



Wake County

301 South McDowell Street
Raleigh, NC

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Monday, January 8, 2024

2:00 PM

Wake County Justice Center

Work Session

Meeting Called to Order: Chair Shinica Thomas

Meeting called to order at 2:01 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Chair Shinica Thomas, Vice-Chair Susan Evans, Commissioner Matt Calabria, Commissioner Vickie Adamson, Commissioner Don Mial, Commissioner Cheryl Stallings and Commissioner Tara Waters.

Staff Present: David Ellis, County Manager; Emily Lucas, Deputy County Manager; Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager; Ashley Jacobs, Deputy County Manager; Denise Foreman, Assistant County Manager; Ben Canada, Chief of Staff; Yvonne Gilyard, Clerk to the Board; Toni Womack, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Dara Demi, Chief Communications Officer; Michael James, Assistant County Manager; Portia Johnson, Senior Executive Assistant; Tanika Cooper, Senior Executive Assistant; Jason Horton, Strategic Initiatives Director; Scott Warren, County Attorney; Frank Cope, Director of Community Services; Tim Maloney, Planning Development & Inspections Director; Chris Snow, Parks, Recreation & Open Space Director; Olivia McCall, Director of Board of Elections; Matt Roylance, Deputy Director of Community Services; Katrina Vernon, Library Division Manager; Caroline Simpson, Senior Business Analyst; Mark Forestieri, Director of Facilities, Design & Construction and Eric Staehle, Senior Facilities Project Manager.

Others Present: Anna Johnson, N&O Newspaper; Scott Levitan, President & CEO, Research Triangle Foundation; Linda Hall, Executive Vice President & CFO, Research Triangle Foundation; Travis Crayton, Senior Director of Planning, Research Triangle Foundation; Joe Milazzo, Executive Director, Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) and Steve Rao, Council member, Town of Morrisville.

1. Agenda

Attachments: [Agenda 01.08.2024.pdf](#)

Chair Thomas shared agenda with Commissioners:

1. Planning RTP's Future
2. Public Libraries 2024 Bond Projects
3. Update on Parks Capital Projects
4. Update on Elections Process
5. 2024 Federal Legislative Priorities

2. Planning RTP's Future

Attachments: [2023-12-20 RTP 3.0 Wake BOCC Presentation - Condensed.pdf](#)

Mr. Scott Levitan, President & CEO, Research Triangle Foundation shared joining him for today's presentation are Ms. Linda Hall, Executive Vice President & COO and Mr. Travis Crayton, Senior Director of Planning, Research Triangle Park.

Mr. Levitan shared that the Research Triangle Foundation (RTF) was established and administers Research Triangle Park (RTP) (7,000 acre economic generation hub located in RTP. He shared Mr. Travis Crayton, Senior Director of Planning, Research Triangle Park, will be sharing today's presentation.

Mr. Levitan shared that RTF has done work on RTP 3.0 for the past one and half years. There has been tremendous support from the County Manager and Ms. Ashley Jacobs, Deputy County Manager, who serve as liaisons with RTF. He shared RTP 3.0 is a plan for RTP, which is a 7,000 acre of parcel, sitting in the 3rd fastest growing region in America. This is a tremendous asset for this region. He shared Mr. Crayton will share the ideas and concepts for RTP 3.0. He shared this region is proposed to grow to over 1 million people over the next 20 years and those 1 million people will need 400,000 dwelling units; which equates to 20,000 dwelling units being produced every year, for the next 20 years. He shared the current rate of production is 9,000 dwellings each year. He thanked the Board of Commissioners for the opportunity to attend today's meeting.

Mr. Crayton shared slides showing ideas and concepts of RTP 3.0.

He shared the team working on RTP 3.0. The Research Triangle Foundation is a 501c4 non-profit organization charged with stewarding RTP; they provide governance to RTP through land covenants on the land.

He shared mission is comprised of three components:

- Facilitate collaboration between the Triangle universities
- Promote cooperation between universities and industry
- Create an economic impact for residents of North Carolina

He shared a map of the Research Triangle Park today (80% located in Durham County; 20% located in Wake County):

- 7,000 acres
- 375 companies + established and startup companies
- 55,000+ employees

Top industries include: Biotech, Life Science, Data Science, Agtech, Cybersecurity, Cleantech and Fintech.

He shared map of RTP in Wake County, highlighting the companies that are located in Wake County.

He shared RTP's new vibrant downtown HUB. He shared HUB is mixed use project located Durham side of RTP, which is land that is owned and working with partners to bring on line. He shared the first 50 acres of this site will include:

- 1M+square feet office & life science space
- 50k SF retail
- 1,200 residential units
- 250 hotel rooms
- 16 acres greenspace

He shared slides titled: The future of RTP 3.0; RTP 1.0 (first plan of 1958, also known as corporate campus); RTP 2.0; RTP 3.0 (What's next for RTP).

He shared What is RTP 3.0:

- A planning process to envision the future of RTP
- A 50 year vision for RTP
- A collaborative effort led by RTF, with close coordination with Durham and Wake counties and RTP companies

He shared RTP 3.0 timeline:

*Fall 2021 = 300 in 100: engagement with RTP companies

*Late 2021 = Identification of themes, trends & needs for future planning

*April 2022 = Feasibility study kickoff

*Through December 2022 = Engagement with RTP companies & community partners

*March 2023 = Phase 2 kickoff

He shared HUB RTP started going vertical in 2021 and when staff returned to offices (after COVID). He shared there have been discussions with companies regarding talent needs, attraction and retention. He shared RTF undertook a feasibility study in 2022. They brought on a consultant to understand what is taking place in other businesses in the region. This

was done through end of 2022 and March 2023, kicked off RTP 3.0.

He shared The Vision:

- Economic catalyst for region and state
- Retain talent from Duke, UNC, N.C. State, N.C. Central and others
- Attract global talent and support economic growth
- A place for ground-breaking research, development, and technological discovery

He shared What We've Heard:

- Be responsive to RTP company feedback about talent attraction & retention
- Position RTP to compete against peer markets (including amenities)
- Create opportunities to transform key locations in RTP into vibrant, mixed-use centers

He shared The Potential:

- Significant population growth expected in the region over the next 20 years
- RTP is centrally located with underutilized land resources
- RTP has a responsibility to support regional growth

He shared RTP Mission Statement:

- Maintain RTP as a global epicenter of 21st century innovation and sustainability, strengthening its role as an economic driver in the region:
- diversity uses
- add amenities
- connect assets
- advance university research
- create inclusivity and resilience
- support & bolster research & development

He shared RTP Today: Existing Place Type - RTP Framework Concept:

- Flexible framework for future development
- Multiple new potential place types
- Opportunities for all RTP landowners

He shared RTP in the Future Rendering:

- Enhanced Corporate Campus
- Residential Neighborhood Development
- Mixed-Use Density Node

He shared Deliverables & Implementation:

- Zoning, covenant and governance changes
- Visioning & planning documents
- Development standards
- Policies, incentives and/or requirements

Commissioner Adamson shared her experience of working in RTP in mid-80's. She asked if the HUB 1200 residential units are affordable or market rate.

Mr. Levin shared under construction, 600 are permitted as market rate (before affordable housing was an issue). Currently, there are none that are affordable housing. He shared they are working to change this and affordable housing construction is embedded in the plan.

Vice-Chair Evans shared she's familiar with site and also worked in RTP in 1980's. She shared this is the right time to consider this plan. She shared people are interested in living closer to where they work. She shared regarding housing, this project can be part of the solution to address growth. She shared supply is most important and there is a high demand, and more housing is needed. She shared potential for visiting this can be tremendous. Looks forward to working with RTP.

Commissioner Waters shared she is impressed with efforts and vision to retain talent. She asked if more information could be shared regarding attraction of candidates to reflect diversity in the community, as there is often under representation of people of color found in careers at RTP.

Mr. Levin shared they have entered into MOU and collaboration with HCBU's. He shared collaborations with NCA&T, Wake Tech Community College, NCCU, and Shaw University are taking place. He shared there is interest to ensure everyone is involved with growth and success of region. He shared he's been with RTF for 6.5 years (he comes from Baltimore) and his previous employer made it a condition to achieve Minority and/or Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) participation. He shared RTF is currently achieving 35% on HUB project with MWBE participation.

Commissioner Calabria shared the vision is appealing. He asked regarding transit and transportation, how is this weaved into this presentation.

Mr. Levin shared transportation participation involves support of existing train service and enhancing the plan as the population grows. He shared that the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is the backbone of transportation and counties are in support of the BRT. He shared there are plans to

collaborate with NCDOT and GoTriangle.

Mr. Crayton shared the levy of 2.5 cent public transportation tax and submitted 2 grant applications (NCDOT and GoTriangle) to relocate transit to new site. Lastly, they have worked with NCDOT to include RTP passenger rail station on site. He shared as growth takes place, transit is being embedded into plan.

Commissioner Calabria shared comment about density and building housing stock and how more is needed. He shared planning and zoning is impactful. He shared this is an opportunity to do it right in a way that no one has. He shared emphasis that as options are being considered, RTF should continue to think about density, as it is needed.

Commissioner Mial shared RTP has the opportunity to do this right in a way that no one else does. RTP is at the crossroads of the triangle and asked representatives to think about density with affordable housing.

Mr. Levin shared 400 acres are owned in RTP and RTF is trying to incorporate a zoning incentive program attractive to encourage and motivate companies to redevelopment the sites.

Chair Thomas shared appreciation to Mr. Levin for the site visit in RTP that she did in December. She was able to see a scale of the work at the Durham site. She shared on slide 17, she appreciates plans for mixed uses and diversity of talent pool. She shared added amenities (place making strategies) is an asset and having developer interest in workforce development. She shared neighborhood development in housing at all levels is important. She shared thoughts on open space and that it is important. She looks forward to Wake County being part of this plan.

Commissioner Stallings shared thoughts how this can be a healthy and inclusive community. She shared child care and health care is important and she is looking forward to the partnership.

Commissioner Mial shared thoughts on diversifying RTP in terms of talent and how this will be awesome for that area and this creates a mixed use component. He shared diversification is tenure.

3. Public Libraries 2024 Bond Projects

Attachments: [LIB Bond Presentation.pdf](#)

Mr. Matt Roylance, Deputy Director of Community Services, and Ms. Katrina Vernon, Library Division Manager, shared Public Libraries 2024 Bond Projects for November bond cycle.

He shared the Agenda:

1. Library System Overview
2. Status of previous WCPL bonds
3. Planning Process
4. Investment themes
5. Potential WCPL projects
6. Staff recommended projects
7. Discussion and next steps

Ms. Vernon shared background on the Library System Today:

- 8 Regional Libraries
- 13 Community Libraries
- 2 Special Libraries
- 1 Bookmobile
- 1 Administrative Building
- 323,000 square feet
- 21% of Wake County population has an active library card

She shared how Wake County libraries compare to libraries across the state:

- Expenditures and size of community comes into play
- Shared libraries in GA, CA and TN
- Shared FY 23 Performance Data
- Circulation
- Visits
- Program attendance
- PC Hours Used
- Wifi Hours Used

She shared NC Public Library Standards:

- The State of North Carolina offers suggested guidelines for proximity of Library facilities to populations (minutes of drive time)
- Essential (20 minutes)
- Enhanced (15 minutes)
- Exemplary (10 minutes)

She shared map of current libraries proximity map.

She shared 2007 WCPL Bond | Completed:

- Voters approved \$45 million in 2007 by 70-30 margin to complete the following projects:
- New libraries (Middle Creek and Morrisville)
- Expand/replace existing libraries (Cary, Fuquay-Varina and Wake

Forest)

- Repairs and/or renovations (East Regional, Green Road, Olivia Rainey, Richard B. Harrison, Southeast Regional, Wendell and Zebulon)

She shared projects added post bond: Eva Perry Regional Library and North Regional Library.

She shared Planning Process:

- Analysis of Internal Factors
- Analysis of External Factors
- Input Opportunities
- Develop projects & recommendations

She shared Investment Themes = Wake County Public Library's 2024 Facility Plan/Capital Improvement Plan makes recommendations and directions for the future of the library system. The goals of the plan are: Equal Access, Infrastructure Renewal and Enhanced Facilities.

Mr. Roylance shared Potential Library Projects chart including: New Libraries: Brier Creek, Friendship (Apex), North Hills, Rolesville and Southeast Wake and Replacement Libraries: Athens Drive Community, Duraleigh Community and Wendell Community Library.

He shared Recommended Renovations & Replacements:

- Library renovations and improvements = \$19,240,000 (projects will address aging facilities, life cycle replacement of HVAC, etc.)
- Athens Drive Library Replacement = \$17,300,000 (this project will require \$1-2M in operating expenses)
- Wendell Library Replacement = \$18,160,000 (this project will require \$1-2M in operating expenses)
- Library Administration Building = \$25,000,000 (this building is significant in operation)

He shared Potential Library Projects (Library Renovations and Expansions):

- Library Renovations:
 - Express Library
 - Green Road Community
 - Library Administration Building
 - Northeast Regional Library
 - Oberlin Regional Library
 - Richard Harrison Community Library
 - Southeast Regional Library

- Library Expansions:
 - Fuquay-Varina Regional Library
 - Green Road Community Library

He shared a map of Potential Library Projects.

He shared Recommendation for New Libraries:

- Rolesville Library \$14,300,000 = Wake County's only municipality without a library, one of the fastest growing community in county
- Renovations & Replacement = \$79,700,000
- New Libraries: \$14,300,000
- Total Request: \$94,000,000

He shared chart of Recommended Projects = adding a library in Rolesville increases the percent of Wake County residents having a library within a 10-minute drive from 84.7% to 87.0%.

He shared Recommended Projects:

- Population Density (2020)
- Residential & Commercial Permit Density (2022)

He shared Horizon Projects chart:

- Brier Creek (Raleigh) = \$16.0M
- Duraleigh Library Replacement (Raleigh) = \$16.0M
- Friendship Library (Apex) = \$16.0M
- Fuquay-Varina Library Expansion = \$11.7M
- Green Road Library Expansion (Raleigh)] \$11.7M
- North Hills Library (Raleigh) = \$16.0M
- Southeast Wake Library = \$17.2M

He shared Next Steps.

He shared Bond Process = working towards bond referendum in 2024.

Chair Thomas asked if the recommendation/replacements are in priority order.

Mr. Roylance confirmed they are not.

Chair Thomas shared she appreciates efforts to ensure all residents have equal access. She shared regarding enhancement of facilities and peak hours going down and wifi hours going up - is there a digital center in the new libraries?

Mr. Frank Cope, Director of Community Services, shared this is the idea to

be discussed and can be added to list. The wifi cost would be around \$18M and would increase the asking price of the bond to around \$112-\$113M. This would increase need to figure out what this would entail and determine best location. If wifi is part of bond, there would be time to figure out these details and he thinks it's an intriguing idea. He shared this would be a unique project making it a "maker space" concept.

Chair Thomas shared as broadband access goes up, that is an important need. She shared wifi access and devices is what the community needs are looking at.

Mr. Cope shared regarding active card holders (used within past 12 months) and households have multiple persons using one card; however there is no way to measure this.

Ms. Vernon shared regarding wifi, people are using libraries differently now than compared to in the past. Seating arrangements are different, and expand where wifi access is located and this was part of community input. Poster sessions were completed to ask what did citizens want to see in the new libraries.

Commissioner Mial shared his appreciation to staff and commented that the additions for the Wendell and Rolesville library are great. He asked regarding Southeast area, is this area near the Oaky Grove?

Mr. Roylance shared he's not certain if that is the same area.

Commissioner Mial asked about Richard B. Harrison library as this an old library and with BRT coming, what type of impact will be looked at.

Mr. Roylance shared work with an architect has been completed to determine BRT activity for that area.

County Manager Ellis shared he has had conversations with staff regarding Richard Harrison library.

Vice-Chair Evans shared agreement with recommendations. She asked since it's been 17 years since Wake County has had a library bond, what are the constraints and flexibility with this dollar amount? She shared importance of not waiting so many years to address locations that were not identified on the map.

Mr. Cope shared the last bond was in 2007 and originally, all projects were to be completed in 2013. He shared he tries to balance for funds spent on parks and libraries.

Ms. Emily Lucas, Deputy County Manager, provided comment about potential projects being added - yes. This does impact downstream for future needs.

Vice Chair Evans asked if Fuquay and Southeast Raleigh could be added to list as well.

Commissioner Adamson shared thoughts that the Bond Referendum plan is good. She shared comments on replacement project regarding Athens, Wendell and Rolesville. What size will these libraries be.

Mr. Roylance shared they will be community libraries: Regional = 22,00 - 30,000 square feet. Community - 5,000 - 8,000 square feet.

Commissioner Adamson asked for Horizon Projects, what percentage does this add for persons within 10 minutes from library.

Mr. Roylance shared it is not hard to do analysis and they can provide that information to Commissioners.

Commissioner Calabria asked for scope of work and is there an estimated number of years.

Mr. Roylance shared schedule is 5-7 years (estimated timeline).

Commissioner Calabria asked could additional projects be added in this 5-7 year plan.

Mr. Mark Forestieri shared there was a bond in 2003 and in that bond renovations (3 of 4) libraries were regional. He shared it may take 7-10 years to complete (due to market and staff capacity).

Commissioner Calabria discussed with Mr. Roylance the driving distance to/from libraries. He is also interested in adding Apex and Fuquay-Varina to the list.

Commissioner Stallings agrees on library renovations in Fuquay and Apex.

Commissioner Waters shared comment regarding the North Hills project and finding land (is this the same for Athens location).

Mr. Cope shared there is a site that can be acquired for Athens Drive library, if need be.

Commissioner Waters shared comment about literacy rates and this is a great way to enhance school-aged children. She thanked presenters for

work being done.

4. Update on Parks Capital Projects

Attachments: [PGROS Capital update.pdf](#)

Mr. Chris Snow, Parks, Recreation & Open Space Director, shared the agenda for Parks Capital Projects:

- 2018 Parks Greenways Recreation & Open Space (PGROS) Bond
- Original projects and timeline
- Current projects and timeline
- Project updates

He shared charts on the 2018 PGROS Bond; Original Projects and Timeline.

He shared Project Updates - Open Space Acquisition.

Approximately \$20 million of the 2018 PGROS bonds was programmed for open space acquisition, with an additional \$5 million available from NCDOT through the Complete I-540 Settlement. To date, the County has:

- Acquired 26 properties totaling 1,514.21 acres.
- Appropriated \$15,734,996 of 2018 PGROS bond funding and \$3,724,415 provided by NCDOT.
- Four items for the January 16 regular meeting - 140 acres utilizing \$3,270,200 in bond funding, \$852,800 in Little River Reimbursement funding and \$976,000 in NCDOT funding.

He shared more acquisitions are forthcoming. There are 4 on the January, 16th BOC agenda.

He shared Project Updates - Greenway Development (\$20M of 2018 PGROS bond was programmed for Greenway development to date:

- Partnered with two local municipalities on three greenway projects
- Allocated \$3.5 million for the design of Swift Creek Greenway
- Allocated \$4.695 million for the design of the Triangle Bikeway

He shared Project Updates -- Construction:

- Beech Bluff County Park
- Original budget was \$14m, current project is \$20.09 million
- Park is expected to open mid 2024

He shared Project Updates -- Planning and Design:

- Kellam-Wyatt County Park
- Swift Creek Greenway & Preserve

- Triangle Bikeway
- Blue Jay Point County Park Renovations

He shared Project Updates - Planning & Design chart

- Lake Myra County Park
- Harris Lake County Park Renovations (in schematic design with staff)
- Historic Oak View County Park Renovations (in schematic design with staff)
- Crowder County Park (revisiting master plan to factor in increased acreage)
- RDU 286
- BW Wells State Recreation Area

He shared Project Updates - March Work Session:

- Discussion at March Work Session on the funding of Kellam-Wyatt County Park
- Presentation of BW Wells Concept plan at March work Session

Commissioner Calabria shared comments regarding prospect of new bond for 2024.

Ms. Lucas shared in the model, there has been capacity for county projects, and for 2018 PGROS projects, funds needed to be set aside for Wake County projects. She shared based on the schedule, and depending on the spend down of current bond funds, questions would be raised since current bond is not completely finished. She shared bonds have to be issued and placed under contract, but reminded the Commissioners that funds are spent over time. She shared there is an immediate need for libraries. She shared given those two factors, timing is crucial.

Commissioner Calabria held discussion regarding movement on bond anticipation in 2024.

Mr. Cope shared that the timeline and cost of project is unique. He shared current projects timeline was created back in 2019 and is only 90 days behind original schedule. He shared some things have adjusted, but they are still close to being on schedule. He has no feeling on acceleration of bond sales. He shared that because of the desire for libraries, he is not sure there would be debt capacity to do a library a bond in 2024.

Ms. Lucas shared a reminder that there are a number of years to issue and spend down bonds.

County Manager Ellis shared that due to COVID and other factors, the

timeline is pretty much the same back in 2019. Staff have done a good job with keeping projects on time.

Commissioner Adamson shared appreciation to Mr. Cope and Mr. Snow for update. She shared since the original plan was created, this project has developed into a 3-legged stool.

Commissioner Stallings asked about green space, land use, and how does farmland preservation fit in and what percentage is open space.

Mr. Cope shared the overall goal is 30%. He shared early numbers are 24%-25% toward 30% (when adding in flood plans and HOA land acquired in parks). He shared the remaining 5% is rapidly shrinking and very expensive, he will share updated information to the Commissioners as soon as he can.

Mr. Snow shared that the B.W. Wells project is part of the flood control project and was passed down to the State.

Mr. Cope shared a concept plan will be brought to Commissioners in March 2024 to provide what costs will be.

Commissioner Mial appreciates update regarding B.W. Wells and concept plan.

Meeting went into Recess

Meeting Reconvened.

5. Update on Elections Process

Attachments: [2024 BOE Presentation.pdf](#)

Ms. Olivia McCall, Director of Board of Elections (BOE), discussed high level process on voter ID for 2024 election.

She shared background: 2023 was a busy year:

- October election (using new voter id process)
- November election (using new voter id process)

She shared timeline 2023/2024:

- Transition from November election into candidate filing
- Jumped into redistricting
- Candidate challenge and hearing

She shared for 2024:

- Training for precinct staff has started, additional staff were brought

in

She shared Voter Photo ID:

- New law went into effect and has been implemented.
- All voters will be asked to provide photo ID in North Carolina
- Most voters have a valid photo ID, however if not, office can provide a no-fee voter photo ID
- 128 photo ID cards have been issued by Wake County Board of Elections as of January 1, 2024
- In 2023, Photo ID was required and implemented in both October and November municipal elections
- Expansion of what types of ID's will be accepted
- Additional information placed on BOE website

She shared 2023 ID Impacts:

- October 10th = total eligible voters = 119,728
 - Absentee: 10 ID discrepancies
 - Early voting: Zero ID discrepancies
 - Election Day: Zero ID discrepancies
- November 7th = total eligible voters = 242,645
 - Absentee: 87 ID discrepancies
 - Early voting: Zero ID discrepancies
 - Election Day: 6 ID discrepancies

She shared Voter Photo ID Outreach:

- 9/9/23 event held at BOE office
- 1/20/24 event held at BOE office
- Future (3-4) BOE/Library outreach events
- Looking to partner with libraries to hold voting events and working with state on uniform process across 100 counties

Chair Thomas asked County Manager Ellis and Ms. Demi if a press release media event will be posted prior to the January 20th event?

Ms. McCall shared the BOE does have a flier and will work with communications to get a press release and social media released.

Vice-Chair Evans asked if photo ID does not match current address, are persons still able to vote.

Ms. McCall responded that is correct. The address on photo ID and current address do not need to be match in order to vote; the voter names must match.

Commissioner Adamson asked what is required by citizens when they come to vote. She shared regarding municipal voting, there is information at polling places being given out by specific political parties. She asked is there way to communicate with citizens through that if handed material as it is possible more misinformation will be shared. She asked when BOE does robust campaign, how/what can Commissioners to do help.

Ms. McCall reminded that residents should come to BOE website for resources.

Ms. McCall shared regarding publications, campaign signage will be outside voting locations. She shared for the 2024 primary, BOE staff are trying to determine what is needed (per State requirements). She shared a budget is being created for Photo ID's. The goal is to have everyone educated and a smooth election day.

Commissioner Adamson asked if promotional materials can be shared with Commissioners so they can distribute as well.

Commissioner Mial congratulated Ms. McCall for being named the new director. He shared his appreciation that BOE is now in one central location.

Commissioner Stallings asked about staffing levels.

Ms. McCall shared they had robust support from tax department staff. She shared 2500 precinct officials are needed to run an election and if employees are interested, they can use community involvement leave. She shared the level of commitment given to the process is appreciated. She shared pay for precinct officials was increased by Wake County BOC.

Commissioner Stallings asked about voter experience.

Ms. McCall shared implementation of voter ID may delay process just a little. She shared for small places, it can be challenging to find places that can accommodate the voting logistics.

6. 2024 Federal Legislative Priorities

Attachments: [Federal legislative priorities Jan 2023 WS v2.pdf](#)

Mr. Ben Canada, Chief of Staff, shared 2024 Federal Legislative Priorities.

He shared What do we need from Board today:

- Approve federal priorities for next year (general guidance, top 3 list and opportunity list)
- Next steps: share with federal lobbyist and consider next steps with

advocacy

He shared Approach Legislative Priorities in Three Ways:

- General Guidance = Policy guidance to County Manager's Office (CMO) and contracted lobbyists
- Top Three Asks = Speak with a single, clear voice, Board needs to set a short list of top priorities
- Opportunity List = We can't predict what issues will be "hot" each session. The Board will approve a list of issues that, if an opportunity arises, CMO has discretion to pursue

He shared What to Expect from Congress in 2024:

- 2024 is a Presidential and congressional election year
- Local government priorities not likely to become hot issues

He shared Staff Recommendations:

- Earmark Requests = lessons learned over past two years; criteria based recommendations
- Housing Block Grants = Ask Congress to maintain or increase funding to CDBG, HOME block grant programs
- EMS Medication and Supply Challenges = Ask Congress to pass legislation that encourages production of medicines in short supply, used in EMS operations

He shared Lessons Learned from Earmarks:

- Earmarks returned to Congress in 2021 after decade hiatus
- Few earmarks requests in 2023 - staff requested time to get internal process in place
- Equipment requests present the fewest regulatory obstacle
- Avoid construction and facility requests
- Distinguish between earmark partnerships and endorsements

He shared Earmark Criteria:

- Alignment with County's approved strategic plan (or board goals)
- Ability to navigate federal regulations
- Priority given to State mandated services
- Priority to vetted pilot projects

He shared Tentative Priority Earmarks for 2024:

- Fire Turnout Gear
- Solar Panels on new public health center and other facilities
- Electric Vehicle charging stations
- 800 MHz Land Mobil Radio United replacement
- 800 MHz Radio System Infrastructure Replacement

- EMS Defibrillators Replacement

He shared What Staff Need from Commissioners:

- Project Partnership Requests
- Letter of Support Requests

He shared Housing Block Grants:

- Congress considering substantial funding reductions in domestic programs
- County invests local funds in housing programs, but supplemented by federal funds

He shared EMS Medications and Supply Challenges:

- National shortages of emergency medications
- Bring attention to the issue
- Explore legislation to encourage increased manufacturing

He shared Opportunity List:

- Programs that complement Wake Transit plans
- Fire sprinkler incentives
- Benefits cliffs
- Admin and reporting relief
- Nationwide public health data tracking
- 240B drug discount program
- Well and septic regulation
- Water source long-term planning
- Early childhood education
- WIOA flexibility
- Commitment to Veterans support and outreach
- Broad band accessibility
- Infant mortality outcomes
- Maternal health disparity

He shared NACO Legislative Conference:

- Under Board approved process, February conference will no longer be a formal part of our advocacy
- Staff will not schedule D.C. - based congressional visits
- Minimal staff presence at conference

Chair Thomas thanked Commissioner Adamson and Commissioner Stallings for adding infant mortality and maternal health disparity to opportunity list, noting the distinction between the two.

Vice-Chair Evans asked if meetings would be coordinated with Senator's

offices while Commissioners are in D.C. or here in NC.

Chair Thomas will be attending Legislative conference and can serve as delegate, as it was more challenging to bring senators to Wake County versus meeting with them in Washington.

Commissioner Adamson shared she has been lobbying for the veterans bill and planned to meet with veteran services staff.

Commissioner Stallings shared she is attending the NCACC Legislative conference, but agrees it is difficult to schedule senator meetings.

Mr. Canada asked if meetings need to be set up with senior legislative senate staff for Commissioners.

Chair Thomas shared since most of Commissioners will be attending, she asked if Mr. Canada could try to schedule a meeting; if not, please schedule a spring session.

Commissioner Waters asked if it is okay to add to the opportunity list: accessibility for disability.

Commissioner Calabria suggested that Mr. Canada speak with Jennifer Imo, The Ferguson Group Managing Partner, for guidance on list.

Commissioners agreed with suggestion to add accessibility to opportunity list.

Commissioners gave approval of top 3 list.

Mr. Canada will follow up with the Ferguson Group.

Chair Thomas asked if a time could be scheduled for a conversation with Ms. Imo and how opportunity list will work versus top 3.

Mr. Canada shared the top 3 list is what will be shared with the Senators.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Antoinette H. Womack, NCCCC
Deputy Clerk
Wake County Board of Commissioners

