

**MINUTES OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'  
REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 21, 2023 AT 5 P.M.**

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**BE IT REMEMBERED:** That the Board of Commissioners met in regular session on March 21, 2023, in the Commission Chambers, 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 5 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  
Amanda Edwards, Commissioner  
Martin Moore, Commissioner  
Parker Sloan, Commissioner  
Terri Wells, Vice Chair  
Al Whitesides, Commissioner

Staff present: Avril Pinder, County Manager; Sybil Tate, Assistant County Manager; Dakisha Wesley, Assistant County Manager; John Hudson, Budget Director; Sharon Burke, Human Resources Director; Allison Dains, Parks & Recreation Director; Stoney Blevins, Health & Human Services Director; Rachael Nygaard, Strategic Partnerships Director; Tim Love, Intergovernmental Relations; Nathan Pennington, Planning Director; Taylor Jones, Emergency Services Director; Derrick Ruble, Public Safety Communications Director; Lamar Joyner, Clerk to the Board; Curt Euler, Staff Attorney

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Sloan motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, remove the **Budget Amendment for Additional Grant Funds for Woodfin Greenway – TDA Grant Project** from **New Business**, and the remainder of the agenda. Commissioner Edwards seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- Approval of March 7, 2023 Briefing Meeting Minutes
- Approval of March 7, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes
- Resolution Awarding a Service Firearm to a Retiring Deputy of the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department
  - James Redmon
  - Van Whitmire
  - William Stanley
- Resolution Approving Pyrotechnic Experts for Firework Display
  - Resolution
- Approval of Library Fine/Fee Write-Off
  - More Information
- Approval of State Lottery Project Application for Asheville City Schools – Asheville High School Renovation & Baseball Field Lighting
- Approval of North Fork Solar Feasibility Interlocal Agreement
  - Agreement
- Budget Amendment for Volkswagen (VW) Settlement Funding for Charging Stations
  - Ordinance
- Budget Amendment for Lake Julian Festival of Lights Grant
  - Ordinance

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Andrew Clark expressed support for programming for veterans (Coffee for Veterans).

Guy Skinner expressed support for the McCormick Field Renovation Project Funding.

Dede Styles stated concerns with water issues due to construction development and climate change.

Anthony Pena` provided information on Long Covid and its effects.

## **GOOD NEWS**

- **Taylor Jones Recognized as Top 100 Influencer in Local Government**

Alex McKnight, Emergency Services, congratulated Taylor Jones, Emergency Services Director, for receiving the award, Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL) as a Top 100 Influencer in Local Government. Taylor expressed appreciation for the department staff.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

- **Women's History Month Proclamation**

Vice Chair Wells read and presented the proclamation to Diana Sierra, YWCA Asheville CEO, and other guests. They accepted the proclamation and expressed their gratitude.

## COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

Avril Pinder, County Manager, introduced Dr. Noreal Armstrong, the County's new Chief Equity & Human Rights Officer.

- **Creative Equity Mural Project**

Rachael Nygaard, Strategic Partnerships Director, updated the Board on the call for artists submissions seeking original mural art to be placed on county property. The project will reflect the people and place of Buncombe County and incorporate concepts related to racial equity, reconciliation and restoration. The selected artists are Gabriel Eng-Goetz, Leslie Reynalte-Llanco, and Jared Wheatley.

## NEW BUSINESS

- **Open Space Bond Conservation Criteria Adoption**

Jill Carter, Open Space Bond Project Manager, and Ariel Zijp, Agriculture & Land Resources, explained to the Board the proposed criteria on how best to allocate funding towards conservation. Staff, with input from the Agriculture Advisory Board, Land Conservation Advisory Board, and the public, have developed a set of criteria for evaluating land conservation projects. The Board deferred voting on the criteria until more information is gathered.

- **Resolution Requesting Quiet Zone at Private Rail Crossing**

Curt Euler, Staff Attorney, explained the request from the area hotels to have the Quiet Zone Railroad Crossing located near the 1400-1500 block of Tunnel Road. County funding is not required.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to approve the resolution as presented. Commissioner Sloan seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Approval of 911 Situational Overview & Recommendations**

Rafael Baptista, Strategy & Innovation Director, explained the challenges that the Public Safety Communications Center is currently facing. Multiple strategies have been implemented to meet these challenges, including but not limited to double-pay for additional shift pick up, utilizing off-duty first responders, redeploying staff from across the county to support operational/ planning needs and securing services for increased well-being. County leadership is proposing temporary crisis pay stipends for telecommunicator employees until the staffing levels within the department have stabilized. No new additional funding is needed, as the County will utilize lapsed salary within the department for this stipend.

Shift Worked	Weekday	Weeknight	Weekend Day	Weekend night
Stipend Amount	\$8 hourly \$96 total	\$12 hour \$144 total	\$15 hourly \$180 total	\$20 hourly \$240 total

Commissioner Whitesides moved to approve temporary crisis pay stipends as outlined above. Commissioner Sloan seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Approval of Homelessness Response Regular Full-Time Position**

Nathan Pennington, Planning Director, explained the request to establish the new regular full-time position as part of a coordinated response to homelessness. This position will be located in the Planning Department's Community Development Division.

Vice Chair Wells moved to approve the position. Commissioner Sloan seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Approval of McCormick Field Renovation Project Funding**

Tim Love, Intergovernmental Relations, provided an update on the ongoing financial discussions between the City of Asheville, Tourists, Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and the County. A financial scenario summary was provided as such:

- Full Project: \$37.5M (\$56.1M w/ interest)
- Minimum Project: \$29.2M (\$43.1M w/ interest)

Current status, project details and cost breakdown, financial plan, frequently asked questions, and next steps were explained during the presentation.

Commissioner Edwards moved to financially partner with the City of Asheville for McCormick Field renovations in an amount of up \$250,000 per year for a 20-year period. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 6-1. (NOES-Beach-Ferrara)

- **Budget Amendment for Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization (CDBG-NR) Grant Funding Award**

John Hudson, Budget Director, explained the budget amendment.

Vice Chair Wells moved to approve the budget amendment as presented. Commissioner Moore seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- ~~**Budget Amendment for Additional Grant Funds for Woodfin Greenway – TDA Grant Project**~~

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

Commissioner Edwards moved to reappoint **Rebecca Heartz, Eileen McMinn**, and appoint **Cindy Trekeld** to the **Home & Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee**. Vice Chair Wells seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Moore moved to appoint **Noreal Armstrong** and reappoint **Angela Garner** to the **Juvenile Crime Prevention Council**. Vice Chair Wells seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Vice Chair Wells moved to reappoint **Tim Love**, and **Rachael Nygaard** to the **Mountain Community Capital Fund Operating Committee**. Commissioner Edwards seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Moore moved to reappoint **Eric Watts** to the **Mountain Area Workforce Development Board**. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- *March 28 @ 11 a.m. - Commissioners' Budget Work Session at 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville.*
- *April 4 @ 3 p.m. - Commissioners' Briefing at 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville.*
- *April 4 @ 5 p.m. - Commissioners' Regular Meeting at 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville.*

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Commissioner Whitesides moved to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a) (3) to hear legal Matters and NCGS 143-318.11(a) (5) hear real property negotiation matters with no possible action anticipated following the closed session. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

The Board heard the update and had discussion regarding the matters. No action was taken.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to go back into open session. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

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LAMAR JOYNER, CLERK  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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BROWNIE NEWMAN, CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS