



Wake County

301 South McDowell Street
Raleigh, NC

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Monday, February 8, 2021

2:00 PM

Wake County Justice Center

Work Session - Meeting Held Remotely

Work Session Meeting Materials

Present: 7 - Chair Matt Calabria, Vice-Chair Vickie Adamson, Commissioner Susan Evans, Commissioner Maria Cervania, Commissioner Sig Hutchinson, Commissioner James West, and Commissioner Shinica Thomas

Staff Present: David Ellis, County Manager; Emily Lucas, Chief Financial Officer; Chris Dillon, Assistant County Manager; Jason Horton, Strategic Performance Director; Ben Canada, Assistant to the County Manager; and Michelle Cerett, Executive Assistant.

Others Present: Julie White, Deputy Secretary, North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Meeting Called to Order: Chair Matt Calabria

1. Agenda

Attachments: [Agenda February 8 2021 work session.pdf](#)

Chair Calabria called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. He introduced Mr. Chris Dillon, Assistant County Manager, to present the first item. Mr. Dillon introduced Ms. Julie White, Deputy Secretary, North Carolina Department of Transportation.

2. Expanding Rail in North Carolina: The S-Line Opportunity

Attachments: [NCDOT S-Line Opportunity Feb 8 2021.pdf](#)

Ms. Julie White, North Carolina Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary for Multi-modal Transit, presented a map of the North Carolina Railroad System. She said it is currently owned by CSX.

She shared information on the S-Line Right of Way (ROW) grant received by North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in the amount of \$47.5 million.

NCDOT received grant to purchase
S-Line ROW - September 2020

Critical for Southeast Corridor buildout, state ownership allows for:

- On-time service
- Increased corridor capacity and resiliency
- Passenger centric service times
- Control of build-out schedule
- Implementation of future technologies
- Economic development opportunities
- Connect manufacturing and job centers to population centers

She shared information on the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) Transit-Oriented Development Planning Grant for the S-Line in the amount of \$900,000. She said NCDOT contacted community partners and was able to raise the funds to meet the match requirement of \$370,000.

FTA Transit-Oriented Development Planning Grant for the S-Line

- Opportunity for value capture in rural and urban areas
- 13 potential station locations for TOD planning
- Community partners provided **100% of the required match:**

\$370K

- Wake Forest: \$90K
- Franklinton: \$30K
- Raleigh: \$150K
- Apex: \$40K
- Sanford: \$30K
- Henderson: \$30K

Raleigh Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin said:

“This grant is crucial to moving the S-Line project ahead and restoring passenger rail service between Raleigh and Richmond. In the long-term, the S-Line will improve mobility and reduce congestion, not only in Raleigh, but across the region. I am thrilled to continue working with everyone involved in this project, and deeply appreciate FTA’s support.”

FTA Transit-Oriented Development Planning Grant for the S-Line

- Grant will deliver corridor wide planning as well as potential station area plans

- Corridor Wide Planning Effort - community engagement, corridor wide shared vision, corridor level market study, etc.
 - Station Area Planning - town specific planning for the potential station area
- Wake County participation in the TOD grant will provide Wake County an opportunity to be an active partner in the corridor wide planning effort and the additional resources will allow for more robust planning.
- A \$75,000 contribution would be commensurate with the contributions of the other stakeholders.

Ms. White asked if Wake County is interested in participating as a community partner. She shared the next steps.

Next Steps - Ready to Build

1. Continue partnership with MPOs, RPOs, communities, and private developers to progress corridor development and planning
2. Seek funding for incremental rail infrastructure improvement projects
 - STI
 - Federal discretionary grants
 - Potential economic stimulus packages

Mr. Dillon thanked Ms. White for her presentation. He said after speaking with the Managers office, the county is interested in contributing the \$75,000 requested for the project.

Commissioner Hutchinson said he is very excited about this project. He said obtaining this corridor will allow connection for several towns around the county, which is a great benefit. He thanked Ms. White for all she does.

Commissioner West asked how this new corridor will connect with the current Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) transportation line.

Ms. White said that is part of the planning process and it is being considered.

Commissioner Cervania said she is very excited for this project. She said if additional partners would be added.

Ms. White said this is an inter-city plan initially but a commuter overlay will be considered further down the road.

Commissioner Thomas asked that based on the map provided would there be any intersection with existing broader networks.

Ms. White said that is part of the wider plan and will be included.

Vice-Chair Adamson said she is very excited about this project and is fully supportive. She asked what fund the \$75,000 would come from.

Mr. Chris Dillon said it will come from the general fund.

Commissioner Evans said she is fully supportive of the project and it will be a very nice addition to Wake County.

Chair Calabria stressed that this line will be in addition to the East/West line and will not interfere with the project moving forward.

Ms. White thanked the Commissioners for their time and consideration.

3. Board Goals Final Revisions

Attachments: [2021 BOC Retreat Follow-up and Next Steps \(2021.02.08\).pdf](#)
 [2021 BOC Goals - Post Retreat Edits \(DRAFT, 2021.02.03\).pdf](#)

Mr. Jason Horton, Strategic Performance Director., shared an update on the goal process. He said final touches are being completed. He also said the new county website is experiencing some issues with the links and it will be fixed soon.

He shared the timeline of the goal process.

2021 Board Goals

- Goals continue to be drafted.
- Some links in the attachment may be unavailable due to the new County website.

Goals Development

- January 7th - Retreat day 1, 'Stronger Together'
- January 8th - Retreat day 2
- January 29th - Retreat day 3
- February 8th - Work Session
- February 15th - Board consideration for approval

He shared the intent of today's meeting.

Today's intent

- Provide Board of Commissioners the latest version.
- Opportunity for additional edits or revisions.

- Review materials in advance of February 15th.

Mr. Horton shared a summary of the drafted 2021 goal worksheets.

Timeline

- January 7th - Retreat day 1, 'Stronger Together'
- January 8th - Retreat day 2
- January 29th - Retreat day 3
- February 8th - Work Session
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Goal Worksheet Drafts

- January 8th discussion focused on draft goals, rationale, and objectives.
- Supplemented each with comprehensive plans, key resources, indicators, and performance measures.
- January 29th discussion included feedback on draft goals, rationale, and objectives.
- Opportunity to refine existing strategies or create new strategies.

He shared the 2021 Key Focus Areas

Key Focus Areas

- Community Health & Vitality
- Economic Strength
- Education
- Great Government
- Growth & Sustainability
- Public Safety

He shared a review of the key revisions.

Community Health and Vitality

- Moved the infant mortality report and program implementation to the goal focused on healthy behaviors and lifestyles.
- Included new strategies:
 - CHV 1.3: Update and implement the Behavioral Health Plan.
 - CHV 2.4: Evaluate the effectiveness of the behavioral health urgent care pilot and determine next steps.

- Updated the goal rationale for CHV 3: Support a higher quality of life for vulnerable residents and communities.

Economic Strength

- Multiple changes to the objectives associated with ES1.
 - Included partnerships with local colleges and universities.
 - Incorporated feedback by adding talent development and entrepreneurship development.
 - Linked community partnerships to community health and vitality strategies.
- Highlighted partnerships with RDU and WakeMed in ES 3 objectives.
- Revived the high-speed internet connectivity strategy.
- Referenced the GRCVB's Destination 2028 plan.
- Placed the "Celebrate arts and culture" goal.

Education

- Created a new 'E 2' objective to oppose unfunded state mandates.
- Expanded strategy 'E 2.1' to improve educational outcomes for students with additional needs.
 - Previous addressed students impacted by housing and/or homelessness
 - Additions include, lack of family support, discipline, language access, and individualized education plan and 504 plans.
 - Important to recognize our role in this area to support WCPSS and explore ways that the County can connect WCPSS to Wake County services.
- Included new strategies in 'E 2':
 - Explore a county-based teaching fellows' program.
 - GoPasses to support public school teachers and employees.
- Included feedback on supporting public school facility design in 'E 4'.

Great Government

- Much of the discussion on January 29th expressed support and placed emphasis on current strategies. Such as:
 - Community engagement and 'Civic Saturdays'-especially engaging hard-to-reach populations.
 - The importance and value of County employees, and the contributions they can make on the community (volunteerism and community leave).
- Referenced 'A Better Wake' in the 'GG 2: Embrace diversity, equity,

and inclusion.’

- New strategy à GG 1.4: Perform a review to identify and implement ways to expand strategic communications, constituent response, and board support functions.
 - Social media
 - List servs and SMS texting strategies
 - Digital presence

Growth and Sustainability

- Discussion around tightening the language used for one water;
- New strategies
 - GS 4.1: Partner with municipalities and nonprofits when feasible to leverage resources to procure open space and develop park and greenway resources.
 - GS 5.2: Identify and implement procedures to ~~prevent and~~ minimize odors associated with the South Wake Landfill.

Public Safety

- Reorganized and consolidated numerous policy ideas into three strategies including:
 - PS 2.1: Support efforts by criminal justice partners to expand diversion programs.
 - PS 2.2: Continue existing detention-based programs and evaluate new plans for those in the Wake County Detention Center.
 - PS 2.3: Explore and support the implementation of re-entry strategies for residents exiting the criminal justice system.

Mr. Horton shared the next steps following approval of the goals at the February 15th meeting.

What happens after approval?

Staff will:

- Begin work on strategies.
- If additional information or exploration is needed, topics will come back to committees.
- Incorporate and clarify definitions.
- Develop indicators and performance measures.
- Update the Wake County Transparency Portal.

There was discussion amongst commissioners regarding their suggested edits to the presented goals. Following the discussion, Mr. Horton said all the information will be taken into consideration and a revised draft will be

provided prior to the February 15th meeting.

Chair Calabria called for a brief recess.
The meeting reconvened.

4. COVID Response Funding Update

Attachments: [COVID Funding Update February 8 2021.pdf](#)

Ms. Emily Lucas, Chief Financial Officer, shared an update on the COVID response funding.

She shared the background on the process.

March 2020 - County began COVID-19 response operations

April 2020 - County received \$194 million in Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) to be used for necessary direct and “second order effects” expenditures due to the public health emergency

May-November 2020 - Board appropriated CRF (and other direct funding) toward the response, based on CRF Funding Plan

CRF was set to expire December 30, 2020; County developed alternate funding strategy

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She shared a Federal Activity update

On December 21, 2020, Congress approved their FY 2021 appropriations package, along with a new \$900 billion COVID relief package, including:

- Funding for Emergency Rental Assistance Program
- Funding for CDC to support continued testing and vaccination administration
- ***Extending the use of the original CRF to December 31, 2021***

With the extension of CRF, County did not make most of the planned public safety payroll adjustments and continues to align COVID related expenditures with the original funding source(s).

She shared a table of the CRF (COVID Relief Funding) Plan and Expenditures.

She shared a chart of how the CRF was used.

Ms. Lucas shared how the CRF was used to benefit Economic Recovery.

Wake Forward

- 349 loans approved totaling \$19.2 million (including Wake's **\$5 million**)

- 2,390 jobs retained
- 82% of loans issued to business with less than 10 employees
- 67% of loans issued to female or minority-owned businesses
- Because CRF was extended, loan repayments will be used to issue new small business loans

Capital Area Workforce

- **\$1.7 million**
- 244 individuals served in Emergency Youth Employment Program
- 907 participants served in other community-based education, training, and support service programs
- Programs will continue through March 2021

GRCVB (Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau)

- **\$1.25 million** investment
- Enhanced visitor safety and installed kiosks at VIC and RCC
- Produced ~200 virtual tour assets
- Virtually attended tradeshow, client events, and conferences to promote safe reopening messages
- Reached more than 53 million through safe reopening marketing campaign

United Arts Council

- **\$1 million** investment
- 53 grants averaging \$18,686
- Grantees received 82.5% of requested amount
- Grantees located in Raleigh, Cary, Garner, Wake Forest, and Apex
- Covered music, dance, theater, visual arts, and multi-disciplinary organizations

She shared how the CRF was used in the Continuity of Operations.

Continuity of Operations**WCPSS & Wake Tech Operations**

- **WCPSS** - Allocated **\$29.1 million** to support remote learning, PPE, cleaning/sanitation, student food security, and safety protocols
- **Wake Tech** - Allocated **\$5 million** to support equipment for new/increased training programs, remote learning/working, and student food security

County & Municipal Operations

- **Municipalities** - Provided **\$17.2 million** to offset public safety

payroll costs and **\$4.2 million** to support COVID pay allowances, PPE, enhanced cleaning, and facility modifications

- **County** - Spent **\$8.2 million** on COVID pay allowances, PPE, enhanced cleaning, and facility modifications

She shared the programs created as part of the community response and resiliency.

Community Response & Resiliency

Wake Helps

Provided **\$1.8 million** (through 1/31) to support 6,100 households with utility payment support

Utility payment support will continue with federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program

Wake Supports

Provided **\$1.4 million** to support households needing childcare or virtual learning center services (August - December 2020)

Food Security

Invested **\$3.1 million**

Through Dec - 7 million+ meals in partnership with 55 community agencies and WCPSS

Will continue efforts through at least February

**Funding not expended and/or encumbered by 1/31/2021 will be diverted to Public Health response activities.*

House Wake

1,447 active applications

347 paid to date with average assistance of \$4,600+

Expected expenses of approximately **\$9 million**

Program will continue with New Emergency Rental Assistance Program
(outlined on next slide)

Other Housing Assistance

Hotels to Housing assisted 643 individuals, representing 297 households

County utilized funds to purchase:

- Mobile shower and laundry units
- Mobile assistance units
- IT equipment for case management

Utilized both CARES and supplemental grants

She shared the new Emergency rental assistance program that was

created with the CRF.

New Emergency Rental Assistance Program

County received direct allocation of \$19.3 million

Can be used for up to 12 months of:

- Rent and rental arrears

- Utilities and home energy costs (including those in arrears)

- Other housing stability services (not currently specified)

Eligibility for households with income that does not exceed 80% AMI

Telamon will continue to administer program

- Will also administer Raleigh's direct allocation of \$14.1 million

Funding must be spent by December 31, 2021

Commissioner Hutchinson suggested increasing the timing of the county created programs to assist residents for an increased amount of time.

Chair Calabria and other commissioners also expressed concerns about the food security funding coming to an end.

Ms. Lucas said she is working with the Cooperative Extension to extend funding as much as possible.

Ms. Lucas shared the Public Health Emergency response that was addressed using the CRF.

Public Health Emergency Response

Through October 2020, only \$18 million in expenditures since response began.

Testing

November - January, \$44.5 million in expenditures (\$3.4 million/week)

142 time-limited staff hired since July

Contracted testing costs approximately \$2.6 million/week (average 31,000 tests/week)

High-volume testing will continue at least through widespread vaccine availability

Vaccination Management

Some staff diverted to vaccination management and deployment

Future costs will be related to:

- Facility use and maintenance
- Staffing costs
- Communications
- Technology for registration, scheduling, and records

She shared a summary of the county priority's as it relates to CRF funding.

Public Health Emergency Response Funding

With the surge in testing and vaccination, unspent CARES funding from other categories will be diverted to cover these critical expenses

- At current spending rate, CARES funding to be fully expended in March

County currently working toward FEMA reimbursement of eligible public health and emergency response expenses

State received approximately \$700 million from CDC to support testing and vaccination management

- County in contact with DHHS on when/how these funds will be distributed

Summary

County's priority remains to ensure sufficient funding supports responsibility to respond to COVID-19

The prioritization of funding will be focused on:

1. Supporting the public health emergency response
2. Ensuring continuity of and safety in County operations
3. Continuing community response programs, as needed

County continues to monitor federal/state legislative activity and **advocate for funds** to support public health and community response efforts

She shared a chart of other COVID-19 Financial Relief

Following further Commissioner discussion regarding CRF, Chair Calabria adjourned the meeting.

Chair Calabria opened the floor for discussion on future meeting topics. Commissioner Thomas requested discussion regarding the CROWN Act (Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair) Act. She said discrimination among the African American population based on their hair is a very real issue. She requested considering a resolution stating that discrimination based on hair is not permitted.

Mr. Ben Canada, Assistant to the County Manager, said this topic is on the Great Government Committee meeting in two weeks.

Adjourn

Chair Calabria adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle L. Cerett,
Executive Assistant