



# Steps We've Taken

## Enhanced Board Oversight

- Limited spending and authority of the County Manager
  - Capped bonuses at \$1,000 for an employee and required that they are reported publicly
- Appointed the County Chief Financial Officer with a direct reporting line to the Board
- Delineated authority and roles of County Manager and Chief Financial Officer
- Performance review process put in place for the appointed positions of County Manager, Clerk to the Board and Chief Financial Officer and annually reviews and their contracts for renewal
- Clarified that only a public, majority vote of the Board can authorize funding for Economic or Community Development
- Delineated purpose of Personnel and Budget Ordinances and restricts one from altering the other
- Ensuring the practice of requiring public hearings as part of the budget process with all segments being recorded
- Requiring public notice and public hearing to change the Personnel Ordinance
- Replaced any previous "Chairman Discretion" provisions in the Personnel Ordinance with a public vote of the majority of the County Board

## Educating the Board and Public on the Budget Process

- Opened the budget process to greater public accountability through:
  - Commissioners receive a line item budget to review
  - Monthly work sessions from November-June are public; sessions are open, recorded and streamed
  - Published Budget summaries
  - Link made available to the public to minutes approving budget actions
- Realigned current County staff to establish a Performance Management Team that provides ongoing fiscal and programmatic monitoring

## Redefined the role of the Audit Committee

- Better defined the role of Audit Committee:
  - Strengthened the Charter and Bylaws
  - Management removed from committee
  - Additional Commissioner added to committee for a total of two
  - Committee given more authority related to Internal Auditor
    - New, defined role for Internal Auditor
    - Internal Auditor provided more independence
    - Established the Internal Auditor as the central point for all Whistle-blower complaints
    - Additional Internal Auditor resources (e.g., added staff)
- Clarified the reporting line of Internal Auditor with access to the Board
- Ensured the Internal Auditor cannot be hired, fired or disciplined without consultation with the Audit Committee
- Gave the Audit Committee the responsibility of approving the annual Internal Audit Plan and reporting annually to the County Board
- Adopted the COSO standards
- Educating employees through an ongoing process that every one has a responsibility to ensure good controls and practices are followed (COSO standard)
- Providing annual training on professional standards and ethics; establishing a code of conduct

## Improving Fiscal Accountability and Procedures:

- Fiscal Accountability workgroup created to review all financial-related policies and processes to ensure clarity and accountability in processes and determine if there are necessary changes to be made
- Changes to Finance processes: AP reviews, reduced petty cash, etc
- New financial system, Workday, integrates PCard purchases into approval workflow

- Approval/review process no longer in separate system
- Itemized PCard transaction integrate into General Ledger instead of summary transactions

## Making Access Easy: created different "Dashboards" to give the Board and Public Access to Our Operations and Activities

Public Dashboards are organized for simple searches to examine:

- County debt levels and affordability
- New capital projects planned
- County budget
- Staff salaries and benefits

### Additional Website Information:

- Links to the County Board meeting minutes and Board approvals
- Upcoming proposed County Board actions which require two-week notice and description of the proposed changes; including proposed policy changes which are red-lined to make it easy to track the suggested changes
- Review of current Freedom of Information Requests through a single web portal
- Review of Let's Talk Comments

## Creating Open Lines of Communication with the Public and with Our Staff

### Externally:

- Establishing the role of Public Information Officer
- Responding to all Freedom of Information requests in a timely and complete manner
- Created the "Let's Talk" platform that allows the public to provide input through comment cards, via our County webpage and by leaving us a voice mail with input.

### Internally:

- Initiated a "Speak Up" campaign to promote the "No Retaliation" policies and an Employee Protection Hotline encouraging employees to speak up if they see something
- Instituted regular weekly County senior leadership and monthly management team meetings and including all department leaders in policy/budget decisions
- Holding staff "drop ins" with County Manager on a regular basis and on an issue-specific basis

## HR: Review of Practices, Ordinance and Classification and Compensation

- Revised the County Personnel Ordinance to address roadblocks to communication between the Commissioners and staff, established an Employee Protection Hotline and a No Retaliation Policy, and addressed nepotism
  - Capped bonuses at \$1,000 for an employee and required that they are reported publicly,
  - Initiated a Classification and Compensation Study
- Established best practices to ensure consistency across departments in hiring, termination and disciplinary actions and providing ongoing supervisory training
- Focusing HR efforts on training including professional standards and conduct, diversity and inclusion and a respectful workplace

*We want to hear from you so we can work alongside one another and build a better Buncombe.*

# LET'S TALK!

*Submit a comment*

[buncombecounty.org/letstalk](https://www.buncombecounty.org/letstalk)

*Leave us a message*

**250-4066**

*Email us*

[letstalk@buncombecounty.org](mailto:letstalk@buncombecounty.org)