



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Monday, May 15, 2023

2:00 PM

Agriculture and Conference Center

Budget Public Hearing

Work Session - 2:00 PM - Agriculture and Conference Center

Present: 5 - Vice Chair Mike Dasher, Commissioner David Delaney, Chair Karen Howard, Commissioner Katie Kenlan and Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores

CLOSED SESSION

[23-4765](#)

Vote on a request to go into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) and (4): (i) to consult with an attorney retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege; (ii) to consider and give instructions to an attorney concerning the handling of Pugh, et al. v. Howard, et al., COA20-533; and (iii) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Delaney, to go into Closed Session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) and (4): (i) to consult with an attorney retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege; (ii) to consider and give instructions to an attorney concerning the handling of Pugh, et al. v. Howard, et al., COA20-533; and (iii) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Robert Waldrop gave the following written comments:

I'm a NC Native, have lived for 37 years in Chatham County and have spent 3+ years working with the Board of Elections including: Poll worker, Precinct Judge, Early Voting Site Co-Manager and Manager, Precinct Chief Judge, Back Office Temporary.

The BOE has a great team, Chance, Steve and Pandora. Best in the state and with highest voter turnout. They know the Law, Process and DETAILS.

Chatham has a ~ 33% growth rate. This will increase dramatically in the very near future as the new housing and jobs come on-line. Chatham is changing now, and most voters will be coming from elsewhere causing an increased workload for the BOE.

BOC needs to act now to be a step ahead of this growth – starting NOW.

The last salary review compared Chatham to other counties with similar populations, not to the Chatham of the very near future.

I spent 35 years as a field technical support engineer, sales, and new business development. From this time, I accumulated knowledge of the products, system and industry that cannot be learned anywhere except by “doing” hands-on. When I started there were 7 of us covering North and South America.

Corporate cost cutting reduced that to 5, then 4, then 3, then 2, now one. That person is now run ragged and is ineffective as a result. This has resulted in lost business, and they must pay consultants (including me) to fill in the gap.

In 5 years, I lived through what you face should you lose two or even one of the county's three.

New employees will need to come up the learning curve and need training from experience you will lose should you lose one of these three. You need years to learn the details. If things don't go smoothly, the new employees will also leave, worsening an already bad situation.

This team is party agnostic, extremely competent, loyal, hard-working, employees. Their performance attracts the competent workers needed to help carry out an election fairly with no drama and no issues.

In summary, I urge you to use your power to keep and encourage this excellent team and Chatham's performance by adjusting their salaries.

BOARD PRIORITIES

[23-4757](#)

Receive Presentation from Chatham County Board of Elections

Attachments:

[Budgetary Impact Request](#)

[Email NCSBE General Counsel April 10 2023](#)

[Email NCSBE General Counsel February 21 2023](#)

[Email Paul Cox NCSBE General Counsel April 26 2023](#)

[Machine Tech Duties](#)

[Memorandum from Poyner Spruill November 14 2022](#)

[MOU 2008 between Board of Elections and Board of Commissioners](#)

[MOU Updated Draft 04042023](#)

[Memorandum of Understanding Power Point](#)

Board of Elections (BOE) Chair Laura Heise and BOE members Mark Barrosso and Frank R. Dunphy II and Chatham County Elections Director, Pandora Paschal, presented to the Board of Commissioners. Amy Meek is another BOE member who

could not attend the meeting.

Ms. Heise thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. She said the BOE consisted of Democrats and Republicans appointed by their respective state parties and she was appointed by the governor.

Ms. Heise said there were two items to discuss. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County and a request for additional salary for elections staff. She said the refined MOU submitted clarified setting BOE salaries of the director and staff. The Board of Commissioners received an abstract that included background information for the MOU. She said the attorney for the State Board of Elections, Paul Cox, confirmed the refined MOU accurately reflects state elections law and his comments have been provided to the Board of Commissioners. She acknowledged and thanked the County Manager's Office staff and other County departments that have assisted the elections office administration and as the MOU stated, the BOE will continue to rely on that assistance in the future. She asked if there were any reactions or questions about the refined MOU.

Chair Howard said the Board would have a discussion after the presentation, but the Board had raised questions about whether the MOU was necessary. She said if the Board has further questions, it will direct questions to the county staff and county attorney. Ms. Heise said the abstract that was given to the Board lays out the BOE's rationale for the MOU in greater detail.

Ms. Heise said the second item is a request for an additional \$80,000 to the salary line item in the proposed County budget. That would include an increase of \$30,000 for existing staff and \$50,000 for the new position of Machine Tech. Since 2016, the North Carolina General Assembly has passed new laws regarding voter ID and voting by mail that will further complicate election administration and poll workers will need to be trained in these new procedures. There are staff vacancies in election offices across the state and salary increases are needed to stay competitive. The BOE is grateful to the Chatham County Management Information Systems (MIS) staff for their continued support.

Salary increases for staff and think the tech position will allow for integrity for elections. Staff morale and health during election season are hard on individuals' health and can lead to errors. Ms. Heise thanked the Board for their time and said she would be happy to answer any questions.

Commissioner Delaney asked if Ms. Heise could be more specific about not getting the funding. He knows more about the BOE's concerns because he has attended its meetings as the liaison, but he would still like additional details. He asked if the BOE's request is a unanimous request of its members.

Ms. Heise said votes were taken before a seat became vacant. Both issues were unanimous. Their primary concern is losing staff. It is a huge burden to train new staff and there is a lot of competition in surrounding counties. Many counties are scrambling to replace directors and staff since their losses in the 2016 election.

BOE member Mark Barroso said the BOE's machines do not exist in any county department. It requires specific training that is complicated and time sensitive. The machine tech must come in and solve time-sensitive issues. It is getting more complicated with more scrutiny from citizens. A machine tech will prevent disasters.

Chair Howard asked for the total number of positions requested and what the actual fiscal impact of the salary increase request. Mr. Barroso said out of the \$80,000

requested \$50,000 is for the machine tech. Chair Howard asked if the remaining \$30,000 accounted for salaries and benefits.

Chatham Elections Director Pandora Pascal said that number is only for the salary increases. They do not want an IT person but a machine tech that would work with the machines and handle loading the laptops. It would be better if they had their own person, instead of MIS staff coming in and out. She had a list of duties. This would be more than working with the machines. Chair Howard asked if it is currently a contracted service. Ms. Pascal said they have been working with County MIS who had a staff person certified in elections and that person is no longer available. Elections have requested this position twice. She does not believe it is fair to put that burden on the MIS department. Elections would still need IT assistance but not for the elections equipment. Security is also an issue.

Chair Howard asked how many positions were requested. Ms. Pascal said they requested two positions. They were given an elections specialist. At the time of the request, she was asked which position she would prefer out of the two and she said the machine tech.

Commissioner Gomez Flores asked if they are using the same machines and systems as used in the 2020 election.

Ms. Pascal said yes, that was the County's first year with Hart equipment. The MIS staff does not feel comfortable loading election results.

Vice Chair Dasher said last year the Board looked at comparable salaries in other counties. He asked if there was any way to know the total funding to the elections department as Chatham compares per capita to other counties.

Mr. Barroso said that is the heart of the issue. Lee County is an example. They have a similar population and have five elections employees compared to Chatham's three. The BOE disagrees with the human resources office. They use the criteria as other offices, but Chatham is a hybrid. The BOE objects to the criteria that determine the salaries. They would like to use criteria established by the courts and NC Board of Elections.

Vice Chair Dasher said it is not always apples to apples. Mr. Barroso said that is not stated in law. The criterion from the state is very specific.

Chair Howard asked the county attorney to speak to the issue. County attorney Bob Hagemann said there were a couple of important points. He wrote a memo last November on the law around the director's salary. It is important to differentiate the director's salary and compensation from other employees of the County Board of Elections. He agrees that the BOE is a quasi-independent unique animal in NC law. But they do get their salary from the budget approved by the Board of Commissioners. The criteria they are referring to only speaks to the director's salary. The law says the director's salary shall be an amount recommended by the BOE and approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Hagemann spoke with Mr. Cox last week and they have a different view on what the law means. He believes the role of the BOE is to make the recommendation and the role of the Board of Commissioners is to approve a salary for the elections director as part of the budget. Mr. Cox believes the law says that the BOE sets the salary by giving the recommendation and the Board of Commissioners must approve that recommendation. Ms. Hagemann does not believe that a salary that differs from the recommendation of the BOE is a violation of the law. He spoke with the UNC

School of Government, and they drew an analogy on a series of statutes for public education and the roles of the superintendent and of the Board of Education. The superintendent makes recommendations on who to appoint to a principal position, but the Board of Education has the final approval. There was a 1984 Attorney General opinion advising that if the School Board is not comfortable with the recommendation of the superintendent it can make its own decision. There is no court decision but that is the best analogy he is aware of. Mr. Hagemann respects Mr. Cox's opinion but he stands by his own. There is nothing in the statute that sets the criteria required for nondirector position compensation and salaries.

Mr. Hagemann said UNC SOG faculty member Kara Millonzi opined that it is within the Board of Commissioners' authority to create a line item for salaries for the Board of Elections and they are then free to operate within that budgeted appropriation.

Mr. Barrosso said the BOE does not disagree with Mr. Hagemann. They do not believe the Board of Commissioners is bound to approve the BOE's recommendation. Yes, the Board of Commissioners has the final say on the elections department's budget. The BOE's question is how County staff arrived at the salaries.

Chair Howard clarified that this is the methodology the County used last year. Mr. Barrosso said the County evaluated each position in the County the same way. The BOE wants to remove elections staff from that process and the BOE use its own process to bring a lump sum recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

Chair Howard asked if staff could refresh the Board on the process used by staff. Assistant County Manager Carolyn Miller said staff did an in-depth analysis of the director's salary and compared it with what they could concretely evaluate as similarly situated based on population and proximity. They compared adjacent counties and the number of registered voters in a county. Some of the other criteria they did not consider as they are very difficult to measure. The criteria used by staff were much more objective. The human resources department has a responsibility to recommend to the county manager so that he may in turn make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

Chair Howard asked how the Board of Commissioners did the allocation to the elections department. Her recollection was it was a lump sum. Ms. Miller said it was a line item by salaries, other salaries and benefits, and then operating expenses.

Ms. Paschal said the BOE did its own salary study using surrounding counties and came up with the amount recommended. They are not asking for anything unreasonable, and the work is complex. She has been in the position since 2016. Her staff was not being compensated as other employees. BOE employees are separate from the rest of the County employees even though they follow employee rules. Her employees are doing comparable work to other county employees and are not being compensated.

Chair Howard said she hopes everyone in Ms. Paschal's department feels that the Board of Commissioners value their work whatever the ultimate decision may be. The Board of Commissioners has done some revaluations for some positions, and it could be time for another pay study. She agrees Chatham is a growing community and the Board wants to keep good staff. She hopes Ms. Paschal knows and believes the Board is committed to fair salaries for all staff. The Board relies heavily on staff recommendations. The decisions are thoughtful.

Commissioner Kenlan said she deeply values the work of the elections staff. She appreciated their presentation and letting the Board know their needs.

Ms. Paschal said she appreciates all the Board has done for her department. They have had these conversations multiple times and there has been some progress, but they have not gotten to the finish line.

Vice Chair Dasher suggested this conversation continue at the budget work sessions next week.

Commissioner Delaney asked what it would mean to operate without an MOU with the Board of Commissioners. He also would like to go back to budgeting and the independent nature of the Board of Elections as expressed in the NC Constitution. He asked how the Board should think about the budgeting process and the need to run good elections. He asked the county attorney for his thoughts.

Mr. Hagemann said NCGS 163 37 states "the respected Board of County Commissioners shall appropriate reasonable and adequate funds necessary for the legal function of the County Board of Elections, including reasonable and just compensation of the director of Elections." Mr. Hagemann said the Board of Commissioners has discretion.

Mr. Dunphy said he is the Republican conservative on the Board of Elections. He believes the Elections department is special. He said in 2021 the Board of Elections and elections apparatus were deemed critical infrastructure by the Obama administration. The BOE equipment requires upgrades every year and is kept in secure locations so the elections cannot be tampered with. The machine tech will work with Hart throughout the year to ensure that the election equipment is ready when the election happens. After election day the BOE performs audits to corroborate the results for quality control by hand counting paper ballots. The machine tech will help with quality control and the peaceful transfer of power.

Ms. Heise said they believe a purpose of the MOU is to make clear that the BOE has a role to play that it has not been playing in the past.. They develop the budget, state the proper classification, and ask for assistance from HR to refine the request. They want to have an opportunity to speak directly to the commissioners about what those salaries may look like. They would like a line item and they can break it down into the specific positions. She does not think they are going to be able to retain staff if the salaries are not increased. Election season is approaching and she strongly urged the Board to not put this off another year.

This Agenda Item was received and filed

[23-4758](#)

Receive Presentation from the Parks and Recreation Department

Attachments: [BOC Recreation Presentation](#)

Parks and Recreation Director Tracy Burnett gave a presentation to the Board.

Ms. Burnett said Northwest District Park is the only park with a swimming pool. Commissioner Gomez Flores asked if the swimming pool operates during the summer months. Ms. Burnett said the pool is by reservation only because of the size. It is used primarily during Parks and Recreation's summer camps. Commissioner Kenlan said she enjoys that park.

Commissioner Gomez Flores asked if there was any overlap of services that could be provided by nonprofits with County funding. Ms. Burnett said that based on the funding the towns are receiving, there have been a lot of improvements to facilities

more than programming. She does not see any overlap at this time.

Commissioner Delaney said he had heard about investment in parks and recreation infrastructure like skateparks. He asked if Ms. Burnett felt there was a good process of getting input and requests into the advisory committee process or if that was something we would have to start from scratch. Ms. Burnett said the County completed a Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2019. That included a redevelopment plan of a lot of parks. She works with the budget team on the Capital Improvements Plan for future planning. There is an interest in Pittsboro to build a skate park but that was not a high priority as part of the Master Plan.

This Agenda Item was received and filed

[23-4759](#)

Receive presentation on redistricting Chatham County Commissioner districts

Attachments: [Redistricting Presentation - May 2023 - 2](#)

Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson presents to the Board.

Commissioner Delaney asked how this related to the Elections Method Task Force recommendations from 2018. He also asked about any communication needed with the Board of Elections for things like precincts. Mr. Thompson said staff has begun identifying what steps are needed and who needs to be brought into those conversations and in what way. The Elections Method Task Force considered the need to expand to seven members and the task force concluded that was not needed. Another question explored was whether Chatham should keep residency districts or change to electoral districts. The task force concluded the current method of election of having residency districts voted at large was appropriate.

The Board agreed by consensus to move forward with the redistricting process.

The Board agreed by consensus to move forward with the proposed timeline.

RECESS

The Board recessed at 3:42 PM.

End of Work Session

Regular Session - 6:00 PM - Agriculture and Conference Center

INVOCATION and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Howard asked for a moment of silence after which she invited everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA and CONSENT AGENDA

Item #23-4751 was amended to adopt a resolution accepting the American Rescue Plan (ARP) grant funds of \$400,000.00.

A motion was made by Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Katie Kenlan, that the Agenda and Consent Agenda be approved as amended. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4744](#)

Vote on a request to approve the naming of one private road in Chatham County

Attachments: [Farm Path Petition](#)
[FARM PATH MAP](#)
[FARM PATH AREA MAP](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4754](#)

Vote on a request to approve the naming of one private road in Chatham County

Attachments: [Noble Reserve Way Petition](#)
[Noble Reserve Way map](#)
[Noble Reserve Way area map](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4748](#)

Vote on a request to approve Letter of Agreement 4-2 for the Environmental Permitting Project for the Western Intake Partnership

Attachments: [WIP letter of Agreement 4-2 - Brown and Caldwell](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Contract, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4756](#)

Vote on a request to approve Amendment #2 to extend the previously approved Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for Creating and Defining Operations and Cost Sharing of the Western Intake Partnership

Attachments: [Western Intake - Amendment #2 to MOA](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Contract, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4751](#)

Vote on to adopt a resolution accepting a grant from the American Rescue plan in the amount of \$400,00 for the Western Intake Partnership engineering studies and approve the County Manager to sign all documents related to the grant.

Attachments: [Resolution - Grant for ARP Funds](#)

[1.Chatham County MRF-D-ARP-0011 LOX 230413](#)

[2.Chatham County MRF-D-ARP-0011 GO 230413](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Resolution #23-24 accepting the American Rescue Plan (ARP) offer of \$400,000.00, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4752](#)

Vote on recommending the combined and prioritized list of transportation projects from Chatham County, Town of Pittsboro, and Siler City, to be submitted to the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization.

Attachments: [May BOC Attachment](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4753](#)

Vote to approve Tax Releases and Refunds

Attachments: [April 2023 Release and Refund Report](#)

[April 2023 NCVTS Pending Refund Report](#)

[April 2023 Manual NCVTS Pending Refund Report](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that the Tax Releases and Refunds, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4767](#)

Vote to adopt a resolution of support for traffic signal and widening at the Whippoorwill Lane (SR 1726) and Old Farrington Road (SR 1726) intersection.

Attachments: [RESOLUTION WHIPPOORWILL LN FARRINGTON RD](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Resolution #23-25 supporting a traffic signal and widening at the Whippoorwill Lane (SR 1726) and Old Farrington Road (SR 1726) intersection, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4766](#)

Vote on a request to adopt a resolution of support for traffic signal and widening at the Mt. Carmel Church Road (SR 1008) and Old Farrington Road (SR 1726) Intersection

Attachments: [RESOLUTION MT CARM CH RD FARRINGTON](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Resolution #23-26 supporting a traffic signal and widening at the Mt. Carmel Church Road (SR 1008) and Old Farrington Road (SR 1726) Intersection, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4770](#)

Vote on a request to adopt a resolution proclaiming Vulnerable Adult and Elder Abuse and Exploitation Awareness Month in Chatham County

Attachments: [RES Vulnerable Adult and Elder Abuse and Exploitation Awareness Month in Chatham County](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Resolution #23-27 proclaiming Vulnerable Adult and Elder Abuse and Exploitation Awareness Month in Chatham County, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4771](#)

Vote to adopt a resolution ratifying, accepting, and approving the amended charter resolution of Central Pines Regional Council (formerly Triangle J Council of Governments)

Attachments: [CPRC Charter One-Pager](#)
[TJCOG Charter -Redline Version](#)
[TJCOG Charter -Clean Version](#)
[TJCOG - Central Pines Resolution](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Delaney, that this Resolution #23-28 ratifying, accepting, and approving the amended charter resolution of Central Pines Regional Council (formerly Triangle J Council of Governments), attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

End of Consent Agenda

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

[23-4760](#)

Vote on a request to adopt a resolution honoring Chatham County's Outstanding Volunteers for 2022

Attachments: [Volunteer Resolution 2023](#)

Chair Howard read the resolution into the record. She also read the biographies of each honoree and presented them with their awards. All volunteers came to the podium for a group photo.

Honoree Johnny Shaw thanked the County staff and the Board of Commissioners for supporting the Council on Aging's transition to a County department.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner Gomez Flores, that this Resolution #23-29 honoring Chatham County's Outstanding Volunteers for 2022, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

[23-4764](#)

Adopt a Resolution in Support of designation of Temporary Protected Status for Guatemalans

Attachments: [Resolution Supporting TPS for Guatemalans](#)

Chair Howard called upon Commissioner Gomez Flores to introduce the resolution.

Commissioner Gomez Flores said Temporary Protected Status (TPS) was created by Congress in 1990 to provide employment authorization and protection from deportation to immigrants in the United States who are unable to return safely to their home countries because of violence, natural disaster, or other extraordinary conditions. Guatemala has not previously been included as a nation with TPS.

Judith (Latino Commission on AIDS) spoke to the Board. It is important to continue to push for federal legislation and protection for Guatemalan residents of Chatham County. After receiving the TPS designation, these residents could access healthcare through their employers. They could obtain driver's licenses and be seen as members of the community.

Commissioner Gomez Flores read the resolution into the record.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kenlan, seconded by Commissioner

Delaney, that this Resolution #23-30 in Support of designation of Temporary Protected Status for Guatemalans, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

No one signed up to speak.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

23-4762

Public hearing to receive public comment on the Recommended FY2023-2024 Budget

Attachments: [Recommended Budget Presentation--BOC Initial Presentation FY2024 DRAFT \(002\)](#)

Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson gave a presentation to the Board.

The Chair opened the hearing.

Victoria Shea submitted the following written comments:

I am here as a member of the League of Women Voters of Orange, Durham, and Chatham Counties because the League supports Boards of Elections that are well-staffed and professionally administered. We have observed the Chatham County Board of Elections meetings for many years. Director Paschal and her staff execute their duties with nonpartisan professionalism and integrity. Their reputation statewide is that of excellence. These folks know what they are doing, and they should have both the support and the independence to do what they know best how to do.

Howard Fifer submitted the following written comments:

My name is Howard Fifer. I am a resident of Chatham County and appear before you as Chairperson of the Economic Development Committee of the West Chatham branch of the NAACP. As you finalize the County budget for this year I urge you to fully implement and fund, as a line item in the budget, the recommendations made by Professor James Johnson in his Needs Assessment for persons in Chatham seeking to start small businesses.

At a time when the opportunity and need have never been greater the County has yet to address and promote the issue of small business development as effectively as it might. This is in sharp contrast to the County's successful investments and efforts to attract large companies. Investing in developing mega sites and funding the Chatham County Economic Development Corporation. Now those incoming corporations have local supply chain needs, the sort which small local businesses are best suited to address. A similar on going campaign is required to grow the tax base by ensuring residents can join the entrepreneurial class and fully partake in the American dream we call Chatham County.

The plain fact is that the Economic Development Corporation is neither designed nor authorized to do this. Jack Pendergraph, an employee of the EDC who helps large incoming manufacturers meet their supply chain needs said, in a recent email to me, "I'm happy to work with any existing businesses

you have connections with through your role with the NAACP". This frames the issue perfectly. The EDC does not develop small businesses but they are happy to work with existing businesses. Now we ask, what will the county's role be in making entrepreneurial dreams come true. What will the county's role be in establishing businesses, jobs and family wealth right here in Chatham? We believe the County should have an active role. I know these are questions you will not ignore, and responsibilities you will not walk away from. Please know that there are citizens and non-profits who stand ready to provide input and participate in making Chatham a true success story for all of its residents.

Wade Kirkman spoke to the Board as a representative of the Goldston Fire Department. Ever since the pandemic costs for fuel, tires, insurance and maintenance costs have all increased. They are looking to purchase a new fire truck. Their newest truck is a 2007 model and the other engine is a 1994 model. They appreciate any consideration by the Board.

John Strowd, Fire Chief of North Chatham Fire Department, submitted the following written comments:

I was born and have lived in Chatham County all my life and proud to be from Chatham County. I'm here this evening to ask for your consideration for an increase in the Fire tax for North Chatham Volunteer Fire Department from 11.8 cents to 12.8 cents per \$100 evaluation. Some general information about North Chatham Fire Department:

- Department established in 1968. Department covers 205 square miles in Northeast Chatham County*
- We provide Fire, Rescue and First Responder services*
- The department covers a large portion of Jordan Lake and equipped with boats, Sonar, and trained divers*
- The department covers a large portion of the Haw River with a trained Swiftwater Team and boats*
- We have trained personnel who assist with Harris Nuclear Drill for both back up Route alerting and opening of decon shelter.*
- The department has 7 stations with 14 volunteers and 64 career personnel when fully staffed*
- Expected emergency call response this year is 2500 calls, a steady increase since COVID started and growth of our district and Chatham County*
- Current ISO rating is Class 4*

Main Reasons requesting the tax increase is:

- Recruitment of personnel*
- Retaining personnel who currently are employed*
- Increase cost of Equipment and Apparatus,*

Example of Equipment cost:

- Cost of 5-inch hose was \$5.50 a foot and now \$9.50 a foot and we have about 10,000 feet of 5-inch hose*

Capital improvement projects are:

Replace 1 Aerial apparatus 23 years old and 2 Engines

- Expected delivery would be 2 years once ordered*
- Since purchase in 2000 of our first Aerial was \$643,000 and estimated Price for the replacement is \$1.8 million.*
- Renovation to Station 1 living quarters and Training room*
- Station 2 addition of living quarters and 2 additional drive thru bays*

These capital improvement projects were planned soon after COVID started, and projects were placed on hold due to increased cost of materials, construction, and labor shortage. These capital projects would be a welcome addition to the department, the fire district, and Chatham County with additional incentives for personnel. Volunteers normally respond from their home to emergency calls, but Career personnel work 24-hour shift work over 9 days a month at the Fire Stations. The station is like their 2nd home, if not their home. They live, train, cook, sleep, and respond to emergency calls from the Fire Station.

Our goal is to continue providing Chatham County with an excellent, well-equipped and maintained Fire Department. Most importantly to maintain our Class 4 ISO rating and work toward improving our grade which reduces both homeowners and businesses insurance premiums. Thank you for your time and consideration of our budget proposal.

Darrell Griffith with the Pittsboro (Circle City) Fire Department spoke to the Board. He said Mr. Thompson, Mr. Strowd, and Mr. Kirkman covered most of his notes. Pittsboro has three fire stations, and they hope to hire and have three staff at each station. Their gear is out of date and costs have increased. They appreciate the Board's consideration.

The Chair Closed the Hearing.

CLERK'S REPORT

Deputy Clerk Lacey George said Clerk Lindsay Ray could not be at the meeting because she was representing the NC Association of County Clerks as its President at the International Institute of Municipal Clerks annual conference in Minneapolis. This morning was the opening ceremony and parade of flags. Because North Carolina has two clerk association presidents in attendance (municipal and county) they asked if Ms. Ray would be willing to carry another flag if another delegate was not in attendance and she happily agreed. She represented Scotland with the United Kingdom delegation which was a shock to all the NC clerks in the audience.

Ms. George also provided Ms. Ray's update on the Historic Courthouse Audio Visual Project.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. LaMontagne said he spent time with NC Rep. Robert Reives and NC Sen. Natalie Murdock with Chatham County Schools this morning. He won't provide any additional information as other commissioners may have comments during their reports.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Kenlan said it was an honor to be with Chatham County Schools this morning. She thanked all the principals, staff, and students who welcomed them and gave them tours. She is the interim director of a Spanish immersion school, and she is proud to be reminded that Siler City is the oldest Spanish immersion program in the State. When students graduate, they get a stamp on their diploma that designates the students as biliterate.

Vice Chair Dasher said it was great to see our schools in action. He is proud of the work they do and what the County does to support them.

Gomez Flores said the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) elected chair stepped down from their position, which was tied to their membership on the Council. Their successor joined the Council, and they are awaiting their appointment by the Board of Commissioners soon. He also attended the Board of Health Meeting and the Triangle Regional Partnership meeting. Chair Howard and EDC President Michael Smith were also in attendance.

Commissioner Delaney had nothing to report.

Chair Howard said she attended the Oil & Gas Commission meeting and they are revising bylaws and aligning them more with the commission rules. She also had a DCHC-MPO meeting last week. She enjoyed the visit this morning with Chatham County Schools. It was a reminder of the level of excellence of the school system. June 9th her youngest child will graduate from Northwood High School. She has now had five children to graduate from Chatham County Schools.

Chair Howard said at the last meeting the Board heard from residents during public input about a resolution of support for the ICAN Cities Appeal for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. She provided the rest of the Board with a copy of the resolution and asked the Board to adopt the resolution.

[24-5444](#)

Resolution of Support for the ICAN Cities Appeal for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Attachments: [Resolution of Support for the ICAN Cities Appeal for the UN Treaty](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chair Howard, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this Resolution #23-66 of Support for the ICAN Cities Appeal for the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be adopted. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Kenlan, that this meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Delaney, Chair Howard, Commissioner Kenlan, and Commissioner Gomez Flores