



# Chatham County, NC

## Meeting Minutes

### Board of Commissioners

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Monday, August 7, 2023

6:00 PM

Agriculture and Conference Center

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#### Regular Session - 6:00 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

#### **INVOCATION and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

*Chair Howard delivered the invocation after which she invited everyone present to have a moment of silence. After which she invited everyone present to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.*

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

*Chair Howard welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.*

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

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Delaney, that the Agenda and Consent Agenda be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

[23-4876](#)

Vote to adopt a resolution approving the Interlocal Agreement (ILA) for the Western Intake Partnership real estate.

**Attachments:** [WIP Real Estate Agreement](#)  
[ILA Western Intake Real Estate Resolution](#)

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Delaney, that this Resolution #23-037 Approving an Interlocal Agreement for the Western Intake Partnership Real Estate, 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

[23-4877](#)

Vote to approve \$2,500 from UNC Family Medicine to support the evaluation of the Maternity Care Center by sharing relevant public health data

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Delaney, 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

## **End of Consent Agenda**

### **PUBLIC INPUT SESSION**

*No one signed up to speak.*

### **BOARD PRIORITIES**

#### **[23-4893](#)**

Vote to set a public hearing for August 21, 2023, during the Chatham County Board of Commissioners' regular meeting beginning at 6:00 p.m., to receive comments on the reapportionment alternative plans for Chatham County Board of Commissioner residency districts.

**Attachments:** [Redistricting Presentation - August 2023](#)

*MIS Director Nick Haffele gave a presentation to the Board. (Presentation attached)*

*Mr. Haffele said the redistricting options are based on the 2020 Census Data. Chair Howard asked if the population numbers listed are in reference to the number of registered voters in each district or the total population in each district. Mr. Haffele said the number is total population.*

*Mr. Haffele stated there were tradeoffs with basing the districts around population centers within the County and staff attempted to keep districts contiguous.*

*Commissioner Kenlan asked for more information about the software used for these options. Mr. Haffele said ESRI is the County's GIS vendor and because the County already has an enterprise license with them the County was able to get this additional module at a very economical rate. The software is widely known and used by many jurisdictions.*

*Mr. Haffele explained the parameters that were provided to the staff and how the three map options presented tonight came to be.*

*The map for option 1 has District 2 and District 1 remaining very similar to the current district map. District 3 becomes much smaller. District 5 and District 4 remain fairly similar in where the population distribution comes from but it shifted significantly to the east.*

*Vice Chair Dasher asked if the boundary line between District 3 and District 2 is HWY 15-501. Mr. Haffele said for the most part the boundary is HWY 15-501.*

*The map for option 2 lumps all of Siler City into District 5 which means the geographic footprint of District 4 grew significantly, by over 50%. Staff also tried to keep all of Pittsboro in District 2. The key characteristic of option 2 is that all main population*

centers are within their own districts. District 5 includes Siler City, District 2 includes Pittsboro and Fearington Village, while District 3 includes Briar Chapel. District 1 includes Cary and the northeast neighborhoods of the county.

The map for option 3 shows Districts 1, 2, 4, and 5 remaining fairly close to their current geographical footprint and District 3 is a little smaller. Mr. Haffele said District 3 was overpopulated in this option from a variance perspective. Pittsboro is broken up in this option.

Mr. Haffele said there are pros and cons to each of these options. In option 2 Districts 2 and 3 are probably going to grow and staff took future growth into account when developing these options. District 5 has slower growth expected.

Vice Chair Dasher asked if Option 3 means Pittsboro would have three districts. Mr. Haffele said Pittsboro is mostly in District 2 and District 3.

Chair Howard asked how the anticipated growth around Siler City and Moncure fit into these options. Mr. Haffele said staff was already seeing residential growth patterns from permits. Districts 4 and 5 will be impacted by WolfSpeed. District 2 will be impacted by VinFast. Mr. Haffele said he cannot say those parts of the county are going to grow faster but staff knows where things are currently growing.

Chair Howard asked the Board to consider how to think and talk through the three options. She asked how much of the Moncure area would be impacted and what the timing would look like. The timing is a little rocky considering the County is in the middle of the Moncure Small Area Plan process. County Manager Dan LaMontagne stated growth will not come to Moncure immediately. It is seven years until the next census in 2030. Both the VinFast and WolfSpeed facilities will not be at full build out by that time.

Commissioner Gomez Flores stated he sees a pattern of three commissioners being within the same region of the county. He asked what percentage of the county's population is in those eastern regions of the county. Mr. Haffele said he did not have that data and would have to run those numbers.

Commissioner Gomez Flores said the county does not have a commissioner living in the deep southern part of the county and he believes the County should think about how to better provide for those regions. Mr. LaMontagne stated the commissioners serve the entire county. Commissioners live in residency districts but are accountable to the entire county as they are voted by county residents at large. He said the people in the west voiced during the Plan Chatham process that they wanted the west to stay more rural and agricultural. Mr. LaMontagne stated those southern areas are less populated and it can be difficult to find people to run for office.

Vice Chair Dasher said he would be interested to see where the line would need to be drawn to make a district along the southern part of the county. Chair Howard said the fewer rooftops the fewer people live in the district and willing to run for public office. Commissioner Gomez Flores believes a commissioner who lives in the heart of the district knows more about the community than one that lives on the boundary of that district. Chair Howard stated it is equally as difficult to serve more densely populated areas as it is to serve rural populations.

Commissioner Gomez Flores asked if staff has any data of other counties that are similarly sized that may have a different size board. He also asked if there was any

*interest in expanding the number of commissioners. Commissioner Howard said the Board of Commissioners looked at that back in 2018. The task force studied the method of election and the number of commissioners and the vote of the task force was to leave the current method of election and number of commissioners the same. Commissioner Gomez Flores said he would like to see what the districts would look like with two commissioners added to the Board. Mr. LaMontagne said staff could look into this.*

*Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson explained the Board would need to adopt a new commissioner district map by resolution no later than 150 days before the 2024 Primary. He asked the Board to clarify if they wished additional board member seats to be part of the redistricting conversation.*

*Chair Howard said the Board was discussing redistricting the current commissioner districts based on the 2020 Census data. She highlighted that the Census data was delayed and that is why the Board is under a time constraint.*

*Commissioner Delaney said he sees two different issues at play. Expanding the number of commissioners would be more appropriate during strategic planning and budget discussions. He asked if the Board is bound by these three map options for public consideration. Chair Howard said the Board would forward the three options for public comment at the August 21st meeting.*

*Commissioner Delaney asked if there was a way to draw a southern district. Vice Chair Dasher said he did not know if it would work that way but he would also be curious to see that. Commissioner Delaney asked if the public hearing would be on a single proposed map or all three of the proposed options. Chair Howard said if a southern district were drawn there would not be a current sitting commissioner to represent that district. Mr. Haffele said it is possible that one of the commissioners could reside in the southern district because it may go farther north. Vice Chair Dasher said he was concerned about dividing the municipalities into multiple districts. Chair Howard said the three options make the more populated districts more compact. Commissioner Kenlan stated she did not see a need to deviate from the parameters presented. Vice Chair Dasher said he is concerned about three commissioners living in the same area.*

*County Attorney Bob Hagemann explained the rules around adding additional commissioners and/or districts. Those actions must be done by a referendum on a ballot. There is no legal requirement to redistrict. Mr. Hagemann said the Board of Commissioners can approve redistricting for the 2024 election and realistically adding two commissioner districts would not take effect until 2026 if the referendum to add the districts is on the 2024 ballot.*

*Mr. Haffele these are three good options but they are not hard and fast. Vice Chair Dasher asked if people can zoom in on the map to the street level. Mr. Haffele said he does not feel comfortable recommending the public use the application as the system has some glitches and he does not feel it is user friendly. He will work with staff to provide more detailed mapping to show the boundaries.*

*Mr. Hagemann asked if the three maps respect precinct boundaries. Mr. Haffele said precinct lines were not a consideration. Mr. Hagemann stated there will have to be precise boundaries for the Board of Elections laid out in the resolution adopted by the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Haffele said the commissioner districts are specific to where a candidate lives. Precinct boundaries are not the most accurate because they do not always follow roads. Commissioner Delaney asked if the Board of Elections will*

receive copies of the maps to review. Mr. Haffele said he can provide them to the Board of Elections if that is the pleasure of the Board.

Chair Howard asked if the Board will have a public hearing on all three options at the August 21st meeting and then have a public hearing one single preferred option at the September 18th meeting. Mr. Thompson said the public hearing on August 21st could serve as an opportunity for public input instead of an official public hearing. During the August 21st meeting the Board could vote on a single preferred plan to move forward for public comment during a public hearing at the September 18th meeting.

Chair Howard asked if the Board was satisfied with what it asked Mr. Haffele to come back with at the August 21st meeting. Commissioner Gomez Flores asked if expanding the board requires a public hearing for a referendum on the ballot. He also asked if adding two districts and making districts based on 10,000 residents instead of 15,000 residents would be easier and produce less snake-like boundary lines. Mr. Haffele said it could result in very compact districts unless the population centers were split. For example, splitting Briar Chapel. Vice Chair Dasher said what makes sense today will probably be different after the next census. Chair Howard said it is important the Board move forward with the redistricting process but she does not want a discussion of expanding the Board to delay that process. Commissioner Delaney said he would be happy to make a motion to move these three options forward and any additional if there is a different configuration that would be helpful to advance the public conversation.

Due to inclement weather, the Board recessed at 6:52pm and reconvened at 7:02pm.

Chair Howard apologized for the recess and explained everyone in attendance had to leave the meeting space to shelter in a safe part of the building due to a tornado warning.

Chair Howard asked for clarifying language for the motion and asked Mr. Hagemann if the opportunity for public input on the three options was sufficient instead of holding a public hearing. Mr. Hagemann said it was sufficient. Chair Howard asked Commissioner Delaney to clarify his motion.

Commissioner Delaney made a motion to advance the three redistricting options to the public meeting on August 21st to allow input from the public for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Hagemann said there is a statutory requirement to hold a public hearing and the legal issue is with the September 18th meeting. The Board would put forward one preferred plan for a public hearing on September 18th but the Board is not bound to approving that option as presented. Mr. Hagemann also stated the Board does not need to publish a statutory notice for the August 21st meeting.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Delaney, seconded by Commissioner Gomez Flores, to advance the three redistricting options to the public meeting on August 21st for public input. The motion carried by the following vote:**

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

## **CLERK'S REPORT**

Ms. Ray had nothing to report to the Board.

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

*Mr. LaMontagne will send an email to the Board to request for two commissioners to serve on a panel for a strategic planning retreat for affordable housing and community development for three days on August 29th: 12 pm - 5 pm, August 30th: 9 am - 5pm, and August 31st: 9 am - 1 pm.*

**COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

*The commissioners had nothing to report.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made by Vice Chair Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Delaney, 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