

**Wake County Board of Commissioners  
Great Government Committee  
September 30, 2019  
1:30 p.m.  
Wake County Justice Center, Room 2800**

**Commissioners Present:**

Susan Evans, Chair  
Greg Ford, Vice-Chair (Joined at 2:00 p.m.)  
Sig Hutchinson  
Vickie Adamson  
James West (Joined at 2:00 p.m.)  
Jessica Holmes (Joined at 2:00 p.m.)

**Wake County Staff Present:**

David Ellis, County Manager; Bill Greeves, Chief Innovation and Information Officer; Chris Dillon, Assistant County Manager; Denise Foreman, Assistant County Manager; Derwick Paige, Chief Community Development Officer; Ben Canada, Assistant to the County Manager; Nicole Kreiser, Assistant County Manager; Paula Richardson, Assistant Information Technology Director; Scott Warren, County Attorney; Margaret Murphy, Senior Budget and Management Analyst; Paul Beata, Information Technology Technician; 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 1:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Commissioner Hutchinson moved, seconded by Commissioner Evans to approve the August 5, 2019 committee meeting minutes.

Commissioner Evans shared the agenda for today's meeting. She said the first item is of particular interest to other commissioners, who will be joining the meeting later. Therefore, she said the first item will be delayed until later in the meeting. She shared the agenda for today's meeting.

1. Approval of Minutes
  - Great Government Committee Meeting of 8/5/19
2. Community Nonprofit Funding Process
3. Board Proclamations
4. Citizen Comment Sign-Up Process
5. Design for New County Website
6. Shared Goals with Municipalities

## **Citizen Comment Sign-Up Process**

Mr. Bill Greeves, Chief Innovation and Information Officer, shared an update on the citizen comment sign-up process.

# **System Update**

- Researched other municipalities and automated options.
- Currently building an online (mobile-friendly) app/sign-up form:
  - Will be available on website 9AM on day of meeting/Close at start of meeting
  - Also will be available via kiosk computer in the lobby outside chambers
  - System will track basic registrant info for general comment portion and 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 and/or any web browser.
  - All registrations for each meeting will be archived for use in records requests and minutes creation

Commissioner Evans suggested that two kiosk computers are made available for citizens to register once they arrive. Mr. Greeves said staff will provide two iPads, and citizens can also sign up from their phones.

Mr. Greeves shared options for consideration.

## 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
- To address late arrivals, Chair can continue to do a "last call" announcement after all on the list have had a chance to speak, ensuring that all voices are heard.
- Have also established a hard-copy back-up process, just in case!
- Will provide training for Chair and all commissioners prior to roll-out

He shared the next steps.

## Next Steps

- Gather GG Committee process and system feedback (Sept)
- Provide GG Committee demo of new system (Oct)
- Launch and market new system (Dec?)

Commissioner Adamson asked if information on parking and meeting procedures would be provided as part of the on-line comment sign-up. Mr. Greeves said parking information and meeting procedures would be provided as part of the sign-up process.

Commissioner Hutchinson asked how other counties are handling citizen sign-up. Mr. Greeves said most counties are still using the paper sign-up, but there are a few that offer online sign-up.

Commissioner Adamson asked if the citizen would know how many speakers signed up and what number they are so they know what time to arrive at the meeting.

Mr. Greeves said the public comments will vary slightly due to the number of public hearings, but citizens will know where they are on the list of speakers.

### **Design for New County Website**

Mr. Greeves shared the vision for the Wake County website.

## **Vision**

**The Wake County web presence must provide a well-designed, dynamically relevant and useful experience for our varied audiences. It must reflect the spirit of an organization focused on the effective and innovative delivery of services and information.**

He shared the guiding principles for the process.

# Guiding Principles

- A **clean, accessible and user-centric design** that acknowledges our diverse audience and does not require knowledge of the county's organizational chart.
- Ensure the website is developed from a **mobile-first perspective**.
- Include tools and training for creating **easily-understood, high-value content**.
- Flexible content management tool to **enable quick, easy updates to maintain relevancy and accuracy**.
- Implement a **governance structure and workflow** that maintains the quality of the site.
- Provide online services to users in a manner that is **engaging and efficient**.
- Establish process for **preserving the longevity, integrity and value of the site** for the long-term.

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Mr. Greeves shared the vendor partner information. He said Interpersonal Frequency is based out of Virginia, and they design websites for counties in many different states.

## Vendor Partner – Interpersonal Frequency

- Multiple award-winning organization with several large local government clients, including San Diego, CA; Baltimore, MD; Cobb County, GA; San Mateo County, CA
- Unique and heavy focus on data to drive website design and content flow, using proprietary technology to gather citizen experience input
- Unanimous decision of a diverse selection committee representing multiple County departments and website needs/uses
- One-stop shop, providing: design, content management system, training, consulting and hosting



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He shared the various phases and rough durations for the new design. He said the kick-off meeting is later in October. He said prior to launching the new site, staff will review all content to make sure it is still accurate and up to date.

# Phases and *Rough* Durations

- Phase I - Planning and Design (12 weeks)
  - *BoC Milestone: Staff will share proposed design with BoC*
- Phase II – Building the New Site (16 weeks)
- Phase III – Training, Migration & Testing (12 weeks)
  - *BoC Milestone: Update to BoC regarding progress and anticipated launch date*
- Phase IV – Launch & Close-Out (12 weeks)
  - *BoC Milestone: Public launch and marketing*
- Project Kick-Off meeting is next month, where we'll begin to tighten up project phase durations, milestones and specific dates

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Commissioner Adamson asked who would maintain the new site once it is completed. Mr. Greeves said Interpersonal Frequency will be contracted to maintain the major portions of the site and county staff will continue to maintain the county information portions.

## **Community Nonprofit Funding Process**

Mr. Greeves shared the purpose of today's discussion.

- Staff is seeking Commissioner input of eligibility and process considerations in order to establish a revised submission and evaluation process for the board to use, beginning in FY21.

He shared the history of public agency funding for FY20.

# FY20 Public Agencies Funding History

Agency	Original Funding Year	Original Funding Amount	FY20 Funding	Notes
North Carolina Symphony	1992	\$ 20,000	\$ 100,000	General operational funding
United Arts Council	Before FY91	\$ 57,483	\$ 511,000	General operational funding
East Wake Education Foundation	2008	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	General operational funding
Communities in Schools	1992	\$ 36,370	\$ 100,000	General operational funding
Marbles Kids Museum	2002	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 650,000	General operational funding
Wake County Smart Start	2016	\$ 325,728	\$ 1,688,028	Ongoing funding to increase the number of children served by the NC Pre-K program
Universal School Breakfast Program	2016	\$ 90,000	\$ 258,000	Funding for universal breakfast at Wake County schools
Interfaith Food Shuttle	2017	\$ 20,000	\$ 25,000	Food pantry program in certain Wake County schools where high percentage of students qualify for free and reduced lunch
InterAct	2018	\$ 75,000	\$ 100,000	Funding to support for an e-filing initiative
Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC	2018	\$ 6,000	\$ 12,000	Food pantry program in certain Wake County schools where high percentage of students qualify for free and reduced lunch

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Commissioner Evans commented on the five agencies who received funding prior to 2016.

Commissioner Ford asked if there are other agencies that had received funding in the past. Mr. Greeves said there were some and asked Mr. Ben Canada, Assistant to the County Manager, to provide the full list to the committee.

Commissioner Holmes said Healing Transitions funding is generated from a different source. Ms. Denise Foreman, Assistant County Manager, confirmed that Healing Transitions funding is now part of the Behavioral Health budget.

Commissioner Holmes commented on the agencies that are core county functions and said their funding should be considered separately.

Commissioner Evans asked for information on the Aid to Community Agencies funding. Mr. Greeves said that funding was eliminated in 2012 during the recession. He said many of the agencies that received funding through Aid to Community Agencies funding are now contracted through Human Services.

Mr. Greeves provided criteria options and asked the committee for feedback.

## WHAT CRITERIA WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONSIDER?

- **Programmatic (Pick One)**
  - Broad criteria, non-specific programs. Application would be open to any non-profit agency regardless of focus area.
  - Well-defined areas of focus: Application must fall within pre-determined, specified program categories (example: Food Security, Arts, Education)
  - Narrow focus on board goals' priority initiatives: Application must directly address board priority initiatives and demonstrate ability to make specific advancement toward desired outcomes.
- **Commissioner Endorsed: (Yes/No & Pick a Number)**
  - Should an applicant be required to obtain endorsement by some number of commissioners (i.e. one, two or three) before an agency could be considered for funding.

Commissioner West suggested that the non-profits involved in the communities are given an opportunity to apply for this funding.

Mr. Greeves said if non-profits meet the criteria, they would be eligible to request this funding.

Commissioner Evans said there is a lot of merit in tying these agencies to the board goals and priorities.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the legacy organizations have received funding for many years and he feels that should continue.

Commissioner West said past boards have struggled with the legacy organizations and their funding should not change. He said the guidelines were developed using a specific criterion that included community outreach. He said several agencies had funding eliminated during the recession.

Commissioner Adamson said offering funding to too many organizations could be a nightmare. She said reviewing them would be very time consuming.



Commissioner Holmes said she supports the middle ground of the areas of focus. She said at the point in the year when the focus would be changing would be during budget season. She said priorities will change from one year to another. She said the funding criteria should always be tied to the board goals.

Commissioner Ford agreed that the current process needs to change. He said the correlation to board goals is important. He said considering equity and access are important.

County Manager Ellis said the process will not be perfect. He said priorities will change along with the board goals.

Commissioner Ford said some of the legacy organizations have built this funding into their model. He asked for clarification that agencies currently receiving funding have been informed that the process will be changed. Ms. Margaret Murphy, Senior Budget and Management Analyst, confirmed the process change has been communicated to the agencies.

Commissioner Adamson asked for clarification on the Smart Start funding. She said Early Childhood Education is now a core initiative of the board and asked if the Smart Start funding should be moved to a different budget category.

County Manager Ellis said the challenge is determining how to separate core initiatives from others. He said if another recession occurs, funding will need to be reduced.

Commissioner Evans said there needs to be a distinction between core county focus and core county function.

Commissioner Holmes said that Interact, Healing Transitions, Universal Breakfast, and Smart Start should all be considered core functions. She said while all the agencies provide a great service, they are not all core services.

Commissioner West agreed and said board the focus has changed over the years. He said it is important for commissioners to understand all the programs and their benefits before decisions are made. He used Communities in Schools as an example and said he is impressed with the service they provide.

Commissioner Holmes commented on the Boys & Girls Clubs and Communities in Schools. She said some agencies are very small, but they still provide a valuable

service. She said it is important to look at the impact agencies have on the community, not just the numbers.

Commissioner Adamson commented on the United Arts Council funding. She said many projects are funded through the United Arts and it works very well. She said opening a separate arts category for county funding may complicate things.

Commissioner Holmes commented on the commissioner endorsement suggestion. She said it would overwhelm the board and she is not in favor of it.

Commissioner Evans agreed and said the process needs to be consistent.

Following further discussion, there was consensus among the committee to defer the endorsement to staff.

Mr. Greeves provided funding consideration options and asked for committee feedback.

## WHAT FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS WOULD YOU PREFER?

### **Total amount of funding: (Pick One)**

- Level of funding is predetermined before applications are submitted, similar to the Community Capital and Hospitality Small Projects processes.
- Level of funding is determined based upon requests and budget availability.

### **Individual amounts of funding: (Yes/No to Each)**

Establish a threshold that requests must be at least:

- a minimum amount for funding request (ex: \$50,000)
- a specific maximum amount that could be either a dollar amount and / or requests cannot represent more than some percentage (ex: 30%) of an organization's overall budget.

Commissioner Holmes said the amount of funding that will be awarded should be determined before requests are received. Commissioners Evans and Adamson both agreed.

Commissioner Evans said it would be helpful for the organizations to provide their full budget along with their resources when submitting their request for county funding.

Ms. Murphy said the budget information is requested from the agencies as part of the budget process.

Mr. Greeves suggested setting a minimum and maximum amount of funding agencies can request based on their entire budget.

Commissioner Holmes said she is in favor of setting a minimum amount because some of the legacy organizations have larger budgets. She said a small amount of funding could go farther for a smaller agency.

Commissioner Holmes suggested \$5,000 as a minimum and agreed there should also be a maximum based on the agencies entire budget.

Commissioner Adamson said the county should not be the primary source of funding for any agency. There was discussion about the East Wake Foundation and Commissioner Adamson said the county provides 50 percent of their funding. She said East Wake Foundation does not charge for any of their services even though they are permitted to.

Commissioner Holmes commented on the Boys & Girls Club and the rates they charge for their services.

Following further discussion, it was decided that a minimum and maximum amount of funding should be established based on the full agencies' entire budget.

Commissioner Ford said it is difficult to identify which funding should be awarded. He said using an "annual bucket" would force commissioners to work together.

Commissioner Ford asked if staff has gathered information from other counties on their agency funding process. Ms. Murphy said staff has gathered extensive information, but all counties have the same challenges.

Mr. Greeves shared options for competitive and non-competitive funding.

## HOW WOULD YOU AWARD?

**Will submission compete against each other or solely via a pre-determined criteria: (Pick One)**

- **Competitive:** Commissioners rank submissions against one another and make funding decisions based upon the ranking using a pre-determined scoring process.
- **Non-competitive:** Submissions are only considered if they meet specific, predetermined criteria (yes / no criteria) and awards are based on funding availability.

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Commissioner West said supporting Social Economic Vitality would be beneficial for the whole county.

Commissioner Evans agreed that applicants must meet criteria to receive funding, but she said commissioners will make the final decisions. She suggested having the list of all eligible applicants presented at a future work session. She said that would allow for board discussion and consensus.

Following further discussion, there were consensus among the committee to have the list of eligible applicants presented at a future work session.

Mr. Greeves provided options for determining how to award funding for public agencies who are currently receiving county funding.

## HOW WOULD YOU ADDRESS AGENCIES CURRENTLY RECEIVING FUNDING?

- **(Pick One or Create Another)**
  - Blank slate in which all organizations are held immediately to the new process
  - Hold harmless and “grandfather” them into the process
  - Scale back their contributions over time while encouraging them to apply via the new process
  - Address each organization individually as a Board
  - Other or a combination of the above

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He offered options for discretionary funding.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONSIDER “DISCRETIONARY” FUNDS?

**Consider an annual “bucket” of dollars allocated per commissioner: (Yes/No)**

- Based on adopted criteria, acceptable to the Finance Officer, commissioners would evaluate and approve one-time (non-recurring) distribution of funds for qualified special projects/events/services on a per-Commissioner basis for smaller requests and organizations in an effort to further specific Board goals and/or initiatives.
  - *Example:* recent request from Dr. West requesting sponsorship for the African-American Cultural Festival

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Commissioner Ford said he is not comfortable with a “community cookie jar.” He agrees with Commissioner Evans’ idea of determining a dollar amount limit. He said the new process should start with a clean slate for everyone. He suggested allocations only be requested during the budget process.

Commissioner Adamson expressed concern about how much the new process would increase staff time. She said she would like to avoid additional staff added due to the new process.

Commissioner West said criteria around equity and diversity should be considered.

Commissioner Ford requested staff feedback because their longevity is greater than some commissioners.

Ms. Denise Foreman, Assistant County Manager, said restricting agency funding to those who meet board goals may cause an overlap in departmental responsibilities. She used affordable housing funding as an example.

Commissioner Holmes said she does not anticipate that will be an issue. She said developers would not be permitted to apply for funding.

Ms. Foreman said restricting the criteria to the board goals may eliminate such things as environmental funding. She expressed concern about expectations of the agencies if the funding is too accessible. She said the \$5,000 minimum requirement will greatly increase the number of applicants.

Commissioner West said some agencies who need it the most are not receiving funding. He said there is a certain segment of the public that is left out of this process.

Commissioner Ford agreed and said the smaller agencies do not have adequate staff to pursue various funding sources. He said a grant writer is often needed to acquire certain funding.

Commissioner Evans asked how the Aid to Community Agencies funding was processed from FY 08 to FY 12. She said her understanding was that county funding was used as seed money.

Ms. Nicole Kreiser, Assistant County Manager, said there was a specific amount of funding available, but it slowly decreased. She said more specific criteria was put in place in 2014 and agencies received the change well.

Commissioner Ford asked for board thoughts on small amounts of funding being approved by full board or having it deferred to a grants committee.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he is in favor of the full board approving it.

Commissioner West agreed and encouraged board members to follow the money.

Mr. Chris Dillon, Assistant County Manager, said it is difficult for staff to defend the commissioners funding decisions to the agencies. He said staff should not be part of the decision process. He said agencies often go through the entire process, but the results are always the same.

Mr. Canada said this is a political pot of money that should be decided by the commissioners. He said the City of Raleigh process is very involved and involves considerable staff time.

Commissioner Evans asked for feedback on the next steps.

Following further discussion, it was decided that staff had enough information to proceed and bring suggestions back to the committee in October.

Commissioner Ford said he is in favor of staff making a recommendation on the process and the criteria. He does not agree with spending staff time and resources when it is a subjective decision in the end.

Commissioner Evans said she appreciates the feedback. She said she is not comfortable with the current process. She said she would like to see the process standardized.

Commissioner Hutchinson said other counties deal with the same issues. He cautioned against investing too much staff time since it is ultimately a political decision.

Commissioner Evans asked how agency funding requests are currently handled if agencies made a funding request to staff. Ms. Murphy said agency funding typically comes to staff from a commissioner, not the agency.

Commissioner West said revising the process will allow for issues to be identified. He said it is important to follow through with the process and implement the changes once a board decision has been made.

## **Board Proclamations**

Due to time constraints, this item will be discussed at the next meeting.

## **Shared Goals with Municipalities**

Due to time constraints, this item will be discussed at the next meeting.

## **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Commissioner Hutchinson moved, seconded by Commissioner Ford to adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Michelle L. Cerett  
Executive Assistant to the Board