

Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2022

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Special Meeting Session for the Interim Commissioner Interviews in Conference Center Room 267 on the 2nd floor of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 12, 2022.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair George Dunlap and Commissioners
Leigh Altman, Patricia “Pat” Cotham, Mark Jerrell,
Vilma D. Leake, Laura J Meier, Elaine Powell,
and Susan Rodriguez-McDowell
County Manager Dena R. Diorio
County Attorney Tyrone C. Wade
Clerk to the Board Kristine M. Smith
Deputy Clerk to the Board Allen Coleman

Absent: Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough (on Extended Leave)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap, followed by introductions and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

TEMPORARY AT-LARGE COUNTY COMMISSIONER INTERVIEWS

Chair Dunlap said he wanted to go over the process of the interviews so that everyone was clear on what was taking place. He said at the Board's direction staff had developed a process to assist in selecting a qualified resident as a temporary replacement. He said part of the determination process consisted of interviewing each candidate and asking a set of eight predetermined questions designed to cover different topics. He said those topics included Budgeting, Equity, Resident engagement, Personal Reflection, and Teamwork. He said the Board would allow for each

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candidate to provide an introductory statement up to three minutes at the beginning of the interview process. He said each candidate had one hour for the entire interview, and any follow-up question from the Board had to be related to the question that was asked. He said at the end of each interview the Board would allow the candidate to provide a closing statement of up to three minutes. He asked the Board to reframe from asking a question that might elicit protected class status information. He referred the Commissioners information in the binder each received.

Chair Dunlap said at the end of the interview process there was a recommendation sheet that was to be used. He said following the Board's deliberation each Commissioner would be allowed up to two candidates for recommendation. He said each Commissioner would use a tally sheet, and that it would not be a final vote. He said the tally sheet would be used for record-keeping purposes only. He said the Clerk would then announce if there were one or two candidates that received the highest votes before the meeting adjourned. He said those candidates would move forward to the March 15th meeting where the Board would officially vote to appoint a candidate to temporarily fill the At Large County Commissioner's seat.

Chair Dunlap said he wanted to make the Board aware of something the County Attorney told him. He said that if Commissioner Scarborough was to pass, the Commissioner at-Large interim would no longer be a temporary position. He said the position would become vacant, which meant the process would change. He said at that point the Democratic party would then select as to who would be the replacement. He said when he learned this information, he engaged in conversation with the Chair of the Democratic party. He said under their process they would have to notify all members of the Democratic committee, which was probably about 400 members. He said the Democratic party would arrange for a meeting and go through the process of making a selection. He said he hoped that whoever this Board selected and recommended to the committee would be approved, otherwise it would delay the appointment for another month. He said the person that the Board selected would also have the opportunity to go before the Democratic party and make their case as to why they should be appointed to that seat.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if the process he had just explained was just during the interim period while they voted, or until the end of the term. *Chair Dunlap said it was until the end of the term.*

Chair Dunlap said he hoped to be leaving the meeting with one candidate to be recommended. He said it was unfair for a second candidate to wait when the Commissioners knew who they wanted to appoint.

Chair Dunlap said there was a request to the Clerk's office to modify the Agenda for the meeting. He said Sam Spencer had requested to switch interview times with Beverly Earl, as he

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had a prior commitment scheduled. He said, per the email response received by the Clerk's office, Mrs. Earl agreed to switch the interview time. He said being that it was the Board's agenda, only the Board could change the agenda.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell, seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, and unanimously carried 8-0, to change the Agenda to switch the interview times of Sam Spencer and Beverly Earle.

Chair Dunlap proceeded with the meeting and called on the candidates.

The candidates appeared in the following order:

1. Sam Spencer
2. Mary T. McCray
3. Beverly Earle
4. Wilhelmenia L. Rembert

Chair Dunlap recessed the meeting after the completion of the second interview.

The Board returned at 10:25 a.m. and interviews for candidates 3 and 4 continued.

Chair Dunlap said now that the interviews were done the Board could discuss the candidates for up to ten minutes for each candidate. He said the discussion would apply to each candidate in the order they had been interviewed.

Comments on Sam Spencer

No Comments were offered.

Comments on Mary T. McCray

Commissioner Altman said she was taken by the energy of Mrs. McCray, and that her knowledge base was phenomenal. She said Mrs. McCray's focus was on Meck PreK, workforce development, and housing. She said this was all aligned with what had been discussed as to what the Board was looking for in an Interim Commissioner. She said Mrs. McCray brought a tremendous energy dynamic to do the job and understood the role.

Commissioner Leake said she wanted to give thanks to the Board and the community for allowing

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them to decide to choose an Interim Commissioner as a group. She said she was grieving the absence of Commissioner Scarborough. She said Mrs. McCray came with a lot of energy and knowledge of the processes and procedures that would take to fill the role. She said Mrs. McCray was very responsive to answering the questions she was asked. She said she looked at Mrs. McCray from a different perspective since she came off the school Board and was active in the community. She said she would vote based on her conviction. She said she trusted and valued that Mrs. McCray would do what was right, being she worked with the school Board and not for the school Board.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said that Mrs. McCray was battle-tested. She said Mrs. McCray had been recently elected At-Large twice in a row and that spoke to her qualifications. She said Mrs. McCray spoke about the towns, had great energy, was extremely knowledgeable, and continued to serve in the community.

Commissioner Cotham said she was acquainted with Mrs. McCray and was impressed with a lot of the things she had spoken about. She said she disagreed with Mrs. McCray when it came to her discussion on security. She said she was concerned about some of the wording Mrs. McCray used when talking about felons. She said for her those labels were tough. She said she thought Mrs. McCray had a lot of capabilities to fill the role. She said she found it interesting how Mrs. McCray approached her At-Large term on the School Board. She said she was concerned about Mrs. McCray's response to the changing of the superintendent when Mrs. McCray was questioned about it. She said she felt Mrs. McCray could have been more transparent to the community without giving way to pertinent personal information in her School Board response. She said Mrs. McCray had reached out to her, and they had met up for Mrs. McCray to give the items she had collected to go towards the homeless. She said Mrs. McCray would be good at interreacting with the whole Board.

Commissioner Jerrell said he respected the comments that had come so far about Mrs. McCray. He said he was very impressed by Mrs. McCray's interview. He said he thought she demonstrated in-depth knowledge about their work of service as it related to the Board. He said Mrs. McCray's depth of knowledge and experience would serve well on the Board.

Comments on Beverly Earle

Commissioner Meier said Mrs. Earle came with great depth of experience. She said that Mrs. Earle had served 23 plus years in Raleigh NC, and Mrs. Earle continued work after her previous tenure spoke to her loving the community. She said Mrs. Earle was known for working across the aisle and relationship-building with Republicans. She said it was commendable that in times of division, Mrs.

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Earle was able to reach across the aisle and listen to others. She said with Mrs. Earle's experience and energy she would be an asset to the Board.

Commissioner Cotham said she had known Mrs. Earle for a long time. She said she appreciated the depth of Mrs. Earle's interview. She said she was intrigued by Mrs. Earle's uniqueness with the fact that she was a former legislator. She said she did not remember a time the Board had a legislator as a Board member. She said the Board could benefit from the 24 years of experience she had. She said Mrs. Earle had heavy leadership knowledge, knowledge in health care, and mental health. She said Mrs. Earle talked about mental health when no one was talking about it. She said Mrs. Earle could add a different skill set to the Board based on her experience and tenure.

Commissioner Altman said the County had core services that deeply involved state funding. She said Mrs. Earle would bring valuable knowledge in that area, and had a skill set that would be very valuable to the Board and County residents.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she appreciated Mrs. Earle's answers as they related to the Budget. She said Mrs. Earle had a real depth of the competing priorities the County had.

Comments on Wilhelmenia L. Rembert

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said Mrs. Rembert had such a depth of understanding of what the Board was already trying to do. She said Mrs. Rembert seemed to understand what the goals of the Board were, and it aligned with her values as well. She said she liked that Mrs. Rembert seemed to have the ability to work with a Board that had different opinions.

Commissioner Meier said she was impressed with the way Mrs. Rembert was methodical in her interview answers.

Commissioner Leake said she served on the school Board with Mrs. Rembert. She said she has known Mrs. Rembert for a long time and has worked together with her previously in advocating for all children regardless of skin color. She said Mrs. Rembert had a background in social work, and that work was strictly related to the County and taking care of the residents. She said whoever was chosen for the At-Large Interim Commissioner role had to be ready to hit the ground running and get the job done.

Commissioner Altman said she was not familiar with the depth of Mrs. Rembert's work history before the interview process. She said it was amazing to have the caliber of qualified candidates to choose from. She said Mrs. Rembert's working history was incredible and would add value in getting the work done as it related to the issues and the work the Board did.

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Commissioner Jerrell said he agreed with Commissioner Altman on her comments to have such great candidates apply for the At-Large Interim Commissioner role. He said he was impressed with Mrs. Rembert's interview answers as they related to additional resources on affordable housing. He said Mrs. Rembert's answers to teamwork, and differences of opinions were in-depth, and for him, it stood out that she talked about how reasonable people could disagree. He said he was impressed with Mrs. Rembert's demeanor; she had a calm presence that would be needed in dealing with issues that would be divisive for the residents and the Board. He said he also appreciated that Mrs. Rembert showed to have a methodical way of solving issues.

Commissioner Powell said she agreed with everything Commissioner Jerrell said. She thanked every candidate who had applied. She said the final four candidates were outstanding. She said she could not imagine a better candidate than Mrs. Rembert. She said Mrs. Rembert had always been engaged in the community, and available. She said Mrs. Rembert has been showing up for the community, and not for votes throughout her work history. She said Mrs. Rembert was uniquely prepared to jump in and get the work done. She said she liked Mrs. Rembert's answers as they related to working as a team and being ok to disagree with others.

Chair Dunlap said he did not share comments about each candidate because he wanted to do it all at once. He said he agreed with what had been said by those candidates who put forth the effort to apply. He said the Board was extremely fortunate to have four capable qualified candidates. He said each candidate had good answers, and they exhibited why they should be the chosen candidate. He said that while each candidate was a good choice, he tended to agree with Commissioner Powell, Meier, and Jerrell that Mrs. Rembert set herself apart from the rest of the candidates in several areas. He said Mrs. Rembert's calming spirit was needed, and her depth of knowledge covered the gamut based on her work experience, and her involvement in the community. He said he was glad Commissioner Meier picked up on the fact that Mrs. Rembert was process-oriented and that there was not one question that Mrs. Rembert did not answer.

Chair Dunlap said they had heard from each of the candidates, and it was time to decide on a candidate. He said after returning from lunch the Board would go into the process of candidate recommendations. He went over the process of having the Board use the tally sheets to make their recommendations.

The Board recessed for lunch until 12:45 p.m.

Chair Dunlap instructed the Board to fill out the tally sheets with their top candidates.

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The tally sheets were collected from each Commissioner.

Commissioner Rodriguez Mc Dowell- Wilhelmenia L. Rembert
Commissioner Meier- Beverly Earle, Wilhelmenia L. Rembert
Commissioner Leake- Mary T. McCray, Wilhelmenia L. Rembert
Chair Dunlap- Wilhelmenia L. Rembert
Commissioner Powell- Wilhelmenia L. Rembert
Commissioner Cotham- Beverly Earle
Commissioner Altman- Beverly Earle, Mary T. McCray
Commissioner Jerrell- Wilhelmenia L. Rembert, Mary T. McCray

Chair Dunlap said it based on the tally votes it was clear that at the next BOCC meeting, the Board would make the recommendation to appoint Wilhelmenia L. Rembert as At-Large Interim Commissioner for the remaining term of Commissioner Scarborough.

Commissioner Leake asked if the voting that was done on the tally sheets was a non-binding vote. *Chair Dunlap said yes, at the next BOCC meeting official voting would take place.*

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 12:52 p.m.

Kristine M. Smith, Clerk to the Board

George Dunlap, Chair