



Wake County

301 South McDowell Street
Raleigh, NC

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Monday, October 12, 2020

2:00 PM

Wake County Justice Center

Work Session - Meeting Held Remotely

Meeting Called to Order: Chairman Greg Ford

Chairman Ford called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He shared information on the two items that will be presented today.

Present: 7 - Chairman Greg Ford, Vice-Chair Vickie Adamson, Chair Matt Calabria, Commissioner Susan Evans, Commissioner Jessica Holmes, Commissioner Sig Hutchinson, and Commissioner James West

Staff Present: David Ellis, County Manager; Scott Warren, County Attorney; Yvonne Gilyard, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Johnna Rogers, Chief Operating Officer; Emily Lucas, Chief Financial Officer; Derwick Paige, Chief Community Vitality Officer; Chris Dillon, Assistant County Manager, Lisa Provencher, Senior Executive Assistant; and Michelle Cerett, Executive Assistant.

Others Present: Dr. Scott Ralls, President, Wake Tech Community College; Dr. Gayle Greene, Executive Vice-President, Wake Tech Community College; Kasey Ashton, Director of Wake Invests, Wake Tech Community College; Tamara Pearce, Director of Diversity and Inclusion and University Relations, Wolfspeed; and Marjorie Williamson, Vice-President of Human Resources, RTI Institute.

1. Agenda

Attachments: [10-12-20 Work Session Agenda.pdf](#)

2. Update on Wake Tech Initiatives

Attachments: [Wake County Commissioners 2020 Presentation.pdf](#)

Dr. Gayle Greene, Executive Vice-President, Wake Tech Community College, shared the agenda for today's meeting.

She will be presenting the Wake Invests in Women portion. She introduced Ms. Kasey Ashton, Director of Wake Invests, Wake Tech Community College.

Ms. Ashton shared the road thus far.

- Wake County Snapshot
 - In-depth research into county
 - Technical Report
- Building Collaborative Partnerships
 - WakeWorks Apprenticeships
 - Raleigh Chamber
 - Triangle DEI Alliance
 - Divine 9 Sororities
- Strategic Plan to Close Identified Gaps
 - Data-driven Focus on Black & Latina Women in STEM

She shared that there is a new scholarship through Sepi, Inc. that will begin next year.

Ms. Tamara Pearce, Director of Diversity and Inclusion and University Relations, Wolfspeed, shared the focus of the mission.

She shared the strategic road map.

She shared how to strengthen the pipeline.

Commissioner Holmes said she is excited about this program and offered her support.

Commissioner West shared his support of the program. He asked for clarification of the connections with Guilford Community College, Wake Tech, and NC State.

Ms. Pearce shared that she is the connection and serves both entities.

Chairman Ford said there are opportunities for Wake Tech and Wake County Public school system and asked if that has been considered.

Ms. Ashton said that is being considered and they are looking at the educational outreach.

Ms. Ashton shared the reasons for the challenge.

- Diversity & Inclusion are a business imperative - culturally & ethnically diverse companies are able to recruit & retain the best talent and are more creative, innovative, and agile when facing change. Bottom line, the research shows that diverse companies perform better and reap better profits.
- The Challenge enables businesses in Wake County and RTP to not only proudly proclaim their commitment to advancing women and DEI initiatives, but to show that they are taking tangible action steps. It goes beyond the checkbox, demonstrates commitment to supporting women & creating inclusive welcoming company cultures that will have the ripple effect of making companies more desirable - help recruit & retain talent. The goal of the challenge is to lift companies up, not shame them.
- Participating in the Challenge helps companies to
 - Identify bias blind spots & equity gaps
 - Select metrics to diagnose risk areas & opportunities
 - Track progress of initiatives over time
 - Calculate the return on investment

She shared the Wake Invest In Women (WIIW) challenge.

She shared the assistance needed from Wake County.

As one of the largest employers in Wake County, We believe that there is no better first beta tester and adopter of the WIIW Corporate Challenge than Wake County. You, the commissioners have consistently demonstrated that you are dedicated to improving the lives of your citizens and families. We know that your backing of and piloting the WIIW Challenge lends strength to the work of Wake Invests in Women and Wake Tech Community College.

Wake Tech has agreed to also be an early tester of the challenge & best practices toolkit, however, the fact that education jobs are not included in the US Bureau of Labor Statistics STEM codes (standard occupational classification), that leaves us with a relatively small pool. With that in mind, we shared the job codes with Jonna Rogers & she confirmed that the county, with some 4000 employees, covers almost all of the STEM occupation codes, which makes the County the perfect beta tester. Having you as a backing partner will act as incentive and encouragement for businesses around the county to join the challenge. We need you to help

us set the stage for success.

Chairman Ford said he is excited to commit the county to accepting this challenge.

Commissioner Calabria said he is supportive of the challenge. He asked how the local Chamber of Commerce can serve as a partner.

Ms. Ashton said there is a member of the Raleigh Chamber on the steering committee. She said Margorie Williams, Senior Vice-President of Human Resources at RTI Institute, is also heavily involved and will be a great asset.

Chairman Ford noted that Dr. Scott Ralls has joined the meeting at 2:35 p.m.

Commissioner Hutchinson said Wake Tech is the best community college and he is supportive of the program.

Commissioner Evans said she is very excited about this initiative. She said while progress has been made in past years, there is still much work to be done to overcome the disparities.

Vice-Chair Adamson said she has always made less than men in her same position. She said she has also learned with young women on creating career paths. She said she is excited to see equity in the work place.

Chairman Ford said he is excited for Wake County to be a partner and a beta testing participant.

Commissioner West shared his support of this program.

Ms. Ashton thanked the Board for their kind words and support.

Dr. Scott Ralls, President, Wake Tech Community College, shared updates on several changes coming up.

He shared information on the new Eastern Wake 4.0 campus. He said the site is 160 acres and is easily accessible from I-87. He said Eastern Wake county is an important place for Wake Tech to offer schooling opportunities.

Dr. Ralls said NC State will be a great partner with their contribution of research. He said Elizabeth City State will be co-located on the Eastern Wake site. He said East Carolina University will also be co-located on the

Eastern Wake site.

Dr. Ralls said the Eastern Wake Campus will be a leader in technology training.

He shared phase one.

He stated one WW Apprentice for Automotive Tech. on the credit side.
He said they have one that starts Apartment Maintenance Tech. Oct. 8.
Slides of Beltline center expansion drawings

Partners

Wake Works Propel

Skilled Construction/Maintenance trades, Healthcare, Information
Technology, Industrial Manufacturing, and Law Enforcement

Talent Magnet vs Talent Ladder

Training leading to degrees

We have had 311 applicants on our WW website. Of these, 170 have completed orientation. 28 have completed their CRC at the appropriate score.

We started our first cohort of EMT's (Pre-Apprenticeship) last week. 11 started in the program and 9 are remaining. 7 of those are female. They are on the credit side. These students will interview with Wake County EMS for Paramedic Apprenticeships in November.

We started 3 cohorts of NCCER Core (Pre-Apprenticeship) last week. 17 of those students are WW, 1 is female. These students will interview for Apprenticeships in Spring for HVAC, Electrical, Building and Codes Inspectors.

He said the Emergency training center will be re-located to the Eastern Wake campus and will offer space for a significant amount of hands on training.

He said the funding for phase one was made possible by the bond funding.

Dr. Ralls shared phase two of the Eastern Wake campus. He said this will include a dive pond to be used by law enforcement for training.

He shared phase three of the Eastern Wake campus.

He shared photos of the completed campus from various views.

Chairman Ford said Wake County is fortunate to have Wake Tech in the community. He asked what year the entire project will be completed. Dr. Ralls said phase three is many years away, but phase one is planned to be done within five years.

Dr. Ralls provided an update on the Wake Works program. He said Wake Tech offers many levels of education and job training.

He shared information on the Wake Works Apprenticeship and how it has been impacted by COVID-19.

He shared an outline of the Beltline Center expansion project. He said the expansion will be 2,800 square feet and will house several different programs.

Dr. Ralls shared information on Wake Works 2.0. He said this program will offer courses that can be completed in three to six months.

He shared the partners for the Wake Works 2.0 programs. He said many of the programs will be offered free of charge to eligible students of that region.

He shared the five categories of Wake Works 2.0 and said they will all be completed with a certification.

Chairman Ford thanked Dr. Ralls for his presentation. He said he is excited to see a plan moving into the next phase.

Commissioner West said he is impressed with the services provided by Wake Tech. He asked for clarification on the law enforcement training that will be offered as part of Wake Works 2.0

Dr. Ralls said Wake Works 2.0 will provide classes and training on policing and will participate in a train the trainer program for addressing ongoing issues.

Commissioner Calabria expressed his appreciation to everyone who worked on moving this program forward. He said he is thankful to see economic mobility as part of the process.

Commissioner Hutchinson said this program is amazing. He thanked Commissioners West and Calabria for their work on moving this forward.

Vice-Chair Adamson said it is amazing to see all these things happening despite the pandemic. She said in her experience, transportation has been

a barrier to students attending college. She asked what is being done to address the barriers for students.

Dr. Ralls said there is a fund that supports the elimination of these barriers for anything less than \$500.00. He said they are always working to eliminate barriers.

Chairman Ford thanked Dr. Ralls for the update.

3. WakeSupports Update

Attachments: [CARES WakeSupports Update 10122020.pdf](#)

Ms. Emily Lucas, Chief Financial Officer, shared an update on WakeSupports.

She shared a background of the program.

County received approximately \$194 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds for:

- Necessary expenditures due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19;
- Expenditures not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of the date of enactment; and
- Were incurred during the period beginning March 1 and ends on December 30, 2020.

Guidance has been broadly interpreted to include:

- Expenses to “directly respond to the emergency” AND
- “Second-order effects” including “economic support to those suffering from employment or business disruption...”

NC Constitution governs services provided by local governments; cannot fund a service that is inconsistent with statutes, even if allowed at federal level

She shared the federal and state guidelines.

Federal and State Guidance Language

Federal CARES Act Guidance

- If determined to be a necessary expenditure, funds may be used to provide emergency financial assistance to individuals and families.
- Individuals must demonstrate a financial need due to COVID-19.
- Funds may be provided to cover the costs of distance learning or in-person learning (meeting CDC guidelines).

Statutory Authority for Counties

NCGS 153A-376 authorizes counties:

- To engage in community development programs and activities, including childcare and education.
- To assist persons of low and moderate income with certain necessary services.
- To accept, appropriate, and expend federal and state funds for said activities.

She shared an outline of how WakeSupports will be implemented.

Ms. Lucas shared how the WakeSupports program will be administered.

Human Services

HS will administer the program:

- Hire temporary staffing to handle anticipated surge in application and administration
- Pay subsidy directly to the childcare provider
- Utilize online application process
- Providers help identify potentially eligible households and assist with application/reimbursement process

She shared information on the State subsidy program.

Utilize up to \$5 million of the County's CRF to provide childcare subsidies to qualifying moderate-to-low income households

High-level criteria:

- Applicant must be a Wake County resident
- Will utilize income thresholds used for other County CARES programs
- For children in grades K-6 enrolled in virtual learning programs/childcare
- Retroactive to **August 17** and available until December 30 (or until funding is depleted)
- Households receiving state subsidy will automatically be eligible to have parent fees covered beginning October 1 (**all ages**)

She shared comparisons of the two programs.

Ms. Lucas shared the timing of WakeSupports.

On October 1, NCDHHS announced it will provide subsidies for the months of October and November for school-aged childcare

Voucher rates:

- Licensed provider - \$870/month
- Licensed family childcare home - \$645/month
- Community based organization - \$516/month

Eligibility: Program will utilize same income levels used for existing childcare voucher programs

Administration: Parents will apply directly through NCDHHS

Start Date: NCDHHS to launch application program October 23

Soft Launch - October 15

- Begin making parent payments for households already receiving partial state subsidies
- Begin retroactive reimbursement process with some CBOs
 - Allows County to test communication materials
 - Opportunity to identify gaps in application submittal, review and approval process

Media Launch - October 26

- Follows launch of state program
- Focus direct messaging to:
 - Childcare providers in Wake
 - Parent-focused media and vulnerable populations in County
- Explain how Wake's program wraps around/supplements state program
- Can direct parents to appropriate resources

She shared a summary of how the Coronavirus Relief Funds have been utilized in Wake County.

County received \$194 million in direct Coronavirus Relief Funds to support the County's response and recovery efforts. County's first priority is to ensure sufficient funding supports our responsibility to contain and mitigate the public health emergency

WakeSupports:

- Children attending a variety of facilities regardless of schools re-opening plans or schedules
- Provides broad financial support to offset costs of virtual learning and households impacted by COVID-19

Chairman Ford thanked Ms. Lucas and staff for all their work on this program.

Commissioner Holmes said she is very supportive of this program. She

thanked staff for making sure this program is available to children of all ages. She thanked the Governor's office for their support.

Commissioner Calabria said he is excited to see this program moving forward. He asked for clarification regarding the flow of funds. He asked if payments are going to parents or providers.

Ms. Lucas said retroactive payment will go to the provider, but the parent will be reimbursed for any payment already received. She said moving forward, providers will bill directly so the parents do not have to pay out of pocket.

Commissioner Calabria asked if a transportation piece is being considered to coincide with this program. Ms. Lucas said that was explored, but will not be moving forward due to a liability issue. She said the short time of need was also taken into consideration since children are starting to return to school.

Commissioner West commended staff for implementing this program.

Commissioner Holmes asked for confirmation that this item will be on the upcoming agenda.

Mr. David Ellis, County Manager, said that had not been planned, but he can do so if requested.

Commissioner Holmes reiterated that she wants it on the upcoming agenda.

Commissioner Hutchinson expressed appreciation to staff for building this program. He also thanked the partners who are providing the care needed. He said this is an important program for our communities.

Commissioner Hutchinson said the Youth Go pass may be of assistance with the transportation issue.

Chairman Ford asked for the age requirements of the Youth Go pass. Commissioner Hutchinson said he is not certain, but will find out. He said families that are eligible for the WakeSupports program should be eligible for the Go Pass.

Mr. Ellis said staff will look into the idea and report back.

Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle L. Cerett, Executive Assistant
Wake County Board of Commissioners