



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

9:00 AM

Agriculture and Conference Center

Annual Budget Retreat

Board of Commissioners 3 Day Retreat from January 9, 2024 through January 11, 2024.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dasher called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

BOARD PRIORITIES - DAY ONE - 1/9/2024

[23-5076](#)

Ground Rules

Attachments: [Guidelines for Productive Meetings](#)
[Ground Rules](#)

Chair Dasher review the following guidelines:

The following ground rules have helped make meetings more productive:

- 1. Participate fully. It's alright to disagree. Everyone should have the opportunity to state his or her own views, regardless of rank or other differences.*
- 2. Work on the problem. Put other issues aside, including personalities, offices, or other differences. Show respect for each other.*
- 3. Focus on interests, not positions. Explain why you favor a particular course of action. Invite questions so you can explain your reasons fully. Balance advocacy and inquiry.*
- 4. Share all relevant information. Be specific. Agree on what important words mean.*
- 5. Discuss "un discussable" issues.*
- 6. Stay focused. Discuss a topic long enough for everybody to be clear about it.*
- 7. Decide how the group will make decisions. Use a decision-making rule that generates the level of commitment needed.*

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5077](#)

Roles and Expectations Review

Attachments: [BOC Expectations](#)

Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson shared an overview of the roles and responsibilities.

Commissioner Howard stated that she preferred this over what was done in the previous year.

Thompson reviewed the expectations of the following sections: Board of Commissioners, Chair, Vice-Chair, Committee Liaisons, and Staff.

The Board of Commissioners discussed committee engagement and liaisons, individual verses board goals, rules of procedures.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5078](#)

Commissioners Discussion of BOC Goals and Priorities for FY2025

Attachments: [FY2024 Commissioner Goals and Priorities](#)

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the adopted goals that began in 2017 and continuing in the coming fiscal year.

Plan Chatham goals and added three additional goals. The complete set of goals adopted is as follows:

Plan Chatham Goals:

1. Preserve the rural character and lifestyle of Chatham County.
2. Preserve, protect, and enable agriculture and forestry.
3. Promote a compact growth pattern by developing in and near existing towns, communities and in designated, well-planned, walkable mixed-use centers.
4. Diversify the tax base and generate more quality, in-county jobs to reduce dependence on residential property taxes, create economic opportunity and reduce out-commuting.
5. Conserve natural resources.
6. Provide recreational opportunities and access to open space.
7. Provide infrastructure to support desired development and support economic and environmental objectives.
8. Become more resilient by mitigating, responding and adapting to emerging threats.
9. Provide equitable access to high-quality education, housing, and community options for all.
10. Foster a healthy community.

Additional Board of Commissioners Goals identified:

1. Demonstrate sound fiscal stewardship to ensure we can meet the important service needs of our residents.
2. Provide effective, efficient government that is responsive to the different needs of residents and varying circumstances across the county.
3. Mitigate the impacts of poverty among individuals and households in the county through programs and services that promote stabilization and resiliency.
4. Ensure public safety through adequate resources, plans, and partnerships to keep people and property safe.
5. Strengthen relationships with other boards, municipalities, and regional entities to address common challenges and opportunities.

The Board of Commissioners reviewed other key areas of focus for the County to prioritize:

1. Local Economic Development Initiatives
2. Partnerships
3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
4. Affordable Housing
5. Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)

6. Health Initiatives
7. Broadband Access
8. Organizational Excellence
9. Transportation
10. Natural Resources

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the goals from county departments with similar missions who formed teams to provide better focus on achievement of these goals. To make the numerous goals, objectives, and strategies of Plan Chatham easier to track and address, high-level themes were identified and adopted by each team:

1. Safe, Vibrant, Healthy Community
2. Demand Driven Public Services
3. Growth and Resource Management
4. Organizational Excellence and Resiliency
5. Data and Technology Gaps

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5080](#)

Health Department Presentation

Attachments: [BOC Public Health Priorities Presentation 1.2024](#)

Health Director Mike Zelek with the Health Department presented an update on Public Health including community assessment, health impact priorities, access to health services, building a coordinated system of health, supporting early childhood services, increasing access to water testing, and maintaining public trust through strong workforce and treatment.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the presentation and asked questions of Zelek.

This Agenda Item was received and filed

[23-5092](#)

CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores, seconded by Vice Chair Mike Dasher, to go into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a) (3) in order to consult with an attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege and to consider and give instructions to an attorney concerning the handling or settlement of a claim was approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Katie Kenlan, to come out of closed session. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

BOARD PRIORITIES - DAY ONE - 1/9/2024 CONTINUED

[23-5079](#)

Overview of Budget and Financial Policies

Attachments: [Budget Process](#)
 [Financial Policy](#)
 [AppendixA--FinancialandBudgetaryPolicies Proposed Change Redline
January 2024](#)

Budget Director Darrel Butts gave an overview of the budget process, including the ongoing budget cycle, Capital Improvements Program/Plan, estimating and projecting expenses, and the operating budget. Butts stated that the process aligns with the Board of Commissioners approved goals.

Butts stated that these policies provides staff and residents with knowledge about what is expected of them, specifically the staff there provides rules and guidelines for decision making. It also provides a consistent and clear response across the county in dealing with things that may not be routine as they arise, and provides an accepted method of dealing with complaints, and provides a clear framework for the delegation of and process of decision making and processing and ensures that the Board of Commissioners are better equipped.

Butts shared an overview of the Budget and Financial Policies, including budget, debt, fee and user charges, Capital Improvement Program, fund balance, cash management, and accounting and financial reporting.

Butts shared some proposed amendment to the Budget and Financial Policies, which included the Capital Outlay funds: Departments shall encumber all approved capital outlay funds by December 31st of the budgeted fiscal year.

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the policies affecting all the departments.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Howard, seconded by Vice Chair Howard, that the proposed change be made to the Budget and Financial Policies.. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

Commissioner Delaney stated that he was concerned about the proposed change.

A motion was made by Commissioner Delaney, seconded by Commissioner Gomez Flores, that the vote on the changes to the Budget and Financial Policies be reconsidered. The motion failed by the following vote:

Aye: 2 - Commissioner Delaney and Commissioner Gomez Flores

No: 3 - Chair Dasher, Vice Chair Howard and Commissioner Kenlan

[23-5081](#)

Partnership for Children Early Childhood Action Plan Presentation

Attachments: [CNA Key Findings for BOC](#)
 [Fiscal Analysis Phase 2 -- BOC Presentation -- Final](#)
 [Fiscal Analysis Options--To BOC](#)

Gevenieve Megginson, outgoing Executive Director and Heather St.Clair, incoming Executive Director for the Chatham County Partnership for Children presented the Fiscal Analysis Phase 2 Draft.

The presentation included a recap of the Community Needs Assessment Focus Areas, which are Child Health, Safety, and Wellbeing, Childcare Infrastructure, High Quality Early Learning, and Childcare Access.

Megginson shared the scope for the fiscal analysis, early childcare system issues to solve, what the research has shown, what models were reviewed, and the recommendations.

Megginson gave an overview of early childcare from birth to forty-seven months including the barriers, which include workforce, cost to families, cost to providers, administrative challenges for the Department of Social Services, and the lack of buildings.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the early childcare barriers including possible funding, and private employers helping.

Megginson then reviewed the Pre-K issues and barriers which include low utilization due to cost. She further shared the recommendations for Pre-K issues which were similar to the early childcare issues. Although some of the current programs have low utilization because of the expense and the lack of Title I coverage.

Megginson shared some of the funding strategies and recommendations. Megginson also shared the recommendations for workforce, buildings, private partnerships, and additional barriers for families.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the pre-K recommendations and asked questions of Megginson.

The Board of Commissioners thanked Megginson for the presentation.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

Recess to Day Two

A motion was made by Chair Mike Dasher, seconded by Commissioner Katie Kenlan, that the Budget Retreat be recessed until Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 9:00am in the meeting room of the Chatham County Agriculture and Convention Center. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

BOARD PRIORITIES - DAY TWO - 1/10/2024

[23-5082](#)

Chatham County Schools Presentation

Attachments: [2024-2025 Heads Up Document - Commissioner Mtg FINAL \(1\)](#)

Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson with Chatham County Schools presented an update. Jackson's presentation included the strategic direction, demographics, free and reduced meals, transportation, academic outcomes, anticipated growth, and challenges. Jackson shared some of the successes including One Academy.

Jackson reviewed the financial highlights as of June 30, 2023

Local Current Expense Fund Balance totaled \$5,872,430 (appropriate for a district our size):

- 1. Capital Outlay Fund Balance totaled \$778,341.*
- 2. Other Local Current Expense Fund Balance totaled \$350,615.*
- 3. Zero audit findings or compliance issues for twelve (12) consecutive years.*
- 4. Recognized for financial accountability and reporting at the state, national and international level for twelve (12) consecutive years.*

Jackson reviewed Chatham County Schools rank by funding source:

Per DPI, 2022 per pupil funding (116 LEA's):

- 1. State Funding = \$7,558, rank of 86, increase of 2.9% (PY92)*
- 2. Federal Funding = \$1,379, rank of 87, decrease of 36.7% (PY 96)*
- 3. Local Funding = \$4,510, rank of 7, increase of 12.8% (PY 6)*
- 4. Total Funding = \$13,447, rank of 42, decrease of 1% (PY 50)*

Jackson stated that local current expense funding (including charter schools) has increased approximately 22.7% since the 2018-2019 fiscal year. Chatham County Schools is proposing a local current expense increase of \$2,500,000 for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to sustain the local salary supplement model, to ensure continued salary competitiveness with surrounding school districts, fund current and anticipated state driven compensation and benefit increases, and support increased fixed operational costs.

Jackson stated that an increase of \$300,000 or (12%) to cover the cost of increased charter school enrollment if fully funded this increase will bring our local current expense county funding (including the Charter School Transfer) to \$46,831,370.

Jackson shared the budget priorities for the 2024-2025 budget year. The first focus area is enhanced compensation for classified staff. Jackson stated that the classified staff plays a pivotal role in the smooth functioning of our educational institutions. Jackson stated that the mandated state raises created salary compaction and unfairly impacted many of our long-time employees. To recognize their dedication and attract top talent, it is imperative to prioritize enhanced compensation. Investing in competitive pay scales for classified staff not only fosters a positive work environment but also ensures the retention of skilled individuals, contributing to the overall efficiency and success of our schools.

Jackson stated that the new classified employee pay scale request is \$1,400,000 and shared the data to support the need: To ensure the long-term success of our schools, it is imperative that we invest in the recruitment and retention of highly qualified classified employees. The proposed pay scale adjustment is a strategic move to attract skilled individuals who play a crucial role in the day-to-day operations of our educational institutions. By aligning our pay scales with industry standards, we not only acknowledge the value of our classified staff but also send a clear message about our commitment to fostering a work environment that encourages excellence. This investment not only addresses the immediate need for competitive compensation but also lays the foundation for a robust and dedicated workforce, enhancing the overall effectiveness of our schools

Jackson shared the second focus area, which is the increased cost of employee benefits. A comprehensive and competitive benefits package is crucial to attract and retain high-quality educators and staff. Recognizing the increased costs associated with employee benefits, prioritizing this aspect in the budget is essential. By offering

robust benefits, we not only demonstrate our commitment to the well-being of our workforce but also strengthen the overall morale and job satisfaction, leading to a more stable and dedicated team.

Jackson stated that the employee raises, and benefit costs request is \$400,000. Then he shared the data to support the need. Our educators are the backbone of our educational system, and their dedication deserves recognition through competitive compensation and comprehensive benefits. The requested funds for employee raises and benefits are not merely an expense but a strategic investment in the well-being and motivation of our workforce. By prioritizing our staff's financial and professional needs, we ensure a positive and supportive working environment that directly translates into improved student outcomes. This allocation is an essential step towards building a sustainable and high-performing educational community, fostering a culture of commitment and excellence that will pay dividends for years to come.

The third focus area that Jackson shared was increased operational costs. The dynamic nature of the educational landscape demands continuous adaptation and innovation. Acknowledging the increased operational costs is a strategic move to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of our schools. By proactively addressing these rising costs, we can maintain a secure and conducive learning environment, invest in technological advancements, and meet the evolving needs of our students and staff, ultimately positioning our schools as leaders in providing quality education. The increased operational costs request is \$300,000.

Jackson stated that a thriving educational system requires continuous adaptation to meet the evolving needs of our students and staff. The requested funds for operational increases are a proactive measure to address rising costs associated with inflation, utilities, and technological advancements. By anticipating and addressing these challenges, we demonstrate our commitment to maintaining a top-tier learning environment. This investment not only safeguards the quality of education but also positions our schools as leaders in providing innovative and cutting-edge learning experiences. Advocating for operational increases is not just about sustaining the status quo; it's about future-proofing our educational institutions for the benefit of generations to come. These funds are required to cover inflationary increases for utilities, insurance, and basic supply needs for operating the district.

The capital outlay expansion request is \$115,000 (5% Increase). The request for a 5% increase or \$115,000 in the Capital Outlay budget for the 2024-2025 school year is imperative to address the pressing needs resulting from seven years of stagnant funding. With the addition of two new schools and a Central Office facility, our infrastructure has expanded significantly, amplifying the strain on maintaining older buildings and aging equipment. This increase is essential to alleviate the financial burden associated with upkeep, repairs, and upgrades. Furthermore, heightened safety expectations demand substantial investments in updated security measures such as cameras, vape detection systems, access controls, and key access protocols. These additional funds are crucial for creating a secure and conducive learning environment, ensuring the long-term sustainability and success of our school district.

Jackson stated that the fourth focus area is adjustments to the employee supplement model. Recognizing and rewarding excellence among our educators is fundamental to fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Prioritizing adjustments to the employee supplement model is a strategic investment in the professional growth and commitment of our staff. This not only serves as a retention tool but also encourages ongoing professional development, contributing to a more skilled and motivated

workforce. Aligning the supplement model with the achievements and contributions of our educators is key to promoting a culture of success and excellence within our educational community. The adjustments to the certified and classified supplement schedule request is \$400,000.

Jackson stated recognizing and rewarding excellence is paramount in fostering a culture of continuous improvement within our educational community. The proposed adjustment for certified and classified supplements is an investment in our educators' professional growth and commitment to excellence. By providing supplements, we acknowledge the extra mile our staff goes to ensure the success of our students. This allocation serves not only as a retention tool but also as a catalyst for ongoing professional development. Building a culture that values and supports the achievements of our educators positions our schools as institutions that prioritize and celebrate success, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education.

Jackson stated that the final and fifth focus area is the charter school transfer of \$300,000. The Charter School Transfer allocation reflects our legal obligation to transfer the appropriate local per pupil funding to charters schools serving Chatham County students. Chatham County serves as the fiscal pass-through for these funds. The current percentage of Chatham county students enrolled in charter school is approximately 12%. That equates to a \$300,000 increase in funding for Charter Schools out of the 24-25 request from the county. 12% of our annual allocation or \$5,619,764. from the Chatham County Commissions is earmarked for transfer to charter schools serving students who reside in Chatham County.

Jackson reviewed the 2024-2025 expansion budget requests:
 New Classified Employees Pay Scale Adjustment - \$1,400,000
 Employee Raises and Benefits = \$400,000
 Operational Increases = \$300,000
 Certified and Classified Supplement Adjustment = \$400,000
 Chatham County Schools Current Expense Appropriations Request: \$2,500,000
 Charter School Transfer = \$300,000
 Capital Outlay Appropriation Request: = \$115,000
 Total Appropriation Request (Including Charter School Transfer and Capital Outlay Request): = \$2,915,000

The Board of Commissioners discussed the budget request and asked questions of Jackson. The Board of Commissioners also discussed the state requirement for charter schools and would like to add it to the legislative breakfast agenda.

The Board of Commissioner took a short break.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5083](#)

Human Resources Pay and Benefits and Pay Study Update Presentation

Attachments: [2024 Pay & Benefits Presentation - BOC Budget Retreat](#)
[Chatham County Presentation to Commissioners Market Study Review](#)

Human Resource Director Courtney Jones presented a year in review with the Board of Commissioners. Jones shared some new features including employee engagement metrics and calendar year snapshots.

Jones stated that the annual employee survey included communication and respect,

recognition and feedback, professional development and opportunities for growth, work-life balance, pay and benefits, workplace safety, and comments and suggestions.

Jones reviewed the pay updates for the approved positions for fiscal year 2024 is forty-six. the forty-six positions included eight funded in DSS for Medicaid Expansion, two maintenance worker I to cover additional buildings, three building inspectors, a Farmland Preservation Coordinator, a Transportation Planner, an Elections Systems Technician, Intergovernmental Relations Manager.

Jones stated that the reclassifications are examined annually during the budget process. For fiscal year 2024, thirty-six were submitted. The first one third pay study completed which includes Public Safety (Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management, Emergency Communications, Court-Related Programs), Maintenance Technicians, and Elections.

Jones stated that the one-third for fiscal year 2026 will include Public Welfare and Community Development, Department of Social Services, Aging Services, Planning, Watershed Protection, Building Inspections, Fire Inspections, and Central Permitting.

Jones shared an update on recruitment and retention including overall turnover including registration, retirement, reinstatements, and dismissals while keeping an eye on equity. Jones shared a benefit update including the health insurance fund and the funding versus the program cost.

Other benefits identified in the employee satisfaction survey that employees would you like to see included longevity pay, annual bonuses, discounted gym memberships, Full-time Wellness Coordinator, full-time nurse for employees, merit increases, tuition assistance, higher percentage increase for promotions, higher salaries, free or discounted summer camps, increased wellness programming.

Human Resource Director Courtney Jones introduced David Hill to present the Phase I Market Comparison. Hill stated that the Phase I Study included Animal Resources, Court-Related Programs, Detention Center, Elections, Emergency Communications, Emergency Management, Facilities Maintenance Technicians, and Sheriff's Office.

Hill stated that the study included sixty-seven classification titles representing 242 employees. The focus of the study was market competitive positioning, employee recruitment, employee retention, and salary compression. Hill stated that the process included a workforce analysis at the beginning of the study.

Hill reviewed the Standard Deviation "Bell" Curve, employee distribution by year employed, year in current position, and employee salaries distribution above minimum.

Hill reviewed the market caparison recommendations. The recommendations included adopting a market comparison pay grade assignments for each position and adopting the employee salary implementation recommendation. Hill stated that both of these are designed to address salary compression and help with employee recruitment and retention.

Hill reviewed several implementation options, and each had a common thread of recognizing employee service time. The advantages create methodology of salary establishment based on length of employment or time in current position, addresses salary compression, aides in employee recruitment, and aides in employee retention.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the pay and benefits and pay study and asked questions of Jones and Hill.

Budget Director Darrell Butts stated that staff would bring back more information concerning the salary changes to a future meeting.

The Board of Commissioners took a short break.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

23-5084

Board of Elections Presentation

Attachments: [Elections - Presentation for Commissioners Retreat](#)
[Memorandum of Understanding](#)
[MOU Updated Draft 04042023](#)

Election Director Pandora Paschal updated the Board of Commissioners on managing election administration in Chatham County.

Paschal stated that the Boards of Elections are subcomponents of county government that is the legal entity and operator that is directly supervised by the North Carolina State Board of Elections and funded by the county. Supported by other administrative functions of the county on a voluntary basis.

Paschal shared the requirements to functions of the Elections Office which include dedicated and well-trained staff, careful management of election technology, election officials and resources and thorough understanding and strict adherence to federal and state laws.

Paschal also stated that they needed office space that is secure and spacious with adequate and secure voting sites for Election Day and Early Voting and precise communication to the public, and all stakeholders.

Paschal stated that in the past elections administration included punch card machines, ES&S m100 & AutoMark, paper poll books and labels, registrars for voter registration, absentee ballots by mail, medical reason to request, and in house servers.

Paschal shared the current responsibilities which include paper ballots, Hart Verity Machines, ADA complaints, electronic poll books and ballot on demand, voter registration through various agencies, no excuse absentee voting through several processes, Sunday voting, cloud base server, record number of public record requests, live stream meetings, photo ID required, virtual election official training.

Paschal updated the Board of Commissioners on election security which includes revised emergency plans with assistance from the Emergency Operations Director, and law enforcement officials for early voting sites and Election Day polling places. Additional Board suspicious letter, suspicious package, emergency plan, inclement weather policy, increased security, partnerships with federal and state governments, who assist with cyber and physical security, logic and accuracy testing on every voting machine before each election, and post-election audits.

Paschal shared the voter registration totals:

2004 – 35,488
2008 – 33,085
2012 – 35,662
2016 – 51,455
2020 – 57,907
2022 – 60,025
2023 – 58,982 as of 2/20/2023
2024 – 60,503 as of 1/3/2024

Paschal shared the absentee voting in person totals:

2008 – 22,021
2012 – 24,686
2016 – 29, 951
2020 – 31,446
2022 – 28,924

Paschal stated that Chatham County has the highest voter turnout in the state.

Paschal stated that the office has three full time employees are NC Certified Elections Administrators and the Director and Deputy are Certified Election. The staff has a combined total of over forty-three years of specialized experience with a strong relationship with stakeholders and outstanding customer service.

The Board of Elections is the responsibility to administer safe, fair and impartial elections to the citizens of Chatham County as outlined in North Carolina election law, to oversee hiring and retaining well trained staff to carry out the day-to-day functions in the election's office, and to maintain solid relationships with all stake holders (North Carolina State Board of Elections, County management, Chatham County school administration, voters, political parties, candidates, League of Women voters, and other nonpartisan groups).

The Board of Elections shared some current concerns including safety concerns at polling places lighting, community building in northeast Chatham to use for early voting, purchase of additional voting equipment, and Performance Building renovations.

Paschal shared the State Bill 747 budget impacts include temporary salary line increase, early voting judges, office temp to assist with absentee ballots, public records requests for provisional, ballots, office supplies, replace all existing documents, impacts of sudden legislative changes, and things not budgeted.

The Board of Commissioners discussed elections and asked questions of Paschal.

Chair Laura Heise gave an overview of other items including the voter ID laws, viewers can follow around election workers, racial gerrymandering case and some districts may have to be redrawn, state legislation change with equal numbers of republicans and democrats with would case tie votes. Heise stated that they have seen some of the pay study and look forward to that. Heise said they would like to get back on a Memorandum of Understanding with the county.

The Board of Commissioners thanked Paschal and Heise.

The Board of Commissioners took a break for lunch.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5085](#)

Sheriff's Office Presentation

Attachments: [CCSO Commissioner Presentation - January](#)

Sheriff Mike Roberson presented an update on the Sheriff's Office Staffing/Budgeting Proposal.

Roberson stated that the Sheriff's Office is required to perform courtroom security, civil service, detention, keep the peace through calls for service, and IVC Transports / Commitments.

Roberson stated that the Sheriff's Office also do additional items including Student Resource Officers in Schools, Animal Resource Center / Response, Full Time Courthouse Security, Sheriff Prevention Partnership, Community Service Events, and CALEA / ACA / NCLEAN.

Roberson shared the 2023 Population by Zone which are Zone 1: 8,214, Zone 2: 19,434, Zone 3: 8,332, Zone 4: 7,815, Zone 5: 19,671. He also shared the 2023 Calls For Service Response Map.

Roberson shared the 2023 per capita per 1,000 calls for service for each zone which were Zone 1: 627.95, Zone 2: 315.79, Zone 3: 589.53, Zone 4: 584.78, Zone 5: 349.14. He also shared the Deputies per 1,000 Residents in other counties including Lee, Randolph, Orange, Alamance, Durham, Guilford, Moore, Harnett, and Wake.

Roberson shared the Community Oriented Substation Map goal, including the main office, substations in northeast, Siler City, Moncure, and Goldston. The goals are priority one is northeast now, priority two is Siler City soon, priority three is Moncure as growth requires, and priority four is Goldston as growth requires.

Sheriff Roberson introduced Budget Analyst Connor Wilkins to present the budget request. Wilkins shared the starting deputy pay comparison for several counties including Lee, Alamance, Wake, Durham, Harnett, Orange, Randolph, Moore, and Guilford. Wilkins stated that Chatham is in the middle of the group on starting deputy pay and it was the same for detention pay.

Wilkins stated that the goal for starting pay for both Deputies and Detention is \$60,850. Wilkins shared the proposed action plan for the next four years to accomplish the goal.

Wilkins shared how the Sheriff's Office budget compares to the overall county budget. He shared the Sheriff's Office request for people, pay, and places. He stated they need forty deputies, the base pay for deputies and detention officers to be \$60,000, and four substations one in each corner of the county.

The Board of Commissioners asked questions of Roberson and Wilkins including the calls for service, growth, pay study and compression. The Board of Commissioners thanked both Roberson and Wilkins for the information.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5086](#)

Court Programs and Grants

Attachments: [Grants & Court Programs - Retreat FY25](#)

Budget Analyst Will Curvin and Court Programs Director Renita Foxx presented an update on grants and court programs.

Curvin stated the Chatham County has two current court programs funded by Federal grants which are the Family Treatment Court and Parenting Program and Family Visitation Services. And the Family Violence Prevention Services Program is funded by a state grant.

Foxx stated that Chatham County Family Treatment Court is a federally funded court designed to provide wraparound treatment and support services to parents or guardians with substance addictions whose children are in Department of Social Service custody, with the goal of parent-child reunification in a safe and sober home. The Parenting Program utilizes the Nurturing Parenting evidenced model based on psycho educational and cognitive-behavioral approaches to learning.

Foxx stated that County Family Treatment Court assist participants with reducing the frequency and duration of relapses while increasing the duration of their sobriety and life skills. In addition, it is the Court's goal to reduce the number of cases where parental rights are terminated and strive to increase public safety and provide support to individuals/families with serious substance abuse disorders who enter the dependent neglect system. The program is committed to focusing resources, training, and expertise on the unique needs of the entire family. We want to help parents overcome various barriers and obstacles required to reunify with their children. There is no fee for this service.

Foxx shared the program goals:

- 1. Reduce recidivism and increase stability for County Family Treatment Court participants.*
- 2. Treatment will be conducted in a coordinated approach.*
- 3. Encourage enhanced wellness of individuals and families.*
- 4. Provide transparent communication to participants and their families, service providers, and support systems.*
- 5. Operate under structured and organized principles governed by the policies and procedures, participant handbook, and memorandums of understanding between agencies.*
- 6. Instill a sense of belonging to our participants.*

Foxx shared the program activities:

- Coordinate the utilization of community-based services to service the family such as health and mental health services, victims' services, housing, transportation, education, vocational training, job skills training, and placement to provide a strong foundation for recovery.*
- Conduct eligibility screenings and create comprehensive service plans.*
- Conduct drug screenings on participants.*
- Provide evidenced-based curriculum to help parents learn "re-parenting", which is replacing old destructive patterns with new behaviors.*
- Demonstrate to parents how long-term dysfunctional patterns of behavior require long-term interventions. Change is evolutionary, not revolutionary.*
- Provide recovery support.*
- Provide transportation to County Family Treatment Court and parenting participants to court, treatment, substance-use screening, and recovery support activities.*

Foxx stated in 2019 we submitted Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention federal grant to establish the Chatham Family Treatment Court for \$750,000 over 3 years and was awarded \$920,000. Then, in 2020 we established County Family Treatment Court and began to provide wrap around services to individuals/families working with the Department of Social Services. Next, in 2023 we applied for a one-year no cost extension and received approval with a service delay due to COVID. In 2024 the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant is due to end September 2024.

Foxx shared the highlights of the program with 215 individuals served and 100% received therapeutic family services. Eighty-six families received services to improve their family's functioning and 58% showed improvement. Fifty-two individuals received services for substance misuse and 92% reduced use or abstained from drug use. Forty-two individuals received services to improve their job skills and 88% showed improvement. Forty-eight individuals received services to improve mental health and 60% showed improvement. Twenty-seven individuals received services to improve school engagement and 78% showed improvement.

Curvin stated that the award term was four years from 10/1/20 to 9/30/24 with three with one year extension and a total grant budget of \$1,160,000. The Federal share was \$870,000 (75%) with a match of \$290,000(25%). The grant funded two positions, a Parenting Educator (100% full time) and Substance Abuse Counselor (100% full time).

Curvin stated that the grant currently has 58% spent as of December 2023 and by fiscal year 2024 end, approximately 70-80% will be spent. The FY 24 projected cost and reimbursement has a projected total program cost of \$268,559 and projected reimbursement of \$238,193 and approximately 89% grant funded.

Curvin shared the projected spending. The grant term ends in the first quarter of fiscal year 2025 ending in September 2024, however at current spending patterns continue, the grant may need an extension. If allowed by the grantor, grant coverage may continue until the third quarter (March 2025). Projected expense and reimbursement projected total program cost of \$275,908, projected reimbursement of \$60,280. The estimate is based on grant ending September 2025. County would need to cover an additional quarter without grant reimbursement totaling \$215,628.

Foxx then gave an overview of the Family Visitation Services program which provides a safe and comfortable environment for supervised visits and monitored exchanges of children by and between parents in situations involving domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. The program is federally funded through the Office of Judicial Programs and Violence Against Women Office.

Foxx shared the location & fees of the primary visitation center is in downtown Pittsboro and includes three furnished visitation rooms that are family-friendly and equipped with toys and activities for families. There is no fee for county residents. There are just eight supervised visitation centers in NC, and Chatham is one of the two centers that does not charge fees.

Foxx shared the program goals of the visitation program:

- 1. Enhance the safety of victims and their children by providing supervised visitation and safe exchange of children and youth by and between parents in situations involving domestic violence, child sexual abuse, sexual assault, and stalking.*
- 2. Enhance the safety of victims by providing civil legal assistance to domestic violence victims.*

Foxx shared the program activities of the visitation program which include attend weekly domestic violence court and other hearings as needed by victims, provide visitation and exchange services, provide civil legal advocacy to victims of domestic violence or sexual assault, collaborate community partners to ensure clients are provided with proper advocacy and support in the civil justice system, coordinate with clients and attorneys to provide civil legal representation, provide support and advocacy for victims seeking protective orders and court information, provide safety planning and community referrals to victims as requested, and conduct outreach activities.

Foxx stated in 2003 was the start of Family Visitation Services program made possible by a federal Office on Violence Against Women Safe Havens grant and in 2016 Family Visitation Services also funded by the Governor's Crime Commission from North Carolina Department of Public Safety state grant. Family Visitation Services funded by a different federal grant – Justice for Families (only 23 awards a year are given out across the country) in 2017.

In 2022 was the last iteration of Governor's Crime Commission from North Carolina Department of Public Safety awards and only Justice for Families award remains the in 2024 the Justice for Families grant is due to end September 2024 (FY 25).

Foxx shared the highlights of the program which include 963 supervised visits and exchanges, training for judicial officials, legal representation for twenty-two child custody cases, referrals to community resources, and twenty-four families served.

Curvin stated that the award term for the grant is three years from 10/2/21 to 9/30/24 with a budget of \$549,654 and no match required. The grant funded positions include Project Director (75% full time), and two Visitation Supervisors (part time), and an Administrative Assistant (part time).

Curvin stated in the current fiscal year the grant has spent 53% spent as of December 2024 and by the end of fiscal year 2024, approximately 70-75% will be spent. The projected total program cost is \$207,794 with a projected reimbursement of \$193,970, which is approximately 93% grant funded.

Curvin stated that the grant term ends in the first quarter of fiscal year 2025 in September 2024, however at current spending patterns continue, the grant may need an extension. If allowed by the grantor, grant coverage may continue until the third quarter in March 2025.

Curvin stated that the projected total program cost is \$213,745, with a projected reimbursement of \$50,490, with it ending in September 2025. County would need to cover an additional three quarters without grant reimbursement totaling \$163,255.

Foxx shared information about the state funded programs for Family Violence Prevention Services. County advocates provide services for domestic violence victims/survivors and their families. The services included assistance and accompaniment with protective orders at the Courthouse, access and referrals to community resources, safety planning and advocacy for survivors and their families, assistance with transportation, emergency shelter, child custody and mental health services, Spanish speaking support group in Siler City, individual and group educational programs.

Foxx stated that the services are provided by advocates fluent in English and Spanish

on weekdays, located in the Justice Center in Pittsboro. 40 E. Chatham St, Room 2401 and there are no fee for this service.

Foxx shared the goals of the program included:

1. Inform and advise all clients of court/legal options and assist in Domestic Violence Protective Order filings.
2. Develop individual safety plans for each client and refer them to appropriate community resources.
3. Provide community outreach services, including weekly support groups for victims/survivors in English and Spanish, attend community activities, and work with community partners to promote the advocacy and support services available to victims/survivors.
4. Refer client victims/survivors to appropriate community resources to shelter, housing, transportation, food, school, employment, legal services, mental health, and substance abuse needs.

Foxx shared the program activities which included:

- Provide advocacy and support services for domestic violence/sexual assault victims/survivors.
- Assist in legal and criminal proceedings to help victims/survivors understand the process, get protective orders, and ensure safety for their families.
- Assist victims/survivors with filing protective orders, make referrals, and introductions to legal services, and accompany victims/survivors to court proceedings, providing transportation as needed.
- Coordinate with law enforcement and the district attorney's office for follow-up and support of victims/survivors in the criminal justice system and will assist victims/survivors with filing claims for crime victim compensation and victim impact statements.
- Provide referrals to community resources including shelter, health care, and job assistance.
- Lead weekly support groups for victims/survivors.
- Participate in community outreach events and collaborate with community partners.

Foxx stated that a community task force including judges, law enforcement agencies, the District Attorney, Department of Social Services, and other agencies worked together to create Family Violence Prevention Services.

Foxx stated that in fiscal year 2017 in Family Violence Rape Crisis nonprofit folds. Family Violence Rape Crisis opened July 2017 with 1.5 full time advocates, supervised by the director of the county's supervised visitation program. And in 2019, Chatham County receives a grant from North Carolina Department of Public Safety Governor's Crime Commission providing funding for another advocate. Grant covered 25% of the program director's salary, 100% of 2 domestic violence advocates, and the majority of operating costs.

Foxx stated that in fiscal year 2023 due to decreased North Carolina Department of Public Safety Governor's Crime Commission funding, the county approves the expansion request to fund one of the domestic violence advocates. And in 2025 North Carolina Department of Public Safety ending September 2024. County does not plan to apply again to allow the nonprofit Second Bloom to expand its services.

Foxx highlighted the activities which include 348 protective orders safety planning, thirty-member weekly latinx support group, 100% case management for community resources, Eight fully funded mental health sessions provided, individual domestic

violence education sessions, five completed a 6-hour course, and 100% court accompaniment/transportation.

Curvin stated that the grant award term is two years from 10/1/22 to 9/30/24, with a budget of \$223,641, with no match. The grant funded 1.25 positions which are a Project Director (25% Grant Funded), a 100% full time bilingual DV/SA Advocate, and the county funds another domestic violence advocate.

Curvin stated that the grant has currently spent 59% as of December of fiscal year 2024. By the end of fiscal year 2024, approximately 85% will be spent. The projected total program cost is \$199,906 with a grant reimbursement of \$108,945 and approximately 54% would be grant funded.

Curvin stated with the current spending patterns, grant budget should be spent by first quarter of fiscal year 2025 in September 2024, this is also when the grant ends. The projected total program cost is \$205,060 which includes one county funded domestic violence advocate and the projected grant reimbursement of \$17,674. The county funding of grant funded positions and expenses for three more quarters of fiscal year 2025, without the grant, has an estimated cost of \$101,942.

Curvin stated that all grant funded programs in Court Services are set to end in September 2024 in the first quarter of fiscal year 2025. The two federal grants may receive an extension and would allow for grant coverage of some expenses through March 2026 (3rd quarter of FY25). There is also a small possibility of receiving awards for federal programs again. In the event extensions are not granted and grants are not renewed, the county would be extending its funding for County Family Treatment Court, Family Violence Service, and Family Violence psychology study to fully fund these programs without revenue to offset expenses. In this scenario, the increased FY25 cost, reduced by grant reimbursement through September, is about \$480,825. This would include 4 full-time and 3 part-time positions and operating expenses no longer funded by the grant.

Foxx shared the impacts of the court programs which were increased access to MH/SA Services, increased supervised visitation, increased case management and support to families/survivors/victims of crime, reduction in detention population, equitable access to diversion and alternatives to sentencing family preservation and support.

Foxx shared the ties to Commissioner Goals include resilience, equitable access, and healthy community. Additional goals are effective, efficient government mitigate the impacts of poverty, ensure public safety, and strengthen relationships.

Foxx shared the focus areas which are partnerships, diversity, equity, and inclusion, health initiatives, and organizational excellence.

Foxx stated court programs is seeking to create a new environment conducive to diversion and advocacy by changing the name to Chatham Diversion & Advocacy Programs. This name change because its more than court services are provided. The department works to serve all members of the community. However, the department cannot continue providing superior services without Commissioner support as funding for family treatment court, parenting program and domestic violence/SA grant are needed for the next fiscal year.

The Board of Commissioners thought the name change was a great idea and supports the change.

The Board of Commissioners thanked Curvin and Foxx and would like to see these important programs continue.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5087](#)

Current Year Accomplishments

Attachments: [FY2024 Mid-Year Accomplishments](#)

County Manager Dan LaMontagne shared the following current year accomplishments with the Board of Commissioners.

In the Manager's Office:

1. Successfully administered \$1 million in ARPA funding for non-profit partners.
2. Conducted equity training for 13 departments (getting # from Brenda)
3. Received the AT&T GREAT Grant - the grant will provide 542 households and 16 businesses with fiber.
4. Implemented a new Capital Improvement Plan software system with a "digital first" interactive document.

In the Human Resources:

1. Went live with NEOGOV Insight – a new applicant tracking system.
2. Applicants can now create an account and apply for multiple County positions without calling or emailing HR to have their application manually copied and pasted to other "job folders". In addition, Chatham County is now featured on [governmentjobs.com](#), the largest public sector employment website in the country.
3. Received Bronze Level recognition on the American Heart Association Workforce Well-Being Scorecard for our County's wellness programming and initiatives. This is the first year that Chatham County has been recognized by the American Heart Association.
4. Chatham County received many Safety Awards from North Carolina Department of Labor for 2023.
5. A new performance evaluation tool introduced in June – modified to be a self-scoring, fillable PDF document complete with a "playbook" which serves as a resource guide for supervisors.
6. Evaluation now based on four main categories – Professionalism, Quality of Work, Knowledge & Initiative and Teamwork and Cooperation

In the MIS Department:

1. Implementation of Varonis data security software within county network & Microsoft 365 tenant.
2. Varonis software has been configured to report on & alert MIS staff of anomalies with regards to how staff access & share sensitive data within the organization.
3. Signed an MOA with NC Emergency Management to partner and share costs related to LiDAR data acquisition for Chatham County.
4. The partnership will save the county approximately \$80,000 in contracted services for the project.
5. Implemented internet service upgrades at different locations across the county network to provide higher bandwidth and more reliable network connectivity at a neutral cost level.
6. Chatham County Detention Center & the new Emergency Operation Center building are the two primary upgrade locations.

In the Cooperative Extension:

1. Members of the Chatham County 4-H Horsekateers Club comprised the NC 4-H National Team for horsebowl, horse judging, and hippology contests. The North Carolina 4-H Horse Program made history at the 2023 Eastern National 4-H Horse Roundup in Louisville, Kentucky, being the first state to ever win all four team contests in the same year: hippology, horsebowl, communications, and horse judging.
2. Chatham County Center staff have continued to offer a mix of in-person, virtual, and hybrid-based classes/trainings/workshops for clientele.
3. Since July 1, 2023, 11,714 direct contacts have been made through agriculture, 4-H youth development, community and rural development, and family and consumer sciences educational programs.
4. Extension is piloting a new "Real Money, Real World" curriculum at Horton Middle School in conjunction with NC A&T State University during the fall semester.
5. This youth-based financial literacy program is currently being offered to 7th-graders with the intent of expanding this pilot program to additional schools in Spring 2024. Students will have the opportunity to increase their knowledge of money management tools used in daily spending for important cost-of-living decisions and overall financial security.

In Library Services:

1. Answered more than 5,500 reference questions including those related to employment and technology.
2. Circulated more than 112,000 items (print and electronic, system wide).
3. Created 6,559 new library card accounts (system wide).
4. Chatham Community Library successfully launched its StoryWalk on the Central Carolina Community College Walking Trail.
5. 2023 Youth Summer Reading Program concluded with a total of 204 participants who read 180,494 minutes.

In Parks and Recreation:

1. Hosted many special events throughout the year.
2. Movies in the Park (186).
3. Sidewalk Chalk Festival (45) -rained out.
4. Chatham County Challenge & Kick Off Event (256).
5. Trunk or Treat Fall Festival (645).
6. Holiday in the Park (425).
7. Hosted "Read and Play" series in collaboration with Goldston Library.
8. Started a new Fall Running Club program.

In Elections:

1. Voter I.D. Information Session held on September 6, 2023, at the Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center for Chatham County political parties, and citizens.
2. The Board of Elections staff provided the opportunity for citizens who didn't have photo IDs to obtain one at the information session. Citizens are now able to obtain a photo ID at the Board of Elections office during regular business hours.
3. Held two successful elections with the implementation of the new Voter ID law without any complications or issues.
4. Implemented use of security cages for each Election Day Polling Place and Early Voting Site to save the county money by not using employees from utilities to deliver and pickup supplies after hours.
5. Purchased Articulate 360 and authored training to implement virtual election official training for use for all future training.
6. Allows election officials to access training at their convenience in the event of scheduling conflicts and reduce the number of in person training sessions.
7. Collaborated with Emergency Management to implement a Suspicious

Letter-Suspicious Package Emergency Plan, and an Inclement Weather Emergency Plan for Early voting and Election Day.

8. Several Elections offices throughout the country received letters that contained fentanyl, which could be a deadly substance. This plan will assist election staff in knowing how to proceed should this happen in Chatham County.

With the Governing Board:

- 1. Former Clerk to the Board Lindsay K. Ray was elected as President of the NC Association of County Clerks for 2023-2024.*
- 2. The newly appointed Clerk to the Board Jenifer K. Johnson received her Master Municipal Clerk Certification from the International Institute of Municipal Clerks.*
- 3. Worked with Finance and MIS to send out an RFP for the Historic Courthouse A/V replacement project which was awarded to Justice A/V Solutions.*
- 4. Installation will happen the week of March 4th and Board of Commissioners meetings are expected to resume at the Historic Courthouse in April.*

In Tax Administration:

- 1. Completed the transition to the new tax software DevNet.*
- 2. Done in three segments: appraisal, listing and collections) the last segment to go live in November of 2023).*
- 3. Launched a new tax website that is based on the new tax software that gives the public an easy-to-understand overview of property information.*
- 4. Launched the Community website:*
- 5. Makes accessing information easy – it is a central hub that includes a powerful dashboard of information.*
- 6. Any data, any location, and any context within Chatham County has been connected to create an intelligent, analytical, and dynamic picture.*
- 7. Patterns and trends are apparent, helping and supporting decision-making processes by providing a clear overview of key areas of concern such as property value, census information, building permit information, and geographic information.*

In Aging Services:

- 1. The Siler City Center for Active Living was recertified by the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services as a “Center of Excellence.” The distinction runs for a five-year period through September 30, 2028. The Pittsboro Center for Active Living completed the process in July 2022.*
- 2. Served a total of 31,510 meals in FY 23-24. This includes 27,957 meals to Meals on Wheels recipients and 3,553 frozen meals.*
- 3. Released first Directory of Resources, designed to be a single source of key contacts for Chatham County older adults. Compiled by Sigi Markworth, Integrated Services Specialist, the guide lists contact information for key resources including caregiver, respite and dementia resources, disability-related services, financial and food assistance, financial management, health supportive services, housing, insurance information and more.*

In Public Health:

- 1. Leveraging opioid settlement funds, Public Health launched a naloxone education and distribution program to prevent overdose.*
- 2. Several staff have become naloxone trainers to provide this education in both English and Spanish.*
- 3. In partnership with Chatham Hospital, Public Health launched childbirth classes for expecting parents. The first classes were held in fall 2023 and include a tour of Chatham Hospital Maternity Care Center.*
- 4. The EMBRACe initiative, named the 2023 Chatham County Board of Health*

Partnership of the Year, launched community Gathering our Resources events. To date, EMBRACe has received several grants to improve birth equity in Chatham.

5. Environmental Health partnered with the Planning Department and Watershed Department to streamline the application process for single-family homes that will provide greater efficiency for staff and clients.

In Social Services:

- 1. Implementing expanded Medicaid eligibility determinations for almost 4,000 uninsured residents in Chatham County.*
- 2. Formalizing kinship support programs for children in foster care to improve placement stability, behavioral health outcomes, and stronger sibling and family ties.*
- 3. Expanding support and services for individuals experiencing housing instability through the development of a new case management program to serve individuals at risk of eviction and software for interagency coordination.*

In Central Permitting and Inspections:

- 1. Created forms and checklists on how to obtain specific building permits and commercial plan submittal requirements with very detailed instructions on what is required.*
- 2. This information is all available on the departmental webpage. This is helpful for Customers, Permit Staff and Plan Reviewers.*
- 3. Residential Plan Review has been streamlined and we've created an internal checklist for consistency and to improve the quality of the reviews.*

With the Convention and Visitor Bureau:

- 1. Launched the Chatham Sports Alliance website: <https://chathamspportsalliance.com/>*
- 2. Secured a major amateur sporting event for 2024.*
- 3. Increased economic impact by 11.3% (2022 figures reflected an increase when compared to 2021).*
- 4. The tourism and hospitality industry directly employs more than 624 people in Chatham County.*
- 5. Total payroll generated by the tourism industry in Chatham County was \$23 million.*
- 6. State tax revenue generated in Chatham County totaled \$3.2 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income. About \$2.8 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.*
- 7. The tourism economic impact reflects a cost savings of \$76.73 per resident.*

In Planning:

- 1. Plan Moncure was adopted in October of 2023.*
- 2. The Planning Department collaborated with the Health Department on a Health & Equity Assessment as part of the Unified Development Ordinance Project.*
- 3. Brandon Dawson worked with NC Department of Transportation and the DCHC Metropolitan Planning Organization to have three Bike/Ped Safety Projects constructed in Chatham County using STBG-DA funds.*

With Sustainability:

- 1. Completed installation of the fourth public electric vehicle charging station at a county office building in Pittsboro (964 East St.).*
- 2. This station installation was partially funded by a grant from the Volkswagen Settlement with the State of North Carolina.*
- 3. Charging Station Usage – Over the first half of FY24, there was a steady trend of increased usage at the County's four public EV charging stations.*
- 4. Nearly every month set a new usage record, culminating with December. The*

stations dispensed over 2.4 megawatt-hours of electricity in December, which was 40% higher than any previous month.

5. *Solar System Energy Production* – The County's two solar power systems combined to produce over 111 megawatt-hours of electricity during the first six months of FY24.

6. *An average house uses about 1.1 megawatt-hours of electricity per month. Over the lifetime of the two solar systems, nearly 300,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions have been avoided.*

With Watershed Protection:

1. *Nominated for Large Local Program Award for erosion control, competing against Charlotte, Wake County and Fuquay-Varina.*

2. *This marks recognition by NC Department of Environmental Quality of the programs' growth and transition from a small program to match the size and capability of large municipalities and counties.*

3. *Event planning is complete for Creek Week, March 16-23, 2024 in partnership with CWEP, Chatham Soil & Water, Friends of the Lower Haw, NC State Co-op Extension, Clean Jordan Lake, Chatham Solid Waste, Chatham Parks & Recreation, Grand Trees of Chatham, USACE, Rocky River Heritage Foundation, Pittsboro Parks & Recreation, Haw River Assembly, Deep River Park, Siler City Parks & Recreation, Chatham County Libraries, Loves Creek Watershed Stewards.*

In the Solid Waste and Recycling Enterprise Fund:

1. *Recycling in Schools - Worked with a senior student at Chatham Central High School to implement a recycling program for the school.*

2. *Provided signs, some recycling containers, and advice, but the student took the lead on getting the program started. The student reports it is going well.*

3. *Compactor Replacement – As part of our ongoing facility maintenance plan, we replaced the trash compactors at two collection centers this year.*

4. *The compactors have approximately a 15-year life expectancy and we are planning on replacing two each year until all centers are complete.*

5. *Mulch Giveaway – Due to an abundance of mulch from the previous year, implemented a mulch giveaway during the months of July, October, and November.*

6. *Mulch is created by grinding up yard waste and woody debris that is dropped off throughout the year at the main facility. Mulch is sold in the spring, but did not sell out, so began the giveaway in July. Over 1,100 cubic yards of mulch was given away to the public and other County departments in those three months.*

In the Utilities Enterprise Fund:

1. *Completed Lead and Copper Rule Revision Compliance Strategy Report – Phase I*

2. *Completed Water System Development Fee Analysis – Phase I*

3. *Completed Western Intake Partners Water Flow Growth Projections*

4. *Completed Chatham County Beaver Creek Water Treatment Plant Expansion Report – Phase I*

5. *Completed Highway 902 Chemical Booster Pump-station Construction Project*

With Court Services:

1. *Reentry – convened Reentry Roundtable Discussions to work towards establishing a Reentry Council in Chatham.*

2. *Pretrial – Screened 166 Individuals; 17 Successfully Completed; Currently Serving 114 Individuals (16 Individuals in Residential Treatment; 41 Individuals Receiving Outpatient Mental Health/Substance use Support).*

3. *Family Visitation Services – Increased services for the Department of Social Service to five days/week. 4. Referrals related to domestic violence increased by 15%. 6 families received legal representation for child custody cases.*

5. Family Violence Prevention Services – Latinx Support Group held a vigil in October and a Christmas Party for participants in December. Support Groups provide a safe space for 30 Latinx Women.

With Emergency Communications:

1. The new VIPER radio system went live across the county using the new radio towers, and radios distributed to every fire, emergency medical services and law enforcement agency in the county. This provides increased coverage, capacity, and interoperability for our public safety responders.
2. The 9-1-1 center went live in the new emergency operation center. The new space provides room for growth, redundancies for critical infrastructure and improved workspaces for employee wellness.

In the Fire Marshal for Fire Inspections:

1. Coordinated with County Businesses and Health Programs offered at County high schools to provide live fire extinguisher training.
2. Participated in a joint fire prevention week education by forming a partnership with Chatham County Communications, Office of the State Fire Marshal, Safe Kids North Carolina.
3. The partnership provided fire prevention presentations for all kindergarten students in the county including charter and private schools. These presentations were delivered to approximately 1,100 students in the county.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5088](#)

Trends Affecting Next Year's Budget

Attachments: [Trends Combined FY25](#)

Budget Analyst Erik Lindley present trends affecting next year's budget which included data from several charts and graphs. The data included the following:

1. Historical Population Growth FY 1993 to FY 2023
2. Projected Population Growth: FY 2024 to FY 2044
3. Race and Ethnicity
4. Projected Median Age
5. Population Actual and Projections by Age Group
6. Chatham County Unemployment Rate
7. 2022 Per Capita Income
8. Median Household Income by Township
9. Chatham County Income Inequality - 2023
10. Consumer Price Index
11. Quarterly Deed Stamps Collections
12. Actual Deeds Stamps Collections
13. Number of Residential Building Permits Issued: Including Cary, Siler City and Pittsboro
14. Commercial Permits
15. Chatham County Tax Base, FY 2014-2023
16. 2023 Tax Base Comparison: Chatham v. Benchmarks & State Average
17. Chatham FY 2023 Present Use Value Breakdown: \$1,474,257,561
18. Chatham County's Historic Sales Assessment Ratio
19. Assessed Value Per Capita
20. Percent of Available Fund Balance Chatham vs. State Average
21. Property Tax as Percent of General Fund Revenue
22. Actual Debt Service as % of General Fund Expenditures
23. Charges, Fees, and Permits as % of General Fund Revenue

24. FY 2022 Per Capita Revenue Comparison For Counties 50,000-99,999 Population
25. FY 2022 Per Capita Expenditure Comparison For Counties 50,000-99,999 Population
26. FY 2022 Expenditure Comparison by Object For Counties 50,000-99,999 Population
27. Number of County Employees Per 1,000 Residents
28. Chatham County Operating Surplus/(Deficit) General Fund
29. Operating Surplus/(Deficit) Water Fund
30. Operating Surplus/(Deficit) Waste Management Fund
31. FY 2023 Average Teacher Supplements: Chatham, Surrounding Counties & State Average
32. Sales Tax as Percent of General Revenue
33. Article 39 (locally collected) Sales Tax FY 2023
34. Statewide Tax Rate Comparison

The Commissioners of Commissioners discussed the data and asked questions of Lindley.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

Recess to Day Three

A motion was made by Commissioner Katie Kenlan, seconded by Vice Chair Karen Howard, that the Budget Retreat be recessed until Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 9:00am in the meeting room at the Chatham County Agriculture and Convention Center. The motion carried by the following vote:

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

BOARD PRIORITIES - DAY THREE - 1/11/2024

[23-5089](#)

Heads Up Items and CIT Updates

Attachments: [FY25 Heads Up Presentation](#)

Budget Analyst Will Curvin presented a heads up that affects the fiscal year 2025 budget. The heads-up process includes identifying and defining common issues identified by the Common Issue Teams, evaluating the impacts of identified issues.

Curvin stated that the themes of the heads-up presentation included access to technology, application support and infrastructure, equity, hurdle to Commissioner goals, internal process management, legislative impacts, safety of the public and/or staff, service availability and capacity. The "Heads-Up" process is an opportunity for county departments to identify issues that may impact them in the upcoming budget year. It is a way to gather information that will provide a more holistic context on the budget requests submitted later in January and February. The budget team asks for this information in November since there should be 4 months (1/3 of the year) of performance and financial measures for departments to analyze and potential new measures to track.

This year we revised the heads-up form to get more details on the issues affecting departments. Questions on the form include identifying the root cause of the problem, its financial, safety, or compliance impacts, and how it affects operations and

residents/customers. Heads-up issues are then analyzed by theme to see what issues are affecting Common Issue Teams and county departments.

Curvin shared the budget functional area Common Issue Teams descriptions which included:

1. Administration: CCACC, County Attorney, Court Facilities, Facilities, Finance, Fleet, Human Resources & Risk Management, County Manager's Office, and MIS.

2. Culture, Education, & Recreation: CCCC, Chatham County Schools, Cooperative Extension Library Parks, and Recreation and Cultural Resources.

3. General Government: Elections, Governing Board, Register of Deeds, and Tax Administration

4. Human Services: Aging Services, Chatham Trades, Chatham Transit, Human Services – Non-Profits, Public Health, Department of Social Services, and Vaya – Mental Health.

5. Natural Resource Management: Central Permitting and Inspections, Convention Visitor Bureau, Economic Development Corporation, Planning, Soil and Water, Sustainability, Watershed Protection, Solid Waste and Recycling, and Utilities.

6. Public Safety: Court Services, Emergency Communications, Emergency Operations, EMS, Fire Inspections, and Sheriff's Office.

Curvin stated that the identified issue themes selected by the Common Issue Teams are 26% - service availability and capacity, 14% - internal process management, 13% - safety of the public and/or staff, 12% - application support and infrastructure, 11% - hurdle to Commissioner goals, 10% - access to technology, 8% - equity, and 4% - legislative impacts.

Curvin reviewed each of the themes and how they may impact the budget.

Curvin stated that the key takeaways for FY25 Budget are rapid development continues in Chatham County and as new residents move into the county all services are impacted – not just those directly responsibility for planning/permitting processes. Chatham is a growing county with a population that expects more and higher quality services. To provide the highest quality of service possible, Chatham County departments must continue to collaborate regularly and work on continuous process improvement.

Curvin shared the next steps include departments will begin their budget requests, both continuation and expansion, staff will meet with departments and help identify solutions and alternatives, the Budget team and Common Issue Teams will evaluate expansion requests, and the recommended budget will be presented to the Board of Commissioners in May 2023.

The Board of Commissioners thanked Curvin and discussed the next steps.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5090](#)

Expected Conditions Affecting Next Year's Budget

Attachments: [Expected Conditions FY25 Budget](#)

Budget Director Darrell Butts shared the preliminary outlook for the fiscal year 2025 budget.

Butts stated that some highlights from the fiscal year 2024 revenues includes:

- 1. Register of Deeds Excise revenue down significantly from last year (~\$483,000): a. At 41% of budget collected, down ~20% from prior year; b. Potential to still meet budget, depending on real estate market in the spring.*
- 2. Inspections revenue up approximately 436% over last year: a. currently at 164% of budget; b. already the highest revenue year ever – driven largely by Wolfsped.*
- 3. Watershed revenues are down 36% from same time last year.*
- 4. Environmental Health revenues down approximately 8% from same time last year*
- 5. Property Tax: a. ahead of FY23 in total collections; b. slightly behind in collection percentage, but still on pace to meet budget.*
- 6. Motor Vehicle Tax: a. ahead of FY23 in total collections; b. at same collection percentage as last year, on pace to meet budget.*
- 7. Sales Tax: a. at 46.2% of budget collected, slightly behind the same time last year (49.6%); b. through 5 months, ahead of last year by approximately \$1.1 million (10.2% increase over the same time period last year).*

Butts shared the fiscal year 2024 summary:

- 1. Revenue from development services continues to be robust in FY24, on pace to exceed budgeted revenue.*
- 2. Locally collected sales tax continues to be very solid.*
- 3. Ad Valorem taxes are on pace to meet budgeted revenue.*
- 4. Expenditures slightly behind (0.2%) last year due primarily to capital outlay purchases.*
- 5. Overall projecting that revenue will slightly exceed expenditures: a. revenue collection dependent upon continued development services activity and strong sales tax receipts; b. expenditures largely dependent upon the number and length of vacancies and ability to purchase the operating/capital equipment (less difficult than last few years).*

Butts shared the economic forecasts and what others are saying including Dr. Michael Walden with North Carolina State, and the Wells Fargo annual outlook.

- 1. Events have been pointing to 2024 being a transition year for economic policy.*
- 2. Have seen some progress on inflation: a. Year-Over-Year rate peaked at 9% in summer 2022; b. inflation fell to under 4% by the end of 2023.*
- 3. Positive economic path has sparked hopes of “soft landing”: a. continued slow growth resulting in a downward trend in the inflation rate; b. fed target annual inflation rate of 2%.*
- 4. Decreases in interest rates will help many sectors: NC (and Triangle region) in good position for economic development projects to be “jump started”.*
- 5. Economy generally remains resilient due to consumer spending.*
- 6. Labor cost growth continues to be “too hot” to be consistent with Fed’s inflation goal.*
- 7. Recent data suggests that “soft landing” could be emerging by mid/late 2024*

Butts shared other factors including the State General Assembly are having continued

impacts from most recent approved stat budget. The Federal Government American Rescue Plan Act funding. The Economic Development activity in Chatham County and the possible interest rate changes.

Butts shared some potential items affecting fiscal year 2025 revenue which is difficult to project this early in the budget process. He said the budget revenue projection methodology is conservative but the budget staff focuses on accurate year-end estimates and project conservatively. The property tax has a conservative outlook with a 2% growth and a optimistic outlook with 4% growth. The sales tax has a conservative outlook of 4% growth and a optimistic outlook of 7% growth.

Butts shared the known expenses for fiscal year 2025.

1. Chatham County Schools - +\$2,915,000 which includes:
 - a. Additional \$1,400,000 for classified employee pay scale adjustment.
 - b. Additional \$400,000 for certified & classified supplement adjustment.
 - c. Additional \$400,000 for compensation and benefit increases.
 - d. Additional \$300,000 for operational cost increases.
 - e. Additional \$300,000 for charter school transfer.
 - f. Additional \$115,000 for capital outlay appropriation.

2. Increase of approximately \$485,000 for new FY24 positions budgeted mid-year and ½ year for ARPA-funded positions which includes:
 - a. +1.2% increase in retirement contribution (\$250,000).
 - b. +3-4% increase in health/dental insurance (\$250,000).
 - c. +10% increase in property/liability insurance (\$75,000).

3. Increased operating costs of new/expanded County buildings/programs including the new emergency medical services base for\$417,000.

Butts stated that other potential additional expenses for fiscal year 2025 included:

1. ~ \$600,000 full-year implementation of 1/3 pay study.
2. ~ \$1.5 – 2 million for adjustments in employee pay.
3. ~\$480,000 in Court Programs positions (due to loss of grant funding).
4. +/- \$500,000 inflationary increase in operating.

Butts stated that the total expected expansion requests are +/- \$3.5 million. The fiscal year 2025 preliminary bottom line is total expense increases: 10,500,000, total revenue increases: 4,500,000, total surplus/(deficit): (6,000,000) and the fiscal year 2025 preliminary property tax where one penny generates: 1,521,300.

Butts stated that staff is seeking guidelines and any other direction, then Staff will deliver the fiscal year 2025 recommended budget within the guidelines that are set by the Board of Commissioners.

The Board of Commissioners discussed the conditions and asked questions of Butts.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

[23-5091](#)

Commissioner Discussion of Budget Goals and Priorities for FY2025
(Budget Guidance for Staff)

Chair Dasher asked the Board of Commissioners to review and discuss the different items.

The Board of Commissioners discussed expanding the courts service program and

support the name change, the early childhood and pre-K program, agricultural trust, climate change position, district park improvements, funding for health issues, Unified Development Ordinance completion, affordable housing, and school funding.

This Agenda Item was received and filed.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores, seconded by Vice-Chair Karen Howard to adjourn. The motion carried by the following vote:

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