

Meeting Minutes
March 12, 2024

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, March 12, 2024.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair George Dunlap, Vice-Chair Mark Jerrell
and Commissioners Leigh Altman, Patricia “Pat” Cotham,
Arthur Griffin, 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 Arlissa Eason

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

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

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24-0148 LAKE NORMAN MARINE COMMISSION UPDATE

The Board received a presentation on recently enacted Charter Boat and Boat Rental Regulations

John H. Johnson, Mecklenburg County Commissioner for the Lake Norman Marine Commission, made the presentation.

Background: The Board will receive information on recently enacted Charter Boat and Boat Rental Regulations.



Lake Norman Marine Commission



What we will cover today:

1. Review purpose of LKN Marine Commission
2. Review "new" Charter & Rental Boat Regulations
 - A. LNR23-1 – Rental Boat Regulation
 - B. LNR22-1 – Charter Boat Regulation
3. Discuss Law Enforcement support for regulations
4. Describe recent activities for algae/weed control

Practice safe boating



Lake Norman Marine Commission Update – March 12, 2024

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Lake Norman Marine Commission

The Lake Norman Marine Commission consists of 5 Commissioners appointed by Lake Norman Counties

1. Catawba
2. Iredell
3. Lincoln
4. Mecklenburg
5. Chairman – Rotates each year between counties

As defined by the North Carolina 1969 State Statute, the LNMC is **responsible for taking appropriate responsibility for Lake Norman and its shoreline area for all matters relating to or affecting public recreation and water safety.**

- Public Safety
- Navigational Marker System
- Boater Education
- Aquatic Plant Management Plan

Each county provides \$37,000 annually to LNMC budget of \$155K

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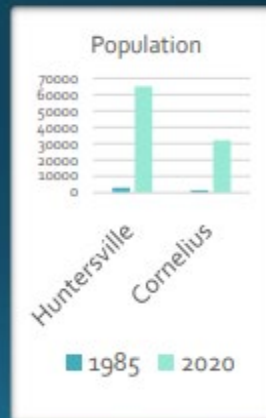
LAKE NORMAN
NORTH CAROLINA

What's Going On At Lake Norman?

- Lake Norman is the driver for economic expansion in north Mecklenburg County!
- Huntersville, Cornelius experienced a 2,000% increase in population since 1985! Huntersville: 3,000 to 61,000
- Top 4 highest-priced Mecklenburg real estate listings are on Lake Norman at \$8M to \$22M – need a lake cottage?
- Makes a \$37,000 LNMC budget sound like a pretty good investment !



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Lake Norman Marine Commission Regulations

- 1969 General Assembly Act Establishing the Lake Norman Marine Commission (Chapter 1089, House Bill 1324)
 - *The Commission may make regulations applicable to Lake Norman and its shoreline area concerning all matters relating to or affecting public recreation and water safety*
 - *Violation of any regulation of the Commission commanding or prohibiting an act shall be a misdemeanor (Up to \$500 penalty)*
 - *All law enforcement officers... with territorial jurisdiction as to any part of Lake Norman or its shoreline area shall, within the limitations of their subject matter jurisdiction, have the authority of peace officers in enforcing the laws over all of Lake Norman and its shoreline area.*

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Regulations? Why Now?

- Recent “explosion” of illegal charters and boat rentals on Lake Norman
 - Serious injuries to people renting boats from companies or individuals without safety inspections, insurance, or training
 - Rental boats operated by incompetent personnel, sometimes overloaded, or without PFDs for all aboard
 - Operators providing charter trips without USCG licenses, vessel safety inspections, or insurance
 - Unlicensed charter operators allowing or promoting unsafe actions or illegal alcohol use on vessels – sometimes participating!



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LKN Charter Boat & Rental Boat Regulations

- Intent of regulations is NOT to prevent charters and rentals – but to ensure they will be safe for the public!
- **3 Fundamentals to both LKN Regulations:**
 1. The boat has been inspected and is safe to use for intended purpose (Rental, Charter)
 2. The operator/renting entity has liability insurance covering the intended purpose
 3. The boat Captain/Operator is verified competent through
 - Documented operator training by renting entity
 - USCG License for charter operations
- Lake Wylie pursuing similar regulations



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Lake Norman Rental Boat Regulation LNR23-1

Over half LKN fatalities related to boats for hire...

Contributing factors to LKN boating accidents:

Lack of education/training

Lack of experience operating a boat

Lack of experience/knowledge of Lake Norman

Excessive use of Alcohol



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Rental Boat Regulations

Rental boat availability on Lake Norman

Established rental companies

On board with LNMC regulations

- Freedom Boat Club ☺
- Carolina Boat Rentals ☺
- Cornelius Pontoon Rentals ☺

Individuals rent via websites

Insurance, maybe no inspection or training

- Boat Setter
- Get My Boat

Short term rentals

The Wild, Wild, West!

Likely no insurance, inspection, or training

- VRBO, AirBnB - with a boat! ☹
- "Some guy" rents his boat... ☹

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LNMC Rental Boat Regulations LNR23-1 Summary



- Register with LNMC; provide proof of following:
 - Maintain minimum \$500,000 liability insurance **for boat rental**
 - Must pass safety inspection & be registered by state
- Require renter/operator is trained/qualified
 - Provide instruction on rules/regulations, boat operation
 - Provide instruction on boating on Lake Norman - No wake zones etc.
- Utilize Pre-rental checklist during rental process
 - Maintain signed copy on vessel
- Permit good for two years
- Pay \$2/vessel registration fee (covers sticker cost)
- LNMC stickers applied to each approved vessel
- Application can be made online www.lnmc.org



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Charter Boat Regulation LNR22-1

- Charter Boat Regulation enacted in 2022
- Applies to *"any boat that is hired, or advertised for hire, to carry passengers who have paid a fee for services including, without limitation, sightseeing, fishing, consuming food or beverages, swimming, waterskiing, and diving... a fishing boat with 6 or fewer passengers is not a charter boat."*
- Enforcement, penalties as required by LNMC Act
- Application available online – www.lnmc.org
- Frequently Asked Question Sheet "Is This A Charter" for clarification on when Charter Boat Regulation applies - available online

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LNMC Charter Boat Requirements

- Commercial liability insurance **for charter use**
- Pass inspection by qualified inspector for more than 6 passengers
- Vessel operated by USCG licensed captain/master
- Written permission by property owner of boarding location
- Access to pump-out station for boats with on-board bathrooms
- Radar equipped if operated at night - beyond sunrise/sunset
- Display current LNMC Charter Permit Sticker



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Law Enforcement on Lake Norman

- Mecklenburg County / Cornelius
- Iredell County
- Lincoln County
- Catawba County
- Wildlife NC
- **The LNMC needs support by counties to enforce LNMC regulations, encourage boater safety, and save lives!**
 - *Violation of any regulation of the Commission commanding or prohibiting an act shall be a misdemeanor ... All law enforcement officers... with territorial jurisdiction as to any part of Lake Norman or its shoreline area shall... have the authority of peace officers in enforcing the laws over all of Lake Norman*
-Chapter 1089, HB 1324
- **Training session for all 4 LEOs in April to reinforce – need “buy in” from LEOs and DAs to enforce regulations**



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Recent Issue on Lake Norman Lyngbya Infestation

- Lyngbya is a mat-forming cyanobacterium (blue-green alga). It occurs in and flourishes in clean, warm water
- Not a weed! Forms smelly mats, can release toxins, may be hazard to pets
- Discovered ~10 acres - south & north LKN
- State has not declared nuisance – will happen in 2024 session but not in time...
- Treatment needs to start now! LNMC obtained estimate - \$60,000
- Requested \$10,000 from each county & stakeholders (Duke, Charlotte Water)
- Received funding, treatment contract signed 3/11/24. NC State studying now...
- **Thank you!**

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Thanks!



- Copies of documents available here and online
- More info:

John Johnson, LNMC Meck County Commissioner

jjohnson@lnmc.org (704) 650-2673

Lake Norman Marine Commission Website

www.lnmc.org

- Would future, regular updates be useful?
- Love Where You Lake!



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Comments

Commissioner Meier thanked him for the presentation. She asked about slide 13, how would the County enforce the regulations. *Mr. Johnson said once a ticket was written, and if it went to court, it was likely to be dismissed by the District Attorney since they wouldn't know what it was.*

County Attorney Wade said it was a criminal matter and would be considered a misdemeanor.

Mr. Johnson clarified that he would need to work with the District Attorney to enforce the regulations.

24-0138 WOMAN'S ADVISORY BOARD FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET PRIORITIES

The Board received a report on budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2025 from the Women's Advisory Board.

Jamilah L. Espinosa gave the presentation.

Background: Each year as part of the County's budget process, advisory boards are provided the opportunity to present their budget priorities to the Board of County Commissioners. The Women's Advisory Board (WAB) will summarize the advisory board's FY2025 budget priorities.

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Women's Advisory Board

Presented to the Mecklenburg
Board of County Commissioners
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Key Priorities

Identified Based on Statistical Data and Community Feedback

- Financial Literacy
- Caregivers: Respite
- Behavioral Health Integration/Accessibility
- Trafficking in Persons
- Resource Campaign




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Financial Literacy

Findings

- A survey by the Girl Scouts of America shows that 90% of girls understand the importance of managing money, but only 12% feel “very confident” in making financial decisions.
- Two of every three women feel they have little knowledge of financial products and services
- Women make up 50% of the workforce but hold less than 17% of senior level positions
- Only 12% of CEOs of large US financial firms are women





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Financial Literacy

Recommendations

Provide	Provide funding for financial literacy programs developed by organizations like the NC Council on Economic Education or NC Cooperative Extension that offer workshops, online resources, and tools
Promote	Promote collaboration among existing county resources such as the local libraries to provide workshops that cover such topics for free
Consider	Consider investing in financial literacy programs in CMS for students similar to Next Gen Personal Finance



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Caregivers: Respite

Findings


- **Economics**
 - In NC approximately 1.33 million family caregivers provided an estimated 1.11 billion hours of care—worth 13.1 billion dollars to their parents, spouses, partners, and friends
 - NC ranks 41 out of 50 states for 2023 with regards to support for older adults, & family caregivers
 - Mecklenburg County sees the Largest Growth in Population over 65
- **Effects on Caregivers**
 - Physical Health Impacts
 - Mental Health Strains
- **Effects on Care Recipients**
 - Quality of Life




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Caregivers: Respite


Recommendations




Continue and expand childcare subsidy program to include caregivers of adults and elderly family members



Consider creating a county program similar to the NC Project C.A.R.E. program that provides financial assistance for respite care for caregivers of adults and elderly family members



Provide funding for capacity grants for new providers of adult daycares

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Trafficking in Persons

Findings

- According to the National Human Trafficking Resources Center, average of 78 sex trafficking cases every year in NC, and Charlotte is the #1 city
- NC ranks in the top 10 worst states in our country for reported human trafficking cases through the Human Trafficking Hotline
- 98% of human trafficking victims in Charlotte from 2020-2022 were female
- Young girls (15 and under) chief targets. Intersection between drug abuse and human trafficking
- FBI indicates it is the largest and fastest-growing crime in the US & worldwide



Human Trafficking
A Global Problem
Prostitution. Servitude. Forced Labor.

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Trafficking in Persons

Recommendations

Strengthening prevention programs and collaborations already in place, such as Present Age Ministries, DARE, Human Trafficking Task Force, etc.

Funding prevention programs for schools


Continue community education such as partnership done in 2023 with the Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation Center focused within identified zip codes


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Behavioral Health Integration & Accessibility

Findings

- One in four of the county's adults don't have a primary care provider
- One in four NC women has been diagnosed with a depressive disorder
- Financial barriers, access, and stigmas surrounding mental health leave many reluctant to seek treatment



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Behavioral Health Integration & Accessibility

Recommendations



Continue to support to facilities such as the Behavioral Health Urgent Care that provide greater access to care



Expand partnerships to co-locate mental health providers, such as therapists or counselors, within areas that community members frequently access, such as non-profits that partner with the county



Provide additional funding for social workers and mental health professionals at CMS



Create more awareness campaigns of MeckHope and other behavioral health resources



Resource Campaign

Findings

County resources such as clinics, programs, workshops, etc. often do not reach their capacity because it is not well publicized

Women in our county often do not know of county resources available because current method of advertising is not sufficiently targeting specific audiences



Resource Campaign

Recommendations

		
<p>Create an annual county fair in which all county resources are publicized in one central location with representatives from each department/agency</p>	<p>Continue to invest in non-traditional marketing (i.e. social media)</p>	<p>Provide cross-training for providers such as DSS, CMS, EMS, Police, that will provide them with fliers, cards, & resources about each agency to make referrals easier</p>

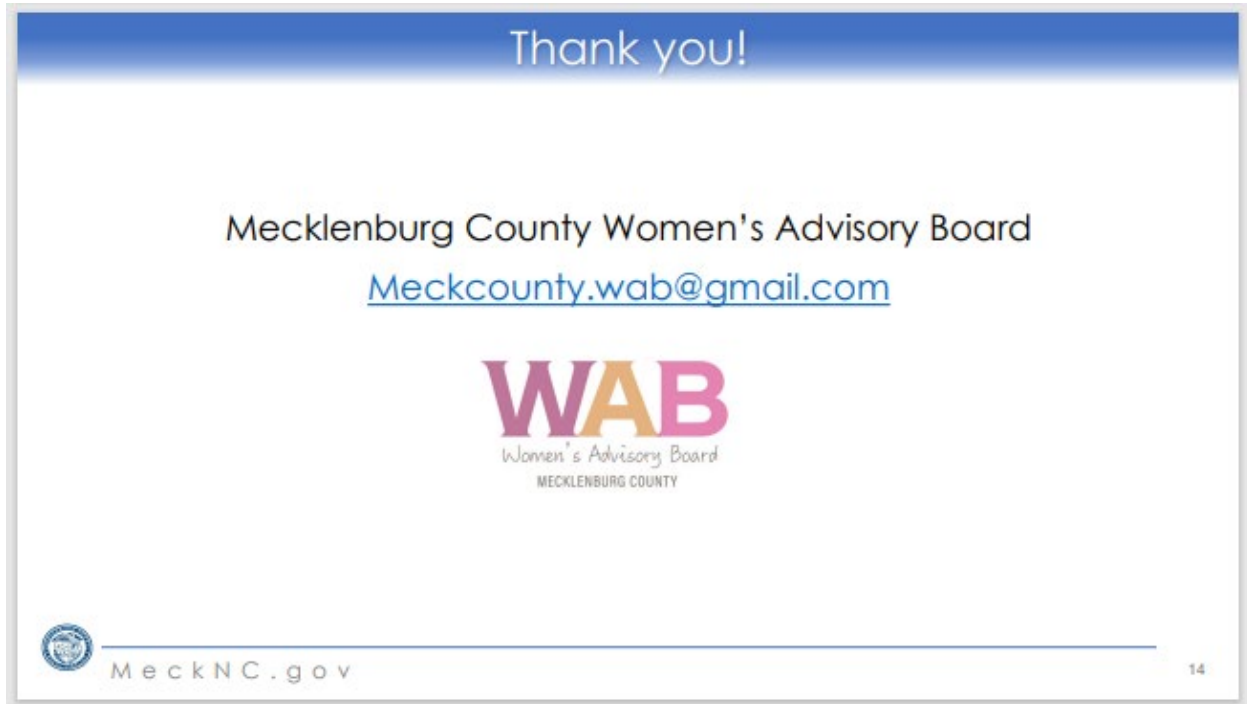
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Comments

Commissioner Leake entered the meeting at 3:28 p.m.

Chair Dunlap asked about slide 8 and strengthening prevention programs such as DARE. He said DARE ended in Mecklenburg County on June 30, 2005, the day he retired. He asked if there were other recommendations other than the two remaining (Present Age Ministries and Human Trafficking Task Force.) *Ms. Espinosa said DARE was still present in some schools, as her son in elementary school had gone through the program. She said there were education workshops they could do. She mentioned the Human Rights Commissions and Safe Alliance, which just receive a grant from Warren Buffet.*

Chair Dunlap said there was no specific amount or department addressed. *Ms. Espinosa said they didn't set an amount because they were not experts, and didn't think it was appropriate to give an exact monetary recommendation.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked her and stated she appreciated the way she presented the information. She said it was on the Board to take it to the next level.

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Commissioner Powell thanked her. She asked if they thought they needed more experts on their board as it would help to have a ballpark estimate of how much something would cost. She mentioned the questions asked by Atrium and Novant to women when being seen. She asked how they would do a better job of letting women know there were resources available. She said concerning timing of meetings scheduled, what happened when the meetings were held when the public couldn't attend. She said they were missing a lot because they were doing what was convenient for staff and not the community. She also asked if there was anything she really wanted the Board to know.

Ms. Espinosa said they could start by putting flyers in bathrooms. She said non-traditional resources, such as placing on social media could help too. She said women in Mecklenburg County were still fighting to survive and had challenges. She said there was a misconception of not doing enough. She said to keep in mind mothers that were just above the financial threshold as well.

Commissioner Leake thanked her. She said the work they'd done was difficult, but they got it done. She said she admired her strength, energy, and love of her community.

24-0147 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVISORY BOARD FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET PRIORITIES

The Board received a report on budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2025 from the Domestic Violence Advisory Board.

Elyse Hamilton-Childers, Community Support Services Prevention & Intervention Director
Adrian Cox, Budget Director

Background: Each year as part of the County's budget process, advisory boards are provided the opportunity to present their budget priorities to the Board of County Commissioners. The Domestic Violence Advisory Board will summarize their FY2025 budget priorities.

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Domestic Violence Advisory Board FY25 Budget Priorities

Presented to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners
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Recommended FY25 Budget Priorities

Sheltering and Housing

Mental Health

Youth and Teen Supports

Communications and Awareness of Existing Resources



Sheltering and Housing

Findings

- 1,019 people who had a Coordinated Entry assessment during FY23 reported being a survivor of domestic violence; 324 reported experiencing domestic violence in the past 3 months
- Safe Alliance provided short-term emergency shelter or hoteling to 452 adults and 500 children during FY23
- Overall, demand for sheltering and housing solutions by domestic violence survivors continues to exceed the supply of resources
- Salvation Army Center of Hope often becomes the overflow location for domestic violence-impacted households who exhaust their time at Safe Alliance or cannot get a bed anywhere else



Sheltering and Housing

Findings

- Mecklenburg County invests in dedicated resources for domestic violence survivors who are seeking sheltering and housing:
 - Domestic Violence Fund for one-time housing stability expenses for individuals or families impacted by intimate partner violence
 - Housing for Good short-term and medium-term rental assistance and supportive services for families fleeing intimate partner violence
- County funding for these resources is fully utilized to provide rental assistance for at least 15 families and to provide one-time financial assistance for about 50 households each year



Sheltering and Housing

Findings

- Additional funding for domestic violence housing has come from the Continuum of Care, which is providing over \$800,000 during FY24
 - Supports over 30 additional households in rapid rehousing
 - Funds one Coordinated Entry social worker who is dedicated to conducting housing assessments with individuals and families whose circumstances are related to domestic violence



Sheltering and Housing

Recommendations

- Continue prioritizing Housing for Good and the Domestic Violence Fund. Consider increasing investment in these resources since current funding is fully utilized.
- Support investments in emergency shelter bed space and solutions that add capacity for emergency sheltering while keeping families together (e.g. domestic violence hoteling partnerships, pet-friendly sheltering programs)
- Support the efforts of the Continuum of Care to fully utilize federal domestic violence housing and supportive service funds that could be available to our community



Mental Health

Findings

- Although mental health is not a cause of domestic violence, it is frequently a co-occurring issue
- Mecklenburg County invests in clinical mental health services for child observers and adult or teen victims/survivors of intimate partner violence
 - Community Support Services served 646 adults in FY23 and 298 children/teens
- Mecklenburg County invests in non-clinical psychoeducation for abusive partners through NOVA (New Options for Violent Actions) as well as one licensed clinician
 - CSS NOVA program served 521 abusive partners in FY23
- There is usually no wait time for NOVA services or clinical mental health services for adult survivors provided by CSS
- Since FY20, the wait time for children's domestic violence clinical services has remained steady at about 5-7 months



Mental Health

Recommendations

- Continue existing County investments in mental health services related to domestic violence
- Support solutions to mitigate wait times for children's clinical mental health services
 - Subsidies to provide additional counseling sessions through contracted external providers
 - Strengthening of university-to-workplace pipeline to recruit qualified mental health clinicians, especially children's clinicians



Youth and Teen Supports

Findings

- Providing support for youth and teens is critical for lowering the risk of relationship violence continuing into adulthood
- Mecklenburg County invests in teen dating violence prevention and healthy relationships education for youth:
 - During FY23, Community Support Services LoveSpeaksOut program provided 337 presentations to 7,674 youth in schools and community settings
 - 6,456 youth were reached through CMS schools; 1,218 were reached through community nonprofits
 - 88% of youth surveyed showed increased knowledge of resources for teen dating violence



Youth and Teen Supports

Findings

- Parents Bill of Rights legislation (SB-49) passed in fall 2023 has impacted ability to reach youth and teens through CMS schools
 - LoveSpeaksOut had to cancel 53 sessions (1,855 student reach) to allow parents time to decide to opt in or not prior to January 12th
 - Since LoveSpeaksOut resumed sessions in CMS after January 12th, 6 sessions have been cancelled due to low opt-in rates; 4 schools have indicated they cannot schedule sessions due to low opt-in rates



Youth and Teen Supports

Recommendations

- Continue County investment in teen dating violence prevention and education programming. Consider increasing investment to expand the capacity and reach of current programming.
- Monitor impact of Parents Bill of Rights on ability to reach youth with early education and prevention services. Partner with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education to identify solutions.
- Support investments in services for parents of youth and teens, such as adult counseling and parenting education



Communications and Awareness of Existing Resources

Findings

- Mecklenburg County and community nonprofits offer a wide array of services and assistance related to domestic violence
- Overall community awareness of existing resources seems to be low



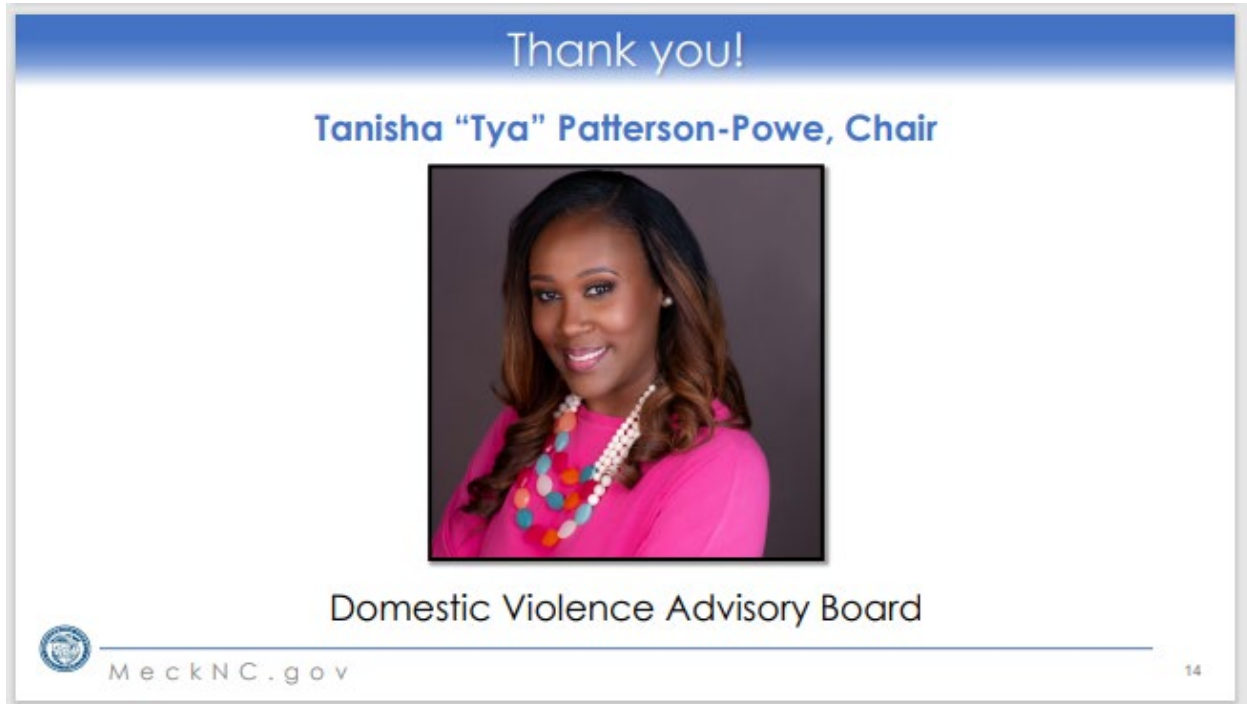
Communications and Awareness of Existing Resources

Recommendations

- Invest in ongoing communications strategy to raise awareness of existing community resources and new initiatives
- Consider periodic targeted campaigns aligned with national awareness months, paired with consistent regular marketing activities
- Diversify communication channels and formats to reach various populations



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Comments

Commissioner Meier thanked her. In reference to slide 10 and the Youth Parental Bill of Rights, she asked if the County's Mental Health Services or Public Health lobbied state representatives. She also said they could work with CMS in relation to communication. *County Manager Diorio said they didn't lobby it as it was already signed into law. She said they would stay out of that and that they lobbied for things under the Board's Priorities and Legislative Agenda.*

Commissioner Powell thanked Chair Dunlap for mentioning staff flex hours. She mentioned how staff scheduled meetings for the public to attend, but people had to travel to where they decided the meetings were versus deciding where they needed to show up. She said they never gave up on getting the input they needed and showing up for the community to let them know they were heard. She said that was needed there as well. She also mentioned that rapid Rehousing was very important to her, as it could save lives. *Ms. Patterson-Powe said it was important as well. She said domestic violence impacted people regardless of their socioeconomic status. She said they had to prioritize getting people access to resources.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked her. In reference to page 7, she asked where those services came from. *Stacy Lowry said they were received from children's counselors. She said they were struggling to obtain licensed social workers as they were competing with the private*

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market. They had been able to get the adult list down, but it was difficult to recruit and retain for children's services. She said investing in the pipeline would help a lot.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center was part of the provider network. *Ms. Lowry said yes and that they helped build the network out, but there still weren't a lot of people out there doing it, and more people were choosing to do it through the private sector.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell reiterated the importance of stating the needs. She said it was a challenge they saw in many different areas of trying to capture people's attention and communicate with them about what resources are available to them.

Commissioner Cotham thanked her. She said it seemed as if she focused more on domestic violence with an intimate partner and not with someone else. She said that many times, she saw women in court having problems with random people. She gave her own experience and mentioned the complications with filing. Concerning LoveSpeaksOut, she didn't think about love but safety, so she asked what this was. *Ms. Lowry clarified that LoveSpeaksOut was a teen violence dating program in schools and the community and focused on healthy relationships.*

Commissioner Leake thanked her. She said this was a major issue.

Vice Chair Jerrell thanked her. He asked, in reference to page 4, rental subsidies and financial assistance, if they could get a dollar amount for how much it was. *Ms. Lowry said the Domestic Violence Fund was about \$100,000 and was now part of the Department of Community Resources.*

Vice Chair Jerrell said in terms of rental assistance, the number seemed light to him. He asked if he was right in that feeling. *Ms. Lowry said yes; she said there was more need than they could provide, but they also had to build community capacity to be able to do what they needed. She said they had a hard time getting agencies to want to provide supportive services and do the housing subsidies.*

Vice Chair Jerrell asked why there was a breakup between rental assistance and financial assistance. Ms. Lowry provided clarification.

Vice Chair Jerrell said that between both presentations, the community did not necessarily lack programming, and he appreciated them highlighting the need.

Chair Dunlap commended her for the way she presented. He said she figured out what the

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County offered and that her recommendation offered what they didn't offer. He said they had a lot of good programming but had to figure out how to reach the masses. He said it was something they needed to work on. He said that the location of the meetings depended on who was holding the meeting. He said finding those places shouldn't be difficult.

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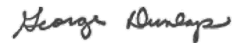
Commissioners shared information of their choosing within the guidelines as established by the Board, which included, but not limited to, past and/or upcoming events.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chair Dunlap declared the meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.



Arlissa Eason, Deputy Clerk to the Board



George Dunlap, Chairman