

Meeting Minutes
January 24-26, 2024

RETREAT – DAY 1

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for the FY 2023 Annual Retreat on January 24-26, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Harris Conference Center at Central Piedmont Community College, 3216 CPCC Harris Campus Drive, Charlotte, NC 28208.

ATTENDANCE

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

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap. He introduced Dr. Kandi Deitemeyer, President of Central Piedmont Community College.

Welcome

Dr. Deitemeyer gave welcome remarks.

There were introductions followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

24-0039 BOCC ANNUAL RETREAT JANUARY 24-26, 2024

Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners Annual Retreat, January 24-26, 2024.

County Manager’s Introduction

Dena Diorio, County Manager gave an overview of the goals and expectations for the Board Retreat.

Agenda Overview & Binder Materials

Adrian Cox, Budget Director gave an overview of the agenda for the Board Retreat and Binder Materials.

Community Pulse Report

Dr. Monica Allen, Strategy & Innovation Director Strategic gave an overview of the 2023 Community Pulse report and an update on the performance of Board Budget Priorities, which included the following:

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Demographics and Population

Overall, the Charlotte Mecklenburg area continues to be a desirable place for many domestically and internationally to live. While the population growth in the region has slowed down and out-migration was outpacing domestic and international in-migration, Mecklenburg remains in the top 10 for population increases. Such increases help the economy grow and create a strong tax base. Yet, without continuing to monitor the growth, economy, housing impacts, health and wellness outcomes, the region could experience more strain on people and infrastructure than ever.

Economy

Some challenges around the cost of living and affordability have risen in recent years for Mecklenburg County residents. Since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the cost of basic needs, especially housing and childcare, has risen drastically. While median earnings have also risen during this time, for many residents, their earnings still do not meet the “living wage” standard for residing in Mecklenburg County. For example, the wage needed to purchase and maintain a median-priced home in the County far exceeds the median wages of Black and Hispanic residents, residents of Two or More Races, and residents of Other Races (excluding White and Asian). The educational attainment of residents mirrors the affordability issue, pointing to a correlation between the educational attainment of residents and median wages. Conclusion and Recommendations: To attain higher wages residents must have access to education and economic opportunities.

Housing

High housing costs for owners and renters continue to remain a problem both nationally and locally, and it was a critical part of the stress that many residents feel in Mecklenburg County. When compared to the outmigration patterns, residents may be choosing to live outside Mecklenburg County to get a sense of relief on housing, or residents may choose not to purchase homes due to the high-interest rates. Conclusions and Recommendations: • Market changes indicate that a greater amount of rental assistance would be required, even to support the same number of households. • In the current environment, assistance needed to help low-income families purchase homes has risen dramatically. • Support policies that encourage more housing development, whether it was through streamlining and enhancing permitting, or offering direct support for affordable housing. The County could also provide much-needed support through other infrastructure like greenways that allow for walkability and would make the increased density of development more manageable to reduce congestion.

Health

Health Mecklenburg County continues to implement projects and welcome initiatives designed to provide better access to care and address mental health for all residents, regardless of wealth, race, age, ethnicity, or insurance status. Based on decisions made by County and state leaders, the County was seeing the needle move in the right direction to increase access to care and taking additional steps to address mental health. However, disparities still exist across some demographic groups. Tangible examples include (but were not limited to): • The County’s FY2024 adopted budget that includes \$29 million related to accessing care. • North Carolina became the Nation’s 40th state to expand Medicaid and now covers residents with higher incomes. • In Spring 2024, the County would publish the draft Behavioral Health Strategic Plan to inform work being done to improve access & quality of our community’s behavioral health services and to identify service gaps. • North Carolina has launched 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, reporting 7,936 callers from Mecklenburg County

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Land Development and Environment

Over the past three years the number of single-family homes dropped while there was an uptick in multifamily developments. Growth projections continue to favor areas closest to Central Charlotte and University area. Water quality remains excellent.

Comments

Commissioner Griffin said that to afford a 1-bedroom apartment in 2022 the data showed that you needed to make \$19.50 an hour and in 2023 you needed to make \$22.69 an hour. He asked why there was a difference when the living wage in Mecklenburg County was \$16.00 an hour that included basic cost and the median new home price was \$415,000 and needed \$83,000 a year in earnings at \$40.00 an hour. He said median black household was \$55,000 which meant the median black household was not going to be able to afford to own a home in Mecklenburg County. *Dr. Allen said that was correct, data showed black households would not be able to own a home in Mecklenburg County. She said the State of Housing report may not take into consideration the various family structures, but her study did. She said MIT data factored in family structure.*

Commissioner Griffin asked to drill down on the information. *Dr. Allen said the data didn't break down by bedroom type and that she would have to investigate it further to answer his question.*

Commissioner Cotham asked for data regarding evictions. *Dr. Allen said the data was available and LaShonda Hart would have it as well.*

Commissioner Altman asked for a clearer picture of the state of the residents. She said 200,000 or 300,000 were Medicaid eligible vs. 115,000 living below the poverty line and asked if that was 1 in 10 residents or 1 in 3. *Anthony Trotman said approx. 350,000 on Medicaid and would increase by 64,000 with Medicaid expansion.*

Dr. Washington said that was like comparing apples to oranges, as the poverty level there was a certain threshold of poverty and the eligibility for Medicaid expanded an array of poverty levels depending on where the resident was, and different things qualified people for Medicaid outside of their income.

Commissioner Leake said her concern was regarding the poverty level and asked where they were currently with young adults moving to the County and the seniors. *Dr. Allen said she did not see in the numbers when people were on the lower income side, and they typically saw people who were more educated and had higher incomes. She asked they would provide a written answer to Commissioner Leake.*

Commissioner Leake asked if it was advantageous to move to Charlotte. *Dr. Allen said it depended on what they were looking for, they were looking to rent or to buy and other factors.*

Commissioner Leake asked what was being done to entice people to live in Charlotte. *Dr. Allen said that a follow-up to the question would be provided.*

Vice-Chair Jerrell said slide 26 was alarming because 30% of the County were African Americans but over 1/3 were below the poverty level and felt this was crisis mode. He asked what strategies could be implemented to drive the number down. He said there was a disconnect, and they were looking at percentages, not even cumulative numbers and the disparity was huge. He said he wanted to tie slides 25 and 31 together about home ownership. He said the primary vehicle to address generational wealth was homeownership and homeownership was unobtainable for too

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many. He asked if there were examples across the country of strategies that other communities had been doing to address it and what areas had they targeted.

Vice-Chair Jerrell said regarding slide 33 - health, it was great they were number 6 but if they disaggregated that data by race, he asked where they would fall in comparison to other counties. *Dr. Allen said she had that data and would be able to get it over to him.*

Dr. Allen said some states, such as Georgia, had been very aggressive in addressing this issue with investors. She said she would provide some data.

Commissioner Powell mentioned slide 38 and said the community health assessment listed healthy environment as one of the top priorities and on slide 42, when they were showing the pattern of development and talking about one of their top priorities, she felt they needed to do a deeper dive on environment. She said if they didn't have an awareness of what was already developed, it didn't look like Mecklenburg County was at risk environmentally. She said it would be nice to have a slide that showed what was already developed so the Board had an awareness of the burden of development on our natural resources and urban areas. She said they were losing land so quickly that they would be built out soon. She said the Board needed to have an awareness of what the development was doing in terms of creek impairment, stormwater management, and how they stayed out of crisis mode. She said the presentation didn't show the challenges and she felt education was very important. *Dr. Allen said that she would put the information together with GIS.*

Chair Dunlap said there was one factor that could affect all those things and that would be to look at an increase in hourly rates. He said that although they couldn't control what the community did in terms of how much it paid its employees, the County could control what happened in Mecklenburg County with County staff and suggested they shouldn't have people who couldn't afford to live here. He said they had said that about other communities so the same ought to be true about their own community. He said he would like for the staff to tell them what the increase in their budget was when they moved from \$18 to \$19 per hour or from \$20 to \$21 per hour. *Dena Diorio said they were already at \$20 per hour and Commissioner Griffin already asked them to look at \$23 per hour. She said she would get that information for them.*

Board Priorities & Metrics:

Dr. Monica Allen provided an introduction for the upcoming section on Board Priorities & Metrics in which the Board received an overview of the performance metrics achieved in the previous 3-5 years and the associated impacts aligned with the budget priorities. Where applicable, data by race was also included.

Background: In FY2020, County Commissioners begin setting its priorities for funding decision-making. SP&E staff shared available data/information (organization-level and community-level) for each priority during the BOCC retreats each year since. Priorities evolved each fiscal year. In FY2023, several Commissioners requested a stronger tie-in of data/information to funding decisions beyond budget quarterly report.

Dr. Allen reviewed the process of how the presenters would present the Board priorities.

She said there would be two types of indicators to track and collect data for initiative and priorities for reporting to leadership and the public. She said they looked at the community indicators (non-direct accountability), i.e. Pulse Report; and organizational/programmatic/service indicators (accountability) i.e. Annual Performance Report. She shared the Logic Model Example for setting priorities to get to desired outcomes and

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community impact. She said the model allowed for understanding the situation all the way to outcome or what the ultimate impact would be.

The Board's Priorities:

1. Early Childhood Development: Expand services that promote healthy early childhood development and education from ages birth to five.
2. Educational Attainment: Align allocations to strategies and targets with proven results to improve college and career readiness outcomes for all students.
3. Environmental Stewardship: Preserve and protect the County's environmental resources.
4. Health Access: Improve access to physical and behavioral healthcare for County residents of all ages and promote healthy behaviors.
5. Housing Insecurity: Reduce the number of residents experiencing homelessness and advance stable affordable housing options for all County residents.
6. Workforce Development: Support initiatives that connect job seekers with employment opportunities.

Racial Disparities: Ensure that investments by the County focus on closing racial and ethnic gaps so that race does not predict one's success, while also improving outcomes for all. Race would be interwoven into the Board Priorities through policies, practices, and procedures that seek to analyze and eliminate the root causes of racial disparities with the hope that all people in Mecklenburg County would have an equitable opportunity to thrive in the community.

Comments

Commissioner Griffin said based on the report, there was very little the Board could be responsible for such as constructing buildings, and building a park or a walking trail, but anything relating to human behavior, there were external factors. *Dr. Allen said the goal was to educate and let the Board know where they were so they could figure out what, as a Board, they would like to accomplish.*

Commissioner Leake asked to look at black males and enhance the support of education and anything else that may have been necessary to lift that group. She asked where it was on the agenda. *County Manager Diorio said what they were seeing at the current moment was the data associated with the Board Priorities in retrospect, because they wanted to be able to level-set the Board about what they were measuring presently. She said they could talk the following day or as they continued through the budget process about investments they wanted to make and what they wanted to track on new initiatives. She said they needed to baseline first.*

Early Childhood Development Metrics

Program Manager Tim Gibbons & Director of Public Health Dr. Raynard Washington gave an overview of the performance metrics & associated impacts aligned with Early Childhood Development from Early Childhood Education Initiatives, which included:

- Public Health
 - Birth Outcomes – A guided Journey
 - A Guided Journey (AGJ) was a maternal and child health program supported by the Mecklenburg County Community Health Worker Initiative in partnership with Care Ring. AGJ supports pregnant women and women at least three months postpartum with linkage to care/resources.
 - Breastfeeding

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- Breastfeeding was associated with several positive infant and child health outcomes.
 - Child Development -CDSA Outcomes
 - Most children enrolled in the Child Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) demonstrate growth in their social-emotional skills. These skills were the building blocks for later educational attainment, economic productivity, and future health.
 - Nutrition – WIC Enrollment
 - Enrollment in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) had risen steadily
 - The racial-ethnic demographics of WIC participants served across the four Mecklenburg County WIC sites demonstrate almost equal percentages of Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black or African American participants.
- Pre-K
 - Mecklenburg County Public Pre-K Enrollment
 - Public Pre-K enrollment has steadily increased year over year and had hit another all-time high in FY24
 - F23 MECK Pre-K Impact and Outcomes
 - MECK Pre-K students demonstrated significant growth in reaching Kindergarten Readiness benchmarks for Language and Literacy in FY23
 - Disparities across MECK Pre-K student demographics had steadily decreased, with minimal Black-White achievement gap across all domains
 - MECK Pre-K students demonstrated significant overall growth on the BRIGANCE Early Childhood Screener during the FY23 school year
 - Disparities across MECK Pre-K student demographics had steadily decreased, with minimal Black-White achievement gap on the BRIGANCE Early Childhood Screener
- Childcare
 - Mecklenburg County Childcare Investments
 - Mecklenburg County’s investments have significantly increased access to childcare and provided targeted support to County program participants

Comments

Commissioner Altman asked if they were covering breastfeeding pumps. *Dr. Washington said they were covered under the WIC program.*

Commissioner Altman asked how quickly a lactation consultant could be available and responsive. *Dr. Washington said within 24 hours.*

Commissioner Altman asked how much Pre-K was on average per month unsubsidized in Mecklenburg County. *Mr. Gibbons said that he didn’t have the exact number for the private pay market but the subsidy for 4 and 5-year-olds was about \$1300 a month and that was from the 2020/2021 market rates so it didn’t reflect the current cost of care. He said private pay was approximately \$2000 a month.*

Commissioner Altman asked if the County voucher had a work requirement for a childcare subsidy. *Mr. Gibbons said for their expanded eligibility program, they lowered the work hours attached to that because the purpose was to help those that needed a leg up. He said the State Subsidy Voucher was 30 hours a week working, and for expanded eligibility, it had been lowered to 22 to 29 hours.*

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Commissioner Altman said she heard there was some State Subsidy that was going away and it would cause a childcare crisis. *Mr. Gibbons said North Carolina received about \$800 Million in Federal Relief Funding in Childcare Stabilization Grants that were broken up into two parts, in which part of it was infrastructure, and the other part was focused on compensation. He said the infrastructure grants expired a while ago and the compensation grants were set to expire at the end of the 2023 calendar year. He said the legislature extended those and provided some flexibility until June of the current fiscal year but unfortunately, the pay was still not competitive.*

Commissioner Meier asked if WIC paid for formula. *Dr. Washington said yes.*

Commissioner Meier asked if there was a reason for the decline from 2021 to 2023. *Dr. Washington said during that time period, another big public health crisis was occurring and most services were shifted to virtual.*

Commissioner Meier said the literacy rate was going up and was pleased.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked for clarification on slide 62, which depicted “A Guided Journey’s” success. *Dr. Washington said they had been able to secure about \$3 million of federal funds to expand A Guided Journey through Health Start Program to serve a larger number of families.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked about the context of the cognitive going down on slide 69 of the presentation. *Mr. Gibbons said the tool looked at some specific learning objectives and developmental objectives so some of the skills it was looking at were demonstrating positive approaches to learning, remembering and connecting experiences, using classification skills, using symbols and images to represent things that were present and as such, they were the types of skills that were being measured.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said on slide 70, they talked about bilingual pre-school and asked if they were increasing the number of classrooms for those students. *Mr. Gibbons said it was a limitation of physical space at that exact time and they had many programs they would have liked to add classrooms to but there was usually a waiting list for Charlotte Bilingual. He said they were in the process of moving to a new location and moving out of the CMS location that they were in.*

Commissioner Cotham asked if they had pods for breastfeeding at the Department for Social Services. *Dr. Washington said they did have breastfeeding spaces in all of their facilities and they were potentially looking into acquiring Mamavas, lactation pods, to place in some high-volume areas in the County.*

Commissioner Cotham asked about slide 58 and if the employees of Mecklenburg County felt connected. She asked if they were aware of the Board Priorities and how they fit into the Board priorities. She asked if they did a survey and how many of them would know this.

County Manager Diorio said all of their departments had strategic business plans that aligned with Board Priorities and they were also aligned with their new performance management systems so everybody's work plan was a top-to-bottom approach so everybody had alignment from the lowest part of the organization to the highest part of the organization, thus they knew they were apart of the accountability as it related to Board Priorities.

Commissioner Griffin said in the chart regarding a Guided Journey with Care Ring, 33% of the population was African American and low birth/still born rate was highest among this population but a smaller percent of this population participated in the program; he asked if this was because of capacity or if more funding was needed in this area. He asked when the County began paying

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for Bright Beginnings and why; he suggested that the BOCC assist the County Manager by asking for the information about PreK readiness because CMS did the assessment as they were required by law to test. He said it made no sense to invest and have no clue whether kids were ready for school. *County Manager Diori said a portion of funding that was given to CMS every year has gone to fund Bright Beginnings for a number of years. She said it was funded by Title 1 funding and the County. She said they were working with CMS regarding Kindergarten to find a way to tag those kids that went into kindergarten and carve them out. She said it was not that they didn't have the data, but they were working on a mechanism on how to identify the children who participated in a PreK program and report their outcome separately.*

Commissioner Dunlap said there was a new Board of Education with a different attitude about what they could get access to. He said they had the information, they just needed to ask.

Vice-Chair Jerrell said he saw on slide 70, the disparity gap with hispanic students and he wanted to know what the handoff looked like regarding extra resources with their CMS partners. He said on slide 71, he saw through prescreening, 4% scored above gifted and post screening was 25%. He said there were really talented kids and when given the proper resources and opportunity, could really excel. He said there needed to be a way to get the information out.

Vice Chair Jerrell said, regarding the expanded eligibility for 860 working families, and being able to take advantage of the program, spoke to what the BOCC had been trying to do with workforce development and requested the information be made available so other families could take advantage of it as well. *Mr. Gibbons said he would have to report back and he was aware of CMS working on a project to better track the feeder systems into the kindergarten programs.*

Commissioner Leake said children could learn if challenged. She said there was an issue with violence and mental illness and asked how they culminated that process for success for children. She asked what the Board could do to improve it. *Mr. Gibbons said there was a robust family support team with five or six full time staff and social workers. He said there was an effort to address the whole family.*

Chair Dunlap requested staff let the Board know if there were factors the Board controlled that could increase the rate of educational attainment and if so, asked what the cost was to implement it.

Educational Attainment Metrics

CMS Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer Beth Thompson, CPCC Vice President of Strategy & Organizational Excellence Dr. Tracie Clark, & CPCC Provost / Chief Academic Officer Dr. Heather Hill gave an overview of the performance metrics & associated impacts aligned with Educational Attainment.

CMS

- Assessment Context and Definitions
 - Testing & Reporting Changes
 - Achievement Levels on State Assessments
 - Common Language
 - Fast Facts
 - ALL reading and math composite scores increased, including improvements in third grade literacy and high school Math I
 - 58% of schools earned a school performance letter grade of an A, B or C
 - 40 schools improved their school letter grade
 - 7 schools ranked in the top 30 in the state for overall academic growth
 - Countless areas of celebration for individual schools
- 8 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE GRADES Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools School Performance Grades A: 85-100 B:

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70-84 C: 55-69 D: 40-54 (School achievement has a weight of 80% and Growth 20%)

- Student Growth Data
 - School Performance grades
 - Achievement vs. Growth
 - Overall proficiency – GLP (Grade Level Proficient) and CCR (College/Career Readiness)
 - Overall Proficiency by Student Group – EOG (End of Grade)
 - Overall EVAAS Growth
 - Overall EVAAS Growth by Student Group
 - Performance Dashboard

CPCC

- Current Enrollment Trends
- One Factor impacting growth: Dual Enrollment
 - Also known as career and college promise allows high school students to enroll in college classes at NC community colleges through their high school
 - Number of Dually enrolled Students by County of Residence
 - College and Career Promise (CCP) Enrollment
- College and Career Coaches (CCC)
- Defining and Assessing Student Success
- Why attainment matters

Comments

Commissioner Griffin said they needed to do better and asked Ms. Thompson if part of the definition for proficient was deleted. *Ms. Thompson said that portion of the definition was not deleted and if grade level proficiency was attained but not at a level 4 or 5, support needed to continue.*

Commissioner Griffin asked for information regarding the transition after a student graduated and what the linkage was between CTE graduates and Central Piedmont Community College while requesting supporting data. *Ms. Thompson said data could be provided.*

Commissioner Griffin asked, regarding curriculums, if the Lexile level increased as students moved up the K-12 chain. *Ms. Thompson said the Lexile level did increase and became harder to read or more rigorous as students progressed.*

Commissioner Griffin asked if third grade was the last grade students were taught the five reading domains regarding fluency, decoding, etc. or if it went beyond that. *Ms. Thompson said by design, students should master those things by the end of second grade, but since that wasn't true for all students, that instruction continued beyond, which became more difficult as the gap became wider.*

Commissioner Griffin said two-thirds of the students not proficient from third to fifth to eighth grade were African American kids and asked, of the number of students that were not proficient, what happened with kids in terms of instruction.

Chair Dunlap left the room at 11:53am and returned when noted in the minutes

Commissioner Meier asked how they accessed the dual enrollment in CMS high schools that didn't have coaches. *Ms. Hill said they did it through the Career Development Counselors (CDC)*

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that were at CMS and the college had the Career and College Promise (CCP) department that helped with the college side.

Commissioner Meier asked what the difference between a coach and a CDC was. *Ms. Hill said the coaches were focused on getting students ready for the CCP program.*

Commissioner Meier asked if transportation was offered or if the classes were virtual with CCP classes taken by high school students. *Ms. Hill said for the Central Piedmont Academy, some of the faculty had been taking the classes to the high schools, however, it was difficult to manage the cost of the program. She said where transportation was an issue, they were trying to take some of the classes to the high schools and students were required to come to the college when there was equipment involved. She said if they could solve the transportation issue, more students would enroll.*

Commissioner Leake asked how many students were remedial coming from CMS. Ms. Clarke said she would get that number.

Commissioner Leake said many black males were failing in CMS and asked what programs they found to have been successful and requested an explanation of the reading program. *Ms. Thompson said they had adopted an English Language Arts curriculum called EL Education that included two components and, for K-2nd grade, it included the science of reading or Phonics instruction.*

Commissioner Leake asked how they were working with parents who found themselves unable to support their children. *Ms. Thompson said they were launching several virtual programs that supported the ability of parents to connect students with the instruction they needed when they had not mastered a standard and some schools had tutoring programs to support them.*

Chair Dunlap returned at 11:58.

Commissioner Altman asked how much growth occurred to put them in the blue and not in the red regarding EVAAS growth by student group and if core priorities had been established. *Ms. Thompson said they used two models to set a projection for every student who had been in CMS for a period of time as a part of the growth measure taken by the State and the projected score would be meeting growth. She said the goal was for students to exceed growth for two reasons; 1) there were many students that had not met proficiencies and 2) they lost a lot during the pandemic.*

Commissioner Altman asked for the growth by demographic from the previous year. *Ms. Thompson said that she could provide that information.*

Vice-Chair Jerrell said it was important for the Board to understand the support needed to continue the trend for enrollment in classes and for CMS, there were positive indicators. He asked what the growth was attributed to on the relevant slide regarding proficiently and for clarification for the interpretation on the slide regarding performance amongst the various demographics. *Ms. Thompson said they implemented a "Standards Align Curriculum", and it was not optional for schools to use it. She said that meant teachers and principals were being provided the resources to make sure students were taught what they needed to be based on the curriculum. She said the State had invested in teachers around literacy with training and development for teachers.*

Ms. Thompson said regarding slide 88, the row for black students would be the result of any student who was black within the district; the row for economically disadvantaged would be any

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student who met the State criteria for economically disadvantaged. She said there could be students from any racial group also in the economically disadvantaged groups.

Vice-Chair Jerrell said they had a narrative that said economically disadvantaged children were struggling the most, and it seemed it was holding true across the spectrum but was based on race as opposed to economically disadvantaged. *Ms. Thompson said, from a strategic lens, students were being taught, evaluated, and plans were developed based on what they were proficient in. She said she they were looking at strategy that addressed individual needs and looking at trends across the State.*

Chair Dunlap asked, if they wanted to increase the positive numbers in any category, would more teachers increase the numbers. *Ms. Thompson said yes, in theory more would be better and the focus on retention and recruitment of teachers was the number one priority over the next five years.*

Chair Dunlap asked how they could provide sources specifically for that group. *Ms. Thompson said that it would be part of the ongoing conversations regarding strategy and budget and what it looked like to recruit and retain the very best teachers and teacher assistants to support learning.*

Chair Dunlap said the Board would like to focus on certain areas and to be assured that when CMS receives resources, they were attributed to the focus areas.

The Board took a break at 12:16 p.m. and returned at 1:01 p.m.

Environmental Stewardship Metrics

Sustainability & Resiliency Manager Erin Stanforth, Mark Hahn Director of Asset & Facility Management, Lee Jones Director of Park & Recreation & Director of Land Use & Environmental Services Ebenezer Gujjarlapudi gave an overview of the performance metrics & associated impacts aligned with Environmental Stewardship.

- Environmental Leadership Action Plan (ELAP)
 - Facilities and Fleet
 - Net-Zero Carbon Buildings
 - Environmentally Friendly Design
 - Net-Zero Carbon Fleet
 - Operations
 - Responsible Purchasing
 - Waste Minimization
 - Employee Engagement
 - Natural Environment
 - Resiliency
 - Land Acquisition
 - Ecosystem Management
 - Policies and Partnerships
 - Community Partnerships
 - Business Partnerships *
 - Legislative Priorities *
 - Justice & Racial Equity *
 - Communication
- Performance Highlights
 - Park & Recreation
 - a) Park Land Acquisition

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- b) Invasive Species Management
- Land Use & Environmental Service Agency
 - a) Solid Waste Management
 - b) Air Quality
 - c) Storm Water
- Asset & Facility Management
 - a) Facilities and Fleet Initiatives
 - a. Solar Master Plan
 - b. Deep Energy Retrofit Master Plan
 - c. Electrification of Fleet
- County Manager's Office
 - a) WorkGreen
 - b) Farmland Preservation

Comments

Commissioner Powell asked how they would respond if standard for air quality was lowered. *Mr. Gujjalapudi said the major contributor was motor vehicles and they would have to look at reducing driving.*

Commissioner Powell said to set a standard they would have to prove it was harmful to human health and that would take a while.

Commissioner Powell asked what stormwater was doing to encourage innovative approaches predevelopment and asked if anything was being done before development. *Mr. Gujjalapudi said predevelopment conversations were handled by the City and the Towns.*

Commissioner Powell said it was critical to partner with municipalities. She quoted one of their goals "they would be stable and partially supporting of diverse aquatic life" and wanted to know why it was partial. *Mr. Gujjalapudi said it's partially supported because it takes time to have enough "bugs in the water" to help support fish.*

Commissioner Leake mentioned the junkyard by Druid Hills Elementary School and said there were many more in District 2. She asked how to get those junkyards removed. *Mr. Gujjalapudi said that the City of Charlotte had zoning authority to enforce against them.*

Commissioner Leake said it was problem.

Commissioner Griffin said there was a heavy rainstorm near Monroe Road and water flowed into Briar creek flooding into some apartments. He said it seemed to occur on a regular basis when there was a lot of rain and asked if they were responsible for this. *Mr. Gujjalapudi said the intensity of rain over a short amount of time was what was causing the flooding and said they were monitoring it because there were several factors that could cause the floodings. He said he would take this information and do some more research on the property.*

Commissioner Griffin asked if the County had ever approached apartment complexes that had a history of flooding to pursue buyouts. Mr. Gujjalapudi said it depended on where they were and according to the point system they used. He said that they had done it in some places.

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Commissioner Altman said that she did not fully appreciate the figure of \$84 million as the price tag for retrofitting 33 buildings in Mecklenburg County. She said she felt a duty to her children and the residents of Mecklenburg County to slow emissions.

Commissioner Altman asked Mr. Gujjalapudi if there was any point in using home water filter systems and innovative approaches because she did not feel they were getting through to their partners who approved development throughout the County. She said she was unsure if there was baseline understanding about the difference between impervious versus non-impervious services and the disaster that could be created if there were violent storms with violent water rushing out in residential and commercial areas. *Mr. Gujjalapudi said that home water filters were a personal choice because the water meets all federal drinking water standards. He said, regarding predevelopment, LUESA Stormwater department worked with the City and the Towns because they did land development for the towns.*

Vice-Chair Jerrell asked how they prioritized where they go with respect to the deployment of resources around invasive species. He also asked about getting and update of park maintenance offline. *Mr. Jones said they evaluated the site to establish a plan and then prioritize based on the level of invasives that were present as well as the types. He said that didn't want to negatively impact the biosphere of park sites, so they coordinated with the residents.*

Health Access Metrics

Health Access from Health & Human Services Senior Program Manager Robert Nesbit, Public Health Business Manager Benjamin Chambers, & Director of Public Health Dr. Raynard Washington gave an overview of the performance metrics & associated impacts aligned with Health Access. Included were the following:

Access to Health MCPH

- Primary Care Partner Measures
 - MCPH Primary Care Partners
 - Uninsured Mecklenburg County Residents Served by Primary Care Partners
 - Chronic Disease Outcome Measures
- MCPH Clinical Services Measures
- MCPH HIV Measures
- MCPH Food Access Measures

Access to Health: Behavioral Health

- Defining Behavioral Health
- Behavioral Health Data Points - Mecklenburg County
- Publicly-Funded Behavioral Health Services
- CFAS Behavioral Health Contracts (FY21-FY23)
- 5. Mecklenburg County Impact Highlights:
 - CSS Substance Use and Domestic Violence Services
 - Anuvia's Detox and Inpatient Residential Services
 - Promise Resource Network's Recovery Hub
 - Smith Family Behavioral Health Urgent Care

Comments

Commissioner Powell asked if people that were seen in 2023, involved with their primary care partners, had their A1C and blood pressure checked. *Mr. Washington said that if they had a full physical, yes.*

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Commissioner Powell said she was concerned with ensuring patients had their A1C checked to assist with early detection. *Mr. Washington said the report reflected how well patients who had been diagnosed with chronic conditions were managed and said blood pressure and A1C were being checked when people came into the County, and they were also providing primary care if they needed another level of care. He said primary care would screen everyone regardless of age.*

Commissioner Griffin asked Mr. Washington if he had an opinion regarding utilization of primary care providers and preventative health services by individuals on Medicaid. *Mr. Washington said it was something they continued to work through. He said the best indication of use was the annual survey and they could look at the number of Medicaid patients that completed the survey and reported back. He said there was still opportunity there and there was a data gap in terms of how many patients were enrolled in Medicaid and routinely engaged in a primary care provider. He said it reflected the County investment in primary care, low income, as well as free clinics in the community. He said it did not reflect the work of other providers who provided primary care to people who didn't have health insurance.*

Commissioner Griffin asked if having the data point would be helpful in understanding the community's health. *Mr. Washington said yes, and he thought it was important and NC Medicaid should have held managed care organizations accountable to manage the care of their recipients.*

Commissioner Leake asked if they needed more services. *Mr. Nesbit said they were doing things that were helping create resources that were long lasting in the community as well as Behavioral Health and Smith Foundation. He said a facility-based crisis center was under construction that would have a behavioral health/urgent care component though it would not launch until 2025. He said they were long-term resources that would promote greater community health and wellbeing as well as providing more access to resources.*

Commissioner Leake asked what they were doing to cut down on the violence. *Mr. Washington said he would discuss violence in the Community Health Improvement plan presentation on day two of the retreat.*

Commissioner Meier asked what Alliance did not cover that the County did cover. She said her concern was for the people not having access to mental health care. *Mr. Nesbit said there were certain waivers that existed that provided care for people with developmental disabilities. He said they provided services to those people who didn't have access to that resource.*

Commissioner Meier asked Mr. Washington if the Ryan White program was the same as the Getting to Zero Program. *Mr. Washington said not exactly as Getting to Zero was their strategic plan around HIV prevention and reduction and Ryan White was a pillar of the Getting to Zero program that had been expanded to cover physical/behavioral/dental and wrap around services.*

Commissioner Meier ask why COVID was a factor in rise in HIV cases. *Mr. Washington said they saw a reduction in number of new cases of HIV reported because people were not engaged with care. He said there was a very small uptick once things opened back up but, over a 10-year period, there had been a decline.*

Commissioner Altman said she thought there was a rise in HIV being diagnosed in Mecklenburg County. *Mr. Washington said he could not say for sure that there had not been any increase in transmission of AIDS/HIV, but between FY2022-FY2023, it had not been dramatic. He said the current and following year would determine how aggressively they looked for it.*

Commissioner Altman asked what number would be good versus bad with regards to the provided information on Chronic disease outcome. *Mr. Chambers said they were better than*

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average, and they wanted to be at the 80% and 88% benchmarks although they were above average.

Commissioner Altman asked when people went to their primary care physician and those things were measured, did they have the information anonymized and could they report how they were really doing. *Mr. Washington said that the partners reported in aggregate quarterly.*

Chair Dunlap said the number of uninsured continued to increase but the number of those being served had decreased and asked for an explanation. *Mr. Chambers said in FY21 – 22, the primary care partner saw a higher number of people coming in because of COVID and after the threat passed, the numbers went back to pre-COVID numbers. He said there was some temporary disruption in service because one partner changed location.*

Chair Dunlap asked why the number of those with breast and cervical cancer had decreased in FY23. *Mr. Washington said allowable targets from the State was reduced because they gave more targets to Charlotte Community Health as well as their demands being higher than the County's. He said the number fluctuated based on demand.*

Chair Dunlap asked what the state of health because of expanded Medicare was. *Mr. Washington said they just received the information so there was not a huge impact except for people having an insurance card. He said they would see a decline of people who didn't have insurance and improved health because of access to health care.*

Chair Dunlap asked if there was marketing to let those without insurance know they could go and be served. *Anthony Trotman said there was an aggressive marketing strategy done by the State for all uninsured and those individuals on family planning Medicaid. He said they were also working with the managed care organizations.*

Break

After a 15-minute break, the meeting continued.

Housing Insecurity Metrics

Director of Community Support Services Stacy Lowry, Director of Criminal Justice Services Sonya Harper and Affordable Housing Program Manager LaShonda Hart gave an overview of the performance metrics & associated impacts aligned with Housing Insecurity. Also included were the following:

Housing Insecurity

- Housing insecurity
 - Multiple Pillars
 - Definition
 - Level setting
- Affordable Housing
 - Renter Cost Burden
 - Housing Programs
 - Data summary
- Criminal Justice Services
 - Vendor Network Housing Program
- Critical Home Repair
 - Critical Home Repair (CHR) addresses major safety concerns in homes by making necessary repairs allowing homeowners to remain in their homes and age in place

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- Eviction Prevention
 - Legal Aid - To provide eviction prevention, diversion assistance, legal advice and representation to low-income people to avoid evictions, get repairs of unsafe and unhealthy conditions in order to ensure equal access to justice and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity
 - Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy - Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy provides eviction prevention assistance, legal advice and representation for immigrants and provide systemic advocacy regarding landlord tenant matters.
- Affordable Housing – NOAH (Natural Occurring Affordable Housing) Program
 - Place-based supportive services & programming
 - Additional Projects & Initiatives

Comments

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked clarifying questions which were answered by Ms. Harper and Ms. Hart.

Commissioner Meier asked clarifying questions which were answered by Ms. Hart.

Commissioner Cotham commended the presenters.

Commissioner Griffin asked, in terms of workforce development, if there was a more formal way to provide services. *Ms. Hart said anyone who wanted those types of services had access and would receive them. She said there were several services being offered and they would see if there was more that could be done.*

Commissioner Leake thanked Ms. Hart for assistance with the program and in helping seniors.

Commissioner Powell said she recalled them mentioning unsuccessful exits and they had a need for substance abuse programs and asked for more information. *Ms. Harper said a primary reason why people were not successful in housing was because of substance abuse and rearrests. She said, those coming out of custody in the recent years showed an increased need in substance abuse help and they faced several challenges including lack of health care for them.*

Commissioner Powell asked how housing venders were obtained and what the restrictions on them were. *Ms. Harper said they had events, and some venders came to them. She said there were no restrictions on cameras outside of the home, but no cameras were allowed on the inside. She said the house had to meet standards and follow City and State landlord/tenant standards as well as be fully furnished.*

Commissioner Powell asked if there was a maximum number of people who could stay in the house. *Ms. Harper said the vendors were asked to set up rooms for double occupancy.*

Vice-Chair Jerrell said many in the community were focused on reentry and the groups that had partnered with the County were passionate about their work. He said though the work may not be perfect, it was important to point out more was being done in their community than many others across the country.

Vice-Chair Jerrell said they were still able to stay below the average market rent across the footprint through NOAHS and saw it as a double win when looking at it in its totality.

Workforce Development Metrics

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Senior Social Services Manager Erik Ortega, & President/Chief Executive Officer of Charlotte Works Anna London gave an overview of the performance metrics & associated impacts aligned with Workforce Development. Also included were:

Mecklenburg County

- Department of Community Resources Unified Workforce Development & Performance Outcomes
 - Unified Workforce Development History
 - UWD Program eligibility
 - FY20-FY23 Performance Outcomes
 - Employed Customers Demographics FY20-FY23
 - Employed customers Barriers and Referral Source FY20-FY23
 - Employee Retention
 - Development Initiative
 - Expanding Opportunities Program
 - Workforce Contracts and Community Partners
 - Internal Initiatives
 - DCR Workforce Contracts and Community Partners
 - Internal Initiatives, Workforce Contracts and Community Partners

Charlotte Works

- Workforce Development Boards (Federal State and Local)
- Who was Charlotte Works?
- Programs and Services
- NCWorks Access Points
- Job Seeker Personas
- FY220-FY23 Charlotte Works Impact Snapshot
- FY20 Charlotte Works Service Details

Comments

Chair Dunlap asked Ms. London what Mecklenburg County Workforce Development was doing that their program was not doing. He asked County Manager Diorio how much money they would save if they didn't utilize their Workforce Development program.

County Manager Diorio said Charlotte Works did not do programming, they sent people to programs and refer people as well as doing the tracking and oversight. *Ms. London said Charlotte Works did not do direct service, they contracted out and provided oversight.*

Chair Dunlap said it sounded like it seemed like they should consolidate to save money.

Commissioner Cotham asked Mr. Ortega what they needed that they didn't have. *Mr. Ortega said they were merging human services with workforce development and said they needed the participants to have access to housing opportunities, resources, mental health etc.*

Commissioner Cotham asked if Mr. Ortega was still involved with youth. *He said they were, and they were increasing services in career support specialists for youth.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked for clarification on the impact snapshot slide which was provided by Ms. London.

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Commissioner Meier asked if they partnered with organizations that were justice involved and referred to employers that were second chance employers. *Mr. Ortega said yes, they connected them with employers and Charlotte Works provided comprehensive wraparound services.*

Commissioner Meier asked what the overlap services between the County Workforce Development and Charlotte Works was. *Ms. London said, although the job seeker may seek services from both programs, they would not receive duplicate services from each program. She said the goal was to make sure job seekers and businesses went to the best first door and Mecklenburg County did in-house, and Charlotte Works contracted out.*

Commissioner Altman said both programs targeted people with barriers and there needed to be a community conversation about how to improve the wealth of the residents. She provided the example of the Lake Norman Economic Development showing high school students the new job opportunities that were available.

Commissioner Griffin asked the presenters opinion of what a living wage was in Mecklenburg County. *Mr. Ortega said, for someone to to sustain themselves, without living paycheck to paycheck, depending on the family size, there were many variables to the question. He said it should be above \$20 per hour for a family of 1 and about \$90,000 a year for a family of 2.*

Commissioner Griffin asked if their focus was to graduate people that could support themselves. *Mr. Ortega said the focus was to identify the career pathway that would help to earn a livable wage.*

Commissioner Griffin asked if they required last high school attended on the applications. *Mr. Ortega said yes, and Ms. London said they didn't ask for the name of the high school but for educational attainment.*

Commissioner Leake said she would like to see the budget for Charlotte Works and asked if they provided jobs for people, and if so, what kind of jobs. *Ms. London said they often helped people find jobs in Health care such as nursing assistants, medical assistants, and human resource positions.*

Vice-Chair Jerrell said it would be helpful if they knew what overall workforce strategy was as a community. He said the City and County had workforce and there were community partners trying to achieve the same goals, but he didn't know if he understood their overall strategy.

Vice-Chair Jerrell said it seemed they should consider the oncoming innovation district and they needed to create jobs paying between \$40 and \$50 per hour. He said there must be a way to set people up for these jobs and determine what role they played in that. *Ms. Landon said there would be a presentation on that tomorrow. Mr. Ortega said they had made progress to a more centralized approach so that they weren't duplicating services but working side-by-side.*

Chair Dunlap said he felt concerned about County resources getting tight which would result in tax increases. He said, if there were services being duplicated, there should be a way to save money somewhere. He said it was a cost to the community and, thinking strategically, they needed to figure out how to eliminate the costs and still get the work done.

Closing Comments

County Manager Diorio gave a wrap-up of day one of the Retreat.

The meeting was recessed at 5:01 p.m. until Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

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RETREAT – DAY 2

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for the FY 2023 Annual Retreat on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 9:03 a.m. in the Harris Conference Center at Central Piedmont Community College, 3216 CPCC Harris Campus Drive, Charlotte, NC 28208.

ATTENDANCE

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

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER

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

Note: Commissioner Altman was not present until noted in the minutes.

Welcome

County Manager Diorio provided a brief overview of day two of the Board Retreat.

Comments

Doctor Monica Allen addressed the Board and provided paper copies of the metrics that was discussed on day one of the retreat.

Arts & Culture Report

Cyndee Patterson and Kevin Patterson Charlotte Arts & Culture Advisory Board Co-chairs, gave the following presentation of the City of Charlotte's Arts & Culture Plan.

- How And When
 - a) Phase 1 Gathering and analyzing data
 - b) Phase 2 Engaging with the Community
 - c) Phase 3 Developing a vision

The State of Culture laid the foundation for community decision-making with a 360-degree review of the area’s cultural environment including:

- Analysis
- Assets
- Funding
- Comparables

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- Engagement

Inside the Arts and Culture Plan

- 1 vision
- 8 priorities
- 26 strategies
- 121 actions

The Vision: A Community where all people value, support and thrive through arts, culture and creativity.

Philosophy: Arts and Culture were essential to our community.

- Through arts and culture, they come to know and understand each other. they appreciate our pasts and build a better future together. Through arts and culture, our daily lives vault from existing to thriving.
- Arts and culture were vital, and they do not take them for granted. Every person deserves to experience creativity and cultural enrichment. Together, they must cultivate arts, culture and creativity for everyone.

Priorities and Strategies

PRIORITY 1

Ensure sustainable and reliable funding for arts and culture in Charlotte-Mecklenburg through public- private planning, collaboration, and commitment.

Strategies

1. Secure significant, ongoing public sector support — primarily ongoing, annual support from the city and County, with supplemental support from state, regional, and national sources.
2. Foster ongoing/increasing private financial participation.
3. Build organizational development capabilities.
4. Build capacity of organizations and artists/creatives to develop sustainable revenue models appropriate to their respective operating models (nonprofit, for profit, individual). (See Priority 2 re: coordination and implementation of arts and culture plan priorities)

PRIORITY 2

The public sector must partner with an already active private sector to play a leadership role in building Charlotte-Mecklenburg's arts and culture ecosystem, including governance and funds delivery

Strategies

1. Establish and implement a joint, public-private governance structure focused on cultivating a sustainable, thriving arts and culture ecosystem in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.
2. Ensure and coordinate ongoing delivery of equitable, accessible, and inclusive funding and services to/for the arts and culture sector.
3. Shift the decision-making for funding and the direction of the arts and culture sector to be more inclusive and transparent.

PRIORITY 3

Equitable, accessible, and inclusive support and funding were critical to advancing, growing, and sustaining *ALAANA, **LGBTQIA+, and other artists and institutions — particularly small and

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mid-sized organizations — that have been historically marginalized in the Charlotte Mecklenburg arts and culture ecosystem.

STRATEGIES

1. As part of the new governance process, ensure that equity goals were defined, and progress was regularly evaluated and reported by an external auditing body.
2. Create an ecosystem of funding to support artists and arts and culture organizations at multiple levels or tiers; tiers may be based on the organization's budget size.
3. Provide an application and a grant process designed to engage and attract artists and organizations who traditionally were underrepresented in funding awards to apply for grants
4. Growth Fund: Create resource (funding and training) pathways for individual artists and small, mid-size and grassroots organizations to advance with mentoring, guidance, and assistance

PRIORITY 4

Provide access to affordable space for the creation and experience of arts and culture

STRATEGIES

1. Partner with city/County/private businesses to 1) convert vacant spaces into multidisciplinary art centers and 2) identify/incentivize the creation of arts districts inclusive of all forms of art for creation/rehearsal/practice/display and experience.
2. Partner with developers and corporations to intentionally build, renovate, incorporate, and operate multidisciplinary art spaces into new construction and existing buildings for practice/rehearsal/creation/display and experience.
3. Prioritize local artist access and affordability to city-/County-owned public art and non-traditional art spaces (i.e., libraries, schools, parks, houses of faith, etc.).

PRIORITY 5

Eliminate barriers to arts and culture creation and participation.

STRATEGIES

1. Provide tickets and transportation to arts and cultural events.
2. Enable cross-cultural shared collaborations, shared experiences throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg and an abundance of diverse, local creative work throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg.
3. Ensure the resources exist in neighborhoods and communities throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg whereby creatives at all levels were encouraged and supported.

PRIORITY 6

Achieve widespread awareness and visibility of arts and culture through strengthening communication.

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STRATEGIES

1. Conduct qualitative and quantitative market research in Charlotte-Mecklenburg to understand:
 - Attitudes of “non-participants” toward the arts and motivating factors for arts and culture participation.
 - Extent of support by “participants” and reasons for support (or lack thereof).
 - Perceptions of the value of a vibrant arts and culture ecosystem in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area
2. Create, implement, and maintain a comprehensive Charlotte-Mecklenburg arts and culture communication plan with revised branding, marketing, and messaging, including social media hashtags or other mediums, in conjunction with the Charlotte Regional Visitor Authority and other regional partners to encourage increased local participation in arts and culture and to raise national and international visibility of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's arts and culture offerings.

PRIORITY 7

Foster collaboration and cooperation throughout the creative ecosystem and with other sectors.

1. Incentivize and enable cross-sector collaborations within the creative ecosystem and with other sectors (such as healthcare, manufacturing, education, social service, etc.) through funding and technical support
2. Build capacity for collaborations across the sector through networking, infrastructure, and financial resources

PRIORITY 8

Expand arts education experiences — early childhood to lifelong learners — for greater access and exposure to arts and culture, enhancing quality of life, robust workforce development, and the retention and cultivation of future artists and supporters.

STRATEGIES

1. Articulate and advocate for the value of arts education across all demographic sectors, i.e., all ages, races, gender, ethnicities, geographic locations, etc.
2. Strengthen arts education in all pre-K-12 schools — public, private and charter.
3. Increase support for arts teachers and teaching artists through increased funding, leveraging community partnerships and professional development opportunities
4. Fortify and expand educational programming from local arts organizations
5. Create pathways for people to become professional artists, entrepreneurs, and business owners within the creative sectors.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Winter / Spring 2023-24:

- Plan presented to County Commission
- Advisory board develops governance structure with input from City and County
- Develop funding options

Comments

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked the presenters and asked for clarification on the connection of the Arts and Science Council and the “ecosystem” and more information about the \$4.1 million. *Mr. Patterson said the Arts and Science Council was part of the Arts and Culture Board and were a part of the process. Ms. Patterson said they were trying to develop their government structure and see how it fit with the Arts and Science Council and if the Arts and Science Council was the adaptability piece, if they could be adapted to what was needed if they had a larger financial commitment or if they were creating something they were part of but not*

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the center piece of. She said they were trying to get to what would work best for the County going forward.

County Manager Diorio said the \$4 million went to the Arts and Science Council apart from \$500,000 that went to Charlotte Shout. She said funding would continue to go to the Arts and Science Council unless there was a collective agreement to do something else. She said workplace giving was a failing model so something else needed to be figured out.

Chair Dunlap said it would have been helpful if they had revisited what happened with the split between the Art and Science Council and what the City of Charlotte decided to do with their funds. He said the County continued to fund ASC, the City had funding, and the presentation showed they were developing it, but they hadn't decided what they wanted to do as it related to the arts. He said the funding the City and private sector put into it was the issue and the advisory board was developing a plan on how that money should be spent and what kind of relationship they would have with the entire ecosystem of the Arts.

Mrs. Patterson said over the previous 3 years, the Infusion Fund had funded the ASC but had not gone directly through the City.

Commissioner Leake thanked them for coming and said her problem was regarding the community that she represented and the lack of representation in District 2. She said she was concerned of what they were doing and how it included people and children in all communities.

Commissioner Griffin asked if the ASC cultural equity report was substantially incorrect. *Mr. and Mrs. Patterson said they could not speak to it.*

Commissioner Griffin asked what the Arts and Culture Advisory Board was planning in response to the equity report. He said he observed that African Americans had been speaking under the table as it related to the support they had been getting and the report uncovered truths about funding. He asked if they were responding to that report. He said one of the Board's budget goals was not to create continuing disparities.

Mrs. Patterson said the first round of funding done through the infusion funds were doubled and created an increase for those organizations not adequately funded. She said those organizations remained funded every year at that increase rate and was likely done due to the equity report.

Vice Chair Jerrell thanked the presenters and said he supported a healthy ecosystem for the arts. He asked if the County had representation within the group that had been convened. *Ms. Patterson said no.*

Vice Chair Jerrell said if they were creating their ecosystem, it was a golden opportunity for all stakeholders to be involved. He said their perspective was laser focused on reducing racial disparities/equity. He said he needed additional information on the decisions the City made and that the County needed a seat at the table and a better understanding of the gaps they were trying to fill including who was going to benefit from it and the outcomes. *Mrs. Patterson said she would get the information to him and agreed. Mr. Patterson said they had to come together as an entire community and make sure they were walking together.*

Vice Chair Jerrell said he believed there would be value coming from the County's side.

Chair Dunlap said the City Council wanted to use their funding for the City economic development and they asked if the County wanted to follow suit which meant there was a structural change in terms of the way the arts community operated. He said the County decided that, because the ASC had completed the equity and inclusion plan, they would continue to fund the ASC and the

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committee's job was to look at the whole ecosystem and decide how they funded arts in their community.

Mrs. Patterson said they expanded the committee to 40+ people and included Leslie Johnson on the steering committee. Mr. Patterson said the original RFP only had the City of Charlotte and it was changed to Charlotte-Mecklenburg to make sure it was expanded beyond the city limits. He said the plan was done and that was the purpose of the presentation. He said they needed to work together to determine the best tools to use for money and organization.

Commissioner Griffin said the Foundation for the Carolinas was the business community and they decided where the funding went. He asked if they had any reports regarding relationships in funding formulas. *Ms. Patterson said they had a report since the Infusion Fund from where they started to what they were funding and they helped raise half the money through the private sector.*

Break

The Board took at break and reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

Workforce Development

President / Chief Executive Office of Charlotte Works Anna London gave an update on workforce development in the County, which included:

Who was Charlotte Works?

- A connector, they connect partners to align the workforce ecosystem
- An influencer, data informed workforce initiatives
- A change agent

Ms. Landon further shared:

- Relevant Trends
- Our Approach
- Ensuring Access for ALL

Comments

Commissioner Cotham said a lot of people didn't have access to the internet and didn't know where or how to apply. She said they should provide information for anyone who was seeking part-time employment or older adults who didn't have access. She said she felt they weren't included. *Ms. London said part of their outreach efforts with the other workforce providers was how to meet people where they were and develop relationships and share resources with them. She said workforce development had a piece in the home for all strategy to make sure the housing/career navigators were able to share information with them when they were ready to apply.*

Commissioner Cotham said she was concerned many people didn't know Charlotte Works and other organizations existed. *Ms. London said that was something they had to consider and be intentional in communication and the marketing plan, so it continued into the community.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the tool was fantastic and asked regarding job offers to applications how responsive or current the information was. She said that it was common for people to feel discouraged as they were attempting to apply as there was an avalanche of other

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applicants and asked if there was a common application. *Ms. London said the common application and intake form was in the works to eliminate job seekers having to repeat their story many times when applying.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how up to date were specific jobs on the website. *Ms. London said that on the website, the jobs were current, real-time jobs. When they went to an employer, they couldn't control how long they left the position up.*

Commissioner Meier said it was a great program. She asked what someone could do when they googled jobs, and their website didn't come up. *Ms. London said when it went live, there were ways to put algorithms in place so that Charlotte Works was one of the options when someone did a Google search for jobs within the vicinity. She said NCWorks and LinkedIn were back-end tools that fed into Charlotte Works.*

Commissioner Meier said she worried about the simple barriers that existed for people who were not in the know.

Commissioner Griffin asked where the gap was, and why there was a continuing gap between the education piece and jobs in the County. *Ms. London said they knew where they were and had pulled together the necessary stakeholders as well as leaders and the next step was to do an inventory of providers, training programs, and current jobs that were in demand including, what required skills were. She said they knew where the gaps were, and coming back to look at it may determine that they needed to shift resources to fill the gaps with priority populations.*

Commissioner Griffin asked how they prepared for something that was three years away. He said no one was connecting the dots. *Ms. London said she was connecting the dots, and they were launching the tangible things they said they would do. She said there had been discussions with industry partners to look at hiring practices and how to map back to the schools, students, and pathways.*

Commissioner Powell recalled the gentleman that came to the budget public hearing to thank them for the classes at the library to learn how to use a computer. She agreed with Commissioner Cotham's concerns regarding helping the ones that did not have access or know how to use technology. She said there needed to be a focus on human communication or human connection. *Ms. London said they were not losing sight on the one-on-one navigation for individuals and that was a key piece of the providers. She said in their marketing piece, they would not lose the human connection piece.*

Chair Dunlap left the dais at 11:07 a.m. and returned when noted in the minutes.

MeckSuccess

Director of Community Resources Yulonda Griffin gave an update on the County's MeckSuccess workforce development strategy. Also included were the following:

- Program Overview
- Projected Outcomes & Parameters
- Career Pathways
- Program Features & Implementation

MECKSuccess Program was a comprehensive community-based initiative aimed at fostering economic mobility, educational excellence, and personal development for residents of Mecklenburg County. This innovative program was designed to empower individuals and families

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by providing a wide range of support services and opportunities, spanning from kindergarten through high school and beyond.

Program Projected Outcomes

Adults

- Increased Economic Mobility through Education and/or Living Wage Employment
 - Year-over-year completion of educational and/or job readiness courses
 - Percent increase year over year in earnings

Youth

- Increased School Attendance
- Improved Academics
 - Improved literacy test scores (K-2nd grade)
 - Improved End-of-Grade test scores in reading & math (3rd-12th grade)
 - High school seniors graduating from high school and enrolled, enlisted, or employed
- Decreased Behavioral Incidents
 - Reduction in In-school & Out-of-School suspensions

MECKSuccess Expansion Parameters

Objective: Elevate adult family member to a living wage job within 2-5 years

- 25 new families for FY24

Program Requirements

- Resident in the subsidized housing program at INLIVIAN'S The Gaston at North End (Zip Code 28206)
- Minor child/ren in the home
- Living Wage education and employment goals
- Motivated to work with MECKSuccess Social Worker

Career Pathways to Living Wage Opportunities

- Healthcare & Human Services
- Manufacturing
- Information Technology
- Construction
- Transportation and Logistics
- Finance

Commissioner Altman entered the meeting at 11:21 a.m.

Comments

Chair Dunlap returned to the dais at 11:32 a.m.

Commissioner Griffin thanked Ms. Griffin and asked if they could do a request for proposal for a professional to hire an evaluator before the first tenant was brought on board. He said there needed to be a professional evaluation so the program could be used as a model for others to follow and a researcher was needed to help with feedback. *County Manager Diorio said it could be done.*

Commissioner Griffin asked for them to stick to college and career readiness because the school system was not focused in that area, as well as credentialed education for those people. He requested to also get the information of the last school attended because they refused to hold

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people accountable and said the kids were not where they needed to be, and they needed to let people know they needed a higher skill set.

Commissioner Meier thanked Ms. Griffin and asked how long had MECKSuccess been around. *Ms. Griffin said it had been around since 2020.*

Commissioner Meier asked if the current program was an enhancement of what was already there. *Ms. Griffin said it was a change in approach. She said previously there were challenges around allowing individuals to be referred and could join at any point in time which created some challenges in being able to see the impact of what they were achieving. She said the program was 2-5 years old so there could be more assistance with moving them to career wage opportunities.*

Commissioner Meier ask if Charlotte works was a connector and if it connected them to this. *Ms. Griffin said in the previous program, yes and it depended on the needs and barriers of the participant.*

Commissioner Meier said she felt like there was a lot of overlap, but she supported it.

Commissioner Leake thanked her for her work in pulling everything together and said her concern was youth attendance. She asked how they got parents to realize the importance of attendance in schools. *Ms. Griffin said there was an agreement that the households would be signing with their engagement in the program. She said there were social workers who would be working with the parents and the students, and also had a vendor that supported them specifically around attendance. She said they would work with the “caretaker” of students when parents were absent with the same energy.*

Vice Chair Jerrell addressed slide 294 and he said the slide laid out the career path and dollar amounts which visually gave a different level of perspective for potential applicants. He said this program was targeted for a specific group, 30% AMI and below, but he said he would also like to see those who were on the benefits cliff. He said they couldn't leave their current job and have upward mobility to achieve \$97,400. He said he didn't know how they would solve to expanding it for the working poor. He said they were almost being penalized because they made too much but they didn't make enough to get on track for upward mobility, to be able to devote the full time needed to go through a program. *Ms. Griffin said the individuals that lived at the INLIVIAN community were at 80% AMI and below. She said they did accept individuals that may be working and there were individuals that were trying to increase their skills to get promotions. She said, for these individuals, there had to be a discussion about other resources.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked, in reference to program costs, if that afforded to the person in the program, if they had to pay or if the County paid. *Ms. Griffin said a lot of people qualified for financial aid assistance or other funding sources.*

Commissioner McDowell asked if the participants could potentially leave the program with debt. *Ms. Griffin said they would work with the individuals as much as possible to identify resources. Deputy County Manager Anthony Trotman said they would not have any debt because the program was funded in the previous year.*

BREAK FOR LUNCH

The Board took a lunch break at 11:49 p.m. and returned at 12:50 p.m.

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A Home For All

Kathryn Firmin-Sellers, Chief Impact Officer of United Way of Greater Charlotte, gave an update on the Home For All project. Also included were the following:

- People
 - a) System Navigation
 - b) Shared Database
 - c) Flexible Funds
- Prevention
 - a) Strike Fund
 - b) Critical Home Repair
 - c) Legal Advocacy
 - d) Upstream Emergency Rental Assistance
- Production
 - a) Housing Trust fund Expansion
 - b) Property Provider Recruitment & Retention
- Emergency Response
 - a) Street Outreach
 - b) Basic Needs, Health & Human Services
 - c) Emergency Shelter & Housing

Comments

Commissioner Meier said she was surprised there wasn't more on substance use disorder. She asked if Charlotte Rescue Mission was involved in the taskforce and if there would be more focus on substance use disorder. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said there was a focus on mental and substance abuse, but it was hidden under System Navigation-People pillar on slide 308. She said the funds were needed to be a bridge until people were able to get Medicaid and that took a process where it could take Medicaid eligible people several months to be Medicaid enrolled and the flexible funding was used during that time to get them connected to services immediately. She said Alliance Health was interested in becoming involved to ensure mental health and substance abuse supports were embedded within the street outreach team and the shelter.*

Commissioner Meier said she was concerned with how the City was moving towards treating addiction as a crime and jails would be filled with people who had substance use disorders, which was not a crime. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said if that happened, they needed to be prepared and see what else they needed to do to not criminalize mental illness and poverty. She said they had to make sure street outreach had the necessary resources and to build a street medicine team with behavioral health support.*

Commissioner Powell thanked her for her work and asked how they made it right with landlords when someone was so far behind in rent. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said there was no one-size-fits-all all solution and they had to realize, just as there were people that took advantage, there were some providers that were not behaving within the best possible way. She said the Risk Mitigation Fund would make the property provider whole, but people needed legal representation for eviction.*

Commissioner Powell asked how they could prevent abuse. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said they couldn't prevent abuse but could try to make the landlord whole so they would continue to rent to someone with a challenging housing record.*

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Commissioner Cotham thanked her and said she didn't mention it but wanted an update on having specific inspectors for affordable housing, so they didn't have to wait too long to get the process going. She asked if the inspector was in place.

Manager Diorio said there was not a dedicated team specifically for affordable housing, but there were processes in place and when people were ready to get their projects inspected, it could be done very quickly. She said they were not hearing from developers regarding delays of getting their properties inspected.

Commissioner Cotham asked if the City's Accessory Dwelling project was moving forward. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said they were moving forward, and they had model plans and if they were used, it would have incentives for the user.*

Commissioner Cotham said there were landlords who experienced delays in getting vouchers. *Ms. Firmin-Seller said one of the incentives through the property provider recruitment included a signing bonus, a holding fee, and risk mitigation funds.*

Commissioner Griffin thanked her and asked Mr. Cox for information on housing insecurity, particularly the \$38M. He asked if the \$12M was in addition to the \$38M for housing insecurity. *Mr. Cox referenced the presentation and said the difference between the FY24 and FY25 would be the additional funds.*

Commissioner Griffin said working with NOAHs and critical repairs, he would be interested in intentional wrap-around services and training to elevate people out of those circumstances. He asked if they were doing any services that focused on equal upward mobility. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said there was collaboration across the plan and Charlotte Works was intimately involved. She said they would look to Charlotte Works to find out what other support people needed as they navigated through the program. She said, in terms of the System navigation pillar, they needed to figure out what were the holistic supports and what families would need to remain stably housed.*

Commissioner Griffin asked County Manager Diorio, as a cultural shift, to encourage more intentional wrap-around services with upward mobility and housing support across the board. *Manager Diorio said it could be encouraged, but it could not be mandated and if it was mandated, there was the risk that providers would not want to participate. She said those were affordable housing providers and didn't have the capacity to provide intentional wrap-around services. She said it was a different line of business than what the Home for All strategy was about to look for systemically across areas to bring everyone to the table and see where they could move the needle.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked her and the comprehensive nature of the program. She asked how much of it was consolidating things they were already doing and said the ask was huge. She said for the County to do the entire amount she couldn't support that without knowing what the City and other stakeholders were putting in. She said regarding the wrap-around support that the County was right for them to be in that space but to do the other pieces and see who was else was bringing funds to the table.

County Manager Diorio said when they started funding United Way, the intent was to build some pilots and proof of concepts and share some successes while proceeding to leverage that to get private sector funding. She said the private sector was being consulted for private funds and there could be some success however, if it was not significant or if the private sector said no, they would have to consider next steps. She said the question would be, if everyone says no, do they walk away, and the Board would have to let her know if they wanted to participate in that work.

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Ms. Firmin-Sellers said the City was facing the request of equal magnitude and they believed firmly in the collaboration of City and County. She said they asked for \$7-8M from private sector, but they were waiting to see what the City and County were putting into it in FY25. She said she expected them to jump in after and thought there would be private investors for unsheltered homelessness.

Commissioner Altman said legal aid would only take cases that facts warranted. She said \$200,000 to serve 200 households for legal aid would be \$1,000 per family which she felt was a good deal to say that could possibly help people stay in their homes. She asked about infrastructure and how much the County paid for versus direct monetary assistance. She said she wanted to understand how Alliance had a responsibility to the County and how many people were shelter resistant as well as how many people were turned away. She asked how they compared to places like Portland and Seattle and said she was concerned about managing the problem and perhaps learning from their mistakes. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said she firmly believed in a universal basic income approach. She said as they launched with public dollars, the ideal opportunity would be to experiment and have two different project designs to see which one they got further with, one project around universal basic income, and another around a more traditional upstream emergency assistance program to see which one could solve with the inflow into homelessness. She said that she was not sure how many people they turned away from shelter, but didn't think it was very many. She said the previous year, there were 300 unsheltered people, which she considered was an undercount. She said the number was most likely 450 and believed if they built a shelter system with the right resources, programs, and environment, many of them would come inside.*

County Manager Diorio said United Way was working closely with Alliance to see what funding could be made available as most of their money went to Medicaid, where many people were either not enrolled or not eligible. She said there had been discussion to see what they could do with their state funding.

Vice Chair Jerrell said the framework checked all the boxes for him from a comprehensive systems approach and when they looked at the addressed elements, it resonated with his constituents. He said he supported the ask and if they couldn't do \$14 million, what would it look like for FY25/FY26 moving forward and suggested considering a phased approach. *County Manager Diorio said to keep in mind, a big chunk was \$7 million for the hotel and whether they moved forward with it would be determined if the City was going to come through with their half.*

Vice Chair Jerrell asked if they could grab some data from Dream Key to see if they could go back to those vulnerable people to figure out what the prevention was regarding the emergency rental assistance. *County Manager Diorio said they could go back and see if there was something they could do with that.*

Chair Dunlap said everything started because of what happened with tent city and was a result of the study that was done. He said when it came back to the Board the Manager was tasked with finding a place to develop all of it and the United Way was given money to do the study. He said everyone involved wanted to deal with the whole issue comprehensively. He said the City was trying to decide if they wanted to recriminalize things that had been decriminalized. He said in an emergency, a lot of money was given to deal with the situation and the \$14M to deal with it comprehensively was a better approach than putting money here-and-there. He said they needed to see what was at stake and do everything it took to get people off the streets, housed, and fed. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said this was an enormous issue and if they didn't act now, they could become another Portland or San Francisco. She said the timeliness of the investment was now.*

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Commissioner Leake asked if the request of United Way's \$14M would eradicate the asking of other agencies. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said no.*

Commissioner Leake said they had a major problem in Charlotte and the County with those that couldn't take care of themselves, and they needed all that was being asked of them as a County, as a City, and the Federal government to take care of the people. She asked if they were including people that moved to the County and were becoming part of the burden and said knowing that would help them understand how growth was eating up the problem of taking care of their own. *Ms. Firmin-Sellers said she didn't have data showing who was a native or new resident in Mecklenburg County but there was a moral and economic component in supporting those who were experiencing housing instability and homelessness. She said the reality was, the unsheltered population was likely costing more in terms of emergency department use or jail-to-homeless cycle so, someone was paying in one way or another. She said addressing it holistically made good moral and economic sense.*

Youth & Family Services

Director of Child, Family & Adult Services Kim Henderson gave an update on the County's strategy for Youth & Family Services, which also included:

- YFS Mission & Values
- Our Children & Families
- Federal, State & Local Landscape
- Services & Performance
- Process Improvements & Workforce Planning

Process Improvements & Workforce Planning

- Caseload & Workload Data
- 2022 Process Improvement Study
- Division Climate & Staff Retention
- FY24-26 Strategic Focus
 - Recruitment
 - Retention
 - Relationships

Comments

Commissioner Altman thanked whoever did the deep dive regarding staffing because she was concerned since she saw how much trauma the staff experienced. She asked them to follow up with the forensic family in-home and second shift/after hours as well as on the specific staffing retention because they had the highest level of difficulty. She said they needed to do more to recruit and said they needed loving, kind, and responsible adults to do the job. She said they needed the 7-weeks of training, and the gap could be reduced by individuals who had the heart but didn't have the degree.

Commissioner Meier thanked Ms. Henderson and Mr. Trotman for meeting with her and answering her questions. She asked for more information regarding the Child and Family Specialty Plan and if that was basically the State taking over foster care. *Ms. Henderson said the Child and Family Specialty plan was a single statewide NC Medicaid managed care plan that would support Medicaid enrolled children involved in the Child welfare space.*

Mr. Trotman said the plan took care of treatment and no one was taking over foster care in the state.

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County Manager Diorio said there would be one provider for the Child and Family Specialty plan in North Carolina and people had to submit a bid to get it. She said, at this time, Alliance was not going to submit a bid to administer that plan, and this was not the tailored plan.

Commissioner Meier asked how the absence of a maltreatment in foster care was reported and investigated. *Ms. Henderson said she would have to follow-up on that question.*

Commissioner Griffin said he noticed most of presentation started with “black,” in terms of participation and felt racial identification was disheartening to see. He said they had to figure something out and it seemed as if they had two counties “white and black & one rich, one poor.” He commended Ms. Henderson and the staff for the tough work they did and said she suggested things they could do to improve the conditions as best as they could. *Ms. Henderson said they had onsite EAP support for staff and staff had developed their own care team when incidents arose or for stress.*

Commissioner Leake thanked Ms. Henderson and Mr. Trotman for securing social workers at Johnson C. Smith University who offered a master’s program. She said she hoped they could find bonuses and salaries to keep the people they had and asked what they were offering as enticement to retain employees. *Ms. Henderson said pipeline was a key area of focus and partnering with Charles Bradley on reinvigorating around connecting with higher education institutions was critical in moving them forward in the recruitment space. She said, as far as enticements, they would be partnering with Human Resources to examine salary ranges, of which were competitive, but it was where employees were falling within those ranges that warrant further investigation.*

Commissioner Cotham said she wanted to know what the employees wanted to stay employed and if there were conversations with staff who were considering leaving employment. She asked, as far as recruiting, if they tried to recruit from colder climates and people who wanted to move to the south. *Ms. Henderson said team members were saying they wanted to be compensated fairly with a balanced and reasonable workload which was different than caseload. She said engagement was a retention strategy and adequate training on the front end as well as supportive supervision and leadership that gave team members the support they needed.*

Commissioner Powell said she was glad the climate survey was addressed and listened to what the employees were saying and responded to it. She said identifying it was a good sign of leadership when they listened to what the employees were saying but was concerned if the staff had time to utilize EAP. She asked if it would be wise to look at creating new positions with different requirements that would help to reduce workload and psychological burden. She said she was concerned with the prospect of finding enough people with the educational background to meet the needs. She said this could be the pathway if they decided to become a social worker and felt they were screaming for their attention in the climate survey.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell thanked Ms. Henderson and asked for information about the employee compensation. She said she hoped they were reinventing themselves and asked how things ran and said it was important they got it right. She said she was all in for what they needed to turn this around.

Vice Chair Jerrell said that Ms. Henderson did her team a great service with the presentation. He said they could see the reactions of the Board and how heavy the topic was. He said with what they had to do and what they were being paid it had to be addressed and, with those that dealt with those circumstances, they needed support services for staff beyond salary due to the high levels of stress.

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Chair Dunlap commended Ms. Henderson and her department for reducing caseload of staff. He applauded them for a 95% investigation rate of complaints within two hours and said there were 175 people over the age of 25 that were still in the DHS custody. *Ms. Henderson said it was a voluntary opportunity to continue to support young people that had aged out and that had not achieved adoption or placement with a family. She said the independent living program was phenomenal in giving them support, resources, skills, and education.*

The Board took a break at 3:10 p.m. and returned at 3:30 p.m.

Community Health Improvement Plan

Dr. Raynard Washington, Director of Public Health and Dr. Kimberly Scott, Assistant Health Director of Population Health, gave the presentation on the Community Health Improvement Plan, which also included:

- Share Overview of CHA Cycle and Supporting Documents
- Review Community Health Priorities
- Review CHA Communication and Branding Strategy
- Identify Core Population Health Indicators and corresponding Baselines, Goals and Equity Levers

Our Priorities

- Access to Care
- Chronic Disease Prevention
- Mental Health
- Violence Prevention
- Maternal & Infant Health

Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

- Is a strategic plan to address health inequities and priorities identified in the CHA report
- Aims to improve the overall health and well-being of Mecklenburg County residents
- Is created in partnership with diverse community partners and residents

Live Well Meck

Purpose

Branding to unite all community health improvement initiatives, core population health indicators, and corresponding action plans under one cohesive umbrella.

Facilitates

- Countywide Organization, Infrastructure, and Uniformity
- Unique, Community-Friendly Branding
- Common Population Metrics
- Streamlined Evaluation
- Connected Partner Network

Comments

Commissioner Griffin thanked Dr. Washington and Dr. Scott for the presentation. He said there had been previous presentations about the disproportionate people dying from chronic disease, and African Americans dying before age 25 as well as the infant mortality rate and use of the emergency room instead of going to the doctor regularly. He asked if they tracked outcome quality scores for Medicaid patients and asked regarding chronic disease and infant mortality

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what the comparative data showed regarding patient outcomes in different demographics. He asked what ways the Board could support the current work for health equity, and for Medicaid patients who were enrolled with physicians but didn't go to the doctor. He asked what the reason was and what tools they needed to increase the connectivity. *Dr. Washington said outcome for Medicaid patients consisted of quality metrics that were graded on the hospital level. He said he would check to see what was available and follow-up with the resources they needed for primary care access. He said they were working on an education campaign for the community. He said there were reasons people didn't go to the doctor including affordability, prioritizing care, access, and feeling comfortable about the care, in which some of that was cultural sensitivity. He said their role was to educate people about the need for care. He said there would be an annual update of the data.*

Commissioner Powell asked about the launch of Handle with Care, Freedom division. *Dr. Washington said the launch was with all the schools in the Freedom division because they needed law enforcement for real time when something happened. He said the Freedom Division of CMPD was working with them for when something happened with a child, and they were notified quickly.*

Commissioner Powell asked if it was launched in the Freedom division because of the rate of violent crimes. *Dr. Washington said they started with the Freedom division because there were several corridors targeted for violence prevention activities and it was one of them.*

Dr. Washington said this was a pilot with the hope to expand further.

Commissioner Powell asked what his first impression of the pilot was. *Dr. Washington said there had been close to 30 referrals that impacted 50 kids and the work they did towards mental wellbeing and trauma-informed work was difficult to measure, but they were working to measure the impact of it.*

Commissioner Leake said they had been working in the crescent to change the living conditions to make people healthy and live a longer life. She said her concern was going back to babies and their generation of going through the process. She said she hoped they continued this process of living well. She said the black community was suffering the most from violence and asked how and what they could do to change the mindset of violence. *Dr. Washington said it continued to be a complex issue and the team had launched the Youth Advisory Council to talk to youth to see what they were experiencing to better understand the complexities and how to intervene as a community.*

Vice Chair Jerrell thanked Dr. Washington and Dr. Scott for the presentation. He said some were taking a comprehensive approach toward dealing with community violence and the lane was public health. He asked that at some point they could get an idea of what the entire ecosystem looked like with their partnership with the City and others in the community. He asked if they could track what the interruption piece looked like in terms of how the programming interrupted violent activity.

Dr. Washington said that violence prevention was a long game and couldn't be stopped immediately. Dr. Scott said they were working to adopt an evaluation plan for all the violence prevention work that would include the programmatic arm of the work to get at preventive health and progress toward measuring those things. He said they hoped to have a plan in place in the coming months.

Access to Health – Behavioral

Rob Robinson, Chief Executive Officer of Alliance Health, Kelly Goodfellow, Chief Financial Officer, Sean Schreiber, Chief Operating Officer, Shawn Mazyck, Senior Vice President of Provider

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Networks, Joslyn Stephens, Director of Child and Adult Welfare, and Ann Oshel, Senior Vice President of Community Health & Well-Being, gave an update on the efforts of Alliance Health to improve access to behavioral health services in the County, which also included:

- Introduction
 - a) Tailored Plan go-live
 - b) Medicaid Expansion
 - c) LME/MCO consolidation
- Financial update
- Service and program update
- Alliance partnerships with multiple County departments and throughout the community
- Opportunities

Comments

Commissioner Altman thanked the team for the presentation and said they were lucky to have LME/MCO because they cared and were responsive. She said she wanted to know the relationship and an understanding of the numbers regarding Atrium. *Mr. Robinson said they were in the final throws of negotiating a contract with Atrium and were getting very close.*

Commissioner Altman asked about the waivers, and said there was not enough funding for the slots if someone had Intellectual Development Disabilities (IDD) and wanted to live in the community but needed support for that and had to get a waiver. She asked what the signing bonus was that the State received to be an expansion state and how was it being used to serve mental health. *Mr. Robinson said the State did not have the exact number and he thought they were looking at investing \$700 million in behavioral health. He said the State asked what the MCOs needed and where the gaps were so they could help fill them.*

Commissioner Altman asked Mr. Trotman if there was data regarding the mental health surveys that had been conducted in the community. *Mr. Trotman said they were developing a behavioral health strategic plan and Alliance Health was part of that with additional community partners. He said they were engaging the community for input into the plan of which was in its final stages of development, and they were hoping to have it out in the spring to share. He said it included all the components of the issues that they encountered and when they finalized the plan, they would have to develop an implementation strategy for the recommendations that came out of the plan.* Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if Alliance was a for-profit entity. *Mr. Robinson said they were a governmental entity.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how many more were needed for the Innovation waivers slots. *Mr. Schreiber said for Mecklenburg County they needed 3,000-4,000 to meet the need.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said, for the Umbrella center, \$250k seemed low and asked for additional information regarding it. *Ms. Oshel said it was the capital investment and because of their financial structure, it was tricky to make an investment so it was settled that they would make a \$250k capital investment and proceed to donate operating costs.*

Commissioner Leake thanked the team for the presentation and for talking about improved quality and accessibility of intensive behavioral health services for adults and asked if they had been doing this before or if they were they just now taking it on. *Mr. Robinson said they had been doing this work but found they needed to do more. He said they were talking about implementing an Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) and acquiring a community*

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support team to help in addressing services as well as provide some housing for that population.

Commissioner Leake asked for a clarification about what the Katie Blessing Child Crisis Residential facility was. *Mr. Robinson said Star Med identified a need as a result of conversations with stakeholders for kid services and were looking at what was needed and how to fund it. He said they had settled on a state-of-the-art program to include in-patient, residential treatment for kids, crisis options, and out-patient, all in one facility. He said they received some money from the State and donated their own money but because the costs had dramatically risen, he was helping them with the State to find additional funding.*

Commissioner Leake asked how and what they intended to do to help correct the problem with violence and children. *Mr. Schreiber said the children and adults they served were more likely to be victims of violence and subjected to trauma. He said they tried to make sure the services they provided were trauma informed and not just a place to stay, but care that addressed their issues. He said the idea of bringing comprehensive services to the community and ensuring providers were using the right kind of services to them was critical.*

Commissioner Meier thanked the team for the presentation and asked about the Katie Blessing Center. *Mr. Robinson said they would like to invest in it and the program would be statewide while serving Mecklenburg County due to the volume. He said they were trying to work with other health plans to contribute and were going to donate something but could not cover the full cost.*

Chair Dunlap asked for insight on why the State was offering a third plan for youth. *Mr. Robinson said it was challenging to serve kids in foster care and the State was looking for solutions. He said the demand for care was greater than the supply of providers, especially during COVID and providers decided to serve those they could easily manage. He said those that were more complex were put to the side and the State came up with the Child and the Family Specialty plan. He said the primary issue was the provider workforce and capacity.*

Chair Dunlap asked if the tailored plan could accommodate the young people. *Mr. Robinson said they wanted a sole plan that would focus on the foster care kids.*

Closing Comments

County Manager Diorio gave a wrap-up of day two of the Retreat.

RETREAT – DAY 3

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met for the FY 2023 Annual Retreat on Friday, January 26, 2024, at 9:02 a.m. in the Harris Conference Center at Central Piedmont Community College, 3216 CPCC Harris Campus Drive, Charlotte, NC 28208.

Present: Chair George Dunlap and Vice Chair Mark
Commissioners Leigh Altman, Patricia “Pat” Cotham,
Arthur Griffin, Elaine Powell, Vilma D. Leake, Laura J Meier,
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

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CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dunlap.

Note: Commissioner Jerrell was absent until noted in the minute.

Welcome

Dena Diorio, County Manager provided introductory remarks for day three of the Board Retreat.

Note: Commissioner Jerrell arrived at 9:07 a.m.

Economic Update

Mecklenburg County Economist Brandon Simmons gave an economic update from the County's Economist, which included:

- Population and Demographics
 - Population Growth
- Employment
 - Job Openings vs. Hiring
 - U.S. Quit vs Layoffs
 - Mecklenburg Industry Analysis
 - Mecklenburg Industry Weighting (Q2 2022 to Q2 2023)
 - Long term employment growth projections
 - Major Announcements
 - Key Economic Indicators
 - Last Year Recap
 - Gross Domestic Product
- Inflation and other Key Metrics
 - Fed Funds Rate
 - Capital Markets
 - Vehicle Sales
- Consumer and Retail Activity
 - Buy now, Save later
 - Reliance on debt
 - Consumer Sentiment
 - Sales Tax
 - Sales Tax Forecast
- Commercial, Retail, Industrial, and Residential Markets
 - Company HQ Relocation Trends
 - Another Study Looking at Cities Between 2022-2023
 - Who and Why were They Moving?
 - Best State to do Business
 - Commercial Office Market
 - Return to Office?
 - Commercial Market Key Points
 - Commercial Office Market Local Data
 - Retail Market
 - Industrial/Warehouse Market
 - Industrial/Warehouse Market Local Data
 - Driving Warehouse Growth
 - Industrial Market Key Points

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- Mecklenburg County Housing Market
- S&P/Case Schiller Home Price Index
- Charlotte Apartment Market
- Charlotte Apartment Market Rent Growth
- Charlotte Apartment Market Median Rent
- Summary
 - Overall economic growth would be lackluster. they have likely avoided a potential near-term recession but expect growth to be slow around 1.3% for the County and 1% Nationally.
 - Falling inflation would spur the Fed to start reducing rates which would alleviate some of the pressure particularly in the housing market with high mortgage rates.
 - Consumer spending should continue to be strong in the near term (sales through December look solid), but slow as savings have dwindled and credit usage increases. Inflation greater than wage growth.
 - Vacancies in our commercial markets would continue to move higher in the short run and would be a concern until the market could adjust.
 - Retail and industrial markets were running strong in the County.
 - Increased supply in multifamily housing would put downward pressure on rents in the County.

Comments

Commissioner Altman said that she would like to have a committee meeting with Dr. Johnson and committee chair Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell to do a deep dive on the Mecklenburg Industry analysis. She said the presentation demonstrated the important economic development work to add 923 jobs with an average salary of \$93,000 as being the kind of results they were trying to bring as opportunities to their residents.

Commissioner Altman asked about the “buy now, save later” and the difference between wage growth and inflation. She said the residents were going backward because of inflation and asked if there was anything local government could do to mitigate that and if they were aware of what other local governments were doing. *Mr. Simmons said the highest inflation categories were housing, food, and energy prices. He said they had public transportation to help offset it and inflation was a broad category of which did not represent everyone because of the varying needs from person to person.*

Commissioner Griffin addressed the living wage and wanted to know if they could figure out what the living wage was for Mecklenburg County in the upcoming year. *Mr. Simmons said they could.*

Commissioner Griffin asked if there was estimate when the money would circulate through and if they would be back to where they were. *Mr. Simmons said the money would be spent over the next ten years.*

Commissioner Griffin asked what the different classifications of apartments were and if it made a market different if you aggregated the A, B or C apartments in the analysis or did it all come out in the wash. *Mr. Simmons said he did not have the data source to segregate the data out.*

Commissioner Griffin asked if the upcoming year’s comparison could be between North Carolina and comparable counties as it related to incomes and the comparison was between North Carolina and the United States. *Mr. Simmons said yes.*

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Commissioner Cotham said she was interested in people in Mecklenburg County that had more debt but there was no breakdown of age groups and wanted to know if that information was available. *Mr. Simmons said he could look into it.*

Commissioner Leake thanked Mr. Simmons for the presentation and asked for more information regarding poverty and the transition into delinquency by loan type. She asked how student loans contributed to young people remaining in poverty for almost a lifetime and how they could economically support those individuals. *Mr. Simmons said the deferment on the payments restarted in December or January and at that time, there was no data to see how it would be affecting those individuals. He said it was something they could look at and bring back.*

Commissioner Griffin left dais at 10:11 and returned when noted in the minutes.

Commissioner Leake said she noticed businesses were not on the west side of town and asked how to rearrange the process so there was equity in process across the County. *Mr. Simmons deferred to the economic development director because he would have a better recommendation as to what could legally be done and their best course of action.*

Commissioner Leake said that part of town would always be in that low-income bracket as it related to jobs, salaries, and living conditions.

County Manager Diorio said she would do some additional research and get back to her regarding her question.

Griffin returned to the dais at 10:14 am

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked, regarding giving incentives and their low tax rate, if they had more relocations because of incentives or lower taxes. She said the question was something that had to be answered collectively among County leadership.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how realistic the \$92,000 salary was. *Mr. Simmons said they asked a company what positions they were hiring for and looked at the SOC codes which could be high-level employees that could skew the numbers.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said the SOC codes would be a better number to share.

Commissioner Meier said it appeared there was a lot of conflicting interest where they wanted people to move but in the previous two years, 15% of existing units would be released. She said there was a need for housing which meant they needed to build more but they also needed to preserve green space.

Commissioner Meier said people were living big on credit and asked if recession was looming. *Mr. Simmons said debt levels were not like it was in the past due to restructuring of standards and they likely see consumers reduce their spending.*

Commissioner Meier asked if a number could be put on the 15% that would be released. *Mr. Simmons said they could not at the time but would get it later.*

Vice Chair Jerrell said, when looking at workforce development programs, they leaned heavily on the construction side but when they looked at the jobs that were forecast with respect to what they were looking at in the future construction was low. He asked if they were preparing properly for the future and present.

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Vice Chair Jerrell said the economy in Mecklenburg County was strong and asked for housing and income to be broken down by race. *Mr. Simmons said that data was not provide this information this year.*

Commissioner Jerrell said he had seen African American and Hispanic incomes had gone up and requested the data for employment, income, and home ownership. *Mr. Simmons said he would provide the data.*

Commissioner Powell said she wanted to know if there had been studies done for loss of touch points, connections, teambuilding, and human touch when people were working from home. *Mr. Simmons said he was not aware of any studies. He said, looking at Generation Z, the biggest priority was remote work, and their destinations were different than millennials. He said, from a business standpoint, they needed to look to the next generation and determine what the priorities were for the future workers.*

Commissioner Powell asked if Mr. Simmons had seen any studies in other urban areas on the impact on water quality and air quality from too much impervious. *Mr. Simmons said they would have to speak to LUESA for that and they had more warehouse and distribution mobility then industrial in Mecklenburg County.*

Chair Dunlap said it was interesting to hear the notion that they needed to buy land and the conflict involved. He said there was a lack of understanding of when the government buys land and its effect on the tax rate. He said the taxes collected on that land stopped and effected providing services.

Chair Dunlap asked how many buildings were vacant and aging where people were looking at for readapted uses. He asked how it affected or impacted their tax rate and said to take one and change it into affordable housing for UNC Charlotte. He asked how that impacted or effected their tax rate and did they get same tax rate on the building. *Ken Joyner, County Tax Assessor, said the use of the building would be the driving force of how that building was valued and affordable housing would calculate into that. He said it would at least keep it on the books and, for UNC charlotte, if it was owned by the university, it would come off the books because the university and hospitals got the same tax breaks.*

The Board took a break at 10:35 a.m. and returned at 10:50 a.m.

Financial Update & Forecast

Chief Financial Officer David Boyd gave an update on the FY2023 financial results, FY2024 projections, & revenue estimates for FY2025. Also included were:

- Summary of Fiscal Year 2023
 - FY23 General Fund Revenues
 - FY23 General Fund Results: Revenues
 - FY2 General fund Expenditures
 - FY23 General Fund Results: Expenditures
 - FY23 Debt Service Fund Results
 - County Investments as of 6/30/23
 - County Investment Performance
 - County debt as of 6/30/23
 - Debt Balance History
 - Debt Management Policy
 - How does the County Compare
 - FY23 Summary

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- Revenues over budget by 3.5%
 - Expenditures under budget by 1.9%
 - “Clean” unmodified audit opinion from external auditors
 - Safe & liquid investment
- FY2024 Financial Status & FY2025 Preliminary Revenue Forecast
 - Sales Tax Collections
 - FY24: Growth in the Tax Base
 - Property Tax Levy
 - FY24 Forecast: General Fund
 - FY24 Forecast: General Fund Summary
 - FY24 Forecast: Debt Service Fund
 - FY24 Debt Service Fund Summary
 - Mecklenburg County Fund Balance Policy
 - Unassigned Fund Balance in Excess of Policy
 - FY24 Appropriated Fund Balance
- FY2: Revenue Forecast
 - General Fund Property tax
 - General fund Sales Tax
 - General Fund – County Dollars
 - General Fund - Other impacts
 - Debt Service Fund

Comments

Chair Dunlap said in the previous year, they discussed the rate of fund balance and asked Mr. Boyd to go over the fund balance policy again.

Chair Dunlap asked clarifying questions about how fund balance was budgeted and used in the previous year, which Mr. Boyd explained. He asked how much would be transferred at the end of the year into fund balance. *Mr. Boyd said they predicted the \$152 million going into the next year.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked for clarification on the Debt Management Policy. She said perhaps they were they not investing enough and asked if they were having to catch up by being too conservative. *Mr. Boyd said they were close to or exceeding their metrics based on the approved capital plan. He said they hopefully had built in enough reasonable conservatism so they wouldn't exceed any of those metrics, policy constraints and, based on the capital plan, they would get to their limits and much closer to a Wake County.*

Chair Dunlap said in comparison to Wake County, they were looking at two different tax rates. He said the County's tax rate was 47.31 and Wake County's was 65.7.

Commissioner Cotham said Wake County had a smaller park and recreation budget due to their State parks. She asked who decided not to accept federal inmates. *County Manager Diorio said the Sheriff made that decision and they would see a reduction in their revenue because of it.*

Commissioner Meier asked for information regarding the shift in golf courses and County clubs. Mr. Joyner said the country clubs were a very small portion.

Commissioner Griffin asked if their data was a forecast or factual. *Mr. Boyd said it was actual.*

Commissioner Powell said smart and responsible growth while protecting air and water quality was under prioritized. She said there had to be balance and they were losing canopy and the impervious was putting a huge burden on creeks and water supply. She said there were prices to

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pay when they were out of balance in their growth.

Commissioner Jerrell said the way they looked at taking property off tax rolls was a great conversation. He said their short-term tax revenue loss was one perspective but when discussing other perspectives, it should be evaluated with long term gain. He asked how it would impact the taxbase going forward. The response was that they had to explore different options.

BREAK FOR LUNCH

The Board took a lunch break at 11:53 a.m. and returned at 12:15 p.m.

Capital Improvement Plan

David Boyd, Chief Financial Officer, Caitlin Moen, Chief Library Services Officer, Lee Jones, Director of Park and Recreation, Mark Hahn, Director of Asset and Facilities, Vicky Savill, and members of CPCC gave an overview of the process for year five of the Capital Improvement Plan & updates on projects from:

- 2025 CIP Process Overview
 - 2025 CIP Process
 - CCBAC
 - Go Bond Approval Update
- Capital Project Updates
 - Charlotte Mecklenburg Library
 - University City Regional Library
 - Main Library
 - Park & Recreation
 - Completed projects
 - Devonshire Park
 - Tryon Hills Park
 - Equity Parks Projects
 - Independence Park
 - Little Sugar Creek Greenway
 - Irvins Creek Greenway
 - Stewart Trib 2 Greenway
 - Ballantyne-McAlpine Trail Connector
 - Construction Projects
 - Long Creek Greenway Phase 2
 - McIntyre Creek Greenway
 - Stewart Creek Greenway
 - McAlpine Creek Greenway
 - Greenway Projects
 - Mallard Creek Recreation Center
 - Ezell Park
 - Discovery Place Nature
 - Latta Place
 - County Facilities (Asset & Facility Management)
 - CRC Implementation
 - Ela B. Scarborough CRC
 - East CRC
 - Southwest CRC
 - Northwest CRC

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- MCSO Field Operations
- CMGC 4th Floor
- Facility-Based Crisis Center
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Central Piedmont Community College
 - Merancas Fire Training Facility
 - Public Safety Training Facility
 - Former ATC Renovations
 - Lineworker Training Facility
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
 - Projects by District

Comments

Commissioner Leake thanked the presenters and said she voted with the Board to put the bond before the public. She said she was wanting information on E.E. Wadell. She asked if the Northwest School of the Arts would be a new building. *Mr. Stewart said it would not, it would be limiting it to 9th-12th grade.*

Commissioner Leake asked clarifying questions that were answered by Mr. Stewart.

Commissioner Griffin said the BOCC had eliminating racial disparities as a focus and requested their MWSBE data from each presenter. He asked if the southwest library would be on the same property. He asked if they would have plans to build a regional library in that area as well and if there would be something similar to the Eastway Recreational Center in the southwest area. *Ms. Moen said they would be adding a library in there and it would go into the master plan where folks needed the library. Mr. Jones said the idea was to have four libraries, but they struggled with covid and the changing economy. He said they looked at partner opportunities and had to consider downsizing. He said they were looking at facilities they already had that could be changed into a recreational center.*

Commissioner Griffin said he would like to ensure they built what was needed, not just what they could get by with.

Commissioner Altman thanked the presenters and said they mentioned people wanting to see collections in the building, but she felt unsure about that. She said it was often thin in certain categories in the library. *Ms. Moen said the books would be on all floors, but the layout would be different.*

Commissioner Altman said they should have a robust variety of books in the libraries. *Ms. Moen agreed and said she would like to talk more about it.*

Commissioner Meier asked if the Board voted on the facility-based crisis center and if they saw a price increase on the Pedestrian bridge. She congratulated CMS for their overwhelming support for the bonds. *Mr. Hahn said the crisis center would have been voted on under ARPA dollars. Deputy County Manager Trotman said it was strictly for the facility-based crisis center. Mr. Hahn said the pedestrian bridge increased by \$2M more.*

Commissioner Jerrell asked for more information about Eastland. He asked Mr. Hahn to remind them what services would be available there because when he looked at their current CRC's, he did not see any level of complement to the East side facility i.e. a library or some other sort of recreational type of facility.

Commissioner Jerrell asked CMS if they could share their policies regarding MWSBEs, especially

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with respect to their construction project. He said disaggregated data would help. *Mr. Gibbons said he would provide that information.*

Mr. Hahn said they had a hard time finding land on the east side, especially for the amount needed for the CRC. He said there were 15 acres left which was not a lot of capacity although they spoke with the library about possibilities but there was really no room for any other use. Deputy County Manager Trotman said it would be a full-sized public health clinic and space for supervised visitation and safe exchange for domestic violence customers. He said they were discussing working with the right community partners to complement the services.

Chair Dunlap asked if they considered a rooftop on the uptown Library. *Ms. Moen said she was told they could not do rooftop sitting on the library, but they were looking at ways to incorporate outside seating.*

Chair Dunlap asked where they were regarding the North Tryon Street Library, given the fact that the City wanted their building back on Tryon Street.

Chair Dunlap asked what would determine the switch from ground parking to a deck. *Mr. Hahn said structured parking decks cost approximately \$50,000 per space to build and they usually only did it if they absolutely had to.* He said the northeast CRC was an example since there was only 7 acres they would have to build a parking deck.

Mr. Jones said regarding accelerated projects, the goal was to get 30 additional miles by the end of 2023. He said they came up with a way to move forward more efficiently in terms of how they bid the projects and designed them and the methodology.

Ms. Moen said regarding the Sugar Creek Library, the design RFQ should go live in the spring and would be moving forward with that library towards Ella B. Scarborough CRC is located.

Total Rewards

Michael Bryant, Deputy County Manager, Anthony Tiller, Talent Acquisition Director, Joannette Freeman, Deputy Director of Human Resources, and Tania Ince, LOE Director, gave an update on the County's Human Resources, including the following:

- Mecklenburg County at a Glance
 - Employee Demographics
- The Employee Journey
- Talent Acquisition
 - Data Trends
 - Initiatives
 - Strategy
- Total Rewards
 - Data Trends
 - Initiatives
 - Benefits and wellness
 - Strategy
 - Mental Health and Wellness
 - Medical and Prescription Benefits RFP
 - Compensation
- Training and Professional Development
 - Initiatives

Comments

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Commissioner Cotham thanked the presenters and wanted to know who the trainers were. *Ms. Freeman said they had hired a wellness consult that built them from the ground up in conjunction with the benefits mentor and working with adult and children family services to help with training as well as LOE.*

Commissioner Altman thanked the presenters. She said she was very thankful and kudos to everyone involved and asked about the great resignation being over but being told to prepare for long term labor shortages. She said she would like to put that on the agenda for Economic Development.

Commissioner Griffin thanked the presenters and said their wellness and caretaking was great. He asked regarding the \$23 when they did their compression studies and if they traditionally did it all in one budget year. He said \$41M was a big hit, but many organizations did that over a period of time and phased it in. He said he loved the \$23 per hour but wasn't sure how the County did compression. *County Manager Diorio said it depended, when they did their \$23 an hour and market study, they did not do the compression and it created many problems with employees feeling like they were not paid appropriately, especially when doing annual increases on top of that.*

Commissioner Jerrell thanked the presenters and said it was well thought out. He asked if they included the employees on salary \$3 in the raise. *Mr. Tiller said yes.*

Commissioner Jerrell said he appreciated the focus on mental wellness for their team members. He asked how they could ensure a team member who went to someone for therapy, etc., that did not end up having to speak with someone they already knew and had bias or prejudice. He said he didn't see in the presentation was around employees who may be experiencing homelessness or other serious issue. He asked what resources were available. *Deputy County Manager Bryant said they did not have an exact plan for that yet. Ms. Freeman said any peer advocates would sign a confidentiality agreement. She said she would keep the Board informed of the progress and the final plan.*

Mr. Bryant did not have a response but would at a later time regarding employees experiencing homelessness and other serious issues.

Chair Dunlap said he wanted to understand what new employees were being told when they were employed by Mecklenburg County regarding remote work. He said they should also ensure that supervisors felt supported.

Chair Dunlap asked for clarification regarding the \$3 raise. County Manager Diorio and Mr. Bryant answered his questions.

Mr. Bryant said during new employee orientation, they are very clear regarding teleworking and all other policies.

County Manager Diorio said they didn't advertise a hybrid work environment because there was no guarantee that it would continue.

Chair Dunlap said the policy was causing confusion. He said it needed to be explicitly clear what the expectation was.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said an employee raised a question about out-of-pocket expenses and would like for them to speak more of it. *Ms. Freeman said they had to adjust because they transitioned to three plans and the deductibles changed as well.*

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Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if they could speak on compensation varying across different departments. *Ms. Freeman said the compensation is just based on the type of work and education or experience required so it was not about the department.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked how they were dealing with cost-of-living raises.

County Manager Diorio said for FY24, they did a 3% raise across the board and did a performance component as well where they could get up to 5% percent.

Chair Dunlap asked, as it related to retirees at that time, what they were being told in terms of their benefits. *Ms. Freeman said they were in great shape.*

Chair Dunlap said they were looking into what happened years ago with the policy and they still had people retiring. He asked what they were being told in terms of their insurance benefit. *Ms. Freeman said a decision was made about retiree benefits that applied to all their retirees and they would have the same rates as people retiring now. County Manager Diorio said they were looking for an attorney or law firm to help. She said people already in the plan and retired, they pressed pause but people who retired going forward were based on the County's interpretation of the policy.*

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked clarifying questions about Total Rewards, which were answered by County Manager Diorio.

Chair Jerrell asked how often they looked at the wages across the board to see if they were competitive. *Ms. Freeman and Mr. Bryant said they were looking at 800 jobs currently which would be completed in March and shared with the Executive Team. Ms. Freeman said she did not know what they did historically.*

The Board took a 5-minute break

Budget Engagement Strategy

Budget Director Adrian Cox gave an update on the Budget Public Engagement Strategy for FY2025 and included:

- County's Budget Engagement FY2020-2024
- Successes
- Challenges & Opportunities
- New FY2025 Budget Engagement Strategy
- Performance Targets

Comments

Commissioner Altman thanked the presenter and said she appreciated them for recognizing it was not working before and persisting.

Commissioner Griffin said he loved the outreach process and suggested a phenomenal group would be the senior missionary group at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. He said he would pass along other good target groups.

Commissioner Cotham said she was glad they were doing the youth outreach but asked if they reached out to the local colleges. *Mr. Cox said they did a course with CPCC in macroeconomics class and regular meetings with the MBA courses at UNC and would be reaching back out to them to get that scheduled as well as Johnson C. Smith University. He said they could reach out to*

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Queens also.

Commissioner Meier thanked them for their work and asked for clarification on the middle school and high school participations which was answered by Mr. Cox.

Budget Development

Budget Director Adrian Cox gave a briefing on the FY2025 operating Budget Calendar & Public Policy Workshop Agenda.

Closing Comments

Dena Diorio, County Manager gave a brief summary of the 3-day retreat and gave closing remarks.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Altman, seconded by Commissioner Griffin, that there be no further business to come before the Board that the meeting be adjourned at 3:49 p.m.

Kristine M. Smith, Clerk to the Board

George Dunlap, Chair