



Wake County

301 South McDowell Street
Raleigh, NC

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Monday, July 10, 2023

2:00 PM

Wake County Justice Center

Regular Meeting

Meeting Called to Order: Vice-Chair Susan Evans

Vice Chair Susan Evans called the meeting to order at 2:01p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: 6 - Vice-Chair Susan Evans, Commissioner Vickie Adamson, Commissioner Matt Calabria, Commissioner Don Mial, Commissioner Cheryl Stallings, and Commissioner James West

Excused: 1 - Chair Shinica Thomas

Staff present: David Ellis, County Manager; Scott Warren, County Attorney; Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager; Emily Lucas, Deputy County Manager; Ashley Jacobs, Deputy County Manager; Denise Foreman, Assistant County Manager; Toni Womack, Deputy Clerk; Ben Canada, Chief of Staff; Dara Demi, Chief Communications Director; Ellen Meder, Communications Consultant; Portia Johnson, Senior Executive Assistant; and Tanika Cooper, Senior Executive Assistant.

Others present: Dan Bulatek, 4-H Youth Development Educator, CPS; Emily Pirhalla, Wake County 4-H Teen Council Reporter Officer; Mom of Emily Pirhalla; Anita Davis, Medicaid Transportation Program Manager; Durwood Earp, Major, Wake County Sheriff's Office; John De Haro, Facilities Design and Construction; Mark Edmondson, Senior Real Estate Project Manager; Trinija Martin, Deputy Director of Human Services; Tim Maloney, Planning, Development and Inspections Director; Marcus Kinrade, Tax Administrator; and Nannette Bowler, Health and Human Services Director.

Invocation: Commissioner Matt Calabria**Items of Business**

Vice Chair Evans shared that Chair Thomas had an excused absence from today's meeting, as Chair Thomas is attending the Harvard Kennedy School of Government - Senior Executives in State and local government program.

Present: 6 - Vice-Chair Susan Evans, Commissioner Vickie Adamson, Commissioner Matt Calabria, Commissioner Don Mial, Commissioner Cheryl Stallings, and Commissioner James West

Excused: 1 - Chair Shinica Thomas

1. Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Evans shared that a change needed to be made to today's agenda, by adding one Manager's Report regarding Wake County's agreement with WakeBrook/UNC Hospital.

Commissioner Calabria moved, seconded by Commissioner Stallings, to approve the amended agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Vice-Chair Evans, Commissioner Adamson, Commissioner Calabria, Commissioner Mial, Commissioner Stallings, and Commissioner West

Excused: 1 - Chair Thomas

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meetings of June 5, 2023 and June 20, 2023, and the Minutes from Work Session of June 12, 2023

Motion: Adamson

2nd: Mial

Commissioner Adamson moved, seconded by Commissioner Mial, to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 5, 2023, Minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 20, 2023 and the Work Session of June 12, 2023. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Vice-Chair Evans, Commissioner Adamson, Commissioner Calabria, Commissioner Mial, Commissioner Stallings, and Commissioner West

Excused: 1 - Chair Thomas

3. NCACC Youth Voice 4-H Delegates

Vice Chair Evans welcomed Ms. Emily Pirhalla, Wake County 4-H Youth Delegate, to share her presentation to the Commissioners. Vice Chair Evans shared that Ms. Pirhalla will be participating in the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) conference next month, as part of NCACC's youth voice program.

Ms. Pirhalla thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to present. She shared that she is a rising 9th grader and attending Middle Creek High School.

She shared one of the Wake County Board of Commissioners goals is to engage the community to envision Wake County's future. She shared she is aware that the Commissioners are pursuing this goal based off of events that the Commissioners have been attending. She shared to engage members of the community, this should include all members, such as involving teenagers. She encouraged the Commissioners to attend high school assemblies. She encouraged if this is to happen, for the Commissioners presentation to focus on topics that would capture attention of teenagers. She mentioned that high school raffles are another way for Commissioners to be involved with teenager activities. She also invited them to attend after school clubs or activities. She shared by doing this, it would allow teenagers to ask questions and for the Commissioners to have engaging conversations. She shared most teenagers spend a great deal of time on social media; however, most teens do not follow active Wake County social media accounts. She offered the best way to engage teenagers is to offer diverse content. She shared that overall, teenagers can make a valuable contribution to the community. She thanked Commissioners for their time and allowing her to speak.

Vice Chair Evans thanked Ms. Pirhalla for her presentation and noted that Commissioners are always looking for additional ways to engage with the public. She noted Wake County's Communication staff were present and she was sure notes were taken on how to increase content that will be appealing for youth.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Stallings moved, seconded by Commissioner Calabria,

to approve Consent Agenda. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Vice-Chair Evans, Commissioner Adamson, Commissioner Calabria, Commissioner Mial, Commissioner Stallings, and Commissioner West

Excused: 1 - Chair Thomas

4. Continue Memorandum of Understanding for Distribution of Federal Transit Administration Formula Funds
5. Approval of the Federal Transit Administration Relief Funding and Appropriation of Funds to Wake County/GoWake Access
6. Accept and Appropriate Donation Funds for the Wake County Sheriff's Canine Unit
7. Authorize the Wake County Sheriff's Office to Apply for the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program Grant
8. Approval of Construction Contract GMP #4 with Construction Manager at Risk for the Public Health Center Project
9. Authorization to Quit Claim Title of Cemetery Property back to Wakefield Missionary Baptist Church, Inc. in Zebulon, NC
10. Medicare Advantage Plan for Medicare-Eligible Participants of the Wake County Retiree Health Plan
11. Designation of Map and Plat Review Officer for the Town of Angier
12. Designation of Map and Plat Review Officers for the Town of Zebulon
13. Tax Committee Recommendations for Gross Receipts Penalty, Refund Requests and Various Reports
14. General Public Comments

Vice Chair Evans opened the General Public Comment Period and reminded everyone of the General Public Comment process:

The following persons came to speak

Patrick Frost - Resident of Cary. Mr. Frost, accompanied by his wife Kristine, his mother-in-law, and others who are like minded regarding his comments. He shared that he has lived in Wake County for 36 years. He shared opposition to Wake County's proclamation of Pride Month and celebrating homosexual ideology. He shared public libraries should be

safe spaces for children, but are now used to groom children into false religion. He shared tax payer dollars are being wasted on hosting events with drag queens. He shared this ideology is taking a vice and treating it as a virtue. He shared when America pulled Christianity out of the government, it did not result in a secular government. He shared Christianity was replaced by humanism. He shared perception is that a Christian veneer is being placed on false religion. He shared proclamation was presented to a pastor wearing a clergy collar and a pride pin. He shared there is no intersection between Christianity and LGBT. He asked Commissioners to stop promoting deviant lifestyles in the community, stop blaspheming the name of Jesus. He shared instead of celebrating pride, promote the biblical virtue of humility. He asked Commissioners to stop bowing at the LGBT alter but instead bow before Jesus. He asked Commissioners to spread message of truth and love.

Mr. Steve Rao, Councilman for Town of Morrisville. He thanked Commissioners for supporting Pride Month and for work being done to support diversity. He shared his honor of attending Prime Minister of India's White House visit in Washington, DC. Conversations were held regarding economic development and he will share that information with the Commissioners. He shared comments on work being done in Town of Cary and the new amenities; noting a future Wimbledon championship being played in the Town of Cary. He shared the Town of Morrisville received a \$2m investment to host Cricket events and stadium seating is almost complete. He shared major league Cricket tournaments will be played in the Town of Morrisville and encouraged the Commissioners to attend events. He shared he is glad to see this global sport come to Wake County, along with another event in August. He shared comments on Smart City; a new app that the Town of Morrisville has, and the purpose is to monitor facilities, get current events. His hope is that the Town of Morrisville can win an award for usage of the app and leverage services for community. He thanked the Commissioners for all of their hard work.

Vice Chair Evans asked Ms. Toni Womack, Deputy Clerk, if there were any online general public comments submitted.

Ms. Womack confirmed there were no on-line public comments.

Regular Agenda

Commissioner West made motion; seconded by Commissioner Adamson to:

- 1. Establish 74.0 full-time positions (FTEs) to support the preparation and implementation of Medicaid Expansion and the end of the Public Health Emergency; and**

2. Accept and appropriate \$3,381,306 of revenues into the General Fund from the NC DHHS as State reimbursements; and reallocate and appropriate a one-time receipt of \$436,122 from NC DHHS recorded as a FY23 liability, with a combined total of \$3,817,428 in revenues and expenditures; and

3. Appropriate \$1,311,553 of fund balance within the General Fund as the required County match.

County Attorney Warren clarified the motion to be voted upon is for the language as written.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Vice-Chair Evans, Commissioner Adamson, Commissioner Calabria, Commissioner Mial, Commissioner Stallings, and Commissioner West

Absent: 1 - Chair Thomas

15.

Additional Positions to Implement Medicaid Expansion

Vice Chair Evans shared that this Spring, the State Legislature approved Medicaid Expansion in our State. This will allow tens of thousands of Wake County residents to enroll for Medicaid benefits. This also creates new work for Wake County. Our Health and Human Services (HHS) team is here today to ask for additional resources to implement Medicaid Expansion.

Ms. Nannette Bowler, Director of Health and Human Services shared the Medicaid Expansion item.

Ms. Nannette Bowler shared agenda:

Agenda

- ✓ Common Definitions
- ✓ Background
- ✓ Projected Medicaid Workloads
- ✓ Preparation
- ✓ Medicaid Expansion Resource Needs

She shared Common Definitions:

Common Definitions

- Medicaid Beneficiaries (aka Recipients): Persons who have already been approved and are receiving health insurance coverage through the Federal Medicaid Program.
- Applicants: Persons applying for Medicaid.
- Reviews (aka Recertifications): Annual review of all current beneficiaries to ensure that they are still eligible to receive health insurance coverage through Medicaid.
- Workloads: The number of applications and reviews that must be completed in a certain time frame.
- Public Health Emergency (PHE) Ending: Also known as the Continuous Coverage Unwinding.

She shared Background: Medicaid Expansion:

Background: Medicaid Expansion

- During the PHE, the number of persons receiving Medicaid grew as the State offered the coverage to any resident not covered by any other health insurance.
- During the PHE, the State of NC auto-extended Medicaid eligibility for all beneficiaries (COVID-19 related or not). This dramatically increased our number of cases.
- On March 27, 2023, Governor Cooper signed HB76 - Access to Healthcare Options - into law. This is commonly known as Medicaid Expansion.
- The legislation will expand Medicaid which is expected to provide health coverage to over 600,000 people across North Carolina and bring billions in federal dollars to the state.
- Expansion will extend eligibility for Medicaid to adults (ages 19-64) with incomes of up to 138% of the Federal Poverty Level.
- Medicaid Expansion will not go into effect until the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approves the rules associated with processing these applications and reviews.
- Recent projections range from 40,000 - 60,000 Wake County residents who will become eligible for Medicaid as a result of Medicaid Expansion.

Ms. Bowler provided a response to a question previously raised by Commissioner Stallings regarding how many persons will lose Medicaid as a result of public health emergency ending. Ms. Bowler shared approximately 50,000 residents were added to Medicaid during COVID. She shared HHS staff are in the process of completing monthly reviews.

She shared as soon as the State approves the expansion rules, less people will lose their coverage, and since Wake County is ahead in terms of staff retention, this will allow applications to be reviewed and submitted the moment State approves rules for expansion.

Ms. Bowler shared Medicaid: Projected Workload - Applications:

Applications

- Projections for the number of persons eligible for Medicaid coverage through Medicaid Expansion range from 40,000 - 60,000.
- Historically, 50% of Medicaid applications processed are approved. Processing times for approvals and denials are the same.
- A midway point of 50,000 newly eligible applicants results in a workload increase of 100,000 applications or more.
- Over a 2-year period, Medicaid Expansion would add approximately 4,167 applications per month to the current 4,300 - 7,800 applications processed per month.

Ms. Bowler shared Medicaid: Projected Workload - Annual Reviews:

Annual Reviews

Two-Year Growth Projection includes these factors:

- Number of residents enrolled in Medicaid (164,094) at the end of FY20 (Pre-COVID-19).
- Added what would have been average growth (5%) for FY21, FY22, and FY23.
- Added 50,000 newly eligible residents.
- $164,094 * (5\% \text{ average growth per year for 3 years}) + 50,000 = 239,960$

She shared HHS Preparation:

HHS Preparation

- Performing weekly check-in meetings with ESS Leadership and Management to monitor and revise plans as needed.
- Completed Process Mapping and identified actions designed to increase efficiencies.
 - Developed Action Plan based on Process Mapping.
- Training for all new staff and retraining staff members hired during the PHE.
- Redesigning training curriculum (Post-PHE)
- Participating as a pilot program for the State's STP project.
- Meeting regularly with County Manager's Office to discuss impacts

of PHE Ending and Medicaid Expansion beginning.

- Working with County HR, BMS, and Capital Area Workforce Development (CAWD) to brainstorm and implement creative approaches to assessing, recruiting and retaining staff in this competitive environment. Meeting with internal HHS staff and County Communications to develop a media plan regarding Medicaid Expansion (TBD).

She shared Medicaid Expansion Resource Needs:

Requesting a total of 74 positions:

- 60 Medicaid Eligibility Case Workers
- 6 Medicaid Supervisors
- 8 Support Staff
 - ✓ Trainers
 - ✓ Quality Assurance
 - ✓ Budget

Expenditure: \$5,128,981

State/Federal Revenue: \$3,817,428

County Share: \$1,311,553

Ongoing State/Federal Revenue: 50% - 75%

Commissioner Adamson shared this has been a long time coming and clarified that prior to Medicaid Expansion hiring, the State budget must be approved first. She asked regarding hiring, what is the criteria and salary range for eligibility case workers.

Ms. Bowler shared there are staff who are time limited and the plan is to make those time-limited hires full time employees. She shared HHS is working with CAWD regarding application process. She shared training will be 6-8 months. Mr. Holder shared pay range average may be around \$38,424.

Commissioner Adamson asked where are candidates to submit their applications.

Ms. Bowler shared Wake County's Communications Department will post information on website.

Commissioner Calabria shared this is a positive development and despite hurdles, Medicaid expansion is good for Wake County. Medicaid Expansion does save lives and with the funding coming from the State, this will lower costs elsewhere. He shared appreciation to Ms. Bowler's

leadership and HHS staff for their work.

Ms. Bowler shared HHS has been working with HR to discuss retention and sign-on bonuses to be competitive with other communities.

Commissioner West shared "how sweet it is to have reached this goal". He shared his perspective that the goals are coming together and quoted Dr. King noting that the poor should not be maintained but transformed. He shared this work is linked to economic vitality.

Commissioner Stallings asked question regarding children who may need Medicaid.

Ms. Bowler shared the goal is to add Medicaid expansion for children and Wake County staff are working on this. Ms. Bowler thanked her staff for the great work.

Commissioner Mial shared thanks to Ms. Bowler and noted that when looking at the number of applications being processed each month, this hard work is appreciated.

Vice Chair Evans shared her excitement about being able to have more staff to process applications. She shared this is important and even though it comes with an administrative cost, she thanks staff for their planning and due diligence. She appreciates staff's work and it is great to hear about enthusiasm from HHS staff. It is evident that Wake County employees love to serve.

Commissioner West shared that Commissioner Adamson has been a key part of this process and a tremendous champion.

Manager's Report

16. Continuum of Care Update

Vice Chair Evans shared Wake County has been working with many stakeholders to address a long-term approach coordinating services to persons living in homelessness. Mr. Duane Holder, Deputy County Manager, is here with an update on those conversations.

Mr. Duane Holder shared Wake County has not been immune to the national problem of homelessness as a growing number of our residents find themselves un-housed or at risk of being un-housed. There has been a lot of activity taking place within our local homeless service system (and our Housing & Urban Development or HUD geographic designation for Wake County is North Carolina or NC - 507) and we want to take this opportunity

to let you and the public know what we know as things stand today.

He shared as a reminder, when we speak of the homeless service system, or NC-507, there are several different players or actors that work within that system. For today's presentation, we want to give you an update on the latest activity as it relates to the Continuum of Care

He shared the Wake County Continuum of Care (or CoC) is a collective of organizations that provide housing and homeless services and supports to people who are un-housed or at risk of being un-housed.

He shared this collective is governed by a Board that is an unincorporated entity. The CoC Governance Board appoints an organization to conduct business on behalf of the Board and the CoC (membership) at large. Now, to this point, that appointed organization has been the Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness (Partnership). On May 30th, in a letter signed by the Chair and Vice Chair of the CoC Governance Board, the CoC voted to terminate their current agreement with the Partnership to serve as Lead Agency, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Lead, and Coordinated Entry Lead for the community.

He shared a record of the communication between the CoC Governance Board and Wake County throughout the month of June. In addition to this communication, also on June 29th, the Governance Board forwarded a draft agreement between Wake County and the CoC Membership. On this past Friday (July 7th) the County was copied on a letter from the Partnership Board Chair to the CoC Governance Board, advising of their inability to continue to sustain operations due to staffing losses. This is of particular concern because the most critical piece of our system is the front door (or what we refer to as the Access Hub and Coordinated Entry process). Because of the challenges that the Partnership is facing, people in our community in crisis and those in need have had difficulty accessing the agencies and services that are available to help them.

He shared at this point, we are working to finalize the terms of an agreement that would appoint the County as Lead Agency, Collaborative Applicants, HMIS Lead and Coordinated Entry Lead for the community. We are hopeful that during your August Work Session and regular meeting that you will be provided with further information and details and ultimately an agreement for consideration to allow the County to serve the community in this role.

Mr. Holder shared Meet the Team:

Wake County Homeless Services System - Main Players

Meet the Team

- Wake County Continuum of Care - NC 507
- Raleigh Wake Partnership To End Homelessness
- Wake County
- City of Raleigh
- Local Service Providers

He shared Wake County Continuum of Care - NC 507:

Wake County Continuum of Care - NC 507

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is the collective networks, institutions, and organizations that provide housing and services to people who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness.

Our Continuum of Care spans the whole jurisdiction of Wake County and is recognized by HUD as NC-507.

Federally mandated goals of the CoC include:

- Promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness;
- Provide funding for efforts to quickly re-house individuals and families who are homeless, which minimizes the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness;
- Promote access to and effective use of mainstream programs; and
- Optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

The CoC is governed by a board composed of community members invested in the issue of homelessness. The CoC Board is an independent entity, but is not incorporated, so must appoint a local entity to conduct business on behalf of the Board and CoC at large. The CoC Governance Board has notified the **Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness (RWP)** of its plans to identify a new entity to serve as Lead Agency, Collaborative Applicant, HMIS Administrator, and Coordinated Access System Lead. The new entity would be responsible for carrying out the administrative activities of the Wake CoC.

- **June 7:** CoC Governance Board requests Wake County to “assume responsibility of all functions currently the responsibility of Raleigh Wake Partnership to End and Prevent Homelessness”.
- **June 9:** Manager responds to CoC Board request with terms agreeable to the County to assume responsibility of functions.
- **June 21:** CoC Board revises initial request of the County, asking for a July 1st assumption of the Access Hub and a requests for

more time to “work...toward creating a meaningful, effective, and mutually agreed upon MOU that includes and involves NC-507 membership, Wake County Government, and the NC-507 Governance Board.”

- **June 27:** Manager responds to CoC Board request with County’s agreement to begin assumption of Access Hub, contingent upon confirmation of the CoC’s plans for Coordinated Entry and HMIS (as of July 1st).
- **June 29:** Governance Board sends letter to the Partnership requesting a meeting and written notice of the agency’s capacity to continue serving as Coordinated Entry and HMIS lead through transition of services/HUD contract periods. Governance Board also responds to Manager with letter stating that their understanding is that the Partnership will continue as lead in these roles, through transition of services/HUD contract periods.

Moving Forward.....

- Wake County Housing has created a plan, working within available resources, to assume responsibility of the Access Hub if and when the Manager successfully negotiates terms with the Governance Board. In order for the Access Hub to be successful, it is imperative that Coordinated Entry and HMIS are well-run as well.
- Currently unsure with whom we would be working collaboratively to ensure coordination between calls and referrals for services.
- Engaging in further negotiation with CoC membership, Governance Board and HUD to finalize the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the CoC and Wake County for the balance of Lead Agency responsibilities.
- Anticipate August 14th Work Session item to discuss details of MOU and implications on budget and staffing.
- Anticipate August 21st BOC meeting for consideration of adoption of MOU and accompanying budget and staffing authorization.

He shared access hub and coordinated entry process. He shared that due to challenges, individuals in the community have difficulty accessing the front door. He shared Wake County is working to finalizing terms in agreement. He shared HMS lead in community. He shared during August work session, Commissioners will be provided with further details for serving community.

Commissioner Calabria asked question regarding timing - in August - what are residents to see between now and then to make sure they are served.

Mr. Holder shared the system that has been experiencing challenges, but the CoC is working with agencies to look at alternatives and he shared there is an expectation to hear from CoC on Thursday.

Commissioner Calabria wants to move things along, and wants Wake County staff to be ready and get not get halted. He asked for the Commissioners to be kept in the loop.

Commissioner West shared his attendance with eviction meetings and development relationships and he is all in and supports this initiative. He shared his belief that this will be a game changer. He shared that partnerships and governance, equate to something to be proud of.

Commissioner Adamson shared this has been something that has been coming for a long time. She is very optimistic. She shared two years ago, housing engagement unit started and has placed almost 300 people in permanent housing. She shared this is a monumental task for housing department. She agrees with Commissioner Calabria, if Commissioners need to do something to progress this along, please let Commissioners know.

Commissioner Stallings thanked Mr. Holder for his work and staff. This is a critical need and if an interim leader can step up, that is key. She is concerned by the statement that services can get worse before they get better. She echoed that if Commissioners support is needed, to let them know.

Vice Chair Evans shared connecting people to services is the end goal. She shared she knows this a burden for staff, but she knows the caliber of employees in the housing department and she looks forward to hearing from Commissioners to move things forward.

Vice Chair Evans shared another Manager's Report will be shared regarding the WakeBrook Behavioral Health Facility. She shared for a number of years, UNC has been Wake County's operator of the WakeBrook facility, and changes have taken place regarding operations. She shared an update to be provided by County Manager David Ellis.

County Manager David Ellis shared that after several months of negotiations, Wake County and Alliance Health have not been able to reach an agreement with UNC Health to provide services at the WakeBrook Health campus beyond the current fiscal year. He shared in March, UNC notified Wake County of UNC's intent to transition away from providing behavioral health crisis services and shift delivery service to children and adolescents. Following that news, Wake County entered into conversations with UNC Health to reach a long-term agreement with UNC

for UNC to continue providing services to WakeBrook. UNC notified Wake County that the proposed terms were not acceptable. UNC notified Wake County that services at WakeBrook will be discontinued, partially due to UNC's staffing challenges, by September 30, 2023. Wake County is working with Alliance Health to secure a new provider at the WakeBrook facility as soon as possible. Wake County and Alliance are currently in negotiations with a new partner who can provide similar services to the WakeBrook facility. Wake County and Alliance will expedite finding a new provider of services and once an agreement is finalized, the information will be shared with the public. Wake County's priority is to maintain services at WakeBrook and resume services as soon as possible. Wake County and Alliance will work with community partners who may be impacted by the disruption of services and Wake County is exploring short term solutions with community partners to continue helping persons with behavioral health needs as soon as possible.

County Manager Ellis thanked all community partners, including Alliance Health, WakeMed Health and Hospitals, and others who have committed to being part of a long-term strategy to help with behavioral health needs. County Manager Ellis shared the following Press Release regarding WakeBrook will be released today, July 10, 2023.

Wake County, Alliance Health to Secure New Provider for WakeBrook Facility
UNC Health to End All Services by October
After several months of negotiations, Wake County is disappointed to share that they have not been able to reach an agreement with UNC Health to provide ongoing services at WakeBrook Behavioral Health Facility
<<https://www.wake.gov/departments-government/health-human-services/health-human-services-locations/additional-health-human-services-locations/wakebrook-behavioral-health-facility-updates>> beyond Fiscal Year 2024.

As a result, UNC Health will discontinue all services at WakeBrook by Sept. 30, 2023, and the county is working closely with its partner, Alliance Health, to secure a new service provider at the facility as soon as possible.

“It’s unfortunate that after discussing several different proposals with UNC Health, we could not settle on terms for a service contract,” said Wake County Manager David Ellis. “WakeBrook is an important care center in our community, and we’re committed to minimizing the gap between providers, so we can continue to serve our residents battling mental health and substance use issues.” The County and Alliance Health are currently in negotiations with a new provider that could deliver services at WakeBrook that would be similar to what UNC Health offers now. They include detoxification for drugs and alcohol, crisis support, and inpatient psychiatric services. Wake County is also engaging with WakeMed and other community organizations on collective solutions that better support a

healthier community - addressing medical needs, mental health needs, and personal challenges that present barriers to achieving optimal wellness and whole-person health.

How the Contract Negotiations Started In March 2023, UNC Health told Wake County that they were changing their service delivery model to focus on children and adolescents. Therefore, they would be ending the detox and facility-based crisis programs at WakeBrook by June 30, and the remaining two programs would end by Dec. 31, 2023. After some discussion, the County and UNC Health agreed in April 2023 to extend the contract for inpatient and crisis assessment services an additional year, through June 30, 2024, with the other two services running through Nov. 30, 2023. However, when news of the contract fluctuations reached WakeBrook staff, it caused uncertainty among the employees. Some left their positions, and it became difficult for UNC Health to hire temporary clinical personnel. Due to staffing shortages, UNC Health had to reduce the number of patients they could serve sooner than anticipated. In early July 2023, UNC Health officially notified the County that an agreement would not be reached and they plan to cease all services at WakeBrook by Sept. 30. As word spreads that negotiations were unsuccessful, additional staff losses may occur, which could result in further capacity challenges. Knowing this, Wake County has authorized Alliance Health to accelerate the pursuit of a new service provider at WakeBrook. Once an agreement is finalized, the County will share this information with the public. The county is committed to making the transition as smooth as possible for patients, staff and the community.

About WakeBrook

WakeBrook is a behavioral health facility located in Raleigh that offers a continuum of services for people dealing with mental health and/or substance use disorders.

The facility offers four main services:

- Crisis and assessment services
- Inpatient psychiatric unit for adults 18 and older
- Alcohol and drug detoxification unit
- Facility-based crisis services

Since 2012, UNC Health has provided behavioral health services at the WakeBrook facility, which Wake County owns. The county has historically leased the facility to UNC Health at no cost as an in-kind contribution for serving local residents. In addition, since 2012, Wake County has funded a three-way contract with Alliance Health and UNC Health to exclusively

support services at the facility.

For more information and updates related to WakeBrook, visit [wake.gov/WakeBrook](https://www.wake.gov/departments-government/health-human-services/health-human-services-locations/additional-health-human-services-locations/wakebrook-behavioral-health-facility-updates)
<<https://www.wake.gov/departments-government/health-human-services/health-human-services-locations/additional-health-human-services-locations/wakebrook-behavioral-health-facility-updates>>.

Commissioner Adamson shared this is not what Wake County wanted to have happen. She asked if the plan is to find a new provider or will WakeBrook facility need to close down for a period of time during transition.

County Manager Ellis shared in a perfect world, the transition would be seamless without any disruption in service. He shared UNC's Sept. 30, 2023 completion date puts pressure on Wake County and Alliance Health. At this time, Wake County cannot guarantee there will not be a disruption in services.

Commissioner West shared from a synergistic purpose, with UNC being the provider, are there any other services that can be transferred or is Wake County starting over from the beginning in terms of behavioral health provided service.

County Manger shared as of September 30, 2023, UNC will not be providing any service to WakeBrook. He shared this will be starting from scratch with a new provider. He shared this year, Wake County obtained a consultant and provided a roadmap of what behavioral health services Wake County should be providing. He shared the goal is to find a provider that can provide all four services. He shared long-term goal is to have a Behavior Health Care system.

Commissioner West asked if services provided by the Live-Well Wake program have helped with behavioral health services.

County Manager Ellis shared Wake County is not asleep, and a draft agreement was provided, but UNC is struggling in terms of retention.

Commissioner Mial shared he knows staff have been working hard and have done a wonderful job keeping Commissioners apprised. He thanked County Manager Ellis for his dedication and hard work and providing services to community is key.

Commissioner Adamson shared what was unique about WakeBrook was their quality of service and for persons who were seen on a regular basis.

She shared WakeBrook's general provider services were offered and this was a successful model. She would like to know if UNC is still offering those slots for persons who need general provider services and how will that transition take place.

County Manager shared staff will look into this question.

Vice Chair Evans shared this is an unfortunate development. She shared as a region, there has not been adequate systems in place to address mental health challenges. She knows in the long run, things will work well for citizens.

Commissioner Stallings thanked County Manager Ellis for keeping Commissioners up to date and said staff has been in good negotiations in this process. She shared sometimes crises create opportunities and she will be optimistic about new partnerships which could lead to expanded services.

County Manager Ellis shared UNC was a great partner over the past 10 years.

Commissioner Calabria shared that staff has worked hard to build a network of facilities, noting the one in Southern Wake for children, and urgent care. He shared Wake County should not place all eggs in one basket; and Wake County's bounce back is an example of resilience. He shared he is grateful for the work that has been done. He shared in looking over budget documents, he saw an increase funding for Wake Brook by 39%, and asked is that being paid out or held.

County Manager Ellis shared funds will be held to use for payment to another provider.

Appointments

Commissioner Adamson made the motion to approve the July 10, 2023 Appointments; seconded by Commissioner Mial. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Vice-Chair Evans, Commissioner Adamson, Commissioner Calabria, Commissioner Mial, Commissioner Stallings, and Commissioner West

Excused: 1 - Chair Thomas

17. Alcohol Beverage Control Board

- 1 Reappointment:
 - Lucius Jones
- 1 Resignation:
 - Kenneth Kirby, Jr.
- 1 Recommendation by Commissioner Don Mial:
 - Ike Wheeler

18. Durham and Wake Counties Research and Production Service District Advisory Committee

- 1 Term Completion:
 - Benjamin Parker
- 1 Resignation:
 - Michael McBriety
- 1 Recommendation by Service District Advisory Committee (SDAC):
 - Gina Anderson

19. Fire Commission

- 2 Vacancies:
 - _____, Cost Share Rep, Alternate
 - _____, Board of Directors Rep, Alternate
- 2 Recommendations by Fire Commission:
 - Demetria John, to fill Cost Share Rep, Alternate seat
 - Gary Vickerson, to fill Board of Directors Rep, Alternate seat

20. Human Services Board

- 3 Vacancies:
 - _____, Optometrist
 - _____, Consumer
 - _____, Psychologist
- 1 Resignation:
 - DaQuanta Copeland, Vice Chair
- 1 Recommendation by the Human Services Board:

- Matilde Ferrer Hoppmann, to fill Consumer vacancy seat

21. Town of Garner Planning and Appearance Commission

- 1 Vacancy:
 - _____
- 1 Recommendation by the Town of Garner Planning and Appearance Commission:
 - Jihan Hodges

22. Water Partnership

- 1 Vacancy:
 - _____, Agriculture representative
- 1 Recommendation by the Water Partnership:
 - John Burt, to fill Agriculture representative vacancy seat

23. Upcoming Vacancies for August

-----**Upcoming Vacancies for August 2023**
(All applications are due by August 3, 2023, by COB)
Appointments made August 21, 2023

- **Jury Commission = 1 Vacancy**
 - 1 Reappointment:
 - Melissa Ross Matton

Other Business

Closed Session

Attorney Warren shared that there was a need for a Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(4) to discuss Economic Development matters.

Motion to move to Closed Session at 3:09 p.m.
 Meeting went into Recess

Meeting Reconvened
 Returned from Closed Session 3:36 p.m.

Closed Session The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Vice-Chair Evans, Commissioner Adamson, Commissioner Calabria, Commissioner Mial, Commissioner Stallings, and Commissioner West

Absent: 1 - Chair Thomas

Adjourn

Vice Chair Susan Evans adjourned the meeting at 3:37p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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