1. The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners commits and provides assurances that it will take necessary and reasonable action to address harm due to intentional and unintentional policies, programs, practices and procedures that produce disparities as well as racially and gender-based discriminate outcomes in Education, Health Care, Housing, Economic Development and Justice as identified or discovered from the audit or during the process.

2. Buncombe County Board of Commissioners also commits to take measures to create and/or strengthen the following:

- Confidence building between government and African Americans;
- Truth seeking mechanisms and processes; and
- Timely accountability of the dispensation of the Community Reparations Commission's immediate recommendations.

3. The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners directs the County Manager to work collaboratively with City of Asheville and the Community Reparations Commission to develop a solicitation that includes a formal scope of work to implement the immediate recommendation approved by the Community Reparations Commission at its December 5, 2022 meeting. The

scope of work should include a financial assessment and policy assessment for programmatic areas related to governmental operations.

4. Upon audit completion, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners directs the County Manager to review the findings and evaluate and prioritize remediation opportunities.

This the 7<sup>th</sup> day of February 2023.

**ATTEST**

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR THE  
COUNTY OF BUNCOMBE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lamar Joyner, Clerk

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brownie Newman, Chairman

APPROVED AS TO FORM

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Attorney