



# Chatham County, NC

## Meeting Minutes

### Board of Commissioners

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Tuesday, May 24, 2022

9:00 AM

Agriculture and Conference Center

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#### Budget Work Session

#### CALL TO ORDER

*Chair Howard called the meeting to order.*

**Present:** 4 - Commissioner Mike Dasher, Commissioner Diana Hales, Chair Karen Howard and Commissioner Robert Logan

#### BOARD PRIORITIES

##### 22-4301

##### Introduction

**Attachments:** [Work Session FY23 FINAL](#)

*Chatham County's Budget Director, Darrell Butts, let the Board of Commissioners know slides ninety and ninety-one were corrected in the electronic document and he provided hard copies of the corrections as well.*

*Mr. Butts reviewed what was discussed at the Board of Commissioners Retreat in January 2022.*

*Commissioner Hales asked about the three school gymnasium renovations. Mr. Butts said the Schools and County had not received the grants applied to provide eighty five percent of the funding for all three renovations. Staff will bring those projects back to the Board in the Capital Improvement Plan in November. For fiscal year 2024 the estimated cost for all three gyms for Bennett, Bonlee, and Silk Hope was fifteen million. Those estimates were for building brand new gyms and repurposing or demolishing the current facilities. Chair Howard asked if the grant opportunity was something the County could apply for again. Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne said yes. Mr. LaMontagne said the Schools and the County were not getting clear answers as to how to improve the application score and there was no rubric.*

*Chair Howard asked what the County's typical lottery proceeds were. Mr. Butts said conservatively five hundred thousand annually.*

*Commissioner Logan asked if there were any partnerships between VinFast, Chatham Park, and the Schools. Mr. LaMontagne said Chatham Park had a Memorandum of Understanding with the Schools for a school site but the County has not had those conversations with VinFast. Chair Howard shared that Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson said an Electrical Vehicle Technician should be an associate's degree through the Central Carolina Community College campuses with a starting salary of eighty thousand dollars a year.*

*Commissioner Hales asked when the Board would get an update about the American Rescue Plan Act funds. Mr. LaMontagne hoped to have an update in July 2022 from Chatham County's Strategic Initiatives Analyst Courtney Cooper-Lewter. The County received over seven hundred responses to the survey in addition to the public input at Board of Commissioners meetings and Community meetings. Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson suggested staff schedule a one on one in July to discuss American Rescue Plan Act funds with the Board of Commissioners.*

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

## 22-4302

### General Fund Revenue

*Mr. Butts continued the presentation with general fund revenue.*

*Commissioner Dasher asked about the Medicaid transportation funding and what the cost was annually for those trips. Mr. Butts said two dollars per person each way. Commissioner Dasher asked if it could be made free for those passengers. Assistant County Manager for Human Resources Carolyn Miller said the County would look into it.*

*Commissioner Dasher clarified that the twenty percent increase on the permits and fees on page twenty-three was a twenty percent increase in revenue and not a twenty percent increase in fees.*

*Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked if the County could forgo inspection fees for residents buying an abandoned home and renovating it. Mr. LaMontagne said this could be a goal for affordable housing. Commissioner Dasher mentioned a possible partnership with the Town of Siler City. If the Town identified dilapidated structures, then the County could reimburse the Town for permitting fees. Mr. Thompson explained that he and Chatham County's Policy Analyst Stephanie Watkins-Cruz had been having conversations with Siler City Planner Jack Meadows along these lines. Staff would look into the possibilities and options.*

*Mr. LaMontagne said with the hotels coming, there could be some other programs that could be funded by occupancy tax. The County was currently at three percent and the State allowed up to six percent. Commissioner Dasher requested this be discussed at the January 2023 Board of Commissioners retreat.*

*Mr. LaMontagne explained that the Board would hear much more in the fall in the Capital Improvements Plan about the County's move to Renaissance Drive.*

*The staff has no recommended tax increase for fiscal year 2023.*

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

## 22-4305

### General Fund Expense

*Chatham County's Budget and Management Analyst Erik Lindley continued the presentation on general fund expense.*

*Chatham County's Finance Officer, Roy Lynch, said the Munis software would go live in October 2022 and the County would begin work on the upgrade and transfer to the cloud in June 2022.*

Commissioner Logan said he was glad to see the space feasibility study and asked what it encompassed. Mr. Butts explained that all County departments that occupy County space and not outside entities who lease space from the County would be included in the study. Commissioner Hales asked if it would include the department on aging and the collection centers. Mr. Butts stated it would, and the collection centers were already considered part of the County facility inventory.

Commissioner Hales asked who owned the Eastern Senior Center in Pittsboro. Ms. Miller explained the Council on Aging owned the building and the Central Carolina Community College owned the land. Council on Aging owned the land and building at the Western Senior Center in Siler City.

Commissioner Dasher had heard that community colleges were supposed to get funding as a result of the VinFast project. Mr. LaMontagne explained the community college appropriation was specifically for the training center in Lee County. He proposed that there would probably be an increased need for class space and an increase in classes offered. The County would not be responsible for maintaining the Lee County facility.

Chair Howard requested the County think about how Chatham students would be able to access the Lee County facility mainly in regard to transportation. Mr. LaMontagne explained the Lee County Moore Center would be for training VinFast employees, not necessarily students. Chair Howard said there were a lot of questions around how the County could make this opportunity accessible to Chatham students so that the County's students benefit. Mr. LaMontagne shared that there would also be a lot of job opportunities with the support industry and suppliers for VinFast.

Chair Howard said it would be critical to have early childhood education and childcare in close proximity to VinFast. Commissioner Logan said central transportation to the facility from all over the county was going to be essential. Mr. LaMontagne shared that transportation was demand driven. The Small Area Plan would be important to make sure this was possible. He hoped the SAP could be completed by fall 2022. There were lots of meetings and conversations happening with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, surrounding counties, City of Sanford, Western Wake Partners, Town of Apex, the Unified Development Ordinance consultants White and Smith, Chatham County's Planning department, and Chatham County's Economic Development Corporation. Chair Howard hoped the Chatham Transit Network would also be included on those conversations.

Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked if the County was able to forgo the Chatham Grove Community Supervisor and the temporary workers' positions. He did not agree with these positions because the western part of the county did not have this same kind of facility. He said this was a prime example of why the west felt neglected. Chair Howard explained the County built this community center in collaboration with the schools. That was narrowing the thinking that one could only have access to what was right around oneself. Just because something was in the northeast did not mean it was only serving people in the northeast. There were three trailer parks in the northeast, and this facility helped people in poverty. Chair Howard explained that when the County built a school in the west, it would be able to recommend this same kind of collaboration. Commissioner Logan said there was an equity issue, but things were typically funded and built based on population. He said it would be great if the County had a position that was responsible for grant writing.

Chair Howard asked if Parks and Recreation was looking at equity when they were

applying for grants. Mr. LaMontagne said the Parks and Recreation master plan took that into account and the western part of the county had given input. Commissioner Dasher believed it was a lot of money for positions that would serve a very narrow population in a small part of the county, but Pittsboro did not have parks programming and that was done by the County. A lot of the County's Parks and Recreation programming would be decided by the growth in Pittsboro. Commissioner Hales expounded that Siler City had Parks and Recreation and did its own programming.

Commissioner Hales agreed that a grant writing position would be beneficial. Mr. LaMontagne clarified that Triangle J Council of Governments provided that service for local governments and would cost the County twenty two thousand dollars a year. They investigated what was available and they did all the applications. Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked if Triangle J Council of Governments goes beyond government being the applicant for the grants. He mentioned opportunities in the west, especially around broadband. Mr. Thompson had asked Triangle J Council of Governments what happened when a community partner came to the County asking for assistance because the partner did not have the capacity to go through the grant process. Triangle J Council of Governments has said if there was an opportunity for a joint partnership with the County and the community partner, Triangle J Council of Governments would help with that grant. They were also tangentially thinking about how they could help nonprofits. Nonprofits had difficulty with grant writing as they were focused on their mission. Commissioner Hales suggested this could be part of a discussion on community development. Chair Howard said the administration of the grant was what was hard. When the grant funding ended it should not fall apart and there should be sustainability. Mr. LaMontagne explained the process. Staff came to the Board of Commissioners when the County applied for a grant. The County would like more one time grants but some did have to come back year after year when programs and positions are involved. Mr. Thompson stated Triangle J Council of Governments did help with the grant administration through required tracking and measurable units. He did not know if the County would be able to find one individual to shepherd the process for every grant from beginning to end. The grants were all so different. The County was currently evaluating whether or not it wanted to join Triangle J Council of Governments' program and if there would be a significant return on investment.

Commissioner Dasher suggested that the land where the affordable housing was going by the college in Siler City would be a great place to do a Master Plan and put a community center. Mr. Thompson said Siler City was working on some things and asked Vice Chair Gomez Flores for clarification about if he was referencing the unincorporated west or Siler City. Vice Chair Gomez Flores confirmed he meant all of the west. Commissioner Dasher suggested out of Town residents pay out of Town fees for Town recreation programming.

Commissioner Hales said she disagreed. The County was not Pittsboro, and it was larger. She said Pittsboro was never going to annex to Briar Chapel. Chair Howard said Chatham Partnership for Children had great programming at Briar Chapel Park and that was the only opportunity for socialization for some kids and parents. Commissioner Dasher predicted in ten years the County would not be running all the recreation programs. He thought the towns should pick up some of the needs. Vice Chair Gomez Flores said the current system was not equitable. Chair Howard shared that she had a fundamental belief in equity, and the County could do it without diminishing the impact on certain communities. Commissioner Hales thought the County would get there. Mr. LaMontagne said the County staff would look into how the County could collaborate with Siler City. If the County could collaborate and help with funding, then maybe the

*Town could speed up any plans it may have.*

*Commissioner Dasher asked about the intergovernmental funds in 2021 for Elections. Mr. Butts said grant funding was received for some COVID-19 response and was used to replace voting equipment, private voting stands, signage, additional security protocols, and personal protective equipment.*

*Chair Howard felt the Elections Director and Deputy Director salaries looked a little out of order. She had conversations with members of the Board of Elections about ten percent raises in salaries for all three elections staff. Ms. Miller confirmed that the Deputy Director and Elections Specialist have been approved for reclassification this year. They would get a two percent salary increase as well as a seven percent increase. They would get a total of nine percent increase. The director could get a seven percent raise. Mr. Butts explained the three elections employees would also see an increase in take home pay with the approved overtime during elections. Ms. Miller said the comparisons made by the Board of Elections was not consistent. The Deputy Director of Chatham County's Department of Social Services was a very different position than the Deputy Director of Elections.*

*Chair Howard asked how often the County did a pay study. Ms. Miller said the County hoped to consistently conduct pay studies at least every five years. All of the elections staff also received pay study implementation increases in January 2022.*

*Commissioner Dasher asked if there was language that could be put in the budget ordinance that allowed Board of Elections flexibility. Mr. Thompson said the staff could structure the budget ordinance allowing the Board of Commissioners to allocate a set amount for Board of Election salaries. Mr. Butts explained the options of the Board of Elections. Mr. LaMontagne said Board of Elections regularly spends more funds than allocated. Mr. Thompson explained the benefits of line item allocations for salaries that could not be spent on other things and making sure operating expenses were protected. Commissioner Dasher shared he did not like addressing individual salaries in this way and that was why the County had pay studies. Commissioner Logan said he understood the Board of Elections wanted more control, but he also understood the responsibility of the County Manager to make sure all county staff salaries were equitable. Giving the Board of Elections control over their salaries and those positions would not be automatically included in pay studies. Mr. Butts explained they also could not borrow from any health and benefits lines. Ms. Miller was not sure the Board of Elections understood the impact this decision would have. Accountability could be an issue. Commissioner Hales asked if a ten percent raise would be adequate for the director. Ms. Miller clarified that the director's salary would be seventy-nine thousand dollars along with the overtime earned during elections. The recommended overtime increased to fifteen dollars per hour.*

*Chair Howard asked if there were other reclassifications recommended. Ms. Miller shared that the County had eight other reclassifications recommended from other departments and there were less this year due to the pay study implementation in January 2022.*

*Vice Chair Gomez Flores was not opposed to a salary increase but requested the Elections employees did more to educate the public. Mr. LaMontagne said the Board of Elections would have to direct that education process.*

*Commissioner Dasher asked if three point five employees were typical for this number of voters. Ms. Miller did not know for sure. Mr. Butts said the Board of Elections added the third employee within the last five years. Ms. Miller shared the County was doing*

more with less in most of the County departments. Commissioner Dasher explained the situation was not unique. This Board would love to pay all county employees more, but he was uncomfortable with singling out three employees. Commissioner Logan remembered one of the Board of Elections speakers said something about a salary study. Ms. Miller shared that the Board of Elections did their own study, largely based on the region and election district, like Wake, Durham, and Orange counties. Commissioner Hales made a motion to increase Elections Director to eighty thousand dollars annual salary and leave the Deputy Director and Elections Specialist with the recommended reclassifications and the included seven percent increase recommended for all employees who met expectations. Commissioner Dasher said he was not comfortable voting for an individual employee's salary, and he would feel better giving them a salary allocation. Commissioner Hales withdrew her motion.

The Board of Commissioners recessed for lunch at 12:45 pm.

The Board of Commissioners resumed meeting at 1:23 pm.

Ms. Miller answered the question raised about cost of Medicaid transportation. Ridership brought in about three thousand six hundred dollars a year with the cost of two dollars per person each way. Mr. Butts explained when the Council on Aging became the Department on Aging, these funds would go to Chatham Transit as the County was not eligible for the funds.

Mr. Butts explained that increasing the Elections Director from seven percent to ten percent was equivalent to two thousand seven hundred ninety-three dollars additional over what was already recommended to provide an allocation. If it was not on the fee schedule then it was more difficult to add later. He asked how the Board wanted to approach the Elections budget or if it wanted to keep it at the department level. Mr. LaMontagne heard the Board wanted to have a compensation allocation and then operation lines would be separate. Ms. Miller suggested it be more specific than it was for regular budgeted compensation so that it protected benefits components. She proposed one way to communicate this was by stating "the County had allocated an amount to commiserate with a salary of eighty thousand dollars for the Director and the recommended nine percent for the Deputy and Specialist". Commissioner Dasher advised a collective statement: "we have increased the salary allocation by x percent increase over last year with nine percent for Deputy and Specialist and an additional two thousand seven hundred ninety-three dollars to raise the Director's salary to eighty thousand dollars". Mr. Butts advised there could be an issue with temporary salaries being shorted to increase staff salaries, creating a risk of not having enough temporary staff for elections. He suggested separating temporary salaries out so that they could not take from temporary salaries. Chair Howard asked if staff needed to check with the County Attorney Bob Hagemann to ensure this suggestion met the law. The Board agreed by consensus to send the memo to the Board of Elections and verify with Mr. Hagemann.

Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked what the additional Personal Property Appraiser was responsible for, and Mr. Butts answered that this person would perform the initial cleanup of the personal property tax roles. The County did not have a person designated for this specific project at this time.

Mr. Lindley gave the disclaimer that human services fluctuated based on grant activity. Mr. Lindley said the County was anticipating a new nine-month Medicaid program this position would likely address. Commissioner Hales asked if this was new. Mr. Butts answered this would be new for economic services and other areas of the department

of social services. The County had someone in this position. Commissioner Hales confirmed the County was going to mitigate this cost. Mr. Thompson confirmed. Mr. LaMontagne explained that was the purpose of the position. Mr. Butts admitted he did not know how other jurisdictions were mitigating this service. Ms. Miller explained this was a very experienced caseworker position and the department knew what they were looking for in this position.

Mr. Lindley presented two on-site wastewater positions and one food and lodging position in which salaries would fluctuate similarly to the Sheriff's department positions. Commissioner Dasher asked if there was a statutory requirement for the health department to handle septic systems and wells. Mr. Butts stated yes, by environmental health.

Mr. Thompson referenced Statute 14-234.3: 'if a member of this governing body has an association with a non-profit then that individual cannot participate in discussions about allocation of funds.' Commissioner Dasher admitted he was on the board for the Partnership for Children. Mr. Thompson explained that Commissioner Dasher can self-report to the Clerk and recuse himself.

Chair Howard questioned where the Arts Council was referenced. Mr. Thompson said staff did not include the Arts Council because their funding was not part of the nonprofit grant process.

Chair Howard asked if the staff would go through this list one-by-one. Mr. Thompson asked if Chair Howard was a board member of the Arts Council. She confirmed she was and explained her interpretation of Mr. Hagemann's input. Her understanding was that the commissioners cannot participate in funding decisions if they were a member of the nonprofit board requesting the funding. Ms. Ray stated that the board members could not vote if the funding was being provided by the County. Chair Howard explained it was sometimes not clear. Mr. Thompson said the staff would walk the Board through the list on the slide and ask if there were any associations with any Board members. Chair Howard shared she was on Central Piedmont Community Action board and Commissioner Dasher was on the Partnership for Children board. Mr. Butts suggested a motion to approve except the Central Piedmont Community Action and Partnership for Children and then have separate votes.

**A motion was made by Chair Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Logan, to approve the recommended nonprofit funding allocations with the exception of Central Piedmont Community Action and Partnership for Children allocations. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

Commissioner Hales asked what the sixty-five thousand dollar request was from Salvation Army. She also wanted more information on the Chatham Homeless Shelters request. Courtney Cooper-Lewter outlined the Salvation Army's request. It was forty thousand dollars for educational expenses and utilities and twenty thousand dollars for staff and salary and five thousand dollars for rent. Ms. Cooper-Lewter said she was not yet sure how the twelve thousand dollars would support the clients.

Commissioner Hales confirmed that funding was needed for the entirety of the Pathways of Hope program. Mr. Butts said the Chatham Homeless Shelter and Love Chatham needed food assistance, temporary housing assistance, hotel ministry, and clothing assistance. Ms. Cooper-Lewter shared they also requested money from United Way and believed they received funding from them as well. This was a new

organization doing important work in the county.

Chair Howard suggested the board be mindful about organizations that may be doing great work but not given the same amount of respect as many other organizations. She loved new groups but some of these established nonprofits were not getting the same level of financial support and commitment.

Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked if staff looked into the non-profit El Futuro and if the organization was open to the public. Ms. Cooper-Lewter said El Futuro had not been able to reopen yet and was struggling to hire positions. Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked if the Board was interested in giving funding to a program that was not open to the public. He said El Futuro was a recipient through the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, and it was hard to access. Commissioner Hales did not want this money to go to El Futuro in Durham, only to the Chatham location. Mr. Butts explained the County partnered with El Futuro through Vaya Health and the County's data was based on Chatham data only. Mr. LaMontagne said this funding was for next fiscal year and the County hoped it would be put to good use. Mr. Butts mentioned the County could provide support other than funding. El Futuro said it would be helpful for the county to provide feedback on the perception of the organization in the community. Chair Howard asked if El Futuro was a provider through Chatham County Schools. Mr. Butts said El Futuro gave a mid-year report and the data must show the funds were spent in Chatham. Commissioner Dasher suggested the Board trust the nonprofit process as this organization had gone through that process that was run by a committee.

Mr. LaMontagne said too many people were operating in the same space over time and the funding sources were being diluted. Ms. Cooper-Lewter said the County provided applicants with a space to look into partnerships with other organizations in Chatham.

Commissioner Hales asked about Habitat for Humanity and home buyer education and if it was for folks who want to be considered for a Habitat home or general population education. Ms. Cooper-Lewter advised some funding was for marketing materials and some was for a mortgage management course and conflict resolution training. Chair Howard asked if the Kidscope outreach was a program and she mentioned the Kalediscope plan, learn, elevating early education program. She asked if there was anyone on the nonprofit panels or if there was any conversation around the continuum of the education spectrum and the fact that the lowest performing students were historically not in quality early learning environments. By the time the students got to third grade the impact was apparent, and the County was investing more at the Chatham County Schools level where it could be invested earlier and have a better outcome. Ms. Cooper-Lewter knew some of those conversations had been happening with Chatham Education Foundation, but it was not specifically discussed in conversations about the applications. Commissioner Dasher knew the Partnership for Children and the state had been working on local data. Ms. Cooper-Lewter indicated Kidscope was a new program that catered to kids aged zero to five years of age.

Chair Howard expressed more money was needed in the nonprofit overall allocation. Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked about Triangle J Council of Government. Mr. Thompson explained if the County would engage in a project and affiliated with a nonprofit to do that said project, then the County could go through Triangle J Council of Government for assistance. Triangle J Council of Government would assist with applying for a grant and administering and tracking that grant. Vice Chair Gomez Flores reiterated that was his intention by suggesting a grant position. Nonprofits needed grant help even if local government was not involved. Mr. LaMontagne expounded it would be very messy to have a county employee liable for deliverables



out of their control. Triangle J Council of Government was looking at possibly helping nonprofits without a local government partnership requirement. Mr. Thompson clarified the County had invited Triangle J Council of Government to come to the county's monthly meetings with community partners. Ms. Cooper-Lewter said if folks cannot attend the meetings, she would send out notes after the meetings. Commissioner Logan asked how long the allocation had been attached to a tax increase. Mr. Butts estimated about five months. Vice Chair Gomez Flores stated he was still uncomfortable with El Futuro. Commissioner Dasher said a lot of mental health services were now provided with telehealth services and he was not worried about the doors of El Futuro being closed. Mr. Butts said El Futuro could provide services to undocumented residents, and no other organization was allowed to do that. Vice Chair Gomez Flores stated he no longer had concerns after the discussion.

Commissioner Dasher recused himself to allow the Board of Commissioners to vote on the recommended funding for the Chatham Partnership for Children.

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Hales, seconded by Commissioner Gomez Flores, to approve the recommended nonprofit funding to the Chatham Partnership for Children. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 4 - Commissioner Hales, Gomez Flores, Chair Howard, and Commissioner Logan

**Recuse:** 1 - Commissioner Dasher

*Commissioner Dasher returned to the meeting.*

*Chair Howard recused herself to allow the Board of Commissioners to vote on the recommended nonprofit funding for Central Piedmont Community Action.*

**A motion was made by Commissioner Diana Hales, seconded by Commissioner Robert Logan to recommended nonprofit funding for Central Piedmont Community Action. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Aye:** 4 - Commissioner Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Gomez Flores, and Commissioner Logan

**Recuse:** 1 - Chair Howard

*Chair Howard returned to the meeting.*

*Chair Howard asked if anyone asked what the PASS program was. Commissioner Hales said no, but she would like to know. Central Piedmont Community Action does a lot, but she did not know specifically what the PASS program does. She said they do the block grant every year and it helps reduce poverty.*

*Commissioner Hales made a motion to work with Arts Council to find legal and appropriate use for additional \$20,000 and earmark contingency, funding of additional \$20,000 contingent upon successful work/resolution with Arts Council. Chair Howard seconded the motion.*

*Commissioner Dasher disclosed his familial relationship with staff on the Arts Council. He thinks the arts in schools' residencies should be a request from the schools. Commissioner Hales thinks the County should be thinking of arts more as a whole, not just in terms of the Arts Council.*

*Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked about the arts for theater and music in the schools. He asked how the County can partner with the schools to advertise the arts from the*

*schools to the entire community. Commissioner Logan confirmed the schools can definitely be a catalyst. He reiterated all of that programming is financed through the school budgets through the state. He asked how other communities are funding the arts and/or supporting the arts. Mr. LaMontagne suggested the County look into that and cautioned that Mr. Hagemann thought there was legal issues with paying individuals. Commissioner Hales highlighted the arts incubator is bringing back a lot of opportunities post COVID-19 and suggested adding a staff person to the Convention & Visitors Bureau.*

*Chair Howard suggested the County look at this topic at the budget retreat to address the arts community as a whole and not only provide funding exclusively to the arts council.*

*Commissioner Dasher asked if the topic could be broached with the arts council to approach the schools next year, prior to getting to the budget retreat in January.*

*Chair Howard discussed the benefits of the arts in residence program.*

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Hales, seconded by Commissioner Howard, to work with Arts Council to find legal and appropriate use for additional \$20,000 and earmark contingency, funding of additional \$20,000 contingent upon successful work/resolution with Arts Council. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

*Mr. Lindley said staff is recommending five additional staff to meet the workload demands for the Central Permitting department. Three new building inspectors, a Commercial Plan Reviewer, and an Inspection Supervisor. They have a larger than anticipated workload coming up. Mr. Butts added the Inspection Supervisor position is a working supervisor role in which they will also be engaged in inspections as well.*

*Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked if the staff received information about the inspection failures and the way the inspectors do not do re-inspections. His family is remodeling a home in Siler City, but they overlooked something simple in the bathroom. He asked if there is a visual document available to reduce the number of inspections. Mr. LaMontagne explained that the county does not receive reports about the types of re-inspections and it was unsure staff could do tracking without getting into the notes of it. He said in a meeting with the Home Inspection Association and the Department of Insurance the importance of building by code and to check your individual work was discussed. County staff are already behind and to come back out and re-inspect something for home renovation projects is difficult to do and unclear where to stop. There are so many things the County would have to do, and it is a daunting task. It is already done by the State. A cheat sheet would be huge and re-inspections kill efficiency. Commissioner Dasher said people rely on inspectors to make their punch list for them and that is not the intent.*

*Commissioner Hales asked if fire inspections were under the Fire Marshall. Mr. Lindley confirmed yes. He said building inspections, fire inspections, and central permitting are all connected under David Camp. Commissioner Hales asked if the Fire Marshall has four employees now. Mr. Lindley explained that the four employees do include the Fire Marshall.*

*Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked what the County's obligation is to provide the services. Mr. LaMontagne said if the towns do not provide the services, the County*

also has to do it for the towns in addition to the County. Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked what the requirement is for an inspection. Mr. LaMontagne said the requirement is two business days.

Mr. LaMontagne explained the County hired three inspectors from Apex and the County's inspectors are working four to ten hours/day, and DOI is also helping at no charge. This is part of DOI's program to train inspectors and also a part of disaster recovery training. It is just building inspections, not electrical/plumbing, etc.

Commissioner Dasher asked what the County is doing with vehicle purchases for employees. Mr. Butts said the ideal employee vehicle would be a hybrid Escape or crossover of some type. David Camp wants to hybridize his fleet as much as possible. The County cannot keep adding electric vehicles until the County gets charging stations.

The Chatham Economic Development Corporation is a nonprofit, not a county department. There are different models in other parts of North Carolina. The Chatham Economic Development Corporation asked for an additional position who was to be the VinFast point person. It was poorly justified and not well explained. At the Chatham Economic Development Corporation board retreat they discussed funding a business retention position through the capital campaign funds and then having further discussion with the County about the VinFast position. A position is needed but could be accomplished with a contracted position. Chair Howard asked if the County would need another position when something lands at CAM. She mentioned the possibility of an intergovernmental liaison position. The County really lost something when Debra Henzey left. The County needs someone that focuses on those relationships and conversations. Chair Howard used New Hanover County as an example. Staff will start looking at the Association of County Commissioners for people we can employee for an intergovernmental position.

Commissioner Hales asked if the Soil and Water Conservation District expend any funds. She knows the district does best management practices. She asked if the district ever purchases any land. Mr. Lindley mentioned the district provides educational and technical assistance to landowners/users.

Commissioner Hales asked what the sustainability goals are. Mr. Lindley noted Environmental Quality Director Kevin Lindley is the only person working on sustainability for the County. He is working on solar power with Tringle J Council of Government, the Keep America Beautiful program, and he is also involved with SSDN. Department heads go through him when they are looking to add to their fleet.

Commissioner Dasher asked questions about watershed protection and the request for three new people. Staff said the county does erosion control for Pittsboro as well as the county. Ms. Ray shared statistics from Watershed Protection Director Rachael Thorn at the last department head meeting.

Commissioner Hales stated Parks and Recreation had requested a trails position. It was not in the manager's recommended budget. She suggested bringing the trails position on mid-year and do not delay two years. She requested to amend the budget mid-year (full time/half year). Mr. Thompson observed the grant is not for a trail coordinator and Alamance County already has that position. The Board of Commissioners gave consensus for staff to move forward with that recommendation.

Mr. Thompson noted the Board of Commissioners had added a lot of expenses and the

*staff will need to figure out how to pay for those requests.*

*The Board recessed for the day at 5:00pm.*

*The Meeting resumed on May 25, 2022 at 9:00am.*

*The Emergency Operations Center building will hopefully be ready in Spring of 2023.*

*Commissioner Dasher questioned how the animal shelter is doing with operations and opening to the public. He has heard from residents that the shelter is not open to the public. Mr. Thompson feels the goal of the Sheriff's Office is to get animal services in good working order so that they can be more outwardly facing and open to the public. Ms. Miller maintained that ongoing conversations are occurring about the Sheriff's staffing plan. They are currently in phase one. Sheriff's Office right now is focusing on management of what is coming in and then will focus on the program coordinator to help get pets adopted and fostered out. Commissioner Hales understood from the Sheriff they want to be a no kill facility. Commissioner Dasher suspected it is a tough department to run. The intent of the new facility was to have a public adoption center.*

*Commissioner Dasher wanted to know about fuel for county vehicles. Mr. Butts disclosed that staff highly encourage employees to go to the bus garage for cheaper fuel. The county has fuel cards with pins for all employees for regular gas stations.*

*Commissioner Hales wanted to know if collection center employees would have a new uniform. Mr. Butts confirmed with yes.*

*Vice Chair Gomez Flores inquired if town residents can purchase a county decal. Mr. Butts clarified that yes, residents can purchase a county decal for the collection centers for \$125 at the Solid Waste main office. Vice Chair Gomez Flores wanted to know if it were more efficient for the County to have residents use collection centers rather than truck pick up. Mr. Butts said yes. Budget staff plans to look this summer at whether to get rid of the flat \$125 fee. Mr. LaMontagne described how to incentivize recycling and less waste by making color bags for recycling and charging more for bags of trash. Chair Howard illustrated it would be great to reward those who reduce waste and recycle more but not penalize those that do not. Mr. LaMontagne explained the Keep America Beautiful program came to a halt during COVID and staff is going to have to mostly start from scratch, but he hopes the program gets momentum, again.*

*Commissioner Hales asked if coal ash funds include money for monitoring next fiscal year. Mr. Butts clarified the county may not use the funds allocated for the monitoring and holding them because it will be utilizing ARPA funds before the deadline expires. Article 46 is really helping keep a healthy balance in the Housing Trust Fund and that will continue to grow.*

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

[22-4303](#)

Other Funds

*Staff continued the presentation.*

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

[22-4304](#)

Discussion

*The Board of Commissioners discussed salaries for the County Manager, the Register of Deeds, and the Sheriff, which were set by statute. There also needs to be guidance given on how to handle the commissioners' salaries. The Board agreed by consensus to give the County Manager, the Register of Deeds, the Sheriff, and the county commissioners the same recommended seven percent increase for all county employees that met expectations.*

*Vice Chair Gomez Flores inquired about the County's total debt. Mr. Butts stated the first debt payment for the Emergency Operations Center and Chatham County School's Central Services building would be in fiscal year 2023. Vice Chair Gomez Flores suggested the County be more aggressive. Mr. Thompson said the County could position itself to get the best rate on the market, which the County had done very well with its current strategy. Mr. Butts acknowledged the County would have the largest debt issuance ever in five to seven years. Both Mr. Thompson and Mr. LaMontagne illustrated the County will have a better estimate of when that borrowing would happen over the next year. Chair Howard projected demand for debt would grow as the County's population grew. Mr. Thompson explained the County was also putting away funds to the County capital reserve for its pay-go projects. These were smaller financial projects that could be done without borrowing. Chair Howard clarified the County's obligation was to spend the people's money on the people. Mr. LaMontagne disclosed the County had a great debt model and the Board of Commissioners had been consistent with contributing to that model and demonstrated good fiscal stewardship by putting money away for future debt.*

*The Board of Commissioners discussed the possibilities for the future county campus on Renaissance Drive. The Board of Commissioners would like a sign that said "Chatham County Government Campus" due to the number of county facilities already on Renaissance Drive. Commissioner Hales also thought it was time for condemnation for the land to build a sign on Progress Boulevard and that corner needed to be under County control.*

*Mr. LaMontagne stated there had been a lot of changes at the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The property owner had someone contact Mr. LaMontagne because they wanted to develop on that corner. He would follow back up with them.*

*Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked for an update on a master plan for Progress Boulevard. Mr. LaMontagne said the Chatham County Economic Development Corporation was looking at this right now to appraise the land. The County was working on getting the covenants improved.*

*Mr. LaMontagne shared that Central Carolina Community College was looking at expansion on Progress Boulevard for the Early College. The Piedmont Health facilities had been installed on the Piedmont side of things. There had been some small area planning happening, especially with the additional affordable housing to be located there.*

*Mr. Butts reviewed the requests from the Board of Commissioners from Tuesday's budget work session.*

*The changes would be reflected in the final budget document, and the changes did not affect the overall budget and tax rate.*

*Staff would ask the Board to adopt the budget at the June 21, 2022 Board of*

*Commissioners meeting.*

*Mr. LaMontagne thanked the budget team for their hard work.*

*Mr. LaMontagne shared the action items he heard during the retreat:*

- The County would look at Occupancy Tax and look into a Siler City Community Center and/or possibilities at Southwest Park.*
- The County would look at Arts and Cultural Resources and what surrounding communities were doing to fund the arts.*
- The County would look at how the County had connection to school arts programs and general arts support, not just funding the Arts Council but arts as a whole and bring all of this information back to the Board of Commissioners at the January retreat.*
- The County would look into Intergovernmental liaison position and look at New Hanover County as an example.*

*Ms. Ray gave an update with reminders.*

*Mr. LaMontagne reviewed possible agenda items with a joint meeting with Pittsboro on Thursday, June 9th at 6pm at the Chatham County Agriculture and Conference Center:*

- update on Town Hall*
- update on where the Town was with water and sewer*
- update on any affordable housing plans*
- what were plans for parks and parks programming*

*Commissioner Dasher asked if the County could ask about re-purposing the current Central Services Building when Chatham County Schools moved to Renaissance Drive. Mr. LaMontagne described a plan to come together when the schools vacated the building per the Memorandum of Understanding. Mr. LaMontagne would be prepared to bring up the Memorandum of Understanding at the Joint meeting with the County and Town of Pittsboro Commissioners to get it on the Town's radar.*

*Mr. LaMontagne talked about the future water treatment plant and that it may be a partnership with Durham, Sanford and Chatham, not Durham, Pittsboro and Chatham.*

*The County would also be adding Pittsboro to its OpenGov permitting software.*

*Chair Howard asked when the board could have a joint meeting with all the municipalities and the schools. Ms. Ray would work with Chair Howard and Mr. LaMontagne to reach out to Superintendent Dr. Jackson and the new Siler City Manager after the Town's elections. Mr. LaMontagne suggested having a joint meeting with just Siler City staff to meet their new board and manager and do all the entities together at a later date. He did not think the Operations Research and Education Laboratory at the Institute for Transportation Research and Education was going to have any updated data this summer in relation to Siler City's population. Chair Howard thought it was important for Siler City to hear from the Board of Education and school administration to know about opportunities with the schools and for town residents. She believed Goldston should be hearing that information as well. Everyone should be at the same meeting, so the Board did not seem to be leaning one way more than the other.*

*Chair Howard asked how the Board of Commissioners could be better ambassadors for the entire community, unincorporated and incorporated. Commissioner Hales and*

*Commissioner Dasher thought Siler City should be a separate meeting with just the town board and staff. Commissioner Hales thought this should happen in the next six weeks or so. Mr. Thompson said the Siler City Board would have to appoint a commissioner to fill Chip Post's seat as he rises to the office of Mayor and that could take until August. Commissioner Dasher would reach out to the new town manager and ask him to talk with his board and come back to the County staff when they were ready. Perhaps a meeting with all the elected boards could happen in December. Chair Howard suggested getting regularity around when to have these joint meetings, so it was not so hard to coordinate.*

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

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Logan, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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