

**Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2025**

**MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Budget/Public Policy Session 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 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11, 2025.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair Mark Jerrell, Vice-Chair Leigh Altman
and Commissioners George Dunlap, Arthur Griffin,
Laura J. Meier, Elaine Powell, Susan Rodriguez-McDowell,
Yvette Townsend-Ingram
County Manager Dena R. Diorio
County Attorney Tyrone C. Wade
Clerk to the Board Kristine M. Smith
Deputy Clerk to the Board Arlissa Eason

Absent: Commissioner Vilma D. Leake

CALL TO ORDER

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

25-0114 NEW ITEM: CLOSED SESSION

Motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Vice Chair Altman, and unanimously carried to go into Closed Session for the following purpose(s): To discuss a Personnel Matter

The Board went into Closed Session at 2:33 p.m. and came back into Open Session at 2:56 p.m.

25-0109 CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG LIBRARY STRATEGY

The Board received as information a presentation on the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Strategy.

Presenters:

Marcellus "MT" Turner, Library CEO
Caitlin Moen, Library Director/Chief Library Services Officer
Angie Myers, Chief Finance & Administration Officer

Background: Earlier this year, the Board requested an update on the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library strategy. The Board will receive a presentation on the Library's strategy for serving County residents in the future including details about the reopening on the Main Library in 2026.



CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG
LIBRARY

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library

Futurecast

Strategy, Growth, & Challenges

MT, CEO
Caitlin Moen, Library Director/Chief Library Services Officer
Angie Myers, Chief Finance & Administration Officer

February 11, 2025
Budget Public Policy Workshop

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Agenda

Objective: Create a shared understanding of the Library's Staffing & Collections Strategies, Opportunities, and Challenges

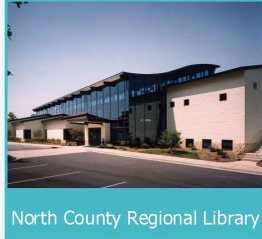
1. Understanding the Library's Operating Model
2. Exploring the Data
3. Identifying Solutions and Next Steps
4. Understanding Library Collections
5. Questions

Understanding the Library's Operating Model

Libraries are like retail businesses in many ways

Libraries and retail stores both:

- Serve the public
- Occupy a physical footprint
- Variety of service points
- Have days of the week & hours of operation (shifts)
- Serve unique needs in various communities
- Provide different types and amounts of items (Collections & Programs)
- Must have:
 - **Logistics** (the infrastructure to move inventory around)
 - **Technology** (to offer services digitally inside and outside of Libraries),
 - Other critical **business operations** (HR, Finance, Procurement, Marketing & Communications, Facilities, etc...)



Programs & Spaces: Libraries are also Service Providers

Libraries also:

- Offer programming for all ages
- Provide one-on-one help for:
 - Technology assistance
 - Job help
 - Literacy development
 - and more
- Provide and manage spaces (study rooms, open seating, computer labs, community rooms) for people to work, learn, study, or meet
- Work with partners (Novant, 311) to offer their services in library locations



Outreach: Libraries Operate Outside of Libraries

In the Community

- Offer programs in community locations – parks, schools, shelters, and more
- Maintain mobile units (MoLi & MiLa) to deliver materials and services into underserved communities and library deserts
- Partner with schools
- Lead and partner on major initiatives for the community – Summer Break, Meck Pre-K, Community Read, and more

Online

- Design and offer programs online
- Maintain robust digital collection of materials
- Offer a deep well of online resources
- Equip students and community members to utilize resources



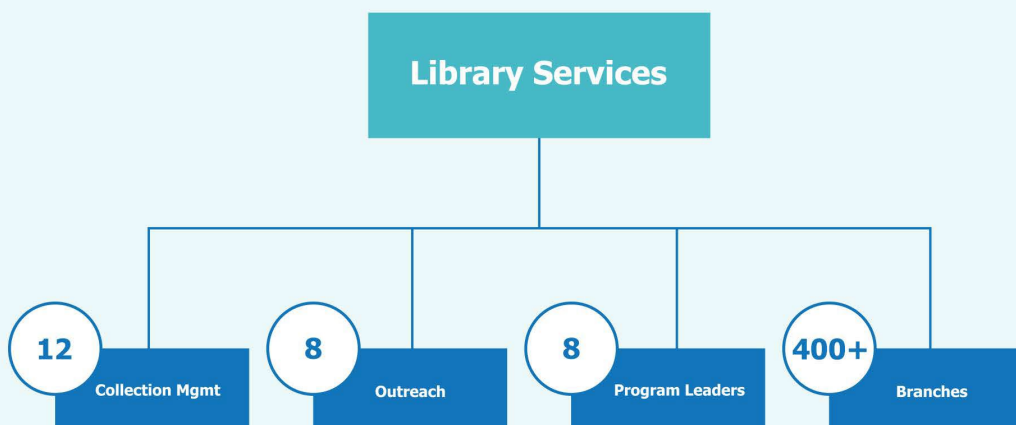
Libraries Operate in Growing Communities

One last place that is **open and welcoming to all**

Safety High needs Growth Diverse audience



Who Accomplishes All of This?



Who Accomplishes All of This?



Who Accomplishes All of This?



Abrar
is a Librarian for
Teens at
Mountain Island.
She also does...

- Workforce Development Team
(Team Lead and Marketing & Communications Sub-Team Lead)
- Welcome CLT Team
(Team Member and Branch Point Person)
- College and Career Connection
(Team Member)
- Community Events Team
(Team Member)



Becca
is a Librarian
for Children at
ImaginOn. She
also does...

- Frontline Puppeteers Team
(Team Lead)
- Theatrical Training Team
(Team Lead)
- Frontline Storytellers
(Team Member)
- ImaginOn Shared Programming Team
(Point Person)
- Freedom to Read Week Team
(Team Lead)
- PuppetPaloosa Lead

Who Accomplishes All of This?



Exploring the Data

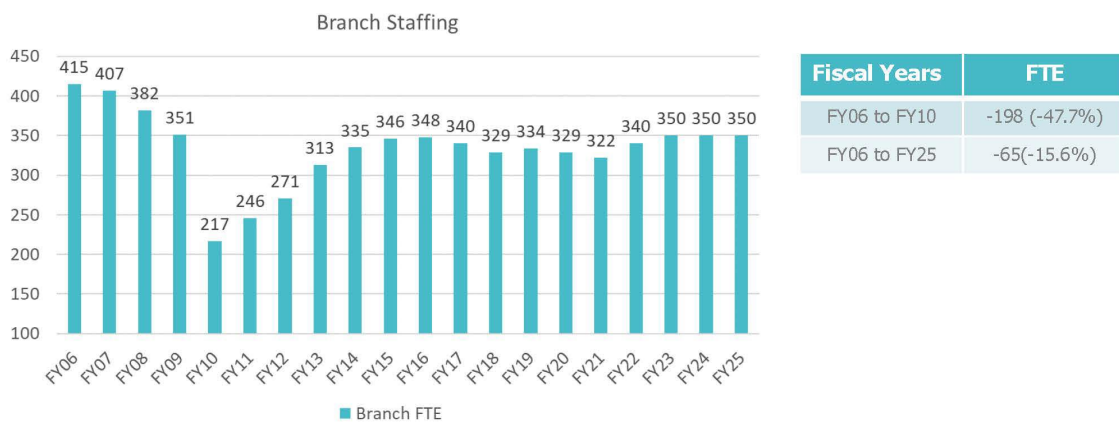
13

Historical Data Review



14

Reductions in Headcount



Progression of Hours and Locations

Coping with an Economic Recession (2009-2011)

Pre-Recession

- 24 Locations
- 1,564 Service Hours per Week

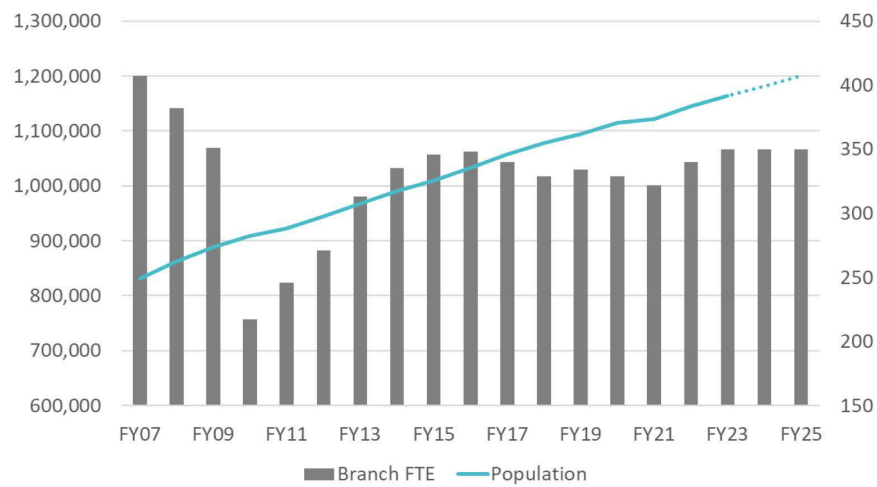
Recession

- 20 Locations
- 722 Service Hours per Week
- Reduced daily and weekend hours

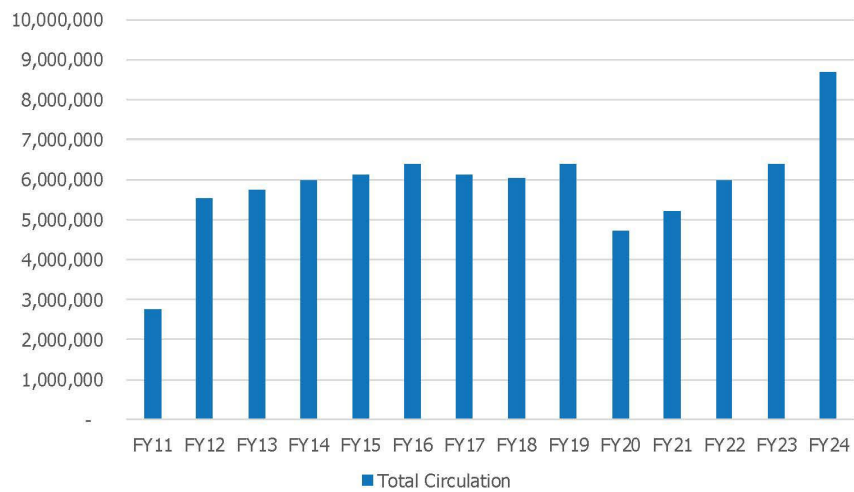
Current

- 21 Locations
- 1,260 Service Hours per Week
- Increased hours with additional County funding

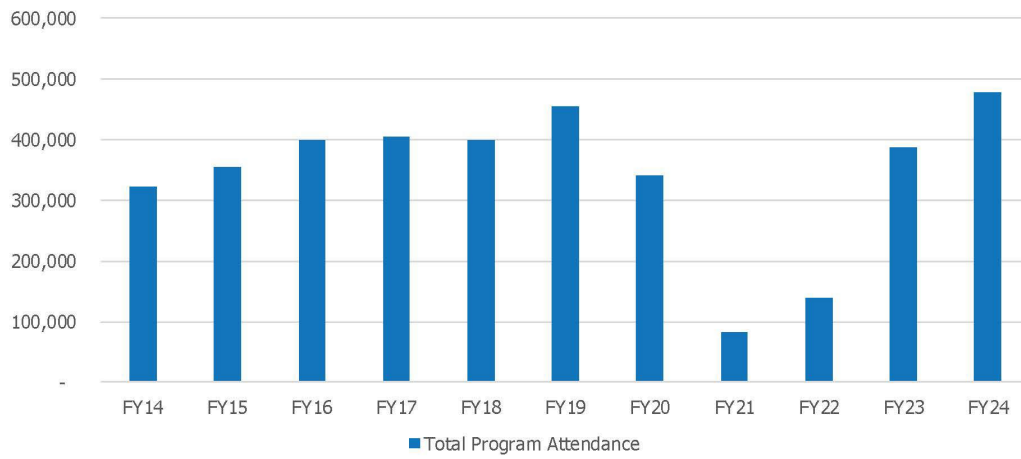
Population Growth in Mecklenburg County



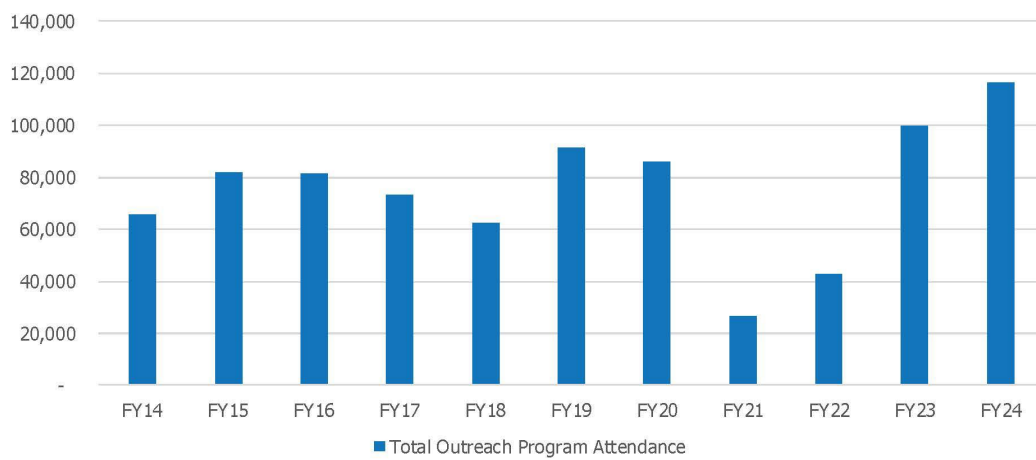
Growth in Circulation



Growth in Program Attendance



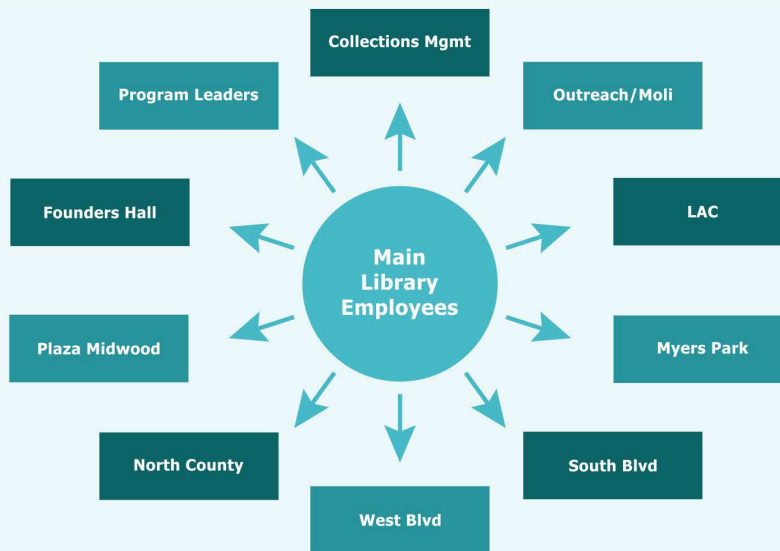
Growth in Outreach



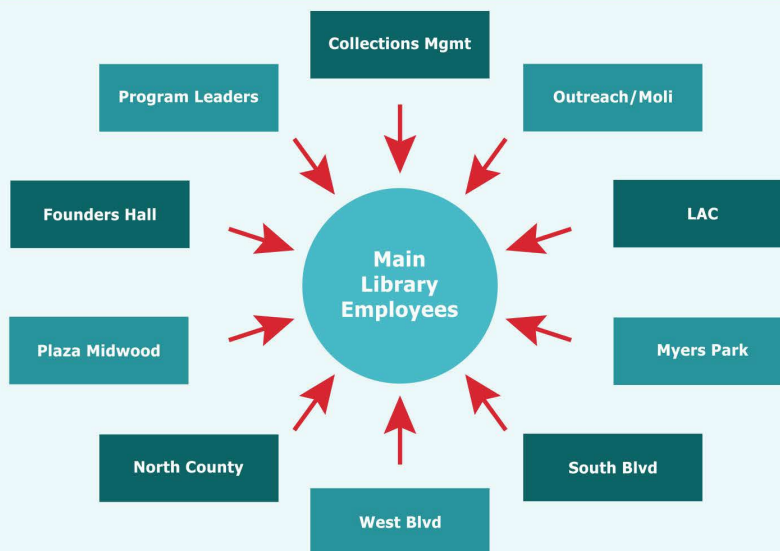
Closures for Renovations since 2016



Employees During Extended Closures



FY2027 – Employees Return to Main Library



Exploring the Data:
Staffing Study

CML Staffing Study Overview

Objective:

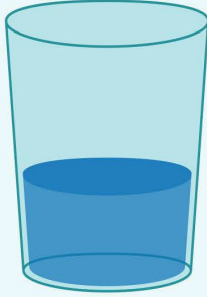
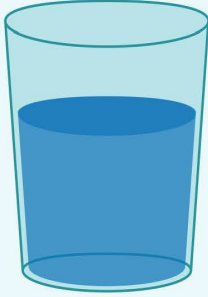
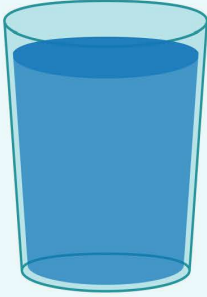
- Optimize staffing levels across CML branches.
- Identify under - and overstaffing.
- Provide actionable recommendations.

Methodology:

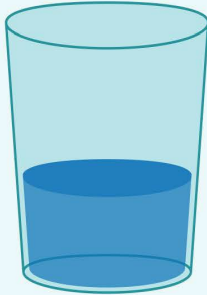
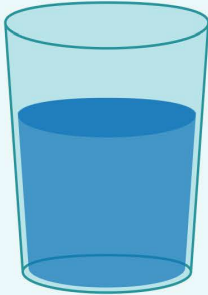
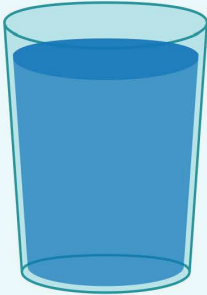
- Staff surveys and focus groups.
- Benchmarking against libraries and state standards.
- Optimization modeling with operational data.



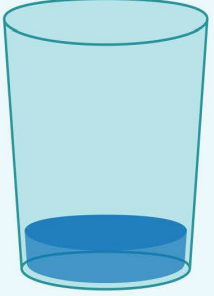
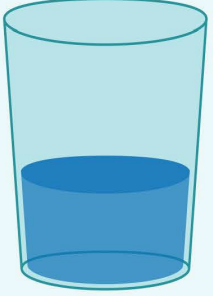
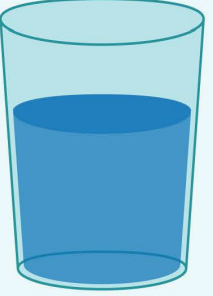
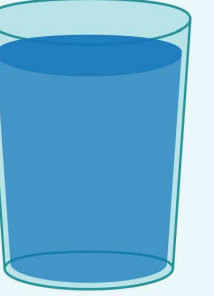
North Carolina State Standards - Staffing

		
<p>Essential The basic level to adequately meet community needs</p>	<p>Enhanced This level recognizes that some aspects of library service stand out compared to their peers</p>	<p>Exemplary This level recognizes public libraries for being state and national leaders</p>

North Carolina State Standards - Staffing

		
<p>Essential The basic level to adequately meet community needs</p> <p>Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Branches</p>	<p>Enhanced This level recognizes that some aspects of library service stand out compared to their peers</p>	<p>Exemplary This level recognizes public libraries for being state and national leaders</p>

North Carolina State Standards - Staffing

			
Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Branches	Essential The basic level to adequately meet community needs	Enhanced This level recognizes that some aspects of library service stand out compared to their peers	Exemplary This level recognizes public libraries for being state and national leaders

Impact of Staffing Levels

"Lack of effective staffing makes it so my sole focus is on day-to-day operations and additional duties are nearly impossible."

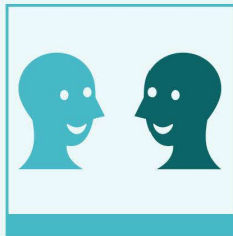
"I am a children's services manager and have to spend so much time programming that it does not leave me much time to plan ahead for the department or come up with new ideas. My management tasks have to take a back seat at times due to the need to cover programs."

"When we're short-handed, we degenerate into a library that only offers basic services—the opposite of a 21st-century library."

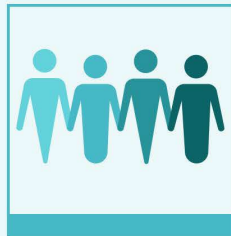
Identifying Solutions and Next Steps

Future Staffing Needs

Factors to Consider in Meeting Community Needs



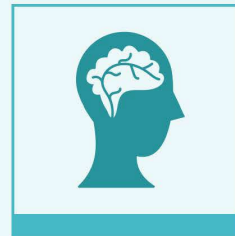
One-on-One Support



Changing Demographics



Multilingual Needs



Increase in Specializations

Staffing Study Recommendations

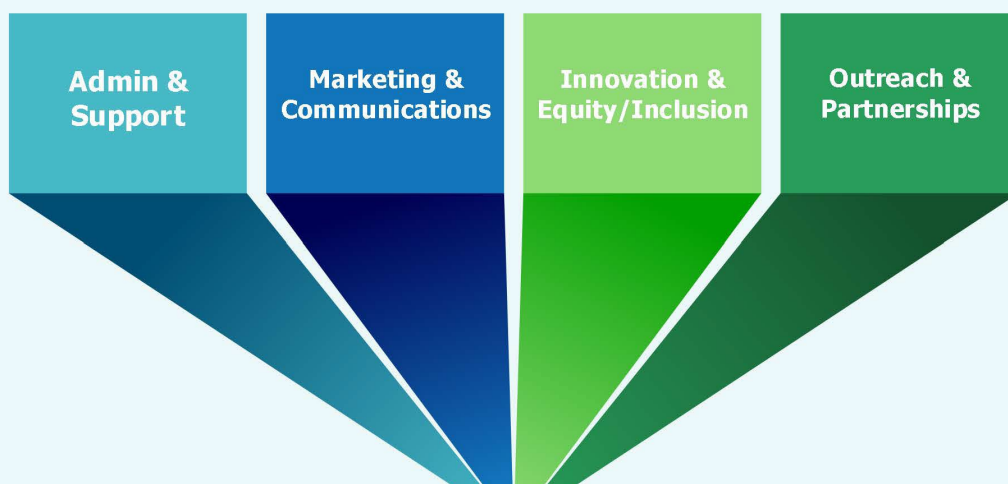
Proposed Approaches

- Increase staffing strategically – various models for consideration
- Optimize “pod” staffing and operational model
- Balance full-time/part-time staff ratios
- Adjust staffing models to redistribute existing positions

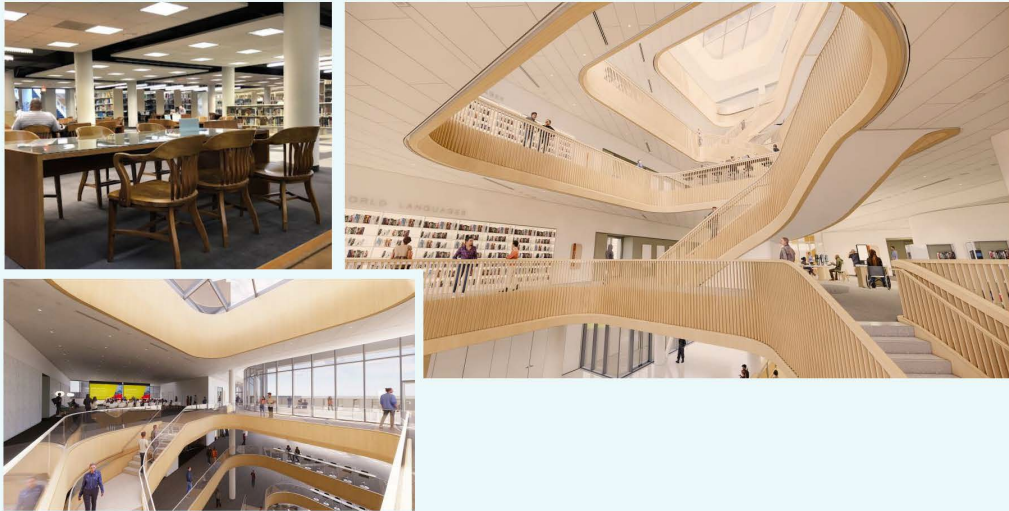


Expanding View to Include Organizational Needs

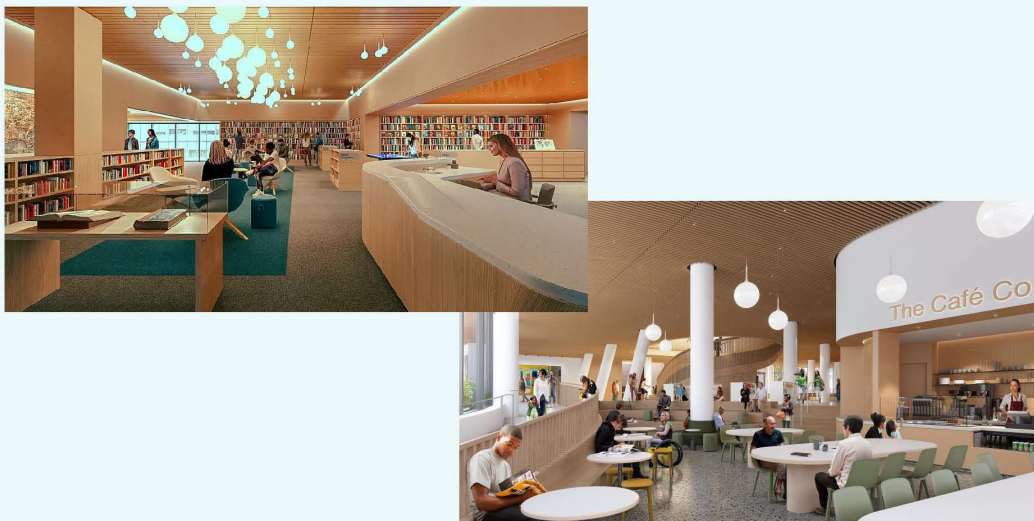
Library Services



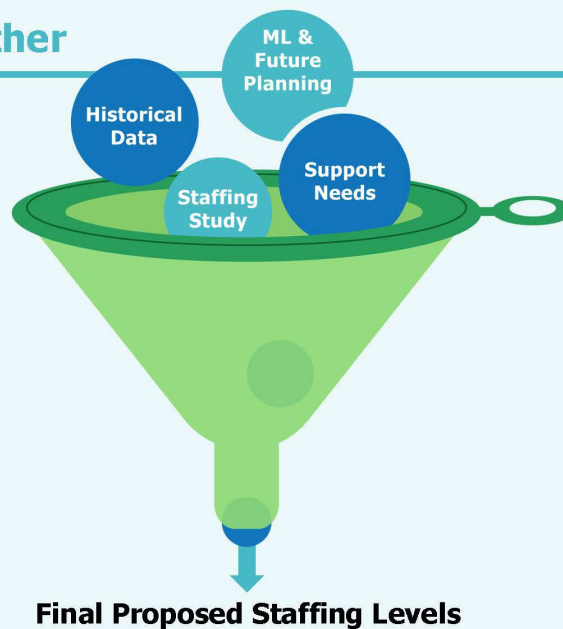
Main Library



Main Library Program of Service



Pulling It Together



Staffing Next Steps

- Follow the County Manager's budget process
- Incremental shifts as vacancies occur
- Strategic planning



Understanding Library Collections

Understanding Library Collections

**In Person
Collections**

**eBooks and
eAudio**

**Online
Resources**

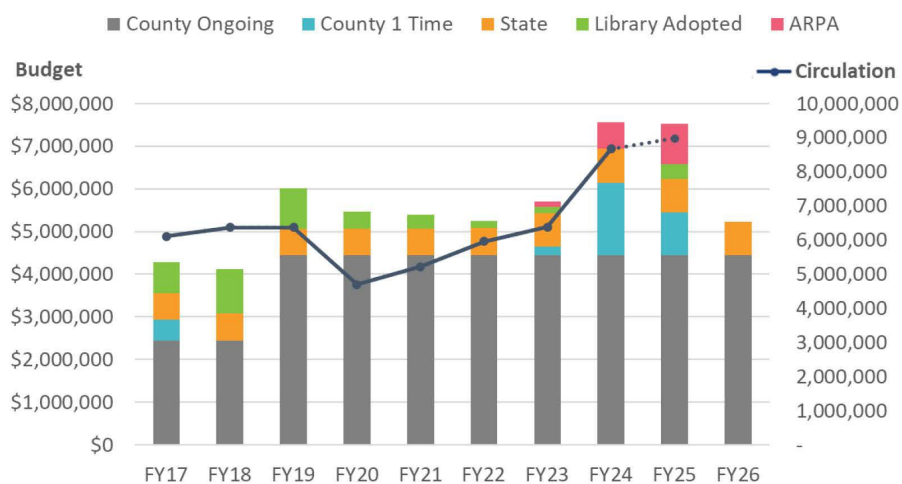


Impacts to Cost and Availability

- Number of materials published
- Languages, formats, etc.
- Licensing
- Cost of online platforms
- Cost of published materials

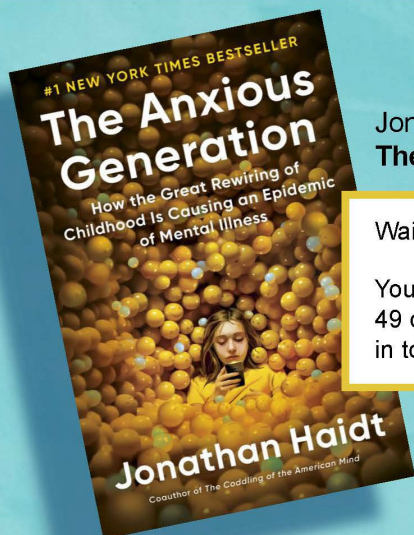


Collections Budget



*Projected circulation in FY25

Customer Impacts



Jonathan Haidt
The Anxious Generation

Wait Time: ≈10 Weeks

You are 249th in line (started: 297th).
49 copies in use. 303 people waiting
in total. 6 people waiting per copy.





Thank You

Questions?

Comments

Commissioner Powell left the meeting at 3:29 p.m.

Commissioner Dunlap asked how many libraries they planned to build in the future. Mr. Turner said that with the Facilities Master Plan, they were expecting to add 10 more, bringing *the total to 31*.

Commissioner Dunlap asked what libraries they planned in addition to the ones in Sugar Creek, the newest one in Uptown, and the proposal for West Boulevard over the next three years. *Mr. Turner said those, as well as one on Nations Ford Road*. Commissioner Dunlap asked, while all staff was used at the time to staff the current libraries, were they looking to expand to accommodate the Uptown, Sugar Creek, and West Boulevard locations. *Ms. Moen said their presentation focused on the main and existing libraries. She said the future projects were brought up through the CIP process each year.*

Commissioner Dunlap said they didn't give specific numbers and asked how the staffing model looked regarding the increase. *Ms. Moen said they looked at about 80 more staff members to operate the main library successfully.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram thanked them. She asked, with the increase in seniors over the next few years and the services the library provided, if there were opportunities in the staffing model for employee sharing, for example, an employee part-time at the library who also worked for a senior center or even CMS. *Ms. Moen said they had one employee shared between them and Reach Charlotte to drive third-grade reading efforts. She said they tried to accomplish it through partnership instead of employee sharing due to the bridge between government funding, nonprofit execution, and corporate execution, which could lead to complicated factors. She said the only place they had seen it be successful and long-term was at the Library and Children's Theater of Charlotte, but it was specifically to operate ImaginOn.*

Commissioner Meier thanked them. She asked how many visited the new University library on that past Saturday (February 8, 2025). *Ms. Moen said approximately 2800 people. Commissioner Meier said there was obviously a need, a want, and a desire for libraries. She asked for clarification on whether The Board hadn't increased the budget in seven years. Ms. Moen said that was correct, but they were grateful, and one-time funding was a way to close the gap, and it just meant they were back again the next year.*

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Commissioner Meier said the 21st-century library was the standard they needed to achieve. She said they shouldn't take the library for granted, because it was for everyone of all ages and backgrounds. *Mr. Turner added that with the 2,800 people who attended the University library, they would get the numbers to know how many checked-out items.*

Commissioner Griffin said he supported the public library as it was vital to the community. He asked if they needed 80 staff members to be "below basic." *Ms. Moen said those were the current levels. She said adding the 80 wouldn't move them up into "Enhanced" but farther up into "Essential," where they could deliver more of what they were currently delivering.*

Commissioner Griffin asked, in terms of services provided, if there was an opportunity to see if those community support organizations could be supported by having staffing there. *Ms. Moen said they had different specialists embedded in, such as with NC Works and Charlotte Works. She said the issue was that it was an in-moment need. She said they asked that staff not be an expert but able to support the person in their need. Mr. Turner added that they were trying to embed social workers in their libraries, as it was a great need.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked, in reference to slide 40, what the green "library adopted" portion on the graph meant. *Ms. Myers said they had received extra money from the ABC Board (Alcoholic Beverage Control Board). She said they almost always put it towards the collection whenever they had extra money, especially if it came late in the year.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she was concerned about part-time staff – the ones working 19 hours or less with no benefits – that they used people for 19 hours, so they didn't have to provide benefits. She asked if the 80 positions needed were full-time, how they utilized the part-time staff, and if the part-time staff wasn't needed, would the full-time staff work better. *Ms. Moen said they had a conversion project to take some of their limited part-time staff and create full-time positions. She said they were looking for a reduction but not eliminating the part-time, limited positions. She said the 80 positions were accounting for the conversions as well. Mr. Turner said the part-time staff was needed to help with schedules; it couldn't be done with the full-time positions.*

Vice Chair Altman said the libraries were a crown jewel of the community. She said they had been advised of growth revenue of \$50 million, County budget needs of \$60 million, and a deficit of \$14.7 million. She said she wanted the community to understand it was about making the numbers work that year. She said she hoped that when they went forward, they may have needed to scour their budget to see what could be cut, as the County Manager had been tasked with doing so for the County. *Mr. Turner said they were starting to work on that.*

Commissioner Dunlap asked where they were in terms of paying for the new library. Mr. Turner said there was about \$11 million more to raise on the private side, and the Foundation would handle it. Commissioner Dunlap asked, on average, what the FTE (full-time equivalent) cost was. *Ms. Myers said 97% of the County's adopted budget went to buildings, people, technology, and books. She said the other 3% was everything else, such as programming, supplies, etc.*

Commissioner Dunlap asked if there was an average cost per employee. *Ms. Myers said it was around \$80,000 due to the range of salaries.* Commissioner Dunlap asked of the employees needed and due to the time periods in which the libraries were completed, if the staffing growth was incremental growth. *Ms. Moen said it would have been incremental growth if they weren't plugging along with the closures and filling the gaps over the last 8 years; it would feel like it hit all at once. She said they were working to stage it out over a two-year process, with the final budget impact felt in the third year.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked how much of an impact there would be and if they could lean on their board to do the fundraising for programming so they could get grant funding. She asked if so if any grants were coming down the pipeline. *Ms. Moen said there was \$424,000 for the programming budget. She said they did get private dollars for specific*

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programs such as Summer Break and their literary festival for kids. She said that all flowed through the Foundation. Mr. Turner said the Foundation was comprised of only four people, and they were raising the \$11 million. He said they would resume funding some of their services and programs once that was complete.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram asked if that was factored into their budget for the next year. *Ms. Myers said it was all part of the Common Spark Campaign and would close the gap for the fundraising for the new library building and some initiatives built into the campaign. She said it had nothing to do with their annual operations.*

Chair Jerrell reiterated the budget considerations and their rank plan. He asked where they were with the Plaza Midwood location. He asked when looking at libraries across the system whether they were in a high need or high opportunity area, on a percentage of per capita basis, if they saw the same level of use regardless of area. *Ms. Moen said the Plaza Midwood location would close on February 22nd for about 3 months for HVAC and roof improvements, and restroom and parking lot renovations. She said they would utilize MoLI (Mobile Library) and MiLA (Mobile Internet Lab) during that time. When referencing usage, she said it was difficult to measure apples to apples, but they used different statistics. She said they found that it varied greatly; for example, the circulation may be lower in a high-need area, but in-house use, such as door counts or computer use, may have been much higher.*

Chair Jerrell said he was always curious about the application of equity. He said that they may get a lot of traffic in high-opportunity areas, but they had access to many other resources. He said that when they focused on high-need areas, he wanted to make sure there was a focus on an application of equity where the resources were not there. *Ms. Moen said that when they prioritized through the Master Facilities Master Plan for the CIP, they kept in mind balancing library deserts in those high-need areas. She said they couldn't deliver some things, but they took the feedback for decision-making and where to take those services.*

25-0106 COUNTY INVESTMENT IN STATE JUSTICE SYSTEM AGENCIES

The Board received as information a presentation on the County's investment in State Justice System Agencies.

Sonya Harper, Director of Criminal Justice Services made the presentation.

Background: Earlier this year, the Board requested that the Manager provide an opportunity for the Board to discuss and determine the most appropriate role for the County to support the Court partners during the budget process. The purpose of this presentation is to provide important information on the staffing needs of the Courts and the County's role in funding the Courts.



County Investments in State Justice System Agencies

February 11th, 2025

NC Constitutional Responsibility for the Courts

- Article IV, Section 20: "The operating expenses of the judicial department, other than compensation to process servers and other locally paid non-judicial officers, shall be paid from State funds."



NC Statutory Responsibility for the Courts

- GS 7A-300 provides: "The operating expenses of the Judicial Department shall be paid from State funds, out of appropriations for this purpose made by the General Assembly, or from funds provided by local governments pursuant to GS 153A-212.1 and GS 160A-289.1."
- GS 7A-302 provides that the county shall be responsible for providing "courtrooms, office space for juvenile court counselors and support staff . . . and related judicial facilities (including furniture), as defined in this Subchapter"



NC Statutory Provisions for Additional Local Support

- GS 153A-212.1 allows counties to appropriate funds under state contract to provide services for speedy disposition of cases involving drug offenses, domestic violence or other offenses involving threats to public safety



NC Statutory Provisions for Additional Local Support

- GS 7A-44.1 allows the use of county or city funds for secretaries for superior court judges
- GS 7A-64 allows the use of county or city funds for temporary assistant district attorneys
- GS 7A-102(e) allows the use of county or city funds for additional assistant and deputy clerks and other employees of the clerk of court's office



NC Statutory Provisions for Additional Local Support

- GS 7A-300.1 allows the use of county or city funds to supplement salaries of judicial officials other than elected officials (judges, DAs, clerks) and magistrates
- GS 7A-498.7(i) allows the use of county or city funds for temporary assistant public defenders



NCAOC Workload Formula

- Developed by the National Center for State Courts
- Based on the most recent three fiscal years of court filings
 - District Attorney
 - Clerk of Court
 - Magistrates
 - Superior and District Court Judges
- Indigent Defense Services conducts workload analysis for Public Defender Offices



Superior Court Filings & Dispositions

- 5,848 total superior court criminal cases filed in Mecklenburg County in FY2023-2024.
 - The number of superior court criminal case filings in Mecklenburg County **decreased 58.2% over the last five Fiscal Years**
- 10,834 total superior court criminal cases disposed in Mecklenburg County in FY2023-2024



District Court Filings & Dispositions

- 68,619 total district court criminal cases (no infractions) filed in FY2023-2024. The number of district court criminal case (no infraction) filings in Mecklenburg County **decreased 35.5% over the last five Fiscal Years**
- 74,992 total district court criminal cases (no infractions) disposed in FY2023-2024



Pending Court Cases

From February 29, 2020 (start of pandemic) to December 31, 2024 (present)

- The number of **pending felony cases** and **pending superior court highest charge misdemeanor cases** in Mecklenburg County has **decreased**
- The number of **pending district court criminal and infraction cases, pending district court criminal cases (no infractions), and pending DWI cases** in Mecklenburg County has **increased**
- The number of **pending criminal cases in each case category (felony, district court criminal and infraction, district court criminal (no infraction), DWI, and superior court highest charge misdemeanor)** in Mecklenburg County has **decreased**.



Court Partner Needs Based on Filings

	AOC Identified Need	State Funded	County Funded	Total
Clerks	249.05	212.60	8	220.60
District Attorney	84.6	62	25	87
DA Legal Assistants	58.1	26	23	49
Magistrates	50	38.5	N/A	38.5
District Court Judges	19.48	21	N/A	21
Superior Court Judges	10.8	8	N/A	8
Trial Court Administrator			14	



Court Partner Needs Based on Filings

- Indigent Defense Services conducted an analysis of staffing needs of Public Defender Offices in 2019.
- It found that the Mecklenburg County Public Defender needed **93.97** attorneys but only had **60** funded positions.
- Currently, the County provides funding for 8 Assistant Public Defenders and 8 support staff positions.



Wake County Needs Based on Filings

	AOC Indicated Need	State Funded
Clerk	213.32	187.50
District Attorney	65	45
District Attorney Legal Assistants	51	32.75
Magistrates	40.7	32
District Court Judges	18.92	20
Superior Court Judges	7.6	6
Public Defenders*	56.08	31



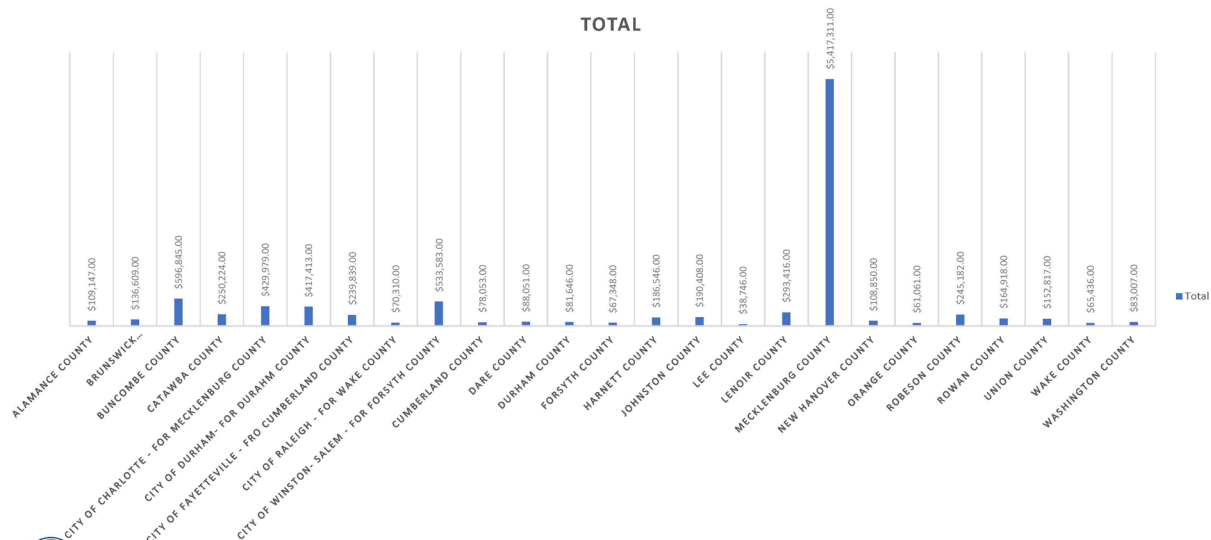
State Partners' County Budget Breakdown

FY25 County Funding \$8,588,698

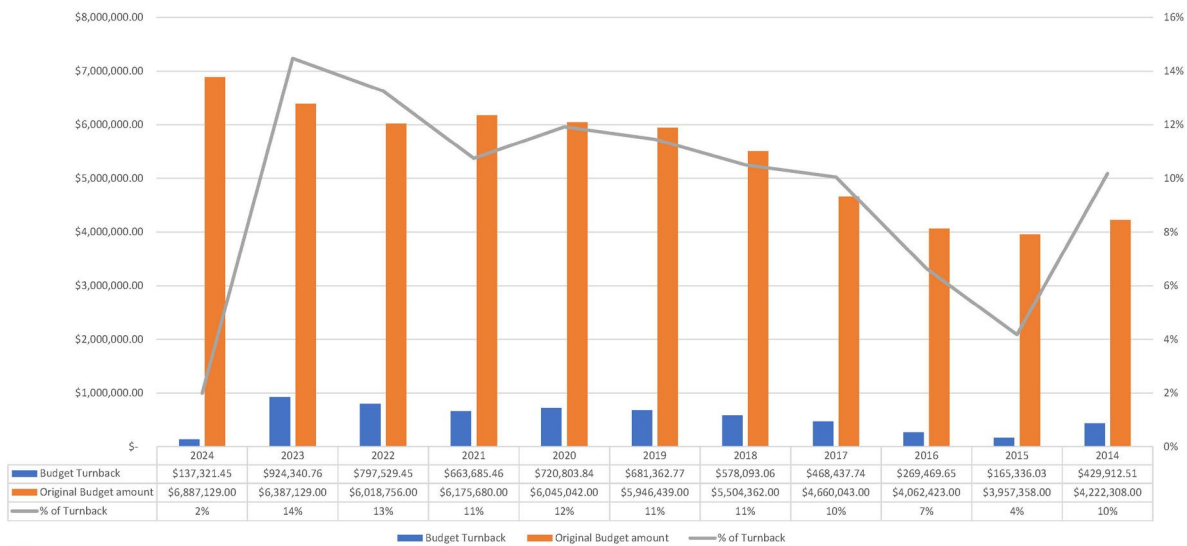
- **\$144,393** is one-time funding
- **\$95,053** is for the salary and benefits of one FT employee
- **\$7,525,989** is to fund three State contracts (AOC, IDS, & Supplement)
- The remaining **\$823,263** is under other object codes for operational expenses



Local Support Comparison: FY 2022



Unexpended Budget FY14 through FY24



Salary Amount

- 86 positions funded
 - 79 filled positions (as of February 2025)
 - 26 are paid under the contracted budgeted amount
 - 18 are paid at the contracted budgeted amount
 - 35 are paid over the contracted budgeted amount



Questions?



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Comments

Commissioner Griffin said about slide 13 that compared to Wake County, Mecklenburg County was urban, while Wake was suburban. He said conditions for crime and poverty were a lot higher, and kids in poverty were higher in Mecklenburg County. He said the need for criminal justice would be greater. He said when looking at the number of clerks, the deficit was at 2,029 in processing cases, particularly for juveniles; he thought the quicker they processed them, it would deter juvenile crimes. He mentioned how the City Council mentioned public health as an issue and said they had a lot of work to do in the County to improve. He asked for their opinion on whether their resources were adequate for them to do their job. *Ms. Harper said the formulas were based on criminal filings. She said Wake County tended not to have as many filings as Mecklenburg County. She said the turnback was sometimes lapse salaries that came from other lines in the budget. She said if positions were not filled, there wasn't a supplement. She said that with crime and criminal behavior, there tended to be buckets where offenses could fall, and they saw a decline in crimes.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said they needed to talk more about firearms. She said they were the only large urban county in the state, and there was no comparison as Mecklenburg County was different. She said slide 10 and the decrease in cases was a little misleading. She said that for the public, one of the things she heard most about was public safety being a concern, and the State was failing them in that area and education. She said she thought her constituents would say they needed to focus on those issues. She said they needed to support the court system and increase their number of staff as it was the way to support public safety.

Vice Chair Altman said that when they did not have enough court staff, people were being held up in the court system longer than needed. She said she would be interested in processing times, days to adjudication, and other high-level metrics to compare outcomes. She said she would also like to know how the metric increased over time if they continued to subsidize what the State was supposed to do. She asked if there were any lessons drawn for the fewer filings and if there were any statistical findings for fewer filings. *Ms. Harper said there were a lot of different factors, but there had been a focus on working on backlog and how cases were processed here. She said they had seen a lot of positive efforts.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said the State had a model; the less they spent on education, the more the County had to spend on their end. She said the County was providing more than their share because they looked through a lens of equity. She asked if they had to decrease the supplement amount for the County's portion and whether there were numbers to determine the impact of the most marginalized demographic. She also asked that since the County's portion was more evenly spread did they have the option to make it more targeted. *Ms. Harper said she would provide her with an answer after a follow-up. She said she didn't see any reason why Mecklenburg County wouldn't move towards other models demonstrated by other counties.*

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram said she felt there would always be a harder impact on black or brown communities. She asked if there was a way to quantify that to say, "If the budget was decreased by an X amount, it would have a certain impact on X demographic." *Ms. Harper said they would work on that.*

Commissioner Meier said she always thought they needed more Assistant District Attorneys (ADAs), but according to slide 11, they had more ADAs than identified as a need. *Ms. Harper said the formula showed they were above. She said when looking at other jurisdictions comparable in size across the country, with filing loads similar to the County's, they're staffed with greater numbers.*

Commissioner Meier asked if the County had met the Court's support request in the last several years. *Ms. Harper said they hadn't been able to fund everything, but they had seen increases year after year. She said there were some things they had to fund legislatively, such as if the*

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General Assembly said they would give salary increases. She said they were required to fund the increase if it was a position funded by the County. She said in her opinion, they were not in a position to fully fund the agencies the numbers based on the AOC Workload Formulas. She said the positions' deficit was greater than any County could fill.

Commissioner Dunlap said he was conflicted because there was a 58% decrease in Superior Court cases and a 35% decrease in filings with District Court cases. He said he would expect there would have been a comparable decrease in the cost of doing so since it was funding at a higher level than it was the previous year. He said they were funding at a rate of \$5 million more than any other county. He said he would have liked to see something to justify why they were at the levels they were given the reduction. He asked if while they were funding over and above the salary ranges, he thought it was being responsive to specific needs that the court system hadn't addressed. He said it all worked through the clerks, and if they were understaffed, how did that hinder the entire system. *Ms. Harper said that the implantation of ECOURT created an increase in need as they knew it would create an increase in workload.*

Motion was made by Commissioner Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, and unanimously carried, to extend the time for the speakers to respond.

Spencer Merriweather, the District Attorney, mentioned how he had to respond to his sixth officer-involved shooting since September that morning. He said that indicated how the Mecklenburg County community differed from any other in North Carolina. He said there were 2.3 million 911 calls that occurred in North Carolina. He said 1.3 million calls alone were in Mecklenburg County. He said he was grateful for the resources they received from the County. He highlighted the lack of prosecutors and their average salaries of \$60,000 while living with the highest cost of living in the state. He also highlighted the number of homicide cases filed in the County compared to Wake County. He said if any of their resources were removed, they would not suffer, but the constituents.

Casey Calloway, the Trial Court Administrator, said that 2.52% of the State's budget went to the judicial branch. She said in terms of contribution to County – State positions, the County funded about 16% of their operating cost, which was mainly for personnel, while the City funded about 1% of those costs. She said the State funded everything else. She said that the decrease in filings was from the pandemic to the present, in which they had an influx of cases since courts modified and canceled sessions. She said of the last published data received in December 2024, 12,276 felony cases were pending in their Superior Court. She said there were 48,101 criminal cases in the District Courts. She said she would provide them with more information.

Kevin Tulley, the Public Defender, said his office needed 94 lawyers, but they had 60. He said the State paid for 55, and the County paid for 5. He agreed with the District Attorney's numbers being off; his office should have about 123 attorneys. He thanked them for every dollar the County had invested.

Elise Chinn-Gary – Clerk of the Superior Court, highlighted 3 points that were discussed. She said the workload study was outdated and didn't consider the most current calculations since the launch of ECOURT. She said they did not have enough clerks to operate at a competent standard. She said the cost of not having those positions was the number of errors in or on the documents, delays, and they often were asked to have a special session to manage the backlog. She said her answer was often no because there was insufficient court staff. She mentioned attrition if staff is overworked it amounts to abuse.

Roy Wiggins, the Chief District Court Judge, said they had 20 judges because the State funded it. He said his work couldn't be done without the assistance of his fellow staff present. He urged the Board to take the numbers given seriously for consideration.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked them all. She said it was a crime that the State's budget only allocated 2.5% to the criminal justice system. She said she supports the court

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100%, and they needed to prioritize them in the budget.

Commissioner Meier thanked them and said it was important for the public to hear what was happening.

Commissioner Dunlap thanked them for shedding light on the numbers.

Vice Chair Altman thanked them. She said they would do the best they could and were deeply grateful.

Commissioner Griffin thanked them. He said he appreciated the statistics and updates and hoped they could better support them.

Commissioner Townsend-Ingram thanked them. She mentioned how education and the judicial system were both underfunded.


Chair Jerrell echoed the other Commissioners' thoughts. He said they appreciated what they and their partners do.

25-0111 **COMMISSIONER REPORTS**

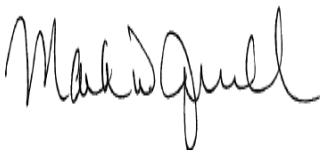
Commissioners shared information of their choosing within the guidelines as established by the Board, which included, but not limited to, past and/or upcoming events.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Jerrell declared the meeting adjourned at 5:21 p.m.



Arlissa Eason, Deputy Clerk to the Board



Mark Jerrell, Chair