

**Wake County Board of Commissioners
Great Government Committee
December 2, 2019
10:00 a.m.
Wake County Justice Center, Room 2800**

Commissioners Present:

Susan Evans, Chair
Greg Ford, Vice-Chair
Sig Hutchinson
James West (Joined at 10:30 a.m.)
Matt Calabria

Wake County Staff Present:

David Ellis, County Manager; Johnna Rogers, Chief Operating Officer; Derwick Paige, Chief Community Vitality Officer; Bill Greeves, Chief Innovation and Information Officer; Emily Lucas, Chief Financial Officer; Nicole Kreiser, Assistant County Manager; Chris Dillon, Assistant County Manager; Ben Canada, Assistant to the County Manager; Scott Warren, County Attorney; Paarth Mehta, Senior Budget and Management Analyst; Dara Demi, Communications Director; Jason Horton, Strategic Performance Director; Denise Foreman, Assistant County Manager; Steve Walston, Information Technology Specialist; Kenisha Hinton, Information Technology Project Manager; Mike Roberts, Information Technology Manager; Denise Hogan, Clerk to the Board; Yvonne Gilyard, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Portia Johnson, Executive Assistant to the Board; and Michelle Cerett, Executive Assistant to the Board.

Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Evans called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved, seconded by Commissioner Ford, to approve the September 30, 2019, committee meeting minutes.

Commissioner Evans shared the agenda for today's meeting.

Today's Agenda

- Board Travel Policy
- Budget Process and Public Hearings
- Board Proclamations
- Demo of Signup App for Public Comment

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Board of Commissioners Travel Policy.

Ms. Denise Hogan, Clerk to the Board, shared the agenda for today's meeting. She acknowledged Ms. Beth Smerko, Senior Deputy County Attorney; Ms. Emily Lucas, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Bill Greeves, Chief Innovation and Information Officer; and Mr. Paarth Mehta, Senior Budget and Management Analyst for their assistance with compiling this information.

Agenda

- Based on feedback from Great Government Committee on November 4th:
 - Add language to resolution for additional clarity and guidance
 - Provide cost estimates for conferences and events to determine annual travel budget
 - Identify additional funding for FY20 BOC Travel budget

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Commissioner Hutchinson said commissioners need to travel for the benefit of the county. He said it is the responsibility of the commissioners. He said the new policy needs to guide the principals of the commissioners and should not interfere with a commissioner's ability to travel for county business.

Commissioner Evans said there was extensive conversation on this topic at the November Great Government Committee meeting. She said the purpose of the presentation today is to hear staff's recommendation based on feedback from the November committee meeting.

Commissioner Ford said his preference is in favor of guidelines instead of policies. He said staff was given direction to provide a proposal and he is looking forward to receiving the information.

Ms. Hogan shared the key language that has been added to the draft resolution.

Key Language Added to Resolution

- Advance notice of out of county travel (Exhibit A - #2)
- Electronic travel authorization (Exhibit A - #3)
- P-card use (Exhibit A - #4)
- Confirm travel arrangements (Exhibit A - #6)
- Quarterly basis notification (#4)
- Clarification of spouse/guest travel arrangements (#6)
- No transfer, pooling, sharing of travel budget between BOC (#7)
- Unused travel forfeited (#8)
- Pay for own travel after exhaustion of travel budget, assistance in travel research still available from staff (#9)
- Notification and approval of non-budgeted conferences through Board Chair (#10)

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Commissioner Hutchinson commented on the need for spouse travel arrangements. He said the role of the Clerk is to make the commissioner's job easier. He said it is appropriate for the clerk to make spousal travel arrangements. He said item six is too restrictive and should be removed from the policy.

Commissioner Evans said it is not acceptable for county staff to make spousal travel arrangements. She said there was discussion at the last meeting regarding spouse travel arrangements and the committee agreed it is inappropriate to use staff resources. She said it is appropriate for staff to research flight options and provide information to a commissioner, but it is not appropriate for staff to make the arrangements.

Commissioner Hutchinson agreed it is not appropriate for the county to pay for spousal travel, but the Clerk's office should make the commissioners travel as easy as possible. He feels it is appropriate for staff to pay for spousal travel with the understanding that the commissioner reimburses the county.

Ms. Emily Lucas, Chief Financial Officer, said county staff is not permitted to make travel arrangements for spousal travel.

Commissioner Hutchinson said making travel arrangements is the responsibility of the Clerk's office.

Commissioner Evans said researching options for a spouse is fine, but it is inappropriate for the expenses to be charged to the county and reimbursed by the commissioner.

Commissioner Evans suggested editing number six instead of removing it. She suggested adding language to say staff may research options for spouses, but not charge them to a county account.

Commissioner Ford asked Mr. Scott Warren, County Attorney, to provide his opinion on the matter. Mr. Warren said the county has been struggling with travel arrangements for three years. He said he personally has worked with the Clerk's office for 30 years and serving as a travel agent is not part of their job description. He said the primary function of the Clerk is to serve the board as a whole. He said if the Clerk's office is going to make travel arrangements, then the process needs to be better defined. He said the administrative staff in the attorney's office does not make travel arrangements.

Mr. David Ellis, County Manager, said administrative staff in the Manager's office makes travel arrangements for staff, but not spouses.

Ms. Lucas said it is appropriate for staff to research travel options for a spouse, but the commissioner should pay the expenses instead of providing reimbursement to the county.

Commissioner Evans said there is some merit to having arrangements made together, but agrees that staff should not pay for spousal travel expenses.

Commissioner Ford asked for clarification on spouses attending conferences. He asked if it is difficult for the commissioner to make separate payment arrangements for their spouse. Ms. Hogan said spouse attendance at conferences is common and most agencies make the spouses payment arrangements very easy.

Commissioner Hutchinson commented on item seven and said it should be removed. He said because of serving on national commissions he has to do more travel and he should be able to use other commissioner's unspent budget. He asked that guidelines be drafted on how unspent budgets can be transferred to other commissioners.

Commissioner Evans said there was consensus at the last meeting that the sharing of unspent budgeted expense money should not be permitted. She said doing so would be very cumbersome for staff.

Commissioner Ford said it would be appropriate to have the full board make the decision on sharing travel budgets. He suggested adding numbers 7, 8, and 9 to the next Work Session for the full board to discuss.

Commissioner Evans agreed with Commissioner Ford's suggestion and said it should not be a decision of the Great Government Committee.

Commissioner Hutchinson said item eight is redundant and should be removed. Mr. Warren agreed and said he supports item eight being removed.

Commissioner Evans commented on item 10. She said she doesn't remember the committee agreeing that the Chair should approve travel expenses for other commissioners.

Commissioner Calabria agreed and said he feels the Chair should not have the ability to restrict another commissioner's travel. He said if a commissioner is within budget, additional approval should not be necessary.

Mr. Ellis agreed and said commissioners should not have to seek approval from the Chair for travel. He suggested clarification on the language of item number 10.

Ms. Hogan said number 10 only refers to travel expenses after the commissioner's budget is exhausted. She said the purpose of that language is to relieve the Clerk's office from making the decision once a commissioner requests travel expenses after their travel budget is exhausted.

Commissioner West said some limitations are needed for budgetary reasons. He said staff has a professional development budget and a travel budget. He referenced a trip he took while he was on the Raleigh City Council. He said that he is involved in a lot of Black Elected Official's organizations. He said commissioners should have a set budget and make their own decisions on how to spend it.

Commissioners Evans suggested adding language that county paid travel should be directly related to board goal and objectives.

Commissioner Calabria said it is not appropriate for the Chair to restrict the travel of another commissioner as long as the expenses are within their travel budget. He said the Chair and Vice-Chair are not involved on other leadership type decisions and that should not change.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he agrees with not exceeding the overall budget, but discretion should be used to allow commissioners to use unspent budgeted money.

Ms. Hogan shared a draft of the amended resolution for the committee to review.

EXHIBIT "A" to Travel Policy Resolution Dated _____	
ADDITIONAL TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT GUIDELINES	
FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS	
1.	The Clerk or Clerk's designee for travel matters shall be the party responsible for making travel arrangements for Commissioners. The Clerk shall be responsible for informing Commissioners of the named designee.
2.	A Commissioner shall provide as much advance notice as possible to the Clerk/designee when requesting travel arrangements.
3.	An electronic travel authorization shall be prepared in advance by the Clerk/designee for overnight travel.
4.	The Clerk/designee shall use a procurement card to pay for authorized and allowable Commissioner travel expenses, such as airfare, other transportation expenses, and lodging. Procurement cards cannot be used by individual Commissioners to pay for meals or incidentals; meals and incidentals are reimbursed through a per diem.
5.	Commissioners are responsible for notifying the Clerk/designee of meals that are not covered by a conference in order to receive the appropriate per diem reimbursement.
6.	The Clerk/designee shall confirm a copy of the travel arrangement with the Commissioner once the travel is arranged through electronic communication.
7.	Commissioners shall submit receipts related to travel (parking, other transportation, baggage fees, etc.) to the Clerk/designee within 30 days of completing travel.
8.	The Clerk/designee shall process the electronic reimbursement and submit it to Wake County Finance within 10 days of receiving the receipts from a commissioner.
9.	Commissioners receive reimbursement through direct deposit for authorized expenses.

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Ms. Hogan asked for feedback on the amended resolution.

Resolution Revision - Questions

Are there additional clarifications and additions for the Resolution?

Commissioner Evans said the resolution should not include specific conferences that are appropriate to attend. She said if a commissioner requests travel other than typical county business, the Chair and Vice-Chair should be notified, but their approval should not be needed.

Commissioner Ford agreed and said commissioners should have flexibility to decide which conferences to attend.

Ms. Hogan shared the additional funding needed for FY 20 based on projections.

FY20 Additional BOC Travel Funding

Conferences and Events	General Time of Year	Attendance Estimate	Per BOC Member Estimate	Total Cost Estimate
National Association of Counties Legislative Conference	March	6	\$1,771	\$10,626
Raleigh Chamber of Commerce Inter-City Visit	April	6	\$900	\$5,400
National Association of Counties Annual Conference <i>Flight + Registration</i>	July	2	\$760*	\$1,520
North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Annual Conference <i>Registration</i>	August	6	\$320*	\$1,920
Total				\$19,466

*Partial costs to be paid in FY20 since event crosses fiscal years

FY20 additional BOC Travel funding does not incorporate travel outside of the typical conferences and events listed

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She shared a breakdown of the FY 20 budget and the revision needed to meet the expenses based on the projected attendance.

FY20 BOC Travel Funding So Far and Needs

FY20 Travel Budget	FY20 Processed and Pending	FY20 Travel Budget Remaining	FY20 Additional BOC Travel Needs	FY20 Budget Revision Need
\$31,757	\$24,420	\$7,337	\$19,466	\$12,129

- FY20 Budget Revision Need is based on the assumption that the conferences on the previous slide will be the only conferences attended and at the attendance estimates listed

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Ms. Hogan asked for feedback on additional conferences that have not been considered.

Additional Funding - Questions

Are there other conferences and events that need to be considered to determine additional BOC Travel funding for FY20?

Are the attendance estimates appropriate to determine additional BOC Travel funding for FY20?

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Commissioner Evans said due to the NCACC conference occurring around primary election time, some commissioners may not attend it.

Commissioner Evans said the goal of the resolution is to identify budgetary needs, not specific conferences that commissioners can attend.

Commissioner West said he is selective in what he attends. He said there should be a way to justify if a conference is beneficial to county operations.

Commissioner Ford suggested having commissioners share at Work Sessions what they learned at the conference.

Ms. Hogan shared a list of conferences and events in the past year with a higher commissioner attendance rate.

Conferences and Events – Higher Attendance

Conferences and Events	General Time of Year	Recent Attendance History	Per BOC Member Estimate
National Association of Counties Legislative Conference	March	5-6	\$1,771
Raleigh Chamber of Commerce Inter-City Visit	April	5-6	\$900
North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Annual Conference	August	5-6	\$1,195
Raleigh Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting	August	5-6	\$35

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She shared a list of conferences and events in the past year with medium commissioner attendance rate.

Conferences and Events – Medium Attendance

Conferences and Events	General Time of Year	Recent Attendance History	Per BOC Member Estimate
School of Government Ethics for Local Government Officials	January	3-4	\$450
National Association of Counties Healthy Counties Forum	April	3-4	\$1,888
Raleigh Chamber of Commerce Summer Leadership Conference	June	4-5	\$1,018
Raleigh Chamber of Commerce Forums	Summer	2-5	\$80
Garner Chamber of Commerce CONNECT Conference	August	3-4	\$89
National Association of Counties Large Urban County Caucus Symposium	November	1-6	\$2,111

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She shared a list of conferences and events in the past year with lower commissioner attendance.

Conferences and Events – Lower Attendance

Conferences and Events	General Time of Year	Recent Attendance History	Per BOC Member Estimate
Southern Women in Public Services Leadership Conference	April	2-3	\$521
National Association of Counties Annual Conference	July	1-2	\$2,459
U.S. Water Alliance One Water Summit	September	0-1	\$2,319
Smart Cities Connect Conference & Expo	October	0-1	\$845
Infant and Young Child Mental Health Home Visiting Summit	November	0-1	\$653

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Ms. Hogan shared a list of events specific to the Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

Board Chair - Specific Events

Conferences and Events	General Time of Year	Board Chair Estimate
NC Local Elected Strategies Meeting	April	\$265
Women in Municipal Government	May	\$186
North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Board of Directors	June	\$140
Young Elected Officials Network National Convening	August	\$1,197
CCFCA Breaking the Chains Against Domestic Violence, Human Sex Trafficking, and Sexual Assault Outreach Ministry	September	\$186
North Carolina Campus Compact NC College Voter Summit	September	\$229
Community Food Strategies NC Food Council Gathering	December	\$277

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She asked for feedback on budget amounts for FY21 based on her presentation.

Conferences and Events - Questions

If travel continues with similar frequency:

- \$7,000 per BOC member travel budget
- \$9,000 per BOC Chair travel budget

Do those ranges work based on seeing all the per BOC member costs together?

To increase the budget for FY21, submit expansion request?

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Following discussion, members of the committee agreed with above budget numbers for FY21.

Mr. Ellis asked if professional development was included in the FY 21 budget numbers. Ms. Hogan confirmed it was included.

Ms. Hogan shared the next steps. She said based on today's conversation, the travel policy will not be considered at the January 6th meeting as planned. She confirmed it will be discussed at the January Work Session. Commissioner Evans said she will be out of town on January 10th. Following discussion, it was agreed to move the discussion to the February Work Session of the Board.

Next Steps

- January 6 – BOC to Adopt Resolution

Budget Process and Public Hearings.

Mr. David Ellis, County Manager, asked for feedback from the committee on the budget process and public hearings for the FY 21 budget process.

He said there was a request after the last budget session to offer additional public budget hearings. He suggested two additional public hearings for the FY 21 budget. He said the meetings will be in two different areas of the county.

Mr. Ellis said there will also be an online educational tool added to the county website. He said this will help the public get a better understanding of the budget process. He said other local government agencies use the online tool and have had success with it.

Mr. Ellis proposed having conversation with municipalities about the role of the county and the benefits of partnering on projects

Commissioner Evans said in her experience, having an online comment process decreased individual emails board members.

Commissioner Evans thanked Mr. Ellis for considering these additional steps to help the public understand the county budget process. She suggested allowing an individual to speak at one public hearing of their choice, but not at each one.

Commissioner Ford said the board considered that option a few years ago, but it was decided that was not good public perception.

Mr. Warren agreed and said that restricting public comment at budget hearings may cause animosity.

Board Proclamations

Mr. Ben Canada, Assistant to the County Manager, shared his agenda for today's meeting.

What We Need from Today's Discussion

- Any additional information Commissioners want to consider changes
- Feedback on applying Rule 1 to proclamations
- No action necessary

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He shared definitions of proclamations and resolutions.

Definitions

- Proclamation
 - Announcement celebrating a service or group during a set timeframe
 - Kinship Care Month
 - First Responders Day
- Resolution
 - Celebratory statement supporting a service or group
 - American Legion 100th Anniversary



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He shared the current practice for requesting proclamations and resolutions. He said this was implemented based on conversations with the Chair.

Current Practice

- 2018 Guidance from the Chair
 - If proclamation done in past couple years, automatically schedule it
 - See handout – Recurring Proclamations
- If external organization requests a proclamation, must request through a Commissioner
- Commissioners have requested additional proclamations
 - Special Olympics, Yates Mill Associates, Pam Dowdy retirement, Brenda Gibson retirement, American Legion, ERA, Women's Equality Day,
- County Departments have requested additional proclamations
 - SEV Workforce Development, Big Sweep Day

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Mr. Canada shared the seasonal trends for proclamations and resolutions.

Seasonal Trend

- Fall and Spring – more proclamations
 - School is in?
 - Better weather?
- Summer and Winter – few proclamations
 - School is out?
 - Avoid the holidays?



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He shared a list of comparable sized counties and their respective proclamations per meeting from January through June 2019.

What Other Counties Do

County	Lowest for a Meeting	Highest for a Meeting	Average proclamations per meeting
Durham	0	5	1.9
Wake	0	5	1.7
Guilford	1	5	1.4
Cumberland	0	3	1.2
Mecklenburg	1	3	0.9
Forsyth	0	2	0.5

WAKE COUNTY • Count of proclamations January through June 2019

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He shared alternative approaches for consideration if the board wishes to make a change to the process.

Alternative Approaches

- Consider a maximum number per meeting?
- Establish criteria for Board proclamations?
- Limit proclamations to only those related to County services?
- Replace selected proclamations with letters from the Board?

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Mr. Canada shared Rule 1 of the board's Rules of Procedure and asked if Rule 1 should be applied to this process.

Application of Rule 1

- Rule 1
 - Requires two Commissioners to request an agenda item
 - 10 days in advance
- Committee did not discuss application to celebratory proclamations
- Staff would appreciate committee feedback

Commissioner West asked if there is a process for recognizing individuals other than county staff for their retirement. Mr. Canada said there is not a current process and it would be a board decision to implement one. He said individuals recognized by the Board should be somehow associated with county goals.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked if there is a problem that needs solved. Mr. Canada said this topic has been discussed at prior Great Government committee meetings.

Commissioner Ford said he asked for discussion on this topic due to the number of recognitions during Board meetings. He said too many recognitions take away from other items on the agenda. He suggested limiting recognitions, other than staff, to two per meeting and the individual or agency be directly related to county business.

Commissioner Calabria suggested recognitions other than staff be added to the consent agenda. He said sometimes the organization is only looking for a blessing from the board and a presentation is not necessary.

Commissioner Evans said she is concerned with some recognitions being on the consent agenda and others not.

Mr. Canada suggested a letter from the board as an alternative to recognition at a meeting.

Commissioner Hutchinson said anyone who requests to be recognized should be honored.

Mr. Ellis asked who the point of contact is for requesting proclamations. Mr. Canada said it depends on the topic. He said the request could be handled by the clerk, or a department head, but he is responsible for getting them on the agenda.

Commissioner Evans said she would like to see a limit on the number of proclamation per meeting. She said the time is not an issue, but too many proclamations take away from other items on the agenda.

Demo of Signup App for Public Comment

Mr. Bill Greeves, Chief Information and Innovation Officer, shared an update on the online citizen sign-up for public comments.



He shared an overview of the new process and how citizens will access it.

System Update

- An online (mobile-friendly) sign-up form, will be accessible via <http://BOCcomment.wakegov.com> and linked from Board pages of WakeGov.com:
 - Will be available on website 9AM on day of meeting. Will close at start of meeting
 - Also will be available via kiosk computer in the lobby outside chambers. Will include signage and QR code for easy instructions and mobile access
 - System will track basic registrant info for general comment portion and/or public hearings, as well as enabling them to select specific agenda topic if they so choose.
 - At start of the meeting, full list will be available to all Commissioners and staff via a secure and permanent web link available via iPads, iPhone and/or any web browser.
 - All registrations for each meeting will be archived for use in records requests and minutes creation

Mr. Greeves recognized Kenisha Hinton, Information Technology Project Manager; and Mike Roberts, Information Technology Manager, for their work in creating the sign-up software.

He shared process considerations for board review.

Process Considerations

- Enabling easy remote registration may increase absentee registrations
- Clerk's staff will assist with the kiosk machine at least 30 min ahead of the meeting, similar to today. Clerk staff will also have an iPad available to expedite registrations if needed.
- Have also established a hard-copy back-up process, just in case!
- To address late arrivals or any technical difficulties, Chair can continue to do a "last call" announcement after all on the electronic list have had a chance to speak, ensuring that all voices are heard.
- Will provide training and install an easy link to the listings on the ipads for Chair and all commissioners prior to roll-out

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Mr. Greeves shared the next steps.

Next Steps

- Gather GG Committee process and system feedback (Dec)
- Launch and market new system (Jan)

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Mr. Greeves shared how the website will look and shared a demonstration of the sign-up process.

Commissioner Ford suggested adding the time the public comments will begin to the confirmation page upon sign-up completion. Mr. Greeves agreed and said he will have the time added in addition to the meeting rules.

Commissioner Evans requested a hard copy of the sign-up list that she can make notes on. Mr. Greeves said that may be difficult, but he will research it.

Commissioner Ford asked if this process will be used for the public hearings. Mr. Greeves confirmed that it will be used for public hearings.

Ms. Portia Johnson, Executive Assistant, asked if the address field is required. Mr. Greeves said all fields are required to complete the sign-up.

Mr. Warren said a person cannot be declined to comment if they don't want to share their address.

After further discussion, it was decided that the address field would be optional instead of required.

There was discussion on whether it is necessary to include addresses in the minutes for the citizens who provide public comment, but no decision was made.

Adjourn

There being no further business Commissioner Evans adjourned the meeting at 12:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Cerett
Executive Assistant to the Board