

**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 28, 2020**

**BUDGET PUBLIC/POLICY MEETING**

*Due to the State of North Carolina's Declaration of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and per NCGS § 166A-19.24, the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners conducted a remote meeting using the WebEx application.*

**CALL TO ORDER – 2:30 PM - REMOTE MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met remotely on Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 2:30 p.m. with Chair Dunlap presiding.

Present:     Chair George Dunlap  
                  Commissioner Patricia "Pat" Cotham  
                  Commissioner Trevor M. Fuller  
                  Commissioner Susan Harden  
                  Commissioner Mark Jerrell  
                  Commissioner Vilma D. Leake  
                  Commissioner Elaine Powell  
                  Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell  
                  Commissioner Ella B. Scarborough

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

**20-6108: Central Piedmont Community College FY2021 Budget**

Dr. Kandi W. Deitemeyer, Central Piedmont Community College, presented the FY2021 funding request from the community college to the Board of County Commissioners. She said they were having a wonderful year the incredible work of faculty and staff this past year. She said that pre-Covid-19, they were having a remarkable year for the college and still were but strategically around her strategic initiatives with a focus on students and their success and ensuring they were continuing to develop the talent ready for a regional workforce. She said they believed post COVID-19, the distance will be needed even more by our community, and we remade steadfast to be that partner for our community and vision as well.

Dr. Deitemeyer reviewed the demographics of students that attend CPCC. She pointed out the number of graduates who were participated there in 2022 to receive a degree and diploma and just 250 who would have received high school credentials. She said they talk about their partnership with CMS and that it was one of their largest partnerships, so she wanted to give an update. She said their middle college high school at the Cato Campus was just one of the three Charlotte area high schools that ranked in the nation's top 500 by U.S. news and world report. She said they were not only proud of the middle college

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faculty and staff but also the faculty and staff who work on the campus from Central piedmont.

Dr. Deitemeyer said the middle colleges at Cato, Levine, Harper and Merancas had just over 830 students in grades 11 through 13. She said that was about \$20,000 tuition free college credits saved there in the past academic, which came to about \$1.5 million in savings for CMS families. She said that there were about 3,700 students from high school who were participating in career and college promise. She said given the numbers that were served, CPCC had the most career and college promised students of any other North Carolina community college. She said they feel pretty great about that in terms of the service that they were doing in the community and that those particular students had earned just over \$23,000 tuition free college credits this year, which comes to about \$1.7 million in savings. She said it was a little over \$3 million of tuition savings for Mecklenburg County families.

Dr. Deitemeyer mentioned UNC Charlotte was their largest transfer partner and builder of the talent pipeline for the community. She mentioned that CPCC opened a store front in October 2019 in Junior Achievement's Central Carolina's Junior Achievement's Finance Park, which was a program spearheaded by Junior Achievement USA to teach young people how to follow a monthly budget, critical thinking, how much it costs to live, and how to solve problems. She said there was a part-time employee who worked with students on different career aspects and opportunities to educate some pathways that they offered and talk to them about how to apply for college, as well as how to fill out for financial aid. She said that CPCC was the first community college in the Country to participate in this national program and that they believed given the sound, financial principles and thinking through life on the front end was really a good thing for those making a choice.

Dr. Deitemeyer reviewed the program 49erNext, that CPCC had with UNC Charlotte. She said the program was announced October 3rd, with a soft launch in August as a new co-admission program so students could seamlessly transfer to UNC Charlotte with greater intentionality. She said the student would be co-admitted to the program, and to fully integrate a student's experience, they could take advantage of what was happening at CPCC as well as some aspects of life at UNC Charlotte. She said that as long as they finished the two-year degree and graduated with a 2.0 GPA, they would be guaranteed admission into a number of programs at the university. She said that currently the college was marketing to CMS and others about the program. She said they had received a million-dollar gift to provide scholarships. She said that came from Peggy and Bob Culbertson to support students as they try to navigate from Central Piedmont into UNC Charlotte. She said that the Year Up Project was another national project housed at CPCC with partners being the John M Belk Endowment, as well as Bank of America. She said it was launched in August of 2019 and that it was a year-long program, in which a student would go to the college to take courses their second semester, and they would be out in the field of work honing in their professional skills. She said that by the time a student ended the program, in four months they would be making at least about \$40,000.

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Dr. Deitemeyer told the story of Muriel and Aumani Magliore, a mother and son; she stating the young man went to the college because the son did not know what he wanted to do when he graduated from high school. She said they went for a tour of CPCC and as they were there, although she had a degree and certifications, she asked her son how he would feel if she went back to college with him, and he told her he thought it would be pretty great. Dr. Deitemeyer said she was just glad to have had that great story between mother and son.

Dr. Deitemeyer said that pre-COVID-19 they were just shy of raising \$30 million already with two and a half more years to reach their goal of \$40 million and that she anticipated they would be able to do that. She said that all of the dollars would go to support students, program, and faculty. She went over how they were meeting some of the student needs for COVID-19. She said the students had not been on campus since March 6, 2020 and that the college had remained open even though they were working in a remote learning environment and teleworking environment. She said they postponed graduation ceremonies, and it would no longer be at Bojangles in May. She said they would do smaller ceremonies to celebrate the students as long as they felt confident that they would be able to do that in late July. Precautions taken by CPCC in response to COVID-19: moved all necessary student services to online and virtual delivery; suspended programs that require in-person instruction; students had not been on campus since March; distributed 215 laptops and 167 hotspots as loaners to students in need; launched the Central Piedmont Cares initiative for students and employees postponed May graduation ceremony to July 29-31. prepared to offer summer sessions fully online, and Central Piedmont Foundation was raising money for student Emergency Fund \$100,000 challenge gift. She said they would start the summer session online with hopes that in the second summer session they could begin to open things up and test out some protocols. She said that they hired Marsh Risk Consultant to come in, and they did a physical assessment of each campus, doing formal and informal interviews with students, faculty, staff, and other constituents. She said they reviewed documents comprised of employee onboarding materials, emergency action plans, business continuity plans, facility drawings/diagrams, and 2,013 security-incident case files from 2017, 2018, and 2019, and in total, the Marsh team made 41 recommendations. These identify opportunities for improvement in facility physical security, organization and staffing, policies and procedures, equipment, and training. She said one first action based on recommendations was establishing an AVP of Emergency Management position.

Mike Whiteman, Vice-President of Finance and Administrative Services, Central Piedmont Community College, reviewed CPCC's proposed requested budget and stated that there were four main categories; the first three dealt with maintenance and operation of the college's infrastructure, and the fourth helped them to hire and retain high quality faculty and staff and students deserve. He said that the largest plot of money was in facility maintenance. He said that in FY21, they were anticipating a zero ask for capital purchases; an ask of \$28.65 million for facility maintenance; facility support cost of \$2.71 million, a proposed request for wage and benefit allocation of \$9, 255, 000, which would total \$39,691,317.

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Mr. Whiteman said the salary and benefits line would build in a two percent for staff, which would also include investing in an Associate Vice President of Safety and Security, based on the recommendation from the security evaluation analysis. He said that in looking at both rows four and nine, you would see decreases in both lines and that they were largely from using the deferred maintenance money in helping to update the infrastructure, energy efficiencies, and things of that nature. He said good savings were being seen from both of those lines. He said he would also point out line seven, which was the largest area of request and the increase there was largely due to a contractual increase that they paid to their third-party facility maintenance provider. He said they had an increase in building square footage and also consumer price index increase that was a result of that contract. He said that the last piece was row 13, in which they did build in a two percent raise for faculty and staff and this was only the supplement portion; however, the number was relatively small to do some turnover. He said from year to year, the percentage of allocations to each bucket remained the same for the proposed, county allocations. Mr. Whiteman showed the overall operation budget for CPCC; there were three, main buckets of funding, with the first being the County funding, which was meant to be used for infrastructure and maintenance operations. She said the next three lines was one bucket but split into three sub-buckets, which were the institutional funds. He said that student financial aid and grants, the largest piece there was the Pell money that they receive roughly to the tune of \$27 million which would go into CPCC then get pushed right back up to the State of North Carolina. He said for auxiliary services, those would be items such as the bookstore, WTDI, and security operations. He said student fees and continuing education were student fees that would be charged, such as campus access parking and security fees, lab fees, and technology fees. He stated it was important to note that the auxiliary services and student feeds and continuing education fees must be used for the purposes for which they were charged, and they were not able to be diverted to salaries or other items that they were not meant to be for; they did not want to charge the students for a certain item then use the money for a different item. He said the largest piece of the budget was the State allocation; roughly \$99.9 million that must be used for instruction and instructional support costs. He said it could not be used for maintenance of the infrastructure and buildings.

Mr. Whiteman said in terms of deferred maintenance projects, the projects range from safety code improvements, energy efficiency projects, roof repair and replacements, and infrastructure and facility updates, and those last three combined were really helping them save in utilities and energy costs in their operations. He said there were 51 deferred maintenance projects planned, with 32 having been completed, 17 in progress, and two which were not yet started, and two of those were from the 2020 funding that they received. He went over the proposed projects for FY21, stating the numbers were in round number estimates and once approved, bids would be solicited with numbers find tuned. He said the projects related to security, replacing roofs, and equipment efficiencies. Mr. Whiteman discussed how deferred maintenance efforts had transitioned into sustainability efforts.

Mr. Whiteman said that in terms of energy, over the last 12 years, the college had increased its building footprint by 37 percent. At the same time, it had decreased total

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energy consumption (electricity and natural gas) by 14 percent; decreased energy consumption per square foot by 37 percent; decreased total energy expenses by 5.4 percent. He said in terms of recycling, the Culinary Arts program and Harris Conference Center continue to compost approximately 20 tons of food waste each year; central Piedmont recycles approximately 150 tons of paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and metal per year. He said in terms of water, the college's water consumption per square foot had decreased by 11 percent over the last 12 years, the college saved 1.9 million gallons of water in 2019 compared to 2018.

Mr. Whiteman went over the results of an economic impact study conducted for Central Piedmont indicate the college contributes \$1.2 billion annually to the Mecklenburg County economy, an amount equal to one percent of the county's gross regional product. He said the \$1.2 billion economic impact included: \$155.4 million in operations spending; \$36.5 million in construction spending; \$42.1 million in student spending; and a \$919.5 million impact made by college alumni who live and work in Mecklenburg County. He said for every dollar a student invested in their Central Piedmont education, they received \$3.20 in future earnings for an annual rate of return of 15.5 percent. For every dollar of public money invested in the college, taxpayers received \$1.70 for an average rate of return of 4.5 percent.

Mr. Whiteman reviewed said the CMS-Central Piedmont middle college high schools based at four Central Piedmont campuses continued to perform well and gain attention from across the state; the middle colleges at Cato, Levine, Harper, and Merancas campus had 830 students in grades 11 through 13, and those students had earned 20,241 tuition-free college credits during the 2019–2020 academic year.

Central Piedmont also offered more than 50 career and technical pathways and four transfer tracks as a part of the N.C. Career & College Promise program for high school juniors and seniors, and in all, 3,706 high school students had participated in the program in the 2019–2020 academic year, giving Central Piedmont the most Career & College Promise students of any college in North Carolina. He said those students had earned 23,083 tuition-free college credits thus far during the academic year.

Commissioner Leake said they gave them everything that CPCC asked for last year and asked if there were an increase in needs.

Mr. Whiteman said the main driver in the increase was their contractual obligation to the third-party facilities maintenance service supply of \$1.4 million.

Commissioner Harden said in her mind it seemed like a relatively modest increase in requests. She requested CPCC's requests for the past five years.

Mr. Whiteman agreed to provide that.

Commissioner Cotham said she hoped sometime in the future that he could alert the Board to the needs of some of the students who were not only food insufficient but also

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housing or living on the streets or in unstable housing, so they could better understand what the challenges were there.

Commissioner Fuller requested to know where CPCC's fat would be for if the County had to stay steady or had to cut.

Commissioner Powell asked what day it prepared and submitted.

Dr. Deitemeyer said she believed they submitted it a week ago, Thursday prior to when the County staff asked CPCC to get it to them.

Ms. Powell said she thought it would be good to be prepared for knowing where the most strategic place to cut as they were in an emergency situation.

Chair Dunlap asked Dr. Deitemeyer to share information about the upcoming board vacancy, because he was excited about the person she was recommending.

Dr. Deitemeyer said they had asked the Commissioners to consider Mr. Jim Dunn of Atrium Health and went into that thinking about it before COVID-19, because they had anticipated and understood that healthcare was truly the number one workforce opportunity for the community. She said now being in the midst of COVID-19 and not understanding what it would look like coming out, having someone on the Board who could work in full partnership about what the needs of the largest industry, made a lot of good sense. She said her and Mr. Dunn had gotten to know each other, and she believed his expertise and advantage and leverage of what Atrium does in the community really was the conversation they had internally then with the Board leadership of who would be a good fit. She said she hoped as they thought about the appointment that it made as much sense to them and that they would affirm that seat for them.

### **20-6109: Mecklenburg County Court Officials FY2021 Budget Request**

Charleston Carter, Trial Court Administrator, presented the court official's budget request to the Board of County Commissioners. The court officials budget request includes funding for the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and the Clerk of Courts.

Mr. Carter went over the mission of Mecklenburg County. He stated the mission in the 26th Judicial District was to provide accessible justice to the citizens and the community, which was the fundamental organizing principle of the Court and its justice partners in Mecklenburg County. He said they were committed to working collaboratively with the community to prevent and solve problems in order to enhance the quality of life for all individuals.

Mr. Carter said their support helped them to provide an updated strategic plan that had propelled and streamlined information, including a future upgraded case management, courtroom technology and technical associate. He thanked the Board for their funding, as

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it had allowed them to extend the hours at the Self-Serve Center, who had just celebrated 20 years of service, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He said at the Self-Serve Center, individuals could now represent their selves in various ways by receiving forms, educational resources, and the guidance to, in some case, avoid unnecessary litigation. He said the Self-Serve Center would not get people advice but would give hope and security for those who may otherwise have been without a voice in their own defense.

Mr. Carter said last year when the budget was presented, the Debt-Relief Program was spoken about, which helps drivers whose drivers licenses was revoked for non-payment of traffic ticket.

Mr. Carter displayed a short video.

Mr. Carter said of the 11,456 cases, divided as it related to the \$15,000 equated to \$1.31; you had changed someone's life forever, because you invested that \$1.31 in them, because you believed in giving back to the community. He said to continue with some of the funding that Mecklenburg County had afforded them, they had digital signs up to see what courtroom the need to be in; evidence presentation system, for attorneys or pro se litigants to present their evidence of a; a jury replacement with computers and microphones, so someone can hear a person speaking in the courtroom. He said all of these things were beneficial to the citizens of Mecklenburg County.

Mr. Carter mentioned the Mecklenburg County' average daily jail population had decreased slightly again from a daily rate of 998 in 2018, to 983 in 2019. He said although it had decreased on a small portion, it was still showing that they were doing something right in the court system. He said the National Center for State Courts had benchmarks that they always tried to make sure the Courts were measured by. He said as it related to measuring the court's clearance rate, the National Center indicated that if you were above 90%, you were doing a great job in your court system. He said in 2019, they were at 98% and that the ultimate goal was always to go over 100%, which would mean they were decreasing their backlogged case.

Mr. Carter said as they had often heard about how much debt as it related to funding for the court, it was actually less than two percent, and they had to take the two percent of what they were giving for the court system and that was the reason why it was so important that they had partners like the County to see the need for the courts and to address those needs to always enhance their operations in the court system.

Mr. Carter said as it related to revenue contribution collected, it was about \$249 million; approximately 45% of the Court's budget was covered by fees and essentially, only one penny out of every tax dollar was spent to support our court system. He said when talking about supplemental funding from Mecklenburg County, 19% of funding received from Mecklenburg County under contract with the Administrative Office of the Courts; that 19% equated to about \$6 million in assisting them across the board with court operation. Mr. Carter mentioned the Self-Serve Center again, stating it was the only Self-Serve Center

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in the State of North Carolina, which served as a model. He said that last year, the Self-Service Center helped approximately 16,000 individuals.

Mr. Carter said that as it related to the County requests, for personnel, they were having trouble hiring and retaining at the salaries that they could currently offer. He said they were trying to get some flexibility as it related to hiring individuals to work for the agency. He said if they had a salary cap based on the person's education or experience, they would have had some sort of flexibility of what they could hire an individual at and hopefully retain that individual so they would not go elsewhere in a short time frame. He said as it related to the AOC contract for the District Attorney's Office, they put \$120,000 in seeking two positions, and the reason why it was so important was that those positions centered around domestic violence and they would work with victims in the court room as well as with the new Marcy Law, which would increase victim's contact that a District Attorney would need assistance with and to have two individuals, they would be able to accommodate that new law or enhanced law. He said the request for the Trial Court Administrator's Office, last year he mentioned that with the Self-Serve Center they had to go to the State to make a request in terms of various grants that may be offered. He said there was a position in the Self-Serve Center called the Domestic Violence Coordinator position. He said with that position, for six years, they had received the grant and that typically it would take about three years and they would say you had to find sustainability, but they continued to apply a fourth, fifth, and sixth year. He said they were informed last year that they would no longer provide money to sustain that particular position. He said he was grateful that in January the County picked up that position for them but that they would need to make another request from January to June, because they were starting a new budget cycle. He said the request for the Larry King Clubhouse was \$5,000 for merit raises and insurance increases. He said for some of the enhanced performance that they had microfilm for the Special Proceedings, like mental health records, area in the Clerk's Office.

Mr. Carter said the second request was the digital sign-in kiosk, also requested by the Clerk's Office. He explained that when someone went to the third floor to, for example, file a civil matter with the Clerk's Office, there would be a long line, and a person may be in line for 10 to 15 minutes just to get to a window to find out that he/she was in the wrong line. He said that if there were a kiosk outside of the Clerk's Office on the same floor, they would know which line to get into and which window to go to so they could make sure their needs were addressed. He said with the FileSolv project, last year the Public Defender's Office requested storage files be scanned, and they received the money for those files, but those files in particular went back to 2017 and now they need 2018 and 2019 files scanned; the reason why you saw the \$309,772 was because it was for two years. He said also in the Public Defender's Office, they were requesting a projector, which would cost approximately \$9,406. He said that other needs were requested as followed: a jury management system, for the entire jury process, \$84,100; a digital signage license \$9,000; digital docket displays, for seven courtrooms, \$56,630; evidence presentation for courtroom 4310 \$32,669 furniture replacement \$43,495; video conferencing in Courtroom 5370 \$13,520; controller for 4th floor displays \$5,756; and video conferencing in Courtroom 6130 \$13,520.

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Mr. Carter spoke on the spirit of collaboration, with education & 26th Judicial District Collaboration by touching on the following programs: Race Matters for Juvenile Justice, a collaborative leadership group that would work within our community to reduce disproportionality and disparate outcomes for children and families of color through institutional organizing, education, and workforce development. Civics 101 course led by current and former government officials in a face to face for people wanting to learn more about how local government works; Court College Educational program for adults about all aspects of justice system; Court Camp Educational program for children ages 14 to 18 interested in learning more about the law and the North Carolina Judicial Branch.

Commissioner Leake said where they needed to put money was with the court system to make it better so that people wouldn't have had the experience of going through a system that was already against them in the first place.

Commissioner Fuller said in regard to the traffic fines, he was grateful there they had that level of thoughtfulness towards the residents, as he was a huge believer of second chances.

Commissioner Harden said she continued to be frustrated about the level of State support for the courts. She said none of the requests seemed out of line but that it was another example of how unfunded the offices were.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell followed up on Commissioner Harden's frustration of how the State was failing them.

Commissioner Cotham echoed her colleagues' comments. She said that Mecklenburg County spent more than \$400 million that the State should spend, that they could not spend on CPCC or CMS or other things. She said the State knows Mecklenburg County will do it because they want better for the community. She said they needed to continue to harp on it.

Commissioner Fuller said he was glad to hear his colleague's comments on the state of affairs on the funding of their court system. He said the problem he had was not only the funding level but also the restrictions that were put on the counties when they want to do things, they would have to do permission of the ALC in order to do these things. He mentioned not seeing a funding request for maintaining cleanliness of the courthouse and felt they needed to do that. He said let's get back to electronic filing.

### **20-6118: COVID-19 Response Update**

Dena Diorio, County Manager reminded the Board that the Stay at Home proclamation was extended April 16, 2020 to April 29, 2020 and added a provision in it that said they would extend automatically if the Governor extended but that they would keep the same restrictions in place that they had, and that was the agreement that was reached between

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the County, City, and six towns. She said the group came to an agreement that they felt at present time, based on the data they had, that they wanted to rescind their current proclamation and align to what the Governor's order had in it. She said that meant a few things and that several things would be allowed to operate now in the County under the Governor's order that they did not permit under their order. She said once the Governor issued his order, the Department of Revenue would issue a number of letters allowing exceptions to the Governor's order or deeming them essential.

Ms. Diorio gave a brief update on the loan programs, stating that for the Small Business Loan Stabilization Fund there had been \$1.5 million of loans which had been approved and that there were some that had been denied due to not meeting requirements and that there were several still being considered. She said at that point in time, they were oversubscribed, and they had applications totaling about \$7.9 million in applications. He said once the application process was done and all the applications were processed, they could go back to the Board and decide whether or not they wanted to add the money to that fund. She said to the Micro Loan Fund, a million-dollar fund, they had approved up to \$90,000 in loans which were geographically dispersed throughout the County.

She said that she had been in conversation with NASCAR and Joe Gibbs Racing and Cabarrus and Iredell County counterparts for them to be in alignment as it related to NASCAR. She said Joe Gibbs Racing was the only NASCAR team in Mecklenburg County and she was waiting for Cabarrus County to make a decision on whether or not they would permit their race teams to go back into their shops and the feedback she received from Cabarrus County was that they were waiting for the Governor to make a decision about the Coke-a-Cola 600, and he felt the race would be able to go on if the health situation was maintained without fans. She said based upon that, they would allow Joe Gibbs Racing to go back into their shop to be able to get ready for that race.

Gibbie Harris, Public Health Director, said based on the questions received at the last meeting, in present time, they had 1,528 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Mecklenburg County and about half of those were received from isolation, meaning they were no longer infectious based on what they knew at that point in time. She said they met the criteria that the CDC had put out and there had been 45 deaths to date. She noted one thing from the data put out that there were several new charts, indicators that the State was using to track whether they were doing what they needed to with social distancing moving forward as they opened things up and what they were seeing in the data, while having looked at 14-day trends, and what they were seeing with a seven-day average was a stable trend over the last 14 days. She said the second one was the daily percent positive of laboratory COVID-19, again having looked at a seven-day average they saw about a nine percent positivity rate in present time, with a stable trend with that as well. She said lastly, they looked at hospitalization of COVID-19 patients and with the seven-day average through the 26th of April they saw a slight decrease in the hospitalizations and would keep a close eye on it as it could quickly change. She said they saw stability in those three indicators, but that stability did not indicate an increase or decrease, in other words they were not moving in the downward protectory the Governor had spoken to that they wanted to see as they moved forward.

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Ms. Harris said the additional graft they had in the data was the social distancing index. She said they were now looking at the University of Maryland COVID-19 impact analysis platform, which was what was being used nationally. She said what that had shown them was a sustained increase in available mobility tracking since the order went into place. She said the order did have an impact in social mobility in the community and they would continue to watch that as they would move forward.

Ms. Harris spoke on the emergency department data they had been tracking and trends that they saw. She said they looked to the emergency room data collected at the State level but that what they had seen from January 2020 to April 18, 2020 was that the ED visits due to motor vehicle crashes had dropped dramatically. She said in terms of ED visits for suicide attempts or self-harm, they saw a slight decrease over the last month. She said visits due to mental health and substance abuse, including overdoses and violence were stable and, in some places, a slight downward trend was seen. She said the ED visits for stroke were also down pretty significantly and she was not sure what the reason was. She said the thought was that some people were fearful of going to the ED with an acute illness, so they were just not showing up in the hospital. She said the Vital Statistic Team was looking for death trends that may have been seen over the past couple of months to try to understand that particular trend. She said the other thing they noticed was calls to poison control center for cleaning materials and disinfectants with a spike leading up to the introduction of the Stay at Home order and that they had continued compared to last year in terms of being more elevated.

Ms. Harris lastly spoke to long term care facilities as they had received changed guidance from the State on Sunday evening that they would begin to release the names of the long term care facilities in the State that had outbreaks as well as the number of individuals infected in the facilities or who tested positive in those facilities as well as the number of deaths. She said they had already released the names and they went ahead and released the data based on state guidance. She said they had 11 facilities and added an additional since yesterday, which was Asbury Health and Rehab Center, which currently had two case. She said the other thing that he would mention was that FEMA at the federal level had committed to providing seven-day supplies of PPE to all Medicaid and Medicaid approved long term care facilities. She said they would start that the first week of May and continue it through mid-June and would reassess at that point. She said starting next week, they would get a seven-day supply of PPE, which would be reassessed and replenished until the mid of June. She said in the meantime, they worked through the EOC to provide the PPE that the facilities had need of in present time.

Chair Dunlap said they wanted to know what date the order would be rescinded and if they could produce one document which said everything that could be done under the order, since there were so many orders and updates to the order.

Ms. Diorio said the order would be rescinded tomorrow, April 29, 2020. She said in terms of putting together a comprehensive document together, they might run a risk that something would be left out, so they would let the Governor's order stand and should

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there be questions about what people could or could not do, they would try to answer them but may have to get information from the Governor's Office about the intent of the order.

Chair Dunlap said it would have been very helpful to have had even if they had to call the Governor's Office.

Commissioner Leake said domestic violence was a major issue, and she said she hoped some better means were being set up for physical and verbal domestic violence. She said the other things were that masks and gloves would be provided through Dr. Jerome Williams with Novant. She requested gender and race data in terms of who was in the hospital and had the virus in Mecklenburg County.

Ms. Harris responded that available information was in the report that came out yesterday. She said at present time, 55% were in females; 45% in males; 30% white; 45% black; 18% Hispanic; and not quite three percent Asian.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if the order would require a new proclamation or if the Governor's order would just supplement and move it into place.

Ms. Diorio responded that another order would need to be done.

Commissioner Jerrell asked for an update on testing.

Ms. Harris responded that they were averaging around 600 to 700 tests, in the county, a day that they were aware of. She said the only ones who were reported testing to the County were Novant and Atrium. She said they had conversations about additional testing they may need to do on the County. She said the other change continued to be test accessibility and to maintain an appropriate amount of PPE in the County but that it seemed to be approving. She said the State gave them guidance around testing but that it was what they had been doing, which was the practice on the high-risk populations and healthcare providers and first responders but that they were having conversations about potential for expanding that over the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Jerrell said as some restrictions were lost and the economy became opened, he believed it was imperative that they moved expeditiously around the test piece, because that would be the lynch pin that could blow everything up.

Ms. Harris responded that it was directly related to access to testing supplies and that they did have some additional capacity and were trying to be judicious about how they used it. She said that more testing would need to be available as they entered back into the workforce.

Commissioner Harden asked about the status of the field hospital.

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Ms. Diorio responded that the hospitals had withdrew their request for the field hospital and had not submitted another one. She said they were able to create additional surge capacity within their four walls and were not even into their surge capacity yet.

Commissioner Harden asked when they would receive numbers of the unemployed in the community.

Ms. Diorio said as soon as the State was able to provide them.

Commissioner Harden what she could do to get those numbers.

Ms. Diorio said she could try to get a request from the Unemployment Commission, and she could ask Starla and Peter to follow up, but as indicated earlier, they were focused on the claims.

Commissioner Harden said she was glad FEMA was providing long term care in nursing facilities a seven-day supply. She said they would do that for a month but that the commitment felt wholly inadequate and she was hearing a lot of stories from nursing aids and people who were working the community elderly who did not begin to have the adequate protective equipment to even begin, much less the seniors having the masks they need to wear. She said not only do the people who work in the facilities need them but also the people who lived in the facilities need them.

Ms. Harris said she would be happy to push recommendations but that the State was supposed to be providing it and evidently had not been able to, which was why FEMA stepped in.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked in terms of the Small Business Loan Program if they were still accepting applications if people wanted to apply.

Ms. Diorio responded yes.

Commissioner Harden was pleased with the decision of matching the Governor's order. She believed that if there was some loosening of restrictions that it was important to get the message out about PPE, in order to ensure everyone had access to them. She asked if gloves were also something they should be focused on or if it was just masks.

Ms. Diorio said masks were number one, as well as social distancing. She said gloves were not necessary so long as you were using hand sanitizer.

Ms. Diorio stated she received update on the unemployment information which indicated that they would not be able to get information until May 22, 2020 for March.

Commissioner Cotham asked what the status was on the porta johns for the homeless. She asked if they were still located as the map showed and if they were being switched out.

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Ms. Diorio responded that they had pulled back the ones that were out there, as they needed to be replaced. She said it was her understanding that they had at least porta johns going to at least 12 different sites in the County and they would be cleaned twice a day, which was an improvement over what they had before. She said she did know that around Hal Marshal would be one of the sites. She said there would be handwashing stations with the porta johns. She said they worked with homeless service providers to help them locate the best places to put them.

Commissioner Fuller asked clarifying questions and received answers from Attorney Wade and Manager Diorio. Mr. Fuller said the actions of rescinding the County's Stay at Home proclamation served to undermine the County's public health role and the statutes undermined the public health role and public health authority and that they had responsibility for public health throughout the County, even in those municipalities, yet they did not have authority with respect to public health even in those municipalities. He said he thought that was wrong and thought people who had been pushing the effort to undermine the actions to respond to COVID-19 should be ashamed of their selves for pushing to reopen in a reckless and political way. He said he believed it should be addressed with the General Assembly, because they did not need to be there again, and it should not be the subject of a consensus. He said it was the County which had the public health authority and that they should had the truth authority that went with it.

Commissioner Scarborough said they should be able to stick to their guns; when they said something, they should keep with it instead of going back and forth.

Commissioner Powell said she was hoping that if they went with the Governor's order that they would at least require masks. She said she would just keep pushing for masks for everyone as much as she could. She said she knew there was a supply problem but thought they really needed to have everyone wearing a mask when unable to social distance. She asked why they took so much guidance from the State when they had such a crisis there. She said she believed they needed a higher standard of care with the populations who were at risk. She asked if they were allowed to do that at a local level. Ms. Diorio said they had limitations as of what they could do at the local level and they did not license or any direct management over them other than from the public health perspective. She assured Commissioner Powell that they were doing everything they could to work with those facilities to insure they had what they need and were using the best practice. She said they were working with MEDIC and the Environmental Health staff who had assessed the facilities and were checking in on them to make sure they were being compliant with the work they needed to do. She said they would continue to have conversations with the State requesting their guidance and involvement in making sure residents were receiving what they should but that was one of the constraints they had.

Chair Dunlap

Commissioner Powell said it was an obstacle for them and they wanted to help with it and would. She said she hoped her colleagues would as well.

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Chair Dunlap asked now that counties could borrow money at zero percent interest if it would make sense to borrow money given, they had outstanding loans with interest and the fact CMS was still trying to purchase land they were responsible for?

Ms. Diorio said the Finance Team was always looked for opportunities for whether or not they could refinance any of their existing debt but that she could have them go back to do an analysis to see if there were any potential savings that could be achieved by doing a refinance of the existing debt.

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Commissioner Leake asked if they needed to stay at home now.

Ms. Diorio said yes, at least until May 8, 2020.

Commissioner Jerrell wanted to continue to lift up the most vulnerable who were in professions of service which were at high risk.

Commissioner Harden said they did not even have a good rain gauge in terms of that their unemployment looked like in the community. She said it was hard to know how to plan when they did not have accurate data to measure the job situation in the community. She said the Long-Term Care and Nursing Home Task Force reminded her of the situation around pre-k; while pre-k was not in their lane, they made an absolutely commitment to understanding what was involved with pre-k and being a leader in that space. She said she wanted to say she did not want to regulate nor oversee the regulatory pieces of the nursing care or long-term care facilities, but at the same they knew those places were the epicenter of poor health outcomes for the community. She said in speaking to the community, they had a scorecard for the Governor in terms of what it would take to reopen the community. She said it seemed if they wanted to reopen and try to target certain numbers and declines and outbreak, they would need to improve the health outcomes of seniors in the community. She said they should be laser focused on that, because if they could cut those outcomes and improve those outcomes for those folks, that would be 50% of the cases. She said the Governor's phase at every level said nursing homes and long-term care facilities would be locked down. She said that was no life for seniors and owe it to the seniors to find out what were better ways of living for them as they lived through COVID-19.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said if half of the cases were in nursing homes and long-term care, that they should had poured resources and not caring whose responsibility it was if that was what it took to get reopened. She agreed with what Commissioner Powell said about requiring masks. She said if the County and City was not responsible for public health, she had a problem with the process of how they decided to rescind. She said she was pleased they were on the same order but not pleased with the way they got there necessarily.

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Commissioner Cotham said she was glad the towns stayed with them as long as they did and were grateful for that. She thought there was a lot of confusion as to why there were two different plans and thought going with the Governor's plan would reduce the confusion, and the result were that the people would follow the order better than they had since there would be only one order.

Commissioner Fuller said he asked questions about the orders because he perceived risks that once they were past this situation, the fact there was confusion was a threat to the public health authority, not just in that particular situation but anything that came down the line. He believed if things were just allowed to happen, that would set a precedent to what would come next, because what they would say next in another situation was that you would bring back what you allowed in this situation. He said he thought what was discovered was that there was a hole in the law that was a threat to the County's public health authority. He said it should be not be different in a non-emergency situation than an emergency citation. He said he took this very seriously. He said he wanted to keep moving forward in letting the data and experience guide them and to not let politics in, which was what occurred. He said he thought that was a danger to public health.

Commissioner Powell said she believed all of the town mayors in north Mecklenburg loved their community and did not want to see any suffering, so while they did not want confusion, they wanted a slow, phased reopening. She believed that if they saw and indication of an increase in incidents that due to the respect the Emergency Management Team had shown to each mayor, that they could all go forward together unified in a way they needed to. She said it had to be data driven. She mentioned her frustrations around being unable to see the unemployment report until May.

Chair Dunlap said while they could not mandate people to wear mask, more and more people were listening to their conversation and understood how important a mask was to get rid of the virus. He thanked the community for following the order and asked that they continued to do so.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell, seconded by Commissioner Harden, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

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**Emily A. Kunze, Clerk**

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**George Dunlap, Chair**