

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALAMANCE COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS FOR ALAMANCE COUNTY**

**March 3, 2025, 9:30 AM
Commissioners' Meeting Room
124 West Elm Street
Graham, NC 27253**

Board Members Present: Chairman John Paisley Jr
Vice-Chair Steve Carter
Commissioner Pamela Thompson
Commissioner Ed Priola
Commissioner Kelly Allen

CALL TO ORDER - CHAIRMAN PAISLEY

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - COMMISSIONER PRIOLA

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Priola, seconded by Chairman Paisley, moved to remove item 6a.2 from the consent agenda to another meeting in order to obtain more information about the HOME Consortium. That motion carried without opposition.

Chairman Paisley, seconded by Commissioner Allen, moved to add a closed session and move the County Attorney's Report to right before the adjournment. That motion carried without opposition.

Moved by: Commissioner Allen

Seconded by: Commissioner Priola

APPROVED AS AMENDED

PROCLAMATIONS

DSS –Social Work Month Proclamation

Commissioner Priola read a proclamation in recognition of National Social Work Month. He presented the proclamation to Candice Gobble, Director of Social Services. Ms. Gobble accepted the proclamation and asked all social workers at the meeting to stand.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Colin Cannell, Mebane Resident, said he wanted to refresh the commissioners on the Burlington Home Consortium. Mr. Cannell said the Board approved a resolution for the consortium to join in 2023. The grant gives access to federal block grants for affordable housing. He said that the money was still available and he was ready to serve the community.

CONSENT AGENDA

Item 6a2. Burlington HOME Consortium appointments were removed from the consent agenda and moved to a future agenda.

Moved by: Vice-Chair Carter

Seconded by: Commissioner Allen

APPROVED AS AMENDED

2025 NCEM Hazardous Materials Emergency Program Grant

2025 Emergency Management Preparedness Grant (EMPG)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Minutes of December 2, 2024

Regular Minutes of December 16, 2024

Regular Minutes of January 27, 2025

APPOINTMENTS/ REAPPOINTMENTS

Board of Equalization & Review – Barbara Acosta, Henry Vines, Lisa Wittig, & Joseph Yusiewicz

Barbara Acosta, Henry Vines, Lisa Wittig & Joseph Yusiewicz were appointed to the Board of Equalization & Review.

Burlington HOME Consortium – Pamela Thompson & Colin Cannell

Removed from the Consent Agenda for further information at a later meeting

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Budget Amendment 8

PRESENTATIONS/OTHER BUSINESS

Board of Adjustment Alternate Members Appointment - Matthew Hoagland, Planning Director

Matthew Hoagland, Planning Director, presented three applications for consideration as alternate members of the county's Board of Adjustment. Applications were received from Anthony Pierce, Rena Matthews, and William Poe. Mr. Hoagland emphasized that the alternates would only serve when a regular member could not attend a meeting or if a regular member had a conflict of interest. Mr. Hoagland said the alternate members would fill the unexpired terms of the two members who were appointed to the county's Planning Board.

Moved by: Vice-Chair Carter

Seconded by: Chairman Paisley

Appointment of Rena Matthews and William Poe to the Board of Adjustment as alternate members.

APPROVED UNANIMOUS

Alamance-Burlington Schools-Project Completion - Susan Evans, Finance Officer

Due to completed projects by ABSS, Susan Evans, Finance Officer, requested approval to transfer \$294,639.35 from the Schools Capital Project fund to the Schools Capital Reserve Fund. She said that amount was the savings in that account and the transfer would return those funds to the capital reserves for future projects.

Moved by: Vice-Chair Carter

Seconded by: Commissioner Thompson

Alamance-Burlington School System Capital Request - Greg Hook, ABSS Chief Operations Officer

Greg Hook, ABSS Chief Operations Officer, asked for approval to transfer bond funds of \$30,000 from Southeast High to Eastern High to complete a security wall. He said a section of the security wall was left out of the project's design for Southeast High School. Mr. Hook requested to transfer \$39,945.10 in bond funds from Southeast High School to Haw River Elementary School and \$255,767.54 from Western Middle School's roof project to Haw River Elementary. He said the transfer's purpose was to roof the gym and add canopy support around the gym. He noted that was left out of that design project from February 2023. Mr. Hook's third request was a transfer of \$75,000 to complete a security wall along the CTE Building at Graham High School. He said over \$800,000 remained in bond funding for Graham High School.

Moved by: Vice-Chair Carter

Seconded by: Commissioner Allen

APPROVED UNANIMOUS

Opioid Settlement Update and Recommendations for FY25/26 - Ashley Barber, Coordinator for Health Services

Ashley Barber, Coordinator of Health Services, gave an informative presentation and recap of the opioid settlement. She reviewed that the county anticipated receiving \$16,638,635 between 2022 to 2038 from the North Carolina opioid settlement. She said that those funds will help bring desperately needed resources to those directly impacted by the opioid epidemic. Ms. Barber indicated that the county had received just over \$5 million. The Board had authorized Resolution #1, expending \$1,278,060.00, and Resolution #2, expending \$1,302,862.27, leaving an available balance of \$2,432,311.85. She noted the county was receiving funds under the McKenzie opioid settlement, which was completely separate from the North Carolina opioid settlement.

Ms. Barber reviewed the Exhibit A Strategies. She said the county was currently funding collaborative strategic planning, evidence-based addiction treatment, recovery support services, early intervention, naloxone distribution, post-overdose response teams, and re-entry programs. She mentioned that the health department was monitoring the authorized strategies and contracts. Ms. Barber advised that monthly invoices and contracts were monitored for compliance. She provided a data snapshot of opioid overdoses from 2021 to 2024. She reported that 3,668 doses of Naloxone had been distributed last year in collaboration with community partners.

Ms. Barber discussed the FY25-26 opioid settlement recommendations, which focused on approving two positions that will dedicate time to carry out the work. She explained that one of those positions was an existing position with a portion of the salary to offset the county's cost. The second requested position would help with the data and evaluation of all contracts. She said the second position, if approved, would be funded completely with settlement dollars. Ms. Barber noted that should the settlement dollars go away, that position would go away. She also recommended continuing funding recovery support services that connected people to opioid recovery services, such as those provided by Orinoco Wellness, for another year. Ms. Barber said the total amount of those recommendations was \$590,134.52. She reiterated that there was no action to be taken that day, but the budget package would include the resolution with those recommendations. She said municipal and court officials were invited to provide input at that meeting. No municipal or court officials were present to provide any additional input.

Lee Maxwell, the new Recovery Court Coordinator, was introduced in the meeting.

Fund Balance Reclassification - Susan Evans, Finance Officer

Susan Evans, Finance Officer, requested the Board uncommit \$277,970 from the pandemic response fund. She emphasized that approval would allow the unassigned fund balance to be within the fiscal policy of 20%.

Moved by: Vice-Chair Carter

Seconded by: Commissioner Allen

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager York said she was asked to recap the overpayment situation. She reviewed that the Board had discussed enhanced holiday pay during a March 2024 regular meeting. A formal policy was never brought before the Board for approval, nor was funding included in the fiscal year 2025 budget. Communication was sent out to department heads by the former human resources (HR) director on June 18, 2024, stating that as of July 1, 2024, emergency services personnel who worked actual holidays would be compensated for hours worked at time and a half. Those individuals would also earn holiday time banked to be used later. The former HR director updated the employee handbook on June 28, 2024, to include the new holiday policy. County Manager York said she transferred the payroll function from human resources to finance to create a segregation of duties and improve employee services. At the end of January, the former HR director informed her that there was an overpayment of employee holiday pay. On February 4th, the finance officer confirmed that holiday was being paid at time and a half for six departments. The former HR director was placed on administrative leave on February 7th, and her resignation was received on February 14th. The Board was informed and took action on February 17th to correct that issue. The Martin Luther King holiday was the last holiday in which employees would be paid at time and a half. On February 20th, communication was sent to all employees explaining the inaccuracy of the holiday pay, and going forward, those employees working holidays would be paid the regular rate of pay and then would continue to accrue holiday time as was the prior practice. County Manager York said the staff will present a new policy at the next board meeting to replace the current language in the employee handbook.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Thompson clarified that first responders would be included in that policy. County Manager York answered that the intent back in March was to compensate emergency services employees who were doing the 24/7 functions of county government.

Commissioner Priola said the overpayment should not have happened and that an investigation should continue. He mentioned that a lot of folks were concerned about that issue. He said he was a fiscal conservative and wanted to reaffirm his commitment to the fiscal responsibility of this county government. Commissioner Priola said he would not support a tax or sales tax increase to offset this issue. He suggested ways to offset the overpayment through spending cuts and right-sizing the workforce.

Vice-Chair Carter said he headed the conservative TEA Party for 13 years. He continued that he lost several potential supporters because they thought he would vote "no" to everything. He noted the county's rapid growth with the 18th lowest tax rate. Vice-Chair Carter said they had to care for the citizens and provide the needed services. He offered that he has an open mind

regarding the budget. He stressed that his hardest vote was raising taxes to pay for the \$189 million bond.

Commissioner Allen addressed the newspaper article that she was mentioned in by explaining her position on suggesting the quarter-cent sales tax referendum. She said it was the only fair tax and would bring in an estimated \$8 million. She reported that 60% of sales tax comes from people outside of the county, according to the Alamance Chamber. She reiterated that she had suggested the quarter-cent sales tax because it least affected property owners.

Chairman Paisley apologized to former County Commissioner Tim Sutton for the misunderstanding about the timeline on the LGC letter he previously referred to receiving.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

10:47 AM Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(5), County Attorney Stevens asked the Board move into closed session to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by, or on behalf of, the public body in negotiating the potential purchase of the real property described as parcel number 157536 (owned by Bruce Cameron, as trustee) to be used related to the operation of the Landfill and Recreation and Parks Departments.

Further, pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6), County Attorney Stevens asked the Board move into closed session to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee.

Finally, pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3), County Attorney Stevens asked the Board move into closed session to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body. The attorney will advise the Board on ongoing legal matters, including the *Adams, et al. v. City of Graham, et al.* (N.C. Middle District 22-CV-906) matter.

Vice-Chair Carter, seconded by Commissioner Allen, moved to enter the closed session. The motion carried without opposition.

11:56 AM Commissioner Allen, seconded by Vice-Chair Carter, moved to reconvene in open session. The motion carried without opposition. No action was taken by the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Allen, seconded by Commissioner Priola, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 11:57 AM.

John Paisley, Jr., Chairman

Alamance County Board of Commissioners

Tory M. Frink, Clerk to the Board