

**MINUTES OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'  
REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 15, 2016 AT 4:30 P.M.**

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**BE IT REMEMBERED:** That the Board of Commissioners met in regular session on November 15, 2016, in the Commission Chambers, 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 4:30 p.m. where and when the following business was transacted:

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

David Gantt, Chairman  
Brownie Newman, Vice Chair  
Joe Belcher, Commissioner  
Ellen Frost, Commissioner  
Mike Fryar, Commissioner  
Holly Jones, Commissioner  
Tim Moffitt, 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**

*(At the request of Commission Moffitt, Chairman Gantt's prayer was included in full)*

Today, we are beginning a change in leadership and entering a season based on being thankful and appreciative of all we have.

Bless the firefighters who are working 24/7 to fight the historic and difficult fire raging throughout the WNC mts. Protect these brave men and women who are running toward danger as most of us run away.

Bless all the new leaders of our County, State, and Nation. Give each one of our elected officials the ability to listen, hear, and understand the needs of the voters who put them in office.

Give all of the elects the ability to work together for the greater good of the community they represent.

Heal the wounds and disappointments of the other candidates and the voters who did not share the winner's positions.

I am thankful of the wonderful Commissioners and staff that have always been willing to work together and move toward the good of Buncombe County.

Thank you for Ellen, Brownie, Joe, Tim, Miranda, Mike, David, and Holly who have made these last 4 years productive and enjoyable. We have shared some personal times and thoughts that made our friendship tighter.

I thank you for staff like Wanda, Kathy, Mandy, Jon, Tim, Bob, Rob, Curt, Mike, Donna, Jerry, Keith, Otto, Van, Drew, and others who have been so willing to do whatever is necessary to protect, educate, and enact policies that have made Buncombe County a better place to live.

We are blessed to live in this County and to have been able to serve in a Government like the one we have in Buncombe. Continue to find great leaders and staff that want to make us the best place to be educated, live, work, and retire in the USA.

Thank you for the good times, the bad times, and every time in between. Somehow, sharing these situations with the good people of Buncombe County has been a learning and growing experience that I will always cherish and remember fondly. During this Thanksgiving season, let us all reflect, appreciate, and verbally thank the good people who have created and share our exceptional wealth and full lives with. AMEN

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paula Zinga, President of the local NCAE, thanked the Board for the increase in supplement pay and Chairman Gantt and Commissioner Jones for their work on the Board.

Ron Dillingham spoke on behalf of the Fraternal Order of Police who he said were offended by a facebook post made by one of the Commissioners regarding a recent shooting. He asked for respect for the law enforcement community.

Commissioner Jones thanked Mr. Dillingham for the way in which he presented his request and apologized for her words which she said she did not mean to be offensive to a profession for which she held the highest regard.

Keith Thompson thanked Chairman Gantt and Commissioner Jones for their service to the community, the schools, the environment and or business growth.

Jerry Rice thanked the Chairman and Commissioners Jones and Moffitt for their service to the County.

David King thanked the Chairman and Commissioner Jones for their service to the County and for their friendship.

Terry Bellamy thanked Commissioner Moffitt for his work in County government and Commissioner Jones for her years in public service; she also thanked Chairman Gantt for reaching out to her when she was Mayor. She thanked him for putting people first in the community.

Mayor Manheimer and several members of the Asheville City Council presented proclamations to honor Commissioner Holly Jones and Chairman David Gantt. The Mayor also presented Commissioner Moffitt with a token of the City's appreciation for his service.

## **DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL TO FOLLOW AGENDA**

Commissioner Belcher moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Frost seconded the motion and it passed 7-0.

- **Approval of the Minutes of the November 1, 2016 Regular Meeting**
- **Resolution Authorizing Execution of Easement to the Metropolitan Sewerage District**
- **Approval of Settlement Agreements**
- **Smoky Mountain Center Financial Report**
- **Resolution in Support of NCDOT Access Road to the New Avadim Headquarters and Manufacturing Facility**
- **Resolution Authorizing the Support of Applications to the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium for Reallocation of HOME funds**
- **Budget Amendment: Fund 10**
- **Special Projects Ordinance**
- **School Capital Commission Fund Project Ordinance**
- **Public School ADM Capital Projects Ordinance**
- **Capital Projects Ordinance**
- **Resolution Donating Surplus Detention Center Mattresses to the Local Rescue Mission or other Qualified Non Profit Agency**
- **Resolution of Intent to Convey Property**
- **Resolution Approving Pyrotechnic Experts for Firework Displays**
- **Capital Projects Ordinance**
- **Budget Amendment: Fund 10**
- **Resolution Authorizing the Chairman to Execute Non-Warranty Deed**
- **Resolution of Intent to Solicit Bids for the Sale of Buncombe county Property**
- **Release Report**

## **GOOD NEWS**

- **WNC Woodcarvers Presentation of Quilt**

Terry Brown, President of the WNC Woodcarvers Association, presented the finished carved quilt that highlighted historical aspects of the County. The quilt was carved by several different carvers and would be displayed in a prominent place in the County. The Chairman thanked the carvers for donating their time and talent to make the quilt possible.

## **COUNTY MANAGERS REPORT**

Wanda Greene, County Manager, reminded the Board of the hotline that is available to anyone that would like to report any wrongdoings that the County needs to know. This hotline number can be found on the County's website.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Funding of African American Heritage Commission**

Commissioner Jones said that the African American Heritage Commission's mission was to plan and implement a public monument highlighting the contributions of African Americans in the County. She said that the City of Asheville would also partner in the project.

Commissioner Jones moved to approve a budget amendment out of fund balance for the Commission's request for \$10,000. Commissioner Moffitt seconded the motion and it passed 7-0.

- **Debt Policy Revision**

Tim Flora, Finance Director, explained the revisions to the debt policy requested and outlined as a part of the minutes of this meeting.

Commissioner Frost moved to approve the revision as presented. Commissioner Jones seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Funding Request to Place State Seals in District Courtrooms**

The County Manager said that the judges had requested that the North Carolina state seal be placed in the courtrooms. Judge Hill thanked the Board for their support over all the years and specifically to Chairman Gantt and Commissioner Jones.

Chairman Gantt moved to approve a budget amendment from fund balance for the purchase and installation of State seals for the courtrooms in the amount of \$9,300 as requested. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Recognition of Outgoing Board Members and Chairman Gantt**

Vice Chair Newman and Commissioner Frost recognized the outgoing members of the Board, thanking Commissioner Moffitt for his short time with the Board and for his experience and wisdom.

They thanked Commissioner Holly Jones for her service on the Board and for the work she had done for women and children. They pointed out that a conference room at the Family Justice Center had been named in her honor. They thanked Chairman Gantt for his 20 years in public service as a champion for what has made the County a great place to live--including steep slope protection, farmland protection and the way that he treated everyone with respect.

Commissioner Moffitt said that his six month experience had been incredible. He said that Commissioner Jones would be missed and had served the community well. He said that Chairman Gantt was a good man and had served the community with passion, intent and courage and he too would be missed.

Commissioner Jones made the following comments:

"My service to Buncombe County came on the heels of serving 7 years on Asheville City Council. Frankly, back then the relationship between the city and the county was not so positive. In fact, it was a constant source of tension for both bodies which did not serve our community well. I am very happy to see real progress in rebuilding this important relationship - which serves both parties and all citizens in very practical terms. This has made a difference in several successful economic development proposals, in large infrastructure projects, and I am hopeful the future board will continue to see the real value of this partnership and remain committed to this very constructive trend.

Also, when I look back eight years, it is stunning to realize the significant structural changes that this board underwent, moving from five seats elected all at large to seven seats, elected by district. When I first sought this office eight years ago, I ran county wide and was very honored to be elected to serve by citizens across Buncombe county. In the following election, the new configuration was in place and I was then on the ballot to represent District One. I am grateful to the citizens of Asheville and Swannanoa for electing me to represent you on this Board of Commissioners.

Although these districts took shape, I always tried to think of the entirety of the county and its citizens as my constituency, working to be fair in the allocation of resources as well as in the responses to needs across our county. I think this is most evident in our investments in schools. I hope the new board members will continue to have those lenses and resist any temptation to be isolate their efforts solely to a geographic district.

You know at this particular moment in our community, there are many, many people hurting and despondent. To these folks, I wanted to say first of all, I understand and I am right there with you. But I also wanted to hold up this county government as a beacon of hope for how good government can work to promote the common good going forward. So, keep bringing your good ideas, your concerns, your constructive input, here I feel sure you will find open minds and hearts.

Also, know that Buncombe County is a safe place for you and everyone is welcome. This is a county that values equality and values civility. Board and staff will be open to your voice.

I now would like to express some thanks.

First to the **press**, Thank you. I am grateful for your presence and persistence. You make us a more accountable and more diligent body and that is good for the people. While I have not always agreed on some of your choices or perspective, I have always respected your right to ask the questions and pursue a story. Your presence makes us better. We think deeper and work harder because we know you are there. You are critical for good government to be more transparent and for citizens be better informed. On the whole you have been fair, and have contributed to this small piece of our democracy.

**To faith communities** across the county. Thank you for your presence in our community and your witness to do good works such as feed the hungry and house the homeless. These acts of kindness are much needed in Buncombe County. To the many faith leaders in this community who have reached out to me over these years, the scores of ministers, pastors, rabbis, who have been praying for me (and all of us) while in public office. Thank you. Your prayers, your notes of encouragement in the hard times have been truly a source of strength,

**To our nonprofit partners.** There are so many important needs in our community and Buncombe county looks to you to help us address them. Your good work in so many realms helps us better serve our citizens and enriches our community. But I want you all to know that I see your work as vital. Thank you for sticking with us and for making our community a stronger and more vital place.

**Thanks to my fellow elected officials** - Your excellent work – has made my job easier in so many ways. I am so proud to have you representing me and I have been privileged to work with your to serve our beloved community.

**To our amazing staff.** All of you that protect our health, support our families, provide comfort to our citizens, encourage reading, keep us safe. I believe deeply in your vocation. I believe you are the best of public servants. There are so many of you in the trenches - in Public safety, HHS, Veterans Services, libraries, your efforts large and small make this county run and I am so grateful for each and every one of you.

Of course, as commissioner, I have interacted most of all with the leadership.

And we have been on quite a journey together.

**Bob-** Thank you for your wise advice and counsel. You have done a good job keeping us out of the ditches. Your work has been excellent and I am grateful to you.

**Tim** – What a terrific addition you have been. Your keen attention and prudent advice is so helpful in our decision-making. The citizens should have great comfort knowing that their tax dollars have your diligent oversight. Thank you~

**Kathy** – Thank you so much for your excellence as our county clerk and for your leadership to promote Buncombe County. You do so many things that people have no idea about. Behind the scenes making us always look good. Always upbeat with positive energy, always thinking of the good of the County. No one loves this county more than you. Who better to promote than its biggest fan. Thank you for all your support and your 30 years of service.

**Jon** – Your steady hand and calm demeanor is a real asset to this board. Your incredible perspective over all these years is invaluable. Your diligence with both economic development and planning has resulted in important projects for our citizens. I thank you deeply for all the insight and direction along the way.

**Mandy** – I admire you greatly. When I grow up I want to be like you. You have the ability to connect all the dots in our community, to bring all the pieces together for us to be working as one on the big stuff. Remarkably, you understand how the threads weave together. Of course, I will always be grateful for your support and leadership to address violence against women and children in our community. What we accomplished together was an amazing feat and I still am in awe.

But the thing I admire the most in you ,oh humble public servant , is your amazing love and respect for all people, particularly those who are the most vulnerable in our county. Thank you for always having their best interest at heart.

**Wanda** – There is so much I need to highlight. First of all you have assembled a wonderful, talented, hard working team. Their loyalty and admiration of you says so much for your leadership. Speaking of dedication, it is nothing short of remarkable how deeply devoted you are to this county and its wellbeing. Under your leadership, Buncombe County has become a statewide leader and model in many realms. We have much to be proud of. I can't say enough about your problem solving ability. You should write a book. If one door closes, you are immediately looking for the open window. Your tenacity has served us well.

You have an incredibly difficult job. You have a staff of over a thousand and a budget of a gazzion to oversee and in the meantime you also have to work with a board with varying abilities and goals. With your support, this board accomplished a lot together.

Finally your courage and grace over this last year has also been very inspirational. Thank you Wanda for everything.

To all the staff, I will miss each of you but know you have a fan in the community.

**Next to my fellow board members, first my colleagues from the Republican party.** Thank you for your service to our community. Tim, it has been a pleasure to sit on your left for these last few months. You have brought tremendous intellect and measure to this body. To Mike and Joe, we disagree on a whole lot but I believe that you do care deeply about the county. I look longingly back to our first year on the commission, when we were able to find consensus on many important items. My hope is that this returning board may find some of that spirit and goodwill. I believe the two of you will lead with this spirit.

**To Ellen,** Thank you dear one. You have been an unwavering voice for equality and fearless in your pursuit of justice. I have so appreciated your support and your friendship. I know how deeply you care for this entire community.

Your dedication to making Buncombe County a better place for all has been such an inspiration and will continue to be. Thanks for taking this journey!

**To David,** You are an inspiration to us all. You have modeled immense devotion and amazing resiliency. I have never worked with someone so able to bounce back after defeats or disappointments or conflict. That is a special and rare trait. As our leader you have also been gently giving us guidance from your 20 years of experience while also cheering us on towards success, every member of this very diverse board. You have been fair and available and I am so grateful for all your advice and support. It has been a pleasure to sit beside you for these last 4 yrs. Finally, you have been a dear and trusted friend. Your thoughtfulness and joy has touched me deeply and made me a better person.

**To Brownie,** Chairman –Elect, I give you the credit for encouraging me to explore local elected service 15 years ago... and we have been at it together in one shape or form for all these years. These last four years have been particularly satisfying as we have moved forward issues of environmental sustainability, built new schools, launched a Family Justice Center, enacted domestic partner benefits and adopted a robust anti-discrimination ordinance. You are going to be a terrific chair. Your calm, smarts, your perseverance, and your even-handedness will serve the community well. Thank you for your enduring friendship, your keen wit and your eternal optimism about what is possible in the community that you love so much. I will miss working with you but will remain your biggest cheerleader.

**To Friends and Supporters** – many of you have also been by my side for years. Counseling me. Correcting me. Encouraging me. Loving me. Your good thoughts and hard work are engraved in my heart.

I must close by thanking my family Bob and Gabriela for your dedication to our community. You have sacrificed a lot. There were times, we were apart more than I would have liked, due to my service. You never questioned. You always understood.

**Gabriela,** you are a force in your own right. My daughter has not known a time when I was not in elected office. She loves this community a lot and has worked to make it a better place. She is the best campaigner there is! Gabriela, you remind me daily why this work in public service is necessary. I love you.

**Bob** in addition to being my partner in life, you have been my most devoted supporter. Daily thanking me for my service. Daily encouraging me in my pursuit of serving the community. Daily reminding me why it matters. You have always been there to pick me up when I fell, to cheer me on when I succeeded and just to listen in the difficult moments. You also have held down the fort when my duties have called me away. I love you Bob. Thank you so.

So I step aside after serving this community for fifteen years, while I was far from perfect, I hope people will know I did my best to listen, to respond, to encourage and to promote positive policies for our county.

I hope my years of service are seen as embodying a commitment to women and children of this county, to public education and the schools, positive city-county relationships, and to equality and dignity for all.

It is my great hope that the future Board- will find ways forward to address the big challenges in our community – Affordable housing, affordable childcare, racial equity and know that I am willing to support this work however you need me to.

Citizens of Buncombe County, You are in good hands. Thank you for the honor of letting me represent you for all these years.

So I will conclude my remarks with an Irish benediction to all. One that we sing every Sunday in my church.

May the road rise to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face.  
And rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

This is a sad moment for me but with that sadness I have a very full heart. And it is filled with gratitude, admiration and love.

I wanted to use these remarks fundamentally as an enormous thank you to several parties. In all honesty, this is a very difficult time for many, many people in our community and in our country. In dark times, sometimes gratitude is hard to come by. So this moment is intentional.”

*Commissioner Moffitt asked that the words of Commissioner Jones remarks be added to the minutes in full. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 7-0.*

Commissioner Gantt thanked the community for allowing him to be part of the County leadership for 20 years. He gave a powerpoint that is part of the minutes of the meeting. He thanked the staff for their hard work and support over the years. He encouraged the next Board to continue the work that had begun and to get to know each other and listen to each other.

Vice Chair Newman moved to name the plaza outside 200 College Street the “David Gantt Plaza.” Commissioner Frost seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcement:

- ***November 24 & 25 – Thanksgiving Holiday***
- ***December 5 – Swearing in and Organizational Meeting***
- ***December 6 – 4:30 p.m. Regular Meeting Board of Commissioners***
- ***December 23, 26 & 27 – Offices Closed for Christmas Holiday***

Commissioner Belcher moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Fryar seconded and the motion passed 7-0  
The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

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KATHY HUGHES, CLERK TO THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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DAVID GANTT, CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS