

APPROVED 9/1/2020

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
VIRTUAL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING
June 4, 2020
7:00 p.m.**

The Orange County Board of Commissioners met for a Virtual Budget Public Hearing Meeting on Thursday, June 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Rich and Commissioners Jamezetta Bedford, Mark Dorosin, Sally Greene, Mark Marcoplos, and Renee Price

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Commissioner McKee

COUNTY ATTORNEYS PRESENT:

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT: County Manager Bonnie Hammersley, Deputy County Manager Travis Myren and Clerk to the Board Donna Baker (All other staff members will be identified appropriately below)

Chair Rich called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Due to current public health concerns, the Board of Commissioners conducted a Virtual Budget Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 4, 2020. Members of the Board of Commissioners participated in the meeting remotely. Members of the public were able to view and listen to the meeting via live streaming video at <http://www.orangecountync.gov/967/Meeting-Videos> and on Orange County Gov-TV on channels 1301 or 97.6 (Spectrum Cable).

In this new virtual process, there are two methods for public comment.

- Written submittals by email
- Speaking during the virtual meeting

1. Opening Remarks

PUBLIC CHARGE

The Chair acknowledged the public charge.

2. Presentation of County Manager's Recommended FY 20-21 Budget (PowerPoint Presentation)

Bonnie Hammersley made the following PowerPoint presentation:

**FY2020-21
County Manager
Recommended Budget Amendments
June 4, 2020**

OPERATING BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Amendment	Sponsor	Department	Amendment	Amount	General Fund Total
20-21OP-001	Commissioner Greene	Outside Agencies	Fund (\$20,000) to support a new nonprofit Reentry House Plus, Inc. that is in the process of opening a reentry house for men emerging from their sentences at Orange Correctional.	\$ 20,000.00	\$20,000.00
20-21OP-002	Commissioner Greene	Human Services	Use \$20,000 from the Social Justice Fund to support the new nonprofit Reentry House Plus, Inc.	\$ (20,000.00)	\$0.00
20-21OP-003	Commissioner Bedford Commissioner McKee	BOCC	Repeal the salary increase for Commissioners effective December 1, 2020. The cost is \$12,710.00 including FICA and retirement.	\$ (12,710.00)	(\$12,710.00)
20-21OP-004	Commissioner Marcoplos	BOCC	Eliminate funding for the National Association of Counties (NACo) membership dues.	\$ (2,666.00)	(\$15,376.00)

Commissioner Dorosin asked if the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is discussing these amendments tonight in any way.

Bonnie Hammersley said no, it was her understanding that this evening is an opportunity for the BOCC to hear from the public, and the BOCC will discuss the amendments on June 9.

Commissioner Dorosin asked if this was the understanding of the BOCC.

Chair Rich said her understanding was the same as Bonnie Hammersley's

Commissioner Price said she would be open to any explanation that the sponsoring Commissioner may want to offer, for the benefit of the public.

Commissioner Marcoplos said he would like to briefly explain his amendments tonight, to clarify context and intent only.

Commissioner Greene said her understanding was the same as Chair Rich and Bonnie Hammersley.

Chair Rich said to let Bonnie Hammersley finish the presentation, and the BOCC can offer brief comments, thereafter.

Bonnie Hammersley resumed the PowerPoint presentation:

Amendment	Sponsor	Department	Amendment	Amount	General Fund Total
20-21OP-	Commissioner Marcoplos	Human Services	Direct funds allocated for NACo memberships dues to the Social Justice Fund.	\$ 2,666.00	(\$12,710.00)

20-21OP-	Commissioner Marcoplos	BOCC	Eliminate funding for the UNC School of Government (UNC-SOG) membership dues.	\$ (17,168.00)	\$ (29,878.00)
20-21OP-	Commissioner Marcoplos	Human Services	Direct funds allocated for UNC-SOG memberships dues to the Social Justice Fund.	\$ 17,168.00	\$ (12,710.00)
20-21OP-	Commissioner Marcoplos	BOCC	Eliminate funding for the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) membership dues.	\$ (12,755.00)	\$ (25,465.00)
20-21OP-009	Commissioner Marcoplos	Human Services	Direct funds allocated for NCACC memberships dues to the Social Justice Fund.	\$ 12,755.00	\$ (12,710.00)
0-21OP-010	Commissioner Marcoplos	BOCC	Eliminate funding for the Triangle J membership	\$ (22,213.00)	\$ (34,923.00)
0-21OP-011	Commissioner Marcoplos	Human Services	Direct funds allocated Triangle J membership dues to the Social Justice Fund.	\$ 22,213.00	\$ (12,710.00)
0-21OP-012	Staff	Debt Service	Reduce Debt Service Payments in FY 20-21 due to lower interest rate realized as part of the G.O. Bond issuance in May 2020	\$ (209,779.00)	\$ (222,489.00)
0-21OP-013	Staff	Housing /Community Development Fund	Reduce County match to the HOME Program as a result of a calculation error in determining the match requirement	\$ (3,654.00)	\$ (226,143.00)
0-21OP-014	Commissioner Rich	Non-Departmental	Suspend the \$568,139 proposed for the Chapel Hill Library in FY 2020-21	\$ (568,139.00)	\$ (794,282.00)
Amendment	Sponsor	Department	Amendment	Amount	General Fund Total
20-21OP-015	Commissioner Rich	Education	Set up a COVID focused "Education Fund" to assist students in need of technology and broadband in both districts, in order to prevent the opportunity gap from growing larger during the COVID-19 pandemic	\$ 500,000.00	\$ (294,282.00)

20-21OP-016	Commissioner Rich	Non-Departmental	Set up a fund to assist non-Chapel Hill residents (on a sliding scale) with a household library card if Chapel Hill decides to charge a fee for the use of the library by non-Chapel Hill residents	\$ 68,139.00	\$ (226,143.00)
20-21OP-017	Staff	Human Rights & Relations	Fund the development of a Racial Equity Index Platform to track progress of the County's racial equity initiatives, and to follow trends in racial disparities	\$ 35,000.00	\$ (191,143.00)
20-21OP-018	Staff	Article 46 Sales Tax Fund	Receipt of \$410,000 in Article 46 Sales Tax Small Business Loan Funds to be used for Emergency Grants to small businesses	\$ 410,000.00	\$ 410,000.00
20-21OP-019	Staff	Visitors Bureau Fund	Reduce the Visitors Bureau Fund expenditure budget by \$19,308 to correct an error related to indirect cost allocation	\$ (19,308.00)	\$ (19,308.00)
20-21OP-020	Staff	Solid Waste Enterprise Fund	Increase the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund expenditure budget by \$475,000 to reflect the Transfer of funds to the General Fund as an expense	\$ 475,000.00	\$ 475,000.00

CAPITAL BUDGET AMENDMENTS:

Amendment #	Sponsor	Department	Amendment	Amount
20-21CIP-001	Commissioner Dorosin	Education	Move the Durham Tech Expansion Project planning up to year 1	\$ 1,000,000.
20-21CIP-002	Commissioner Dorosin	County CIP Projects	Delay the following CIP projects from Year 1 (FY 20-21) to Years 6-10: Conservation Easements (\$1,000,000); Roofing Projects (25,000); EMS Substation - Morgue Project (\$675,000); Blackwood Farm Park (\$350,000); IT (\$900,000); Vehicle Replacements (\$250,000)	\$ (3,200,000.00)
20-21CIP-003	Commissioner Dorosin	Education	Move the Durham Tech Expansion Project phase 2 up to year 2	\$ 14,000,000.00

20-21CIP-004	Commissioner Dorosin	County CIP Projects	Delay the following CIP projects from Year 2 (FY 21-22) to Years 6-10: Soccer.com (\$4,589,000); some IT Infrastructure (\$1,500,000); Millhouse Road Park (\$400,000); Lands Legacy (\$500,000); Lake Orange Dam (\$50,526); Little River Park, Phase II (\$500,000); Roofing Projects (\$250,000); Twin Creeks Park (\$220,000); Old Courthouse Square (\$220,000); Vehicle Replacements (\$250,000)	\$ (8,479,526.00)
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Amendment #	Sponsor	Department	Amendment	Amount
20-21CIP-005	Commissioner Dorosin	Education	Move the Durham Tech Expansion Project phase 3 up to year 3	\$ 11,547,911.00
20-21CIP-006	Commissioner Dorosin	County CIP Projects	Delay the following CIP projects from Year 3 (FY 2022-23) to Years 6-10: Millhouse Road Park (\$6,400,000); Twin Creeks Park (\$3,780,000); Conservation Easements (\$1,000,000); Blackwood Farm Park (\$300,000); Fairview Park (\$2,000,000); Courthouse Square (\$390,000); IT (\$748,385); Vehicle Replacements (\$250,000)	\$ (14,868,385.00)
20-21CIP-007	Commissioner Price	Education	Move the Durham Tech Expansion Project planning up to year 1	\$ 1,000,000.00
20-21CIP-008	Commissioner Price	County CIP Projects	Remove the following CIP projects from Year 1 (FY 20-21): EMS - Substation - Morgue project (\$675,000); Millhouse Road Park (\$300,000); Roofing Project (\$25,000); Vehicle Replacements (\$100,000)	\$ (1,100,000.00)

Amendment #	Sponsor	Department	Amendment	Amount
20-21CIP-009	Commissioner Price	Education	Move Durham Tech Expansion Project phase 2 up to year 2	\$ 14,000,000.00
20-21CIP-010	Commissioner Price	County CIP Projects	Delay the following CIP projects from Year 2 (FY 21-22) to Years 6-10: Soccer.com (\$4,589,000); some IT Infrastructure (\$382,300); Little River Park, Phase II (\$250,000); Roofing Projects (\$250,000); Twin Creeks Park (\$220,000); Vehicle Replacements (\$100,000)	\$ (6,291,300.00)
20-21CIP-011	Commissioner Price	Education	Move the Durham Tech Expansion Project phase 3 up to year 3	\$ 11,547,911.00
20-21CIP-012	Commissioner Price	County CIP Projects	Delay the following CIP projects from Year 3 (FY 2022-23) to Years 6-10: Millhouse Road Park (\$6,400,000); Twin Creeks Park (\$3,780,000); Blackwood Farm Park (\$300,000); Fairview Park (\$2,000,000); Courthouse Square (\$350,000); Vehicle Replacements (\$100,000)	\$ (10,930,000.00)

BUDGET TIMELINE	DATE
Recommended Budget Presentation	May 5
BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS	DATE
Budget and Capital Investment Plan (CIP)	May 12 & June 4
BUDGET WORK SESSION SCHEDULE	DATE
Schools and Outside Agencies	May 14
Fire District, Public Safety, Support Services and General Government	May 21
Human Services and Community Services	May 28

Budget Amendments and Resolution of Intent to Adopt	June 9
BOCC REGULAR MEETING	DATE
FY2020-21 Operating and CIP Budget Adoption	June 16

FY2020-21 RECOMMENDED BUDGET
BUDGET AND AMENDMENT AVAILABILITY

- Clerk to Board of Commissioners
- County Finance & Administrative Services Office
- Orange County Website - <http://orangecountync.gov>

Commissioner Marcoplos clarified his amendments. He said the BOCC has memberships in 4 organizations, which he wanted to put up for discussion: the pros and cons of each.

Commissioner Dorosin said his amendment to the CIP has generated more emails than the others, and his intent was primarily to move the Durham Tech project out of the 6-10 parking lot and move it up in the CIP. He said he is on the Durham Tech Board, and it has become clearer to him that this is critical to the Orange County Campus. He said the need for community colleges, in the wake of the pandemic, will increase. He said the BOCC has had too limited a focus on K-12 funding in Orange County for so long, and needs to re-focus on the later years of education as well.

Commissioner Dorosin said the other point he wanted to make was that he did not want to add costs to the budget, without offsetting cuts, which he has proposed. He said he is not wedded to cutting these particular projects, and is open for discussion. He said his priority is to get the Durham Tech project done.

Commissioner Price said she agreed with Commissioner Dorosin. She said one of the differences in Commissioner Dorosin's proposal and hers, was the use of lands legacy or conservation easement funds, which she did not mean to include. She said she is also not wedded to cutting the particular projects she proposed, and is open for discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Deborah Barrett said she is a clinical social worker, and there are so many needs in this community, and one of those is mental health. She said there is a program called the Pro Bono Counseling Network, which was set up locally to provide counseling services to those who could not otherwise afford them. She said the Network lost its institutional home last year, but the needs remain great, if not greater than before. She said the Network needs funding for one part time staff person who can match the client to the service. She said she is asking the BOCC for funding to help get the Network back on its feet.

Shelley Danser said was the Program Coordinator for the Pro Bono Counseling Network, and is a licensed clinical social worker. She said during the 5 years she worked at the Pro Bono Counseling Network, she came to see how effective and efficient the program is. She said she helped match clients with good therapists, all of which included a number of pro bono counseling sessions. She said the program stopped functioning because the institutional home did not hire a new coordinator after she vacated the position. She said there are many therapists wanting to offer pro bono services, and the community already knows these services. She said Covid-19 has only exacerbated the need for this service. She asked the BOCC to offer ideas and funding to get this program back up and running.

Miriam Leiberman said she was one of the therapists with the Pro Bono Counseling Network for years. She said she always had clients that were part of this program, and it offered a way for those in need to find a therapist through an ethical and affordable channel. She said the Network coordinated continuing education classes for the therapists, which was a wonderful way for them to earn their required hours. She said this program had worked, and therapists want to volunteer their time, but it is so important to do so with a safety net.

Jessica Sheffield said she is the Executive Director of the Eno River Association, and her Board sent the following letter to the Orange County Board of Commissioners earlier today, which is below:

Dear Board of County Commissioners,

We understand that the impacts of Covid-19 may result in the County facing lower revenue. However, the Eno River Association is adamantly opposed to the proposed FY 2020-21 CIP amendments CIP-004, CIP005, and CIP-006 affecting the Lands Legacy and Conservation Easement Programs in Orange County. Since 2000 over \$8 million in other funding--from grants and landowner donations--has been raised for land protection due to the Lands Legacy Program and Conservation Easement Program. With those dollars nearly 4,000 acres within Orange County have been protected, creating parks for underserved populations within our community, improving water quality for over 500,000 citizens, ensuring viable farmland into the future and climate change resiliency, and strengthening the overall health and wellbeing of Orange County residents.

These past weeks we have seen unprecedented numbers of visitors to Orange County open spaces, seeking solace during these difficult times. It is clear that more open space is needed to accommodate our neighbors. Investments in land protection today provide lasting, positive impacts on our community into the future. Proximity to parks and open space enhances the value of residential properties and produces increased tax revenues for communities. Open spaces capture precipitation, reduce stormwater management costs, and by protecting underground water sources, open spaces reduce the cost of drinking water up to tenfold. Improving access to public open space can increase levels of physical activity, provide mental health benefits and reduce healthcare costs.

The Eno River Association and Orange County have worked collaboratively to protect land in the Eno River Watershed since 2012. Together we hold six conservation easements on working farms totaling 398 acres, and Orange County has helped us protect an additional 250 acres of land. The proposed amendments would pull all additional funding from the Lands Legacy Program and all funding from the Conservation Easement Program for the next three years. This would devastate land protection efforts in Orange County. Without the financial commitment of the County, we would no longer be able to leverage grant funds to support land acquisition. In most cases, our joint funding partners require matching resources, especially from municipal and county governments. The lack of County funding would undermine all land trusts working to preserve land for future generations. The Eno River Association staff and Board of Directors urge you to reject the proposed amendments CIP-004, CIP-005, and CIP-006.

Riley Ruske said Orange County has the highest tax rates in the state. He said the County's 136 entities, along with the school boards, try to find ways to spend taxpayer dollars. He said there are many things in the proposed budgets that appear to be non-essential, and seem to bloat the budget. He said only one Commissioner has expressed concern for the taxpayer's burden. He said County government has no regard for the taxpayer, and will

continue in excessive spending with exorbitant taxes. He asked if this will simply continue, or will the taxpayer have to revolt.

Brian Link said he a Social Studies teacher and the Social Justice Academy Director at East Chapel Hill High School, and is also the Vice President of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Association of Educators. He said he hopes the BOCC can help fund the schools. He said the nation is facing two pandemics: Covid-19 and racism. He said the BOCC has to choose how to direct funding, and he hopes it will do so in ways that promote equity and justice throughout.

Roshna Bala Keen said she is a civil rights attorney, and she has some questions about shifting funds from the Chapel Hill Library to a Covid Education fund. She said it is very important that everyone have access to the library, as it is a great equalizer. She said the library is an essential part of the community, and she has great concern about shifting the funds from the library to another purpose. She encouraged the BOCC to please find alternative funding sources.

Former Commissioner Barry Jacobs sent the following email, which Chair Rich read:

For 20 years, the Lands Legacy Program has been the backbone of Orange County's efforts to actively conserve open space and natural areas. The program has been key to our watershed protection efforts and to the farmland preservation that undergirds our bountiful local agricultural economy.

By providing a reliable, ongoing source of funds, Lands Legacy and associated conservation projects enable the county to amplify the impact of its contributions, attracting millions of dollars in matches from federal, state, regional and private partners. And, like the Social Justice Fund, dependability and flexibility are advanced by having a designated pool of money.

Lands Legacy is a recognized model for other counties, a source of pride for many Orange residents, and an affirmation of our environmental values. Doing away with, or limiting, the program without extensive forethought and public discussion would be highly regrettable.

Please have the chair read this aloud at the hearing.

Chair Rich read the following letter, which was translated from Spanish:

Atte: Beatriz Ponce

Padres de Cameron park

919 730-4867

Vazquezbeatriz17@yahoo.com

I am the mother of Angel (3rd Grade) and Ana (1st grade) from Cameron Park School. The reason for this letter is to let you know that as parents, neighbors and more parents from different schools in Orange County, we are very concerned about the upcoming decisions you could make that would affect us too much as part of the spanish-speaking community. We want to be present and participate more in our children's schools, we would like more interpreters in schools, on school boards, at events, and in our children's classes. Just thinking that you want to remove Spanish classes, the only thing that makes us feel welcome and makes us feel at home. SPANISH is more than just a language, it is culture and it is a universal communication. Spanish is too valuable which allows a person to be bilingual and it is the opportunity of many great things in spiritual, professional and educational life. That is why children from a young age are taught both languages so that when they grow up, already in universities, they are prepared. Medical studies have confirmed how important it is for them to learn a second language from a young age and that will last them throughout their lives. A child who starts speaking another language is very interesting because they do not lose their accents. An adult who seeks to speak a second language, it becomes more difficult to memorize and the pronunciation is difficult. For young children, however, it is pretty easy for them to capture all that and more. My request today is DO NOT REMOVE SPANISH CLASSES IN ORANGE

COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS. We want more support so that we can be present on school boards.

Vecinos y padres de otras escuelas - Neighbors and Parents from other Schools

Rosa Sandoval -Jordan mom CENTRAL ele.

Germán Sanchez- pawway elementaria

Anabel Sánchez -Efland cheek

Nanci abasolo -Cameron park

Rosario García -Cameron park

Agustina Tlaxani -new hope

Lucero Vargas -new hope

Sugey cardenas -Cameron park

Gloria mancilla -Cameron park

Carolina Favela -Cameron park

Karina trochet - new hope

Chair Rich said the Orange County Board of Commissioners only funds the schools, and the school districts, themselves, decide the curriculums.

Commissioner Greene read a statement from Reentry House Plus:

Reentry House Plus was founded as a 501c3 in 2019 with 2 co-equal missions.

First- Housing for men reentering into society and Second- Education to enhance the probability of success while transitioning back into the job market and to life and family.

HOUSING

The housing component has been made possible by a \$240,000 investment by a local LLC to purchase and renovate a 2500 sq ft house in Hillsborough. It will provide housing for 5-6 returning men and will be based on the Oxford House model in which each man will be responsible for securing jobs and contributing to the costs of their daily expenses.

We are currently working to set up alliances with local churches to sponsor one individual in the housing program and to help both financially and socially as a hands-on mentor. These alliances will allow Reentry House to make this component of our program self-sufficient. It is our expectation that we will be ready to accept men into the house in September of this year.

EDUCATION

But we named our organization Reentry House PLUS. The PLUS component is our commitment to education and support to assure higher probability of success in reentry into local society.

This educational component is possible due to an alliance with the SWIT team led by Tommy Green, CHW, PSS (NC FIT)! and William Elmore, Outreach Specialist (Reintegration Support Network). These men are past felons who have returned to local society as certified counselors currently working for county and other non-profit organizations. Their program has been successfully run for over 9 months with over 30 participant successes. Now they are ready to ramp up their efforts with an alliance with Reentry House Plus providing the facility and overall support and guidance.

Each teaching session contains up to 20 participants and is comprised of several classes taught over a one-month period. One new element to the program includes a computer teaching lab set up in the Reentry House in which job-related skills are taught.

But the most important element of the SWIT program is interaction with the staff who themselves have been incarcerated and who have learned how to turn their experiences into life changing opportunities for those involved in the program.

This program will welcome men and women from across the region and particularly Orange County. Our pool will include individuals from the Local Reentry Council, Parole, Probation, AA and NA graduates, and perhaps the Orange County Court System including the Family Drug Court.

Each one-month program will cost \$8,400- or \$420 per participant. Under this program- understanding that the contribution from Orange County will not be applied to the housing component of Reentry House Plus- a \$30,000 grant would provide instruction and support for up to 60 individuals in the Orange County area.

4. Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Dorosin, seconded by Commissioner Marcoplos to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Penny Rich, Chair

Donna S. Baker
Clerk to the Board

Submitted for approval by David Hunt, Deputy Clerk to the Board.