



# Chatham County, NC

## Meeting Minutes

### Board of Commissioners

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Tuesday, November 16, 2021

9:00 AM

Agriculture and Conference Center

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#### Capital Improvements Plan Work Session

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

*Chair Dasher called the meeting to order at 9:09 am.*

**Present:** 5 - Vice Chair Mike Dasher, Commissioner Diana Hales, Vice Chair Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner Jim Crawford and Chair Karen Howard

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA and CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Howard, seconded by Commissioner Gomez Flores, that the agenda and consent agenda be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Commissioner Crawford, and Chair Howard

#### **21-4098**

Vote on a request to approve Pyrotechnic display at The Bradford wedding venue located at 75 The Bradford Ln. New Hill NC 27562 during a wedding celebration on December 3, 2021

**Attachments:**    [Attachment A-N.C.G.S 14-410 and 14-413](#)  
[Attachment B - Pyrotechnics Request](#)  
[Attachment C-NC Pyrotechnic Display Operators License](#)  
[Attachment D- Ledford Certificate of Insurance 2021](#)  
[Attachment E- Ledford ATF License 2021](#)  
[Attachment F-Floor Plan The Bradford 12/3/2021](#)

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

**Aye:** 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Commissioner Crawford, and Chair Howard

#### **End of Consent Agenda**

#### **BOARD PRIORITIES**

#### **21-4088**

Review the Process

**Attachments:**     [FY 2023-2029 CIP Work Session Final.pptx](#)

*Budget Director Darrell Butts reviewed the Capital Improvements Plan process.*

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

[21-4089](#)

Overview of CIP

*Budget Director Darrell Butts gave an overview of the Capital Improvements Plan. He reminded the board that the Capital Improvements Plan was a plan and not a budget. The projects approved with no contracts executed and recommended projects were the ones the board had the ability to alter or change.*

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

[21-4090](#)

Funding Sources & Strategy

*Budget Director Darrell Butts said the COVID pandemic had an impacted on the cost of materials and labor, but on the positive side the County had received a historically low interest rate.*

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

[21-4091](#)

Operating Effect

*Budget Director Darrell Butts said any time the County took on a debt for a project the debt service must be paid every year. This debt had a direct impact on the operating budget.*

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

[21-4092](#)

Completed Projects

*Budget Director Darrell Butts said there were three completed projects. The Central Carolina Community College's Health Sciences Building, Chatham Grove Elementary School and the voting equipment replacement were all completed this year.*

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

[21-4093](#)

Schools Projects

*Chatham County Schools Chief Operations Officer Chris Blice stated the school system lost five mobile units to fire and there was damage to the Pre-K playground. The current insurance policy provided for full replacement, but the investigation was ongoing. Chatham County Schools recommended moving from five mobile units to a six-classroom pod. The schools believed they could get through until the summer before having to replace anything. That would give time to have the pod custom built. It may be possible to get some temporary mobile units until the summer if needed.*

*Vice Chair Hales asked what was happening to the students who were using those mobile units. Mr. Blice said music had been moved to a cart classroom. Two units were being used as storage and art had already moved to the cafeteria. English as a Second Language was moved to a different location after the fire. The fifth unit was being used primarily for storage as well. This had actually created an opportunity to plan for increased capacity over the next ten years.*

Commissioner Crawford complimented the new traffic flow at Northwood High School. He would like to move up the gym replacements at Bennett, Silk Hope, and Bonlee schools, as he had stated before. Commissioner Gomez Flores agreed. Chatham County Schools Director of Maintenance Randy Drumheller said a feasibility study would determine the best course of action for these facilities. Commissioner Gomez Flores asked how quickly the turnaround would be for renovating the facilities compared to building a new facility. Mr. Drumheller stated that renovations would take about a year because the gyms were occupied. The building of a new facility would also take about a year for construction and about six months for design. The feasibility study should be done by the end of this month.

Commissioner Howard asked if there was a political component to updating these facilities. These schools had resisted moving to the kindergarten to fifth grade and sixth grade to eighth grade middle school model and it would be wise to think about those conversations.

Mr. Blice stated a study on the addition of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning to the existing systems in the county gymnasiums was also being conducted.

Chair Dasher questioned how much of the COVID funding the schools had received. There was an article last week about the funding in the state overall. He asked where Chatham County Schools spent those funds. Chatham County Schools Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson stated the funds are distributed over a three-year period. Chatham County Schools had to have a detailed plan, so all the funds were already allocated and if anything changed there had to be additional approval. There were certain amounts mandated for certain things. The total allocation was approximately eighteen million dollars. Chatham County Schools Chief Finance Officer Tony Messer said getting a heating, ventilation, and air conditioning project completed in three years was just about impossible when one hundred counties may be trying to do that same thing with the same vendors.

Commissioner Howard stated there was just recently an update on lottery capital funds. She would get more information from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.

Vice Chair Hales asked if there were any conversations about a refresh of Jordan Matthews High School. Mr. Blice stated the refresh of facilities was ongoing in the form of small projects. An entire school renovation done as one big project would be for aesthetics. A technology refresh would be much more important to ensure instruction was keeping up with the times and students had access to the best technology.

Vice Chair Hales noted there were no lockers at Seaforth High School. Mr. Blice stated they were taking them out of other schools gradually because students no longer used them.

Dr. Jackson stated they would be having some of these conversations with the Board of Education in January, but he would love school programming to drive the District's capital needs.

Commissioner Gomez Flores asked how substitute teachers were paid. Mr. Messer stated that when a teacher takes annual leave, they had to pay fifty dollars towards the payment of the substitute. It was a state policy, not a county policy. It did not apply when a teacher took sick leave.

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

[21-4094](#)

## General Fund Projects

*County Manager Dan LaMontagne gave an update on the Central Carolina Community College Business Campus in Siler City. A developer wanted to know how they could connect from behind the gas station over to Progress Boulevard so they could develop that parcel. This was very positive news, especially when there was still a need for a sign for the campus.*

*Chair Dasher asked if there had been discussions about a master plan for that campus. Mr. LaMontagne said there would be a health campus there. Affordable housing was also going in behind the hospital. Chair Dasher also suggested there could be an advantage in having a plan to look at possible future uses instead of waiting for things to come to the board.*

*Chair Dasher stated that the Veranda at Briar Chapel removed their charging stations. He asked if the stations were part of the site plan and could they remove the stations without coming to the Board with a revised site plan. Mr. LaMontagne believed putting the charging stations at the Veranda was voluntary and was not significant enough change to make the developer change the site plan.*

*Assistant County Manager Carolyn Miller said the electronic vehicle charging station would be going in next week at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center. The Board also discussed the audio/visual project for the Historic Courthouse and Justice Center. The Administrative Office of the Courts have committed to upgrading one courtroom in each county. In order to keep the technology consistent in the other three courtrooms in the Justice Center and the Historic Courthouse courtroom, Management Information Systems was working with Administrative Office of the Courts' vendor to gather information on what the potential costs and timeline would be to update the remaining four courtrooms. Clerk to the Board Lindsay Ray would also work with Management Information Systems to make sure the Board of Commissioners' needs were addressed and met with the audio/visual in the Historic Courthouse.*

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

[21-4095](#)

## Enterprise Fund Projects

*Mr. LaMontagne said the original partners for the future western intake on Jordan Lake were Orange Water and Sewer Authority, Durham, Pittsboro, and Chatham County. Orange Water and Sewer Authority have decided not to continue in the partnership. The Town of Pittsboro had said they would not continue with the project but would participate in the governance piece. Chatham County was a partner but not a huge partner. Durham was one hundred percent committed for their sixteen point five million gallons per day. Staff needed to go through the process of looking at alternatives.*

*Vice Chair Hales asked whether the Town of Cary was a partner. Mr. LaMontagne said Cary did not need to be a partner because they already had their own intake.*

*Commissioner Crawford asked if it was Mr. LaMontagne's understanding that Durham would build this facility regardless of what the other partners did. Mr. LaMontagne said yes, it was being built in Chatham's backyard, so it made sense to continue with it, and Durham had been a great partner. Financing was difficult for the Town of Pittsboro. The County convinced Pittsboro to participate in the governance piece with the expectation that Pittsboro would join eventually.*

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

[21-4096](#)

## Future Projects

*Chair Dasher said his understanding was that no one asked the contractor if the Central Carolina Community College Career and Technical Education Building could be scaled back. He asked if there was a way to use ARPA funds for the facility. Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson said it seemed staff could use ARPA funds, but the guidance given would be followed on the funds. He was not sure this would meet with the concept of a reasonable use of the funds. Staff could likely argue renovations of an existing building would qualify but construction of a new building would probably not qualify.*

*Mr. Thompson said the community college was expecting an allocation from the state budget, but the College Board of Trustees would then have to distribute those funds among the three locations.*

*Mr. LaMontagne said staff did not have a lot of time for discussion before the final recommended Capital Improvements Plan document's deadline. Mr. Thompson said the reason for something was a future project may be a small issue that could be resolved but not in time to be included in the recommended Capital Improvements Plan.*

*Mr. Butts said he and Budget Analyst Lisa West met with a University of North Carolina Capstone team currently working with Council on Aging Director Dennis Streets on a new senior center project. Vice Chair Hales asked if a new building or the expansion of an existing building were discussed. Mr. Butts said both options as well as other options were being considered.*

*Ms. Miller said an economic analysis for the expansion at the Agriculture and Conference Center would provide more information. Vice Chair Hales asked if there would be any equestrian additions. Ms. Miller said a big part was covering the arena and that plan included many features so staff could identify which ones were most feasible.*

*Commissioner Howard asked if there was a timeline for a county complex master plan. Mr. LaMontagne said a wastewater plant for county facilities on Renaissance Drive was being looked into. Renaissance Drive would likely eventually be in the Town of Pittsboro's jurisdiction.*

*Commissioner Crawford said another component was that Pittsboro was supposed to build a town hall and the County would be able to lease space, but that project had stalled. Mr. LaMontagne said he would like to work out an agreement with the Town of Pittsboro to leasing space in the town hall. With commitment the Town would allocate wastewater for the new county complex on Renaissance Drive. Chair Dasher suggested a joint meeting with the Pittsboro Town Board. Mr. LaMontagne said staff could look at the possibility of a feasibility study on a county complex master plan with operating funds. The Board agreed by consensus to move forward.*

*Vice Chair Hales said the County preferred to own the land and County facilities. The County did not lease property if it did not have to. She asked if a fifteen-year lease for a library in the northeast would be possible. Commissioner Crawford stated the issue was finding space in the northeast part of the county that was adequate. It was hard to find even a small business space right now. Mr. LaMontagne stated the Town of Goldston, and the Town of Siler City provided the space for the libraries. The County did not lease those buildings. Mr. Thompson asked if the latest Library Assessment looked into space needs. Staff would look into that.*

*Public Information Officer Kara Lusk Dudley said the County was conducting the biennial feedback survey and staff would have some feedback on this topic at the January retreat.*

*Commissioner Crawford said McDougal Elementary in Carrboro had a shared library facility for the school and the county. He asked if this model could be possible in Chatham. Mr. LaMontagne said there had been some discussion about that at the new school at Chatham Park when it was built. Ms. Miller pulled up the library needs assessment, and some suggestions were boosting WiFi, building a branch in northeast or northwest Chatham, and different library kiosks (like Red Box kiosks) at different retailers. Vice Chair Hales said Chatham had a large population over fifty-five years of age. Libraries were transitioning to more digital media. Commissioner Howard stated it was easy to think of the northeast as the wealthy part of the county but there were a lot of young families and people in poverty in that section of the county as well. There was not convenient access to library programming in that part of the county. Ms. Miller said it was a good time for staff to explore a variety of options like library programming at the new recreation center at Chatham Grove Elementary. Commissioner Crawford remembered some discussion about a library at the new CCCC's Health Sciences Building. Mr. LaMontagne said there was a ten thousand square foot space for a future library. The Library Advisory Committee was not pushing to move forward with that facility at this time. Library staff should be coming forward with their needs based on what they have seen and experienced. Ms. Miller pointed out that the libraries had retained the curbside service that was created in response to the pandemic.*

*Vice Chair Hales asked if it was possible to have a boat storage for the Sheriff at Seaforth High School. Mr. LaMontagne said North Chatham Fire Department was there by the lake and the water treatment plant was also close by and were possible options for the boat storage. Mr. LaMontagne said there were a lot of moving pieces with this. There was a Rural Digital Opportunity Fund through the Federal Communications Commission. It was not known at what local level that this would happen. There were areas called Capacity and Coverage Optimization holdings that companies could bid on and receive low bandwidth areas that they would serve. They are committed to completion within six years. Vice Chair Hales asked if this was happening nationwide. Mr. LaMontagne stated it was. Mr. LaMontagne had been having discussions with Randolph Communications about another federal program called National Telecommunications and Information Administration. They had to make sure the different federal and state programs they utilized did not interfere with one another. Mr. LaMontagne would dig into the budget to figure out where the county was on that and who could help the county figure out where the gaps were. He had been unable to reach the state broadband office. Vice Chair Hales asked for the status of the broadband project for the schools. Mr. LaMontagne said the connection to the schools was almost complete. That was a federal program just for education and federal services. The County could not necessarily lease that fiber space out to anyone right now. There may be some new things in the state budget that would address this and allow more flexibility. Mr. Thompson said whatever work done by the County would have to be done through internet service providers. Chair Dasher asked if there were consultants that could do some of this broadband leg work for the County. Mr. LaMontagne said not yet. In other states, Counties could use ARPA funds for broadband but counties in North Carolina were not allowed to use the funds for that purpose. Vice Chair Hales asked if the County had any ARPA funds set aside for this. Mr. Thompson said there were funds set aside so if the County was eventually allowed to do something with broadband the funds would already be allocated and available.*

*Chair Dasher said the schools central services building would be done in December of 2022. He asked if the County planned to talk with the Town of Pittsboro about possible uses of the current school central services building. Commissioner Crawford also asked if there were any possible uses of the current Emergency Operations Center and Sheriff's office buildings. Mr. LaMontagne said the Sheriff's Office investigations unit was going to move into the current Emergency Operation Center building. Chair Dasher said the school's central services building would be a great location for a community center. Mr. LaMontagne said staff would look into having a joint meeting with the Town of Pittsboro in February 2022.*

*Mr. Butts thanked the commissioners for their time and for working with staff during this process. The approval of the Capital Improvements Plan will be on the December 20th Board of Commissioners' meeting agenda.*

*Mr. LaMontagne thanked Finance Officer Hope Tally for her service to Chatham County and wished her well in her future endeavors. He also thanked all of staff for their work on the Capital Improvements Plan.*

**This Agenda Item was received and filed.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Aye:** 5 - Vice Chair Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Commissioner Crawford, and Chair Howard