

**Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2020**

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

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Informal Session on Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 5:17 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Chair Dunlap presiding.

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

INVOCATION/PLEDGE

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

REMOVAL OF ITEMS FROM CONSENT

The following agenda items were identified by Commissioners to be removed from the Consent agenda for clarity, comment, public awareness, and/or to be voted upon separately:

-20-6421: by Commissioner Leake
-20-6429: by Commissioner Leake
-20-6431: by Commissioner Leake

STAFF BRIEFINGS – NONE

CLOSED SESSION

20-6423: Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to go into closed session to discuss land acquisition and to discuss a personnel matter.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 5:21 p.m. to go into closed session in Room 267 and returned to open session at 5:54 p.m.

FORMAL SESSION

The meeting reconvened at 6:05 p.m. in Room 267 for the Board of County Commissioners' Formal Session.

AWARDS/RECOGNITION – NONE

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

20-6424: Public Appearance

No speakers addressed the Board of County Commissioners.

APPOINTMENTS

20-6434: Appointments

Alcoholic Beverage Control Board

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring June 30, 2023. This advisory board requires that nominees be interviewed.

The Ad Hoc Committee conducted interviews on October 14, 2020. Commissioner Fuller, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, announced that the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Jordan Boyd.

The recommendation carried by the following vote:

YES: Commissioner Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Jerrell, Leake, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Powell

Jordan Boyd was appointed.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Community Relations Committee

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring September 30, 2023.

The results of the votes are as follows:

Round 1:

Jennifer Boyce, 3 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Harden and Powell

Lorie Brown, 2 votes by Commissioners Fuller and Rodriguez-McDowell

Ryan Kerstan Pickell, 1 vote by Chair Dunlap

Jacqueline Yelverton, 2 votes by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake Round

Round 2:

Jennifer Boyce, 2 votes by Commissioners Cotham and Powell

Lorie Brown, 4 votes by Commissioners Dunlap, Fuller, Harden and Rodriguez-McDowell

Jacqueline Yelverton, 2 votes by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake

Round 3:

Jennifer Boyce, 4 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Powell and Scarborough Lorie

Brown, 3 votes by Commissioners Fuller, Harden and Rodriguez-McDowell Jacqueline

Yelverton, 2 votes by Commissioners Jerrell and Leake

Round 4:

Jennifer Boyce, 5 votes by Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Jerrell, Powell and Scarborough

Lorie Brown - no vote was taken since Ms. Boyce received a majority vote.

Ms. Boyce was appointed

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Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee

The Board considered two appointments to three-year terms expiring September 30, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to extend the terms of Larry Blakeney and Jeffrey Giddens to September 30, 2023.

Larry Blakeney and Jeffrey Giddens were reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment for a three-year term expiring August 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to reappoint Robert Bruton.

Robert Bruton was reappointed.

The Board considered one appointment to a three-year term expiring October 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to reappoint Tarshia Faniel.

Tarshia Faniel was reappointed.

Park and Recreation Commission

The Board considered one At-Large appointment for an unexpired term expiring June 30, 2021.

Srividya Ganesan withdrew her name from consideration.

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough and carried unanimously to appoint Megan Gregory.

Megan Gregory was appointed.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORTS

20-6464: Centralina Regional Council Report

Geraldine Gardner, Executive Director, Centralina Regional Council, presented information on the organization and its programs and services. She stated as part of a rebranding that they changed their name from Centralina Council of Government to Centralina Regional Council. Their refreshed mission statement was to lead regional collaboration and to spark local action to improve opportunity and expand quality of life. She emphasized the importance of regionalism. She said when they come together as a region, it is in the interest to think about how they may confront some of the challenges and leverage the opportunities together. She said the work centered on three work streams: how they collaborate across the region to creatively address and solve challenges; how they support local governments through the work they do; and how they deliver services to individuals across the region.

Ms. Gardner walked the Board through a few examples of the work and how they were collaborating with the County. She said on the regional side their work was focused on regional growth, economic development, mobility, health, and intergovernmental affairs. She said their current focus for the current fiscal year lied in implementing regional plans for growth and economic development and leading a new initiative around regional mobility. She said their role was to bring stakeholders together across the region and set a collective framework and to support local implementation and how that evolves in each and every community.

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Ms. Gardner spoke about Connect our Future, a regional growth plan that the organization lead its development with a whole range of stakeholders for the broader region. She said it was a playbook for how they accommodated the projected doubling of the region's population between now and 2050. She stated that one of the new areas of work they were currently focused on was a new study on regional mobility called connect beyond. She said it uses the basic principles of Connect our Future, such as locating jobs near housing; thinking about priority transit corridors, and it dives into a deeper analysis. She said that Connect Beyond would define the single vision for coordinated transit across the broader study area and would very much build on the CATS 2030 plan. She said it would be done in partnership with the MTC and CATS and would yield very specific recommendations and implementation plan. She pointed out that they knew transportation was the long game and it takes decades for these types of initiatives to be implemented but that one of their focuses was to make sure they were thinking about today's ride. She said this project was so important because they knew a reliable and connected multi-modal transportation system was absolutely critical to their economic competitiveness, not only in the southeastern region of the U.S. but also globally as they were competing for talent and new businesses to come to the area.

Ms. Gardner said in terms of project timeline, they were about halfway through their 18-month timeline and were in the second step of identifying high-capacity transit corridors. She said they were also doing it in effort and coordination with Mayor Lyles's Charlotte Moves Taskforce. She highlighted a few things from the last two workstreams. She said they provide technical assistance, including staffing support, advice and expertise and project implementation. She said for the County they support the community development block grant program and the implementation of the microbusiness stabilization fund that they set up in response to COVID-19. She said that staff collaborates with staff on a range of transportation projects, including the Catawba Crossing's Advisory Committee and they also participate on the Age Friendly Mecklenburg Committee as well.

Ms. Gardner stated they were the area agency on aging for the region. She said they have the responsibility of serving as the workforce development board for seven out of the nine counties, not Mecklenburg but that they do collaborate with Charlotte Works when it came to hiring events and regional talent discussions. She said their aging team was the first in the State to offer virtual health and wellness classes to the seniors.

Ms. Gardner answered Commissioners' questions and responded to comments.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

20-6417: Public Hearing- Street Lighting Final Assessment

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to open the public hearing.

Chair Dunlap read for the record that the Board (A) acknowledged receipt of certification that a notice of the public hearing was mailed by first class mail to all property owners in the Capps Hollow, Cardinal Woods and Cardinal Woods Estate, Hearthstone, McGinnis Village, Mountain Point, Mountain Point Estates, Royal Oaks and Spicewood Subdivisions and (B) acknowledged receipt of the Assessment Rolls for Mecklenburg County's participation in the Street Lighting Assessment project for the Capps Hollow, Cardinal Woods and Cardinal Woods Estate, Hearthstone, McGinnis Village, Mountain Point, Mountain Point Estates, Royal Oaks and Spicewood Subdivisions.

There being no speakers, either for or against, a motion was made by Commissioner Scarborough, seconded by Commissioner Fuller, and carried unanimously to close the public hearing and to adopt the final assessment resolutions for each of Capps Hollow, Cardinal Woods and Cardinal Woods Estate, Hearthstone, McGinnis Village, Mountain Point, Mountain Point Estates, Royal Oaks and Spicewood Subdivisions.

Resolutions are recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #48-#55.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Dena Diorio, County Manager said that she was sure that the Board knew Christy Lantis, the Deputy Assessor who worked for Ken Joyner. She stated she was sad to report that she passed away last night. She had Leukemia and was undergoing treatment. She said that things were progressing, and things went wrong. She took a turn for the worse. She asked the Board to keep her, her family, Ken, and the team in their thoughts and prayers.

Ms. Diorio asked the Board to extend the deadline for the receipt of applications for the Homes Program. She said if they remembered, in September, they approved the Homes Program, which was the helping out Mecklenburg's homeowners with economic support, a grant program created to help individuals and families stay in their homes as a result of rising property values.

Ms. Diorio stated that thus far they have had some success and that thus far they had appropriated \$250,000. She said that as of yesterday, they had received 181 applications, of which 49 were approved, 58 were pending, and 84 were denied. She said they had only approved so far \$17,230 in grants. She said she would like the Board to extend the deadline for the receipt of applications to November 13, 2020.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Jerrell and carried unanimously to extend the receipt of application deadline for the Homes Program to November 13, 2020.

20-6415: Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprise Disparity Study

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director stated in FY19 and FY20 budgets, the Board elected to make funds available to the Office of Economic Development to conduct not only an analysis of the policies and procedures for minority, women, and small business contracting within Mecklenburg County but also to conduct a disparity study. He said that they selected Griffin and Strong out of Atlanta to conduct the study.

Michele Jenkins, Griffin & Strong, P.C., presented a summary of findings and recommendations regarding the Minority, Women, and Small Business Enterprise Disparity Study. She stated they looked at the County's data for the past four years, including policy. She said when they look at if there was a disparity if it was statistically significant and what caused the disparity, which was likely caused by something other than the race and gender of the owner. She said they also look at the marketplace disparities as well. She said that they collected a lot of the antidotal evidence from a number of methods, including public hearings, focus groups, surveys, and individual interviews and emails. She said that helped them to get the temperature and understand more of the unique characteristics of Mecklenburg County. She said it also helped to formulate the recommendations.

Ms. Jenkins said they broke down their analysis by industries: construction, AME, professional services, other services, and goods. She said they looked at the last four years and where they were spending at least 75% of their dollars. She said for construction it was the Charlotte MSA; in AME it was the Charlotte MSA. She said for professional services it was the whole state of North Carolina, as well as other services, and for goods it was the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Ms. Jenkins said when they looked at prime, they looked at prime plus some. She gave the summary on the dollars that were ultimately spent. She said for construction the total percentage spent with minority-owned firms was 1.18%, total dollars spent with female-owned businesses was 16.65%. She stated they were non-minority females. She said with AME, the total percent spend was 13.35%; with female-owned firms, .88%. She said in professional services it was less than 1% and females were a total of less than 1% to all MWBEs. She said in other services they spent 3.25% and a total of 5.03%.

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Ms. Jenkins said that was her summary of availability and that they would ultimately compare the two to see if there was a disparity. She said for their percentage of ready, willing, and able in the marketplace by category was 14.91% minority in construction and 7.43% female owned firms in constructions. She said it was 14.91% minority-owned firms in AME and 6.86% female-owned firms in AME. She said for professional services, the available percentage 18.30% MBE and in female-owned firms 7.16%. She said in other services it was 17.72% MBE and 6.69% for female-owned firms. She said for goods and supplies it was 8.83% total MBE and 6.15% for women-owned firms.

Ms. Jenkins reviewed the industries with significant utilization in MWSBE. She said for construction, female-owned firms were overutilized. In AME, black-American owned firms were overutilized, and Hispanic-American firms were at parity. She said in other services, American Indian owned firms were overutilized. She said in all other categories, for all other ethnicities there was a statistically significant underutilization, based on what should be expected based upon the availability of the firms in the relevant markets.

Rodney Strong, Griffin & Strong, P.C., gave recommendations based on their findings. He stated the first recommendation was for the County to consider increasing the allocation of resources, included in staffing. He said to run an effective program, they really needed a staff of at least two or three people, compliance officers who could help provide the various services that needed to be provided in terms of monitoring and contract administration.

Mr. Strong's second recommendation was that there be a subcontracting goal program to set contract by contract goals in construction the first year and phase in the additional categories as the resources increase. He said they were recommending separate MBE and WBE goals. He was also recommending that they apply all the contract compliance techniques, that they go in and do outreach, forecasting, monitoring, and contract administration.

Mr. Strong's third recommendation was that there would be robust, good-faith efforts, which would be firms who come in to do business with the County must meet the goals or demonstrate good-faith efforts and that good faith efforts equal meeting 50 points, as set by state law. He said if they did not meet the goal or satisfy the good-faith effort, the bid would be rejected as not responsive or responsible. He said that process was an important one. He said they were also recommending a small business reserve program, where certain levels of contracts be set aside to only be competed among small, local businesses.

Mr. Strong stated they were also recommending vendor rotation. He said that on a routine basis, for regular purchase, you select several firms who could provide those services and rotate those vendors. He said they were also recommending a mandatory subcontracting requirement so that contracts over a certain threshold must have subcontract requirements so that you increase the opportunity for small firms to participate as small contractors on larger contracts. He said it would provide for more opportunities for the MWSBE. He also recommended that they strengthen their project forecast. He said when they identify opportunities in the budget process for the next year's budget and you publicize those and forecast those opportunities coming up as far in advance as possible, it would allow for better planning for those firms, including targeted outreach. He said it would also encourage the firms to seek out partners they could team with and increase their capacity that would in order to compete on other projects.

Mr. Strong stated they made a recommendation regarding supportive services. He said those are really technical assistance, business incubators, financial assistance, and loan programs. He said the County did not necessarily have to run all of those programs their selves; it could refer companies to those services that already existed, such as the small business development centers that were operated by the department of the small business administration. He said one thing that would really help would be to encourage firms to have conversations when they were unsuccessful about why they were unsuccessful, in order to target the recommended, supportive services to them in order for them to be more competitive on their future bid opportunity. He said they also recommended a prompt pay ordinance to assist small businesses in meeting their financial obligations, and it would put a penalty on prime contractors who delay payment. He said he also recommended there be

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an encouragement of joint ventures, and for projects of a large size, they recommended teaming and joint ventures be encouraged. He said lastly that they were recommending data maintenance reform, basically suggesting that the commodity code practices were revised and that they track award data and implement a process by which they track the subcontractor data, requiring the primes to provide the data.

Mr. Zeiler spoke about next steps in action planning. He said six of the eleven recommendations the County already began processes on. He stated that over the next 30 to 60 days, the Office of Economic Development and Minority Women and Small Business Enterprise Division would be working with the Enterprise Management Office to understand how they could work through a process to take the recommendations, turn them into actionable steps and recommendations they could put forth in an action plan that they would then go forward with implementing. He said they would be able to provide the work plan within the next 60 days.

Commissioner Harden asked how best to hold staff accountable to making the recommended changes.

Ms. Jenkins responded that there was a scorecard and that some jurisdictions have how well a department was doing as part of the performance review process. She said there was also an internal scorecard to see where you were doing to begin to meet some of the steps. She said one way was to look at ways in which you incentivize but definitely look at incentives and reviews as part of their review process would be to take this into account.

Commissioner Harden asked County Manager Diorio how she saw the implementation of the program being worked into the performance plan.

Dena Diorio, County Manager stated she was getting ready to present the FY21 workplan to the Performance Review Committee next month, and it included the development and implementation of the recommendations.

Commissioner Harden asked if it would have specifics and a scorecard.

Ms. Diorio said no, because they would not have the plan ready for another several weeks or months, because they just received the recommendations and did not have a full-blown implementation plan yet.

Commissioner Fuller asked about looking into adopting best practices where communities have done disparity studies and have truly followed through on adopting the recommendations and actually acting out the recommendations so that they would have a template for what worked.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller and seconded by Commissioner Scarborough to adopt a resolution supporting recommendations provided by Griffin & Strong, P.C. as part of the Mecklenburg County Disparity Study.

Commissioner Jerrell asked if there were any existing templates or anything from other communities you worked with relative to scorecards that they could have visibility to.

Mr. Strong responded that they would bring that back to the Board as there were several jurisdictions using them, including Chicago and Memphis.

Commissioner Jerrell made comments in relation to the high-level of professionalism of Mecklenburg County staff.

Commissioner Cotham asked if the women were certified as a woman-owned business.

Ms. Diorio said all the certification was done by the City.

Mr. Zeiler said there were multiple certification arms, and the City of Charlotte does a small business certification for the region; the State of North Carolina and a couple other professional organizations do certifications for minority and women owned certifications.

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Commissioner Cotham said she always resented this as she had her own company for 10 years and kept hearing from the City and other places about becoming certified but that she had to spend money to get certified. She said in talking about equity, to charge someone starting a business an extra fee to be certified to be a certified woman. She thought the principle of the whole thing was ridiculous.

Commissioner Cotham spoke about a developer which had a big reception and invited all minority contractors and from that many got jobs with that company, because they were looking for them. She said she believed that was a wonderful way to help minority contractors and put them together. She asked if that was something the County could ever do to help minority contractors to get some of the things, because it was hard when you start to get those relationships.

Mr. Zeiler responded that the certification used by Mecklenburg County within their MWSBE program charge no fees, so the City of Charlotte charged no fees for its small business certification and the HUB certification that they use for women and minority status was a publicly ran project which also charged no fees. He said they had an upcoming event connecting contractors with subcontractors just as she had mentioned.

Commissioners made further comments.

Commissioner Powell stated she had a worry about the consequences of mandatory subcontracting if they did not specify more than that. She said they did not want to be a part of perpetuating inequities on the small businesses that might want the bits so bad that they were not paying the employees anything but minimum wage. She believed it was an important recommendation but that they needed to be careful about how they implemented it so that they were not part of perpetuating disparities. She started she hoped they were looking to Mecklenburg County for the businesses as it was better if they were trying to get business from Mecklenburg County businesses.

A vote was taken on the motion and recorded unanimously.

Resolution recorded in full in Ordinance Book 49, Document #56.

20-6425: COVID-19 Response Update

Raynard Washington, Deputy Health Director provided an update on COVID-19 data and the response to it in Mecklenburg County. Dr. Washington gave an update on the flu season stating that flu season has started and that they were working aggressively to be able to do two things, most importantly of course they wanted to increase awareness in the community around the flu and thing they could all do to prevent the further spread of the flu, particularly as they were also battling the COVID-19 pandemic. He said they had launched their media campaign, which was a combination of social media, radio media, print media, tv media, and the Fourth Street parking deck banner to remind people to get their flu shot and to adhere to the three w's in their fight against COVID-19 and the flu. He said they also updated the flu information on the website, providing additional information around resources, including where they could go to get vaccinated. He said they had transitioned the COVID-19 hotline to also being a flu hotline as well. He stated it would be available for calls Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Washington said they were also increasing availability of the flu vaccine and hopefully increasing the number of folks in the community that would get the vaccine. He said that last year and several years prior, based on population-based surveys, about a third of the residents received a flu vaccine. He said that was not good and that they number needed to be increased. He said on top of flu and COVID-19, there was also seasonal cold and other viruses floating around in the air. He said it was really important to try to get as many people vaccinated as possible. He said they were expanding the number of flu vaccines they had available in stock and made a request to the State for an additional 6,500 vaccine to be available to anyone in the community, not limited to children and pregnant women. He said they have made the vaccine accessible in many ways. HE said they had extended the

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appointment availability and were having two events. He said the first was Flu Fighter Fridays, which would be done of four Fridays over the next few months. He said they would be at the Health Department starting this Friday at the Southeast location at 249 Billingsley Road from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. He stated it would be a drive through. He said they would also be having Sleeve up Saturdays on November 14th and December 12th. He stated no one would need health insurance or ability to pay. He said there was also good community coverage through retail and healthcare.

Dr. Washington stated they were seeing an increase of COVID-19 cases throughout the County and have seen the number of daily cases almost double throughout the last week. He said things were looking really good for the County a couple of weeks ago and that they were now unfortunately seeing an uptick in cases. He said they were seeing about 177 cases per day on average but that they were able to staff pretty significantly with case investigators and contact tracers. He stated they felt very prepared to be able to respond as they had seen the increase over the past week or so. He said this was not just in Mecklenburg County but in the region across the State and states across the Country. He said as the fall season came into play, they expected this to happen, so they were digging in right now and needed everyone to jump in as it related to what worked to keep the virus spread as slow as possible in the community.

Dr. Washington said that to date there were 377 deaths in Mecklenburg County and over half were related or connected to the outbreaks in long-term care facilities. He said staff was working closely with the long-term care facilities, getting the number in outbreak status down really low. He stated the Communicable Diseases team was on the phone daily with the facilities talking them through step-by-step, making sure they have access to testing and have all of the appropriate measures in place.

Dr. Washington stated not much had changes as far as virus demographics in the community; they still continue to see that nearly three quarters of the cases were among young adults, specifically ages 20-39. He said one in four over all were in Hispanic. He said that pattern had improved fairly significantly over the last several months, as they're was a huge disparity for a very long time. He said it was pretty much not there any longer. He said they did a lot of work with that community to insure there was testing information and resources available. He said the good news was that over 80% of the folks that had been diagnosed with COVID-19 were out of isolation and were recovering well with no significant consequences but that they do still have a number of people who end up having severe complications and have to be hospitalized.

Dr. Washington said the hospitalizations were increasing, partially due to increase cases among residents and the surrounding counties. He said they saw this happen really quickly and a number of hospitals in surrounding counties reached their capacity and have started to send their patients to Mecklenburg County. He said they were a regional healthcare provider, as the local healthcare systems do provide care not just across the counties and state but also across the State line. He said it was very important for the County to work closely with the healthcare systems to insure they have all the necessary resources they need in terms of PPE and support and that they were monitoring with them daily how many patients they have in the hospital, what their staffing looks like, and their capacity to be able to provide care. He said they really had to watch that very closely, especially as flu season starts and as they were experiencing an increase in cases now.

Dr. Washington said they were up to about 6% on average over the past week and that they had been as low as 4.5%. He said in terms of COVID-19 testing, they were seeing increases in demand for testing, which was obviously due to increase spread in the community. He said that more of those folks who were being tested were testing positive. He said they were doing pretty good as a county in the spirit of testing and that testing was still widely available. He said there were a number of locations open seven days a week and there were over 25 retail sites where you can get tested fairly easily. He said that turnaround times were relatively stable right now, as lab test results were coming back within 24 to 48 hours. He said they were working to deploy new testing resources in the County to supplement some of the long-standing testing access points and that they have additional resources from both the State and federal partners that have been very helpful for them in the process. He said they had new mobile testing where they were able to quickly mobilize to any location across

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the County and they also had some surge testing capacity, which they were using currently to try to test as many of the teachers and staff in the public-school system. He said they were also expecting increase capacity in terms of the rapid test. He said the state was providing an additional supply of rapid test to the community, which would be deployed this week to the Health Department, to make available to their testing partners in the community. He said they were trying to focus their areas to make sure they were reaching those hard-to-reach populations and groups of folks who find it difficult to access testing like high-risk adults who need to be tested and folks who were in neighborhoods with more community spread than others. He said they were using all the data they had to try to help focus and target those efforts, both in terms of where cases were occurring and where they were seeing less testing in the County. He said they were also working with their university partners to ensure that those students on campus right now were tested before they go back home for Thanksgiving. He said they were also trying to get creative where there were gatherings to make sure testing would be available following those events. He said the offer was still on the table if any community organization or group would like to host testing. There was plenty of capacity and supply to do so, and they could reach out directly at mecklenburgcountync.gov. He said they have received three or four responses to that in the last week or so, and they were currently being set up.

Dr. Washington gave a reminder of who should be tested in the County. He said the testing guidance had not changed. He said the following should be tested: any individual experiencing COVID-19 symptoms; anyone who had close contact with a known positive; individuals who were higher risk due to their age or underlying chronic illnesses or due to where they work such as a frontline worker or first responder. He said if you have been to a gathering of any kind, please watch for symptoms and be tested, as many individuals in gatherings range in size from 10 people at a restaurant to 100 people at a house, especially where people were not complying with social distancing or wearing masks. He said it was really important because people thought they had a little cough or allergies but need to go get a COVID-19 test. He told people to not discount those symptoms.

Dr. Washington stated they would continue to work with their partners to make sure testing was available to everyone who needed it, regardless of insurance coverage. He said they had a testing work group that they would be reconvening next week again to talk through the additional strategies they needed to take. He said if you ever had a question about testing they could call the Health Department.

Dr. Washington gave an update on the ambassador program, which they thought was going very well. He said they had completed over 750 compliance inspections and responded to 726 service requests. He said the teams were out in the field any time of day in the evenings or whenever there was something happening where they believed there may be an educational opportunity or opportunity for them to be able to influence businesses or groups or gatherings to do what they knew was right in terms of wearing masks; social distancing; and maintaining occupancy limits. He said the ambassadors had seen improvements as they go out to places then go back for a reinspection to ensure the organizations were making progress towards maintaining crowds, mask wearing, and enforcing social distancing. He said they were seeing progress, which was good news, because he believed most of the businesses were doing the right thing but that there were some who were continuing to have challenges, and their goal was to find them and to try to provide as much education as possible. He said when the education fails, obviously there could be enforcement actions.

Dr. Washington said that several of the locations increased in security to assist with crowd monitoring, mask wearing, and social distancing. He said it was important to have those staff in place to be able to do crowd control when those things happen. He said some were self-managing well. He said they did a spotlight of one of the breweries this weekend who decided to close their taproom, Sycamore Brewing Company. He said they appreciated it, because the company noticed things were getting out of hand, and the best option was to not let it get that way and to stop before it gets too far. He said he needed for all of the businesses to adopt that mentality as they needed to be watching, have enforcement mechanisms, and if it got to be too far, they needed to stop. He stated that would help everyone in the fight against COVID-19 as they moved ahead.

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Dr. Washington gave an update on an active outbreak under investigation. He said they were working with the United House of Prayer for all People on Beatties Ford Road. He said they made an announcement over the weekend that there had been at least nine cases associated with a convocation event that occurred over the course of October 10th and 11th. He said they were aware that the vent was almost a full week of activities, but they were pretty confident the best opportunity for spread in the cases they had at the time were related to, the Saturday and Sunday events, which were much larger crowds. He said they were now up to 50 laboratory cases associated with the event, and they were individuals who were Mecklenburg County residents and attended at least one of those events throughout the week. He said they were now encouraging everyone who either attended any of the Saturday and Sunday events or anytime in the window of October 4th through the 11th to be tested at watch for symptoms. He said it was going pretty quickly and they really wanted to ensure the community was aware that there were certainly individuals who were infectious at some of the vents and they want people to do the right thing and quarantine, isolate, and follow the County's instruction. He said the 40 cases arson had upwards to 75 close contacts who may have been potentially exposed to or now being contacted for quarantine. He said that five of those who tested positive were arrangements to a congregate living center, which was an independent living facility for seniors, because now they have launched a cluster at that location due to all having tested positive.

Dr. Washington said he reached out to one of the leaders at the church and have advised them not to have any gatherings in the coming weeks as they do not know how far the spread went at this people. He believed it was not a good idea to convene the same group of people at this time. He said they had not had testing at the church, but the County was looking at setting up an additional testing site at the northwest location, which was not very far from the church, in order to create an additional opportunity for people to get free testing.

Dr. Washington gave an update on Mecklenburg County Public Health Clinical Services. He said they were currently offering clinical services at both southeast and northwest locations as well as virtual. He said they offer family planning, STI testing and treatment, immunizations, breast and cervical cancer screening, which would be available at both sites, and tuberculosis and refugee clinic which were available at northwest. He said the services were all at no cost or low cost. He reminded everyone that they had to do what they had to do to keep the virus spread slow in the community, which was wearing a mask; waiting at a distance; cleaning hands and surfaces; and avoiding large gatherings of any kind.

Commissioner Jerrell said the feedback he got in his district was that it was not being reported or it was being under reported in the refugee community and that they did not want to self-quarantine due to economics or financial reasons. He said he hoped they could find ways to connect them to additional resources, particularly the financial resources and food resources. He believed the language piece was another huge barrier.

Dr. Washington said they had resources available for folks who tested positive with COVID-19 and needed to quarantine for any reason, mostly supported by the State but in the form of food resources, there was a cash payment available now and the social workers and community health workers who were funded through the State were able to provide those services. He said individuals should not be hesitant to answer the phone when we call because we were to say stay home, because there were resources available to help people be able to do the isolation and quarantine safely and with basic social supports.

Commissioner Fuller said there were a lot of cultural reasons why folks in those communities may not want to engage with government, but to the extent the County could do more outreach to those communities, he believed they would benefit from that.

Commissioner Fuller asked about an allege COVID-19 cluster that the Charlotte Observer was reporting.

Dr. Washington responded that any clusters that occurred within childcare facilities or congregate living centers like shelters or independent livings or nursing homes were publicly reported every Tuesday and Friday. He said there were two additional clusters which were identified in two facilities just this week, which was added to the report. She said they had a few of those occur over the course of the pandemic. He said they treated those like they

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would a long-term care or nursing up. He said they were immediately in touch with the staff there and testing out a plant if they needed one, as well as much decisions about isolation and quarantine for the folks who were involved.

Commissioner Fuller asked if it was in a Meck Pre-K facility.

Dr. Washington responded that he would find out.

Commissioner Fuller asked what they were doing to prepare for a potential deluge of people coming from other places in the State and from Couth Carolina.

Dr. Washington responded that the healthcare system was aware off the situations, not just in this region but across the Country. He said they worked with them in emergency management and other partners to monitor the situation closely. He said they have increased their PPF, increasing their staffing as they were allowed to. He said there were a number of other measures put into place to insure when any surge in hospitalizations come, they could handle the surge within the walls of the buildings they had currently. He said they obviously did not know what was to come and that was why they could continue to reinforce the need for everyone as a community to play their part in it and wear a mask, keep a distance, and not go to gatherings, because it was really important to do everything they could to slow the spread. He said they were prepared for a surge and were doing everything now to prepare in terms of staffing. He said they were hopeful they did not get to that point. He said they meet with the hospitals, emergency management, the policy group, and town leadership twice a week.

Commissioner Leake made comments regarding the cluster of positive cases attributed to the United House of Prayer. Commissioner Leake allowed Elder Murray, United House of Prayer, to address the Board regarding the preparations they made and the response they were pursuing.

Commissioner Harden requested that the Halloween criteria be reviewed.

Dr. Washington said that the single most important things they could do was to wear a face cover, not make contact with others, not gather in bars and restaurants, and not participate in parties and that it was okay to trick or treat if it was safely being done.

Commissioner Harden asked if there was more money that could be spent on marketing and getting out those messages to the community. She believed those investments would lead to lower rates of transmission as they went through the holiday season.

Ms. Diorio responded that the County on me CLT campaign was being continued through the end of the calendar year. She said they did have additional dollars to spend. She said they were also looking into a message being created around behavioral health.

Chair Dunlap asked how they were contact tracing when people were coming from all over the States.

Dr. Washington said it could be challenging but that they did make contact with all of the surrounding counties in North and South Carolina for folks who may have come from this immediate area to the event. He said the most effective thing was to talk to the people who were there. He said the contact tracing team handled that. He said if the close contacts lived in North Carolina, they would put them into the contact tracing system and the health department where they lived would contact them. He said they made every effort to do so but it was challenging as they did not have a list of everyone was not in attendance.

Chair Dunlap stated that testing was intensified immediately after Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Chair Dunlap inquired about the enforcement of COVID-19.

Ms. Diorio responded that CMPD continued to do enforcement of the executive orders.

The presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6463: Request Update - COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Loan Fund

Commissioner Cotham stated she has always commended County staff and the Boards for wanting to be transparent and she believed they had that as an ultimate goal. She said back in April they were in the early days of the pandemic having remote meetings and she was excited that the County staff was helping to allocate money to get it quickly out to small businesses. She said as she recalled, they worked on two different funds, one for micro businesses and for businesses up to 50. She said for this specific one that they had \$5 million and learned the State had all of those rules and they had to have a third party to administer it. She said that she was contacted by a reporter from WCNC, Nate Morabito. She gave him credit, stating the media was there to give their information to the public, so they were working for the community just as the County was. She said they wanted transparency, and it seemed as though this particular fund took a turn for the worse. She stated she did not vote for it as she thought the fee was excessive. Commissioner Cotham requested that there be transparency of those dollars so that the public would know where their money was going.

Ms. Diorio responded that the reporter did make a public records request for the list of companies which received loans under the small business relief fund. She said they did not get that information; Carolina Small Business administers that on their behalf, and the County would get metrics and data on a macro scale, in terms of how many loans they had given, how many companies it went to, and what the amounts were. She said they wanted to protect the borrower's, because they did not want their situation being made public. She stated she understood the other side, which was the transparency piece. She said when he made a public records request, they did not have a public record which was responsive to his request, because they did not have the information. She said that was where they kept saying they did not have it, then she and Commissioner Cotham had conversations about it. She told her it would make it easier if the Board made the request to have it provided, then they would have a public record they could share with the media. She said she did not want to set a precedent of creating a record to respond to a media request, so that was why it was handled this way.

Commissioner Cotham requested it be broken down by district. She said when you are getting public dollars it was a different ball game and when you get them it is always transparent. She believed there were some communication misses there. She said going forward she request if they were ever working with a nonprofit on one of these things the State makes them do, that it is made clear.

Ms. Diorio said she agreed and was happy to do that.

A motion was made by Commissioner Cotham and seconded by Commissioner Fuller to direct the County Manager and staff to provide the names of the companies which have received the loans and the amount of the funding they received from the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Fund and also to provide the information by district.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell asked if this was before they received the CARES Act Money.

Ms. Diorio said it was County general fund dollars, but they now have converted it over to CARES Funding.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell she said when people want to know where their tax money was going, this was CARES Act money that came from the federal government. She asked if that was correct.

Ms. Diorio responded that she was correct.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she felt the story got to a sensationalized, heightened level that did not need to be that way that made the Board look as if it were doing

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something shady or wrong or did not know what they were doing. She wanted to dispel that myth. She asked if anything changed, if people who received the money that their identity was protected because of trying to protect their businesses from appearing to be struggling financially. She wanted to know what had changed since then for them to disclose that information.

Peter Zeiler, Economic Development Director stated that Carolina Small Business Development Fund, as part of its protocol, generally has a policy of not disclosing borrowers' names to public entities. He said in the County's negotiations with Carolina Small Business Development fund understood that and talked about after all the funds had been dispersed, doing a post action analysis, and at that point they would request the names of the borrowers. He said they wanted to protect them, but they also wanted to insulate the Board and staff from any charges that there may had been undue influence. He said whenever they had conversations with Carolina Small Business Development Fund, they say they have a lender, identified by this number, and that they do not have any insight into them, that way they would not know and there could not be a charge that perhaps a Commissioner or staff was unduly influencing a decision on a lending or decline of lending on a particular borrower.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell responded that she really appreciated that and believed it would be extremely useful to have a breakdown of the types of businesses, the districts, and amounts, but she did not personally feel she needed to know the names of the businesses.

Commissioner Harden asked if they were contractually guaranteed privacy. She wanted to know if that was a part of their lending agreement.

Mr. Zeiler responded no; they were not.

Commissioner Leake stated she received several phone calls asking her what businesses received money, when on the news they talked about these large corporate businesses got money which was not intended for them, but they got taxpayers money and used it. She said they wanted to know what happened to the money the County provided. She received three calls Saturday night from three, black women in business who said they had applied three times and never got a dime. She said they felt they were overlooked. She said she did not know what the criteria was, but they have a right as the public to know how money was given. She said when the Foundation of the Carolinas came to the County and generated funds to give to the public, they have the right to know how they dispense that money. She said the money was not their money; the money came from the County. She said there was a committee which sat down to determine how those funds were going to be generated, also the money from United Ways. She said the County pays those companies money to disperse the funds they had provided. She said people could not believe they gave United Way \$1,000,000 to dispense their money, people could not believe it; they thought it was exorbitant. She said they had a right as a community to ask those kinds of questions when they were asked to them as Commissioners. She said they should have received a report written out how the funds were deviated and given to the community so that they would know who they needed to help more. She said when people do not want to itemize how they spent the money but just spent it, that would not tell her anything. She said that was a major concern in many communities, as people fall out about money and become awfully upset when it would become money. She said she believed they should still have a list of how the money was disseminated.

Commissioner Fuller said he supported the motion based on the general principle he had of when businesses come to get public money, they should not expect that it would be private. He said maybe it was a question of what is disclosed, and he believed it should be limited to the recipient of the funds and how much they got. He did not believed they should be releasing their individual, financial reports. He said if you did not get a loan, you want to know who did and why and how come they did not get it. He said he did believed that this was unnecessarily sensationalized, as he saw some political candidates trying to may hey of this. He said he did believe it was important for the Board to say publicly that they believed in the principle of transparency when it came to taxpayer dollars and that they would make a disclosure of at least those two things.

Commissioner Jerrell said he respected where everyone was coming from with respect to the motion, but he just wondered if they were conflating the issue. He asked if the issue was

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the process did not get money, which was legitimate. He said there was room to explore how that happened and what was behind it. He also asked if the issue was disclosing who got what funding. He said he believed there were two separate issues there and the other thing he believed they had to consider was if it was CARES Act Funding, he was not so sure he agreed with the argument around the expectation to disclose that information. He said he was not sure he had ever seen the federal government disclose loan amounts and the company name with how much they were awarded. He said he was not sure he agreed going down that road, as he believed there was a way to provide information while actually protecting the business but believed they should be definitive around the information they were working for. He said if it was district level or industry, he was on in favor of it. He was not sure it should be the specific business.

Commissioner Powell said that public trust was very important, and she agreed with Commissioner Fuller who thought it was an issue. She did not think to ask if it would be public; they just assumed everything they did was public. She said they were hearing from the community, call after call, people who were in crisis angry or in shock, and a lot of her calls were from small business owners. She said the Board was not perfect, but their intention was, and they were doing their best to make sure they came up with solutions for the community who were in crisis in a situation they could not have anticipated. She wanted the community to know they never thought they would be doing anything in darkness; who thought it was an issue. She said now that it has been brought to their attention. The public deserved to know, and she fully supported that.

Chair Dunlap stated he agreed with Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell that it was sensationalized. He said it gave the appearance that the County did not have a clue as to what happened to \$5,000,000. He said the Board never does anything without the expectation of it not being public. He said it was not a question of not having the information available; it was the fact that the people they were asking the information of did not have the information. He said that lead people to believe that they did not know where \$5,000,000 was. He said if the right questions were asked, they would have known where the \$5,000,000 was, because they would do then what they would do tonight, which was to request from the Small Business Loan Association who received the funds. He said it could have been avoided had people not participated in what he thought was a question from a reported which was worded in such a way that you were sort of entrapped. He said people went down that rabbit hole, but the bottom line was that it could have been said that they did not know but could request the information and provide it to you. He said for Ms. Diorio to have it put on the agenda, because if the person who said it did not put it on the agenda, he would. He said he was glad it got there, so they could put it to bed once and for all.

Chair Dunlap said he believed there was some other information that people needed to know about the loans. He asked how many requests for loans would be made.

Mr. Zeiler responded that there were 563 applications received by Carolina Small Business Development Fund, and out of that, 197 loans had been approved, and 33 loans were pending. He said at the beginning of this, they were clicking along at about a 60% approval rate and they were now down to about a 25% to 29% approval rate. He said their average was at about 39% loan approval. He said the average loan size was \$26,000. He said that 52% of the loans have gone to minorities; 34% of minority-owned businesses have gone to women-owned businesses, and out of that, they knew that about 930 jobs had been retained and saved as a result of this. He said those were real lives, real employees and their families. He said there were another 390 or so jobs which were expected to be created out of the program.

Chair Dunlap asked out of the 563 loan applications, if there were any complaints.

Mr. Zeiler responded that they have a weekly call with Carolina Small Business Development Fund, and if there were any particular applications that had a nuance to them that they would like to discuss with them around underwriting, they go through that. He said the only recall they had received out of the 563 applications was a company that had been declined for a loan and did not understand why. He said they reached out to Commissioner Jerrell and Commissioner Jerrell reached out to him. He said they then reached out to Carolina Small Business Development Fund and realized at the end of it that the applicant had put the wrong incorporation date on their application, so they had not met their threshold of being in

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business for two years. He said he worked with Carolina Small Business, and they corrected the application, and the company received their funding. He said each applicant, whether they were given a loan or declined for a loan, also receives a packet which has information about other resources available in the County and the State, as well as names, telephone numbers, and emails of the key OED staff who would be able to help them going forward. He said those who were accepted, who get alone, know they can reach out to the County and work on business plans. He said those who have been rejected know they can reach out to the credit access and counseling program to work with them to try to shore up their finances.

Chair Dunlap said since he knew the media watches the meeting, the community would know they were even more transparent than they ask them to be.

Commissioner Rodriguez-McDowell said she 1,000% believed in transparency, but as long as they did not change the rules- She said her impression was that the businesses thought they were going to be protecting their businesses from being exposed. She said it made her feel better to know that was not one of the pieces of the loan, that they would be private.

Chair Dunlap stated he knew how people felt, because they were in crisis, and it was embarrassing to know they need that support. He said he felt bad they had to release their names, but it is public, and that was the way they operate.

Commissioner Cotham stated she did not believe anyone who received COVID-19 dollars should be embarrassed, as everyone was going through a once-in-a-lifetime experience. She said they should feel they received some support from their tax dollars, whether it came from the County, the State, or federal; tax dollars were tax dollars.

Commissioner Jerrell pulled up information on PPP loans and stated it did not give company names, just city, state, amount, business type, veteran status, and some other identifying demographic information.

A substitute motion was made by Commissioner Jerrell and seconded by Commissioner Harden, to direct the County Manager and staff to provide loans and amount of funding companies received from the COVID-19 Small Business Emergency Stabilization Fund and provide the information by district; the identifying information will mirror the PPP loans as shown on the SBA website.

Commissioner Cotham said there were a lot of different lists.

Commissioner Jerrell said it came from the SBA site.

A vote was taken on the substitute motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Dunlap, Harden, Jerrell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioners Cotham, Fuller, Leake, McDowell-Rodriguez, and Powell

A vote was taken on the main motion and recorded as follows:

YES: Commissioners Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Harden, Leake, Powell, Rodriguez-McDowell, and Scarborough

NO: Commissioner Jerrell

DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTORS' MONTHLY REPORTS

20-6436: Department Management Monthly Reports

Monthly department management reports for October 2020 were included in the agenda for information. These reports highlighted key activities and initiatives within the County departments and show relevant performance indicators of departmental activity.

STAFF REPORTS & REQUESTS – NONE

CONSENT ITEMS

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

20-6427: Tax Refunds

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to approve refunds in the amount of \$1,339.10 as statutorily required to be paid as requested by the County Assessor.

Note: This Board action is necessary to approve registered motor vehicle refunds resulting from clerical errors, value changes, and appeals processed in the new statewide vehicle tax system.

A list of the taxpayer recipients is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

20-6428: Land Acquisition - Irvins Creek Greenway

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary for acquisition of a permanent greenway easement (± 0.12 acres) and a temporary construction easement (± 0.01 acres) on Tax Parcel 193-151-03 from Carolina Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, Inc for the future construction of the Irvins Creek Greenway for a purchase price of \$1,850 from Fund PAYGO.

20-6430: Grant Application - National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC) - Sheriff's Office

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, to (A) affirm submittal of a grant application up to \$16,000 from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), United States Department of Commerce (DoC) as a Sub-Grantee of General Dynamics Mission Systems, Inc. and (B) if awarded, recognize, receive, and appropriate the award amount to the General Grants Fund (G001) for the duration of the grant.

THIS CONCLUDES ITEMS APPROVED BY CONSENT.

20-6421: Budget Amendment - FY21 Revenue Increase for Department of Social Services - (DSS)

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to amend the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive, and appropriate an increase of \$177,693 from Smart Start to the General Fund (Fund 0001) within the Department of Social Services.

20-6429: Donation from Partners for Parks for Senior Fan Program

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Powell, and carried unanimously to amend the 2020-2021 Annual Budget Ordinance to recognize, receive and appropriate a donation of \$4,620 to the General Fund (0001) within the Park and Recreation Department from Partners for Parks for the purchase of fans.

20-6431: Grant Application - North Carolina Alliance of YMCAs COVID-19 Grant

A motion was made by Commissioner Leake, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to (A) affirm submission of a grant application to North Carolina

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Alliance of YMCAs of up to \$350K to be used to support remote learning and (B) if awarded, recognize and receive award amount.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS REPORTS & REQUESTS

20-6422: Commissioner Reports

Commissioner Jerrell reminded the community to vote.

Commissioner Cotham shared an experience she had in relation to the court. She asked the Board to continue to talk to legislators about the needs in the court system so they could have enough money to operate, because they did not have it. s

Commissioner Leake thanked the community for supporting her and said to not forget the seniors.

Commissioner Harden stated that the name of the Morrison Regional Library was changed to the South Park Regional Library, and it was done in coordination with the family who donated the land and who's relative it was named after. She said that name and the values the former governor had advocated for were not the values of the community today. She thanked to community for supporting that. She said in thinking about what the Board has done to address racial inequality, she could see some of the fruits of the decisions they have made, and she was proud of the district.

Commissioner Harden said there was a lot of miseducation around what you could do during early voting and that people needed to know they could register and vote at early voting. She said it was not too late to register and vote.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Fuller, seconded by Commissioner Scarborough, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07 p.m.


Emily A. Kunze, Clerk


George Dunlap, Chair