

Item Title: Appropriate \$400,000 of Behavioral Health Restricted Fund Balance for Behavioral Health Related Special Projects

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners appropriates \$400,000 of restricted fund balance for behavioral health related special projects as outlined below.

Item Summary:

In an effort to continue improvements to behavioral health strategies supported by Wake County, the Board of Commissioners is requested to approve an appropriation of \$400,000 to support four special projects supporting the County's behavioral health efforts.

| Project | Beginning Budget | Appropriation | Remaining Unallocated Funds |
|---|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| SAS Study | \$ 6,300,000 | \$ (200,000) | \$6,100,000 |
| NCSU Study | | \$ (100,000) | \$6,000,000 |
| UNC WakeBrook Assessment | | \$ (50,000) | \$5,950,000 |
| Permanent Supportive Housing Technical Assistance | | \$ (50,000) | \$5,900,000 |

1. SAS Data-Driven Analytics Study = Not to exceed \$200,000

Wake County will engage the services of SAS to conduct a historical analysis on a combined data set from the County jail management system, emergency management systems and homeless data to provide Wake County with a complete population analysis that identifies high utilizers and key factors that are highly correlated with high utilizers. By building an analytic model based on this historical analysis, SAS will be able to proactively apply the model to identify individuals who are likely to engage with criminal justice and emergency services.

This initial phase, to be completed within an estimated timeframe of three-four months, will provide clear, data driven insights to support Wake County's understanding of the high utilizer population. This phase will establish a foundation that demonstrates the value of greater access to data and the insights that analytics can provide. The County is working with other community partners that may lead to future phases of this effort.

2. NCSU Study: Mental Health Characteristics and Outcomes of Wake County Detainees = Not to exceed \$100,000

Wake County and specifically, the Wake County Sheriff's Office will engage the services of Dr. Sarah Desmarais and Dr. Eric Laber at North Carolina State University to utilize available jail data that would inform policies and procedures aimed at reducing the risk of inmates harming themselves and/or others during their incarceration as well as promote safety and stability among all individuals in the jail at any given time. The most immediate benefit of the work proposed by Dr. Desmarais and Dr. Laber is the ability for a detention officer to identify at intake the inmates most at risk of suicide and to make appropriate decisions that are in the best interest of the inmate.

Additionally, the proposal aims clarify the prevalence of mental illness in the jail. This piece of information will not only guide data-driven decisions for the Wake County Sheriff's Office as they relate to inmate management and space planning, but it will also be important for other criminal justice partners as they work towards strategies to reduce recidivism and promote community health. It is anticipated that working towards these strategies would lead to a reduction in jail population, future cost reductions, improved quality of life for vulnerable citizens and savings to the taxpayer.

3. UNC WakeBrook Assessment = Not to exceed \$50,000

Wake County will engage the services of a consultant to conduct an assessment of the programs and services offered by UNC Health Care at WakeBrook and develop considerations for long-term needs of the County.

UNC Health Care began a partnership with Wake County in 2012 after making a commitment to invest \$40 million towards behavioral healthcare in Wake County and began operating programs and services at WakeBrook in 2013. Since that time, UNC Health Care has expanded service offerings, expanded facilities and now provides a comprehensive, integrated approach to providing care for some of Wake County's most vulnerable citizens. However, the funding to continue the services and programs as currently offered is not sustainable. Wake County provides over \$10 million annually to support services at WakeBrook and has not increased the annual funding since the partnership began. The assessment will review WakeBrook programs and activities and community demand for crisis-related behavioral health services and will advise Wake County on strategies to assure the sustainability of WakeBrook.

4. Supportive Housing Technical Assistance = Not to exceed \$50,000

Wake County will engage the services of a consulting agency to assist with efforts to improve and increase permanent supportive housing efforts in Wake County. The contract will include technical assistance for the following types of support:

- Evaluation of existing permanent supportive housing units and partnerships in Wake County to identify opportunities to make existing units available for a more difficult to serve population
- Advise and expertise in the overall plan development and execution, selection of development and service partner(s), pro forma development, site selection, identifying target populations and other related assistance

The contract will not exceed twelve months and will not exceed \$50,000.

Funding used to support these projects is from Wake County's prior year unspent behavioral health funds that have been held in a restricted fund balance for future behavioral health related expenses.

Attachments:

1. Budget Memo