

**APPROVED 12/4/23**

**MINUTES  
ORANGE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BUSINESS MEETING  
October 17, 2023  
7:00 p.m.**

The Orange County Board of Commissioners met for a Business Meeting on Tuesday, October 17, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the Whitted Human Services Center in Hillsborough, NC.

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chair Jamezetta Bedford, Vice-Chair McKee and Commissioners Amy Fowler, Jean Hamilton, Phyllis Portie-Ascott, and Anna Richards (arrived at 7:23 pm)

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Commissioner Sally Greene

**COUNTY ATTORNEYS PRESENT:** John Roberts

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

Chair Bedford called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All commissioners were present, except Commissioner Richards and Commissioner Greene.

**1. Additions or Changes to the Agenda**

Chair Bedford dispensed with reading the public charge.

**2. Public Comments (Limited to One Hour)**

**a. Matters not on the Printed Agenda**

At the time this agenda item came up, there was no one signed up to speak. Following Item 3, the Board agreed to allow two public commenters for matters not on the printed agenda.

Susan Walson said she will speak about the proposed Orange Grove Rd. convenience center. She provided a packet of information, which the Clerk passed out to the Board. She said Solid Waste Management published information in response to questions that were raised at the neighborhood information meetings, and one of the documents was titled Appendix A. She said county staff has indicated that Appendix A shows market values for properties around existing convenience centers, however, she believes Appendix A actually shows the tax values from the properties' record cards. She said that market values and tax values are not equivalent, so this document does not accurately show what being near a convenience center does for property values. She said she pulled comps for residences in the Collins Creek neighborhood, which is adjacent to the property. She said the properties staff chose to highlight in Appendix A are not similar to the properties immediately surrounding the proposed site.

Marilee McTigue said she is a 30-year resident of Bingham Township and is speaking on the proposed convenience center. She read from the following prepared statement:

"Given all the information the community has shared with the BOCC, county manager, and Solid Waste Department, it's time for the county to stop wasting time and money on an option that is clearly not right for this community. We ask that the BOCC immediately direct the County Manager and Solid Waste staff to remove this option from further consideration and would very much appreciate your comments at the end of this meeting tonight.

If it's determined by the BOCC that consolidation of the Bradshaw Quarry and Ferguson Road Convenience Centers is justified with business criteria and it's critical to the success of the Solid Waste mission, then we ask that the BOCC provide concrete direction to the County Manager and Solid Waste staff as to selection criteria for the future site. The community asks that you provide the following direction:

1. That the Solid Waste Staff work in a collaborative and transparent manner with the Bingham Community to develop and assess criteria for a potential site.
2. That only Commercial or Industrial sites will be considered in order to be consistent with the siting of the Eubanks, Walnut Grove and High Rock sites. Sites in residential areas will be removed from consideration.
3. If no site is found that is acceptable to Solid Waste and the Bingham Township Community, we ask that you direct the County Manager and Solid Waste Staff to find a way to upgrade the current Ferguson Road and Bradshaw Quarry sites which, by the way, already meet the community's needs in their existing form. I understand this option was undertaken at High Rock when no acceptable replacement site was found and the upgrade plans were adjusted to fit into the existing High Rock site.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter and I look forward to hearing your comments at the conclusion of the BOCC regular agenda later this evening.”

b. Matters on the Printed Agenda

(These matters will be considered when the Board addresses that item on the agenda below.)

**3. Announcements, Petitions and Comments by Board Members**

Commissioner Fowler said she attended the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board meeting today and learned they received a clean financial audit. She said they have given out \$1.1 million in distributions this past year to law enforcement, substance abuse prevention and education organizations, and the county. On Thursday she said she will attend the Orange Cooperative Extension Breakfast and Report to the People.

Vice-Chair McKee read a statement expressing his concern for residents of Israel and Gaza following Hamas's terrorist attacks on Israel. He stated that he wanted to ask the Board to pass a Resolution in support of Israel but felt it would be words on paper without any real impact. Instead, he petitioned staff to reach out to community organizations, both governmental and private, to bring the Board information on how to actively participate in the rescue and repatriation of United States passport holders back to this country.

Chair Bedford petitioned staff to find out what the water standards are for watersheds and any state limits on building along S 15-501 where Chapel Hill Town Council is considering a request to change the water/sewer boundary. She said she attended the Board of Health meeting a few weeks ago, as well as an equity subcommittee meeting. She said the subcommittee reminded her of a Health in All Policies framework, which she wants to share with fellow commissioners. She said there is also consideration of potential work on a policy recommendation to restrict tobacco, vape, hemp shops within a certain distance of schools and parks. She said she, Commissioner Portie-Ascott, Commissioner Hamilton, and Commissioner Richards attended the Peach Apartments groundbreaking this morning. She said there will be 10 apartments off Merritt Mill Rd. in Chapel Hill built by EmPOWERment using some of the 2016 bond funds. She said the apartments will have no mortgage and will be affordable at 30% and 60% AMI.

Commissioner Portie-Ascott said she toured the proposed site for the solid waste convenience center on Orange Grove Rd. with Commissioner Richards. She said they were invited to tour by the residents in that community and listened to the concerns they have about

the convenience center at this location. She said she also attended the Triangle Area Rural Planning Organization (TARPO) meeting, and that board decided to meet every other month in 2024. She said the NC-54 Corridor Project the Board saw at a recent meeting was adopted at the TARPO meeting. She said she also learned at that meeting there will be 39 electric vehicle charging stations in the four-county area and 10 of those will be privately owned.

Commissioner Hamilton thanked Vice-Chair McKee for his comments on the events happening in the Middle East. She said through her work as a therapist, she knows that many are affected by what is going on there. She said she wishes everyone peace because violence won't help us develop as humans and as societies. She reminded everyone about the 9-8-8 Crisis Line for those feeling distressed. She said she attended an Alliance Health Board meeting and reported that Medicaid expansion is going to take place December 1, 2023. She said entities are working hard to be able to serve all those who will become eligible. She said the state has some funding for mental health services for those without insurance and that funding stream has not been cut. She said the state budget is looking to increase Medicaid reimbursement and payments to direct care workers to help support those providing mental health services. She said the Strategic Communications Committee met on October 6<sup>th</sup> and they are working to improve communication with county residents. On the same day, she also attended the Employee Appreciation Celebration and expressed her thanks to Orange County staff. She said she met with the executive director of the Central Pines Regional Council and learned more about that organization. Finally, she said she enjoyed attending the Peach Apartments groundbreaking, and said it is a great example of what can be done when government, non-profit organizations, and the private sector work together.

The Board agreed to revisit Item 2-a to allow two members of the public to comment on matters not on the printed agenda.

#### **4. Proclamations/ Resolutions/ Special Presentations**

##### **a. Orange County Arts Commission 2023-24 Annual Grant Recipients**

The Board acknowledged local artists and organization receiving 2023-24 Orange County Arts Grants

##### **BACKGROUND:**

##### Orange County Annual Grants Cycle

The Orange County Arts Commission (OCAC) administers two primary grant programs each year. The Grassroots Arts Program (GAP) utilizes state funding to provide support for nonprofit organizations and schools conducting arts programming. The Artist Project Grant (APG) utilizes County funding for artist-led community projects.

For the second year, \$45,000 (typically dispersed through the Outside Agencies Program) was allocated to the OCAC's annual Grassroots Arts Program to ensure arts agencies were applying for funding through a program specific to the arts following the best practices set forth by the North Carolina Arts Council. Of that \$45,000, \$15,289 was directly allocated to Kidzu and is managed by the Visitors Bureau, changing this year's available allocation to \$29,711.

For the first time this year, the OCAC elected to keep the allowed 50% of Grassroots Arts Program funding to partially support a new full-time Programs Coordinator, lowering the amount of GAP funds available for sub-granting by half.

Statistics regarding this year's grant cycle are noted in the chart below.

<b>TOTAL</b>	
NC Arts Council Funding: Grassroots Arts Program	\$25,508
NC Arts Council Funding: ARPA	\$35,001
Orange County Funding: Artist Support Grants	\$28,800
Orange County Funding: Outside Agencies	\$29,711
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDING</b>	<b>\$119,020</b>
Total dollar amount requests	\$158,497
Total grants awarded	38, or 81% of applications
Total applications received	47, 45 eligible
Total first-time applicants	12, or 30% of applicants

The OCAC grant review and awards process is as follows:

1. The grant application process is open for two months. Two virtual training sessions occurred and the OCAC director was available for one-on-one meetings.
2. After the due date, OCAC staff conducts an initial compliance and eligibility review. Applications found noncompliant or outside of the grant requirements are considered disqualified. Eligible organizations are given a compliance score based on prior year adherence to grant requirements such as logo usage and reporting.
3. Qualified applications are forwarded to members of each review panel for initial review and scoring. This year's grant panels included the following:
  - a. Visual Arts: Composed of OCAC Board Members with visual arts expertise, as well as one visual arts professional from the community.
  - b. Performing Arts: Composed of OCAC Board Members with performing arts expertise, as well as one performing arts professional from the community.
  - c. Literary Arts: Composed of OCAC Board Members with literary arts expertise.
4. Non-governmental Grassroots Arts Program (GAP) applicants are also evaluated by a Financial Review Panel who examine submitted financial documents to determine financial solvency and stability.
5. Each panel met virtually to evaluate assigned applications. Feedback, first strengths and then challenges, was offered by panelists and recorded by OCAC staff. After discussion, each panelist submitted a score through the online platform for each of the categories below. After all scores were submitted, the Director recorded the final score per applicant.
6. The scoring rubric for this year's grant program was as follows:
  - GRASSROOTS ARTS PROGRAM - ORGANIZATIONS**
    - Artistic Merit – 30%
    - Community Impact – 25%
    - Program Management – 15%
    - Financial Review – 10%
    - NC Arts Council Priority of Funding – 10%
    - Compliance score (prior grantees only) – 10%
  - GRASSROOTS ARTS PROGRAM - SCHOOLS**
    - Artistic Merit – 40%
    - Integration in curriculum/enrichment – 40%
    - Free and Reduced Lunch Percentage – 20%
  - ARTIST PROJECT GRANTS**
    - Artistic Merit – 40%
    - Community Impact – 30%
    - Program Management – 20%

Compliance score (prior grantees only) – 10%

7. Funding decisions were made at the September 2023 OCAC meeting. For the GAP program, the board prioritized high scoring program requests, programs hiring multicultural artists, and schools. For APG, the board approved funding applicants with scores above 60 at their full request amount.
8. All applicants were notified of the panel's decisions. All declined GAP applicants received panel feedback; and approved GAP and APG applicants could receive feedback upon request.

Katie Murray, Arts Commission Director, reviewed the background information for the item and introduced grant recipients. Following recognition, a picture was taken of the Board and grant recipients.

*Commissioner Richards arrived at 7:23 pm.*

## **5. Public Hearings**

### **a. Joint Public Hearing with the Historic Preservation Commission Regarding the Proposed Designation of the Davis Cotton Gin and Press as an Orange County Historic Landmark**

**BACKGROUND:** In 1991, the BOCC adopted the "Ordinance Creating the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) of Orange County," also referred to as the "Historic Preservation Ordinance." In 1997, the BOCC adopted the Historic Landmark Program, a voluntary program allowing the HPC to designate properties of local historic and/or architectural significance, as authorized by NC General Statute 160D-9-40 - 160D-9-51. One of the HPC's duties is to recommend properties to the BOCC for historic landmark designation. Properties must meet a high standard of historic and/or architectural significance to be designated as a landmark. The higher standard is appropriate since landmark property owners are eligible for a fifty (50) percent property tax deferral as provided by State law, as long as the property retains its historic character. The intent of this tax treatment is to provide a modest benefit for owners who face high costs to maintain, paint and repair historic buildings, usually by employing local tradespeople.

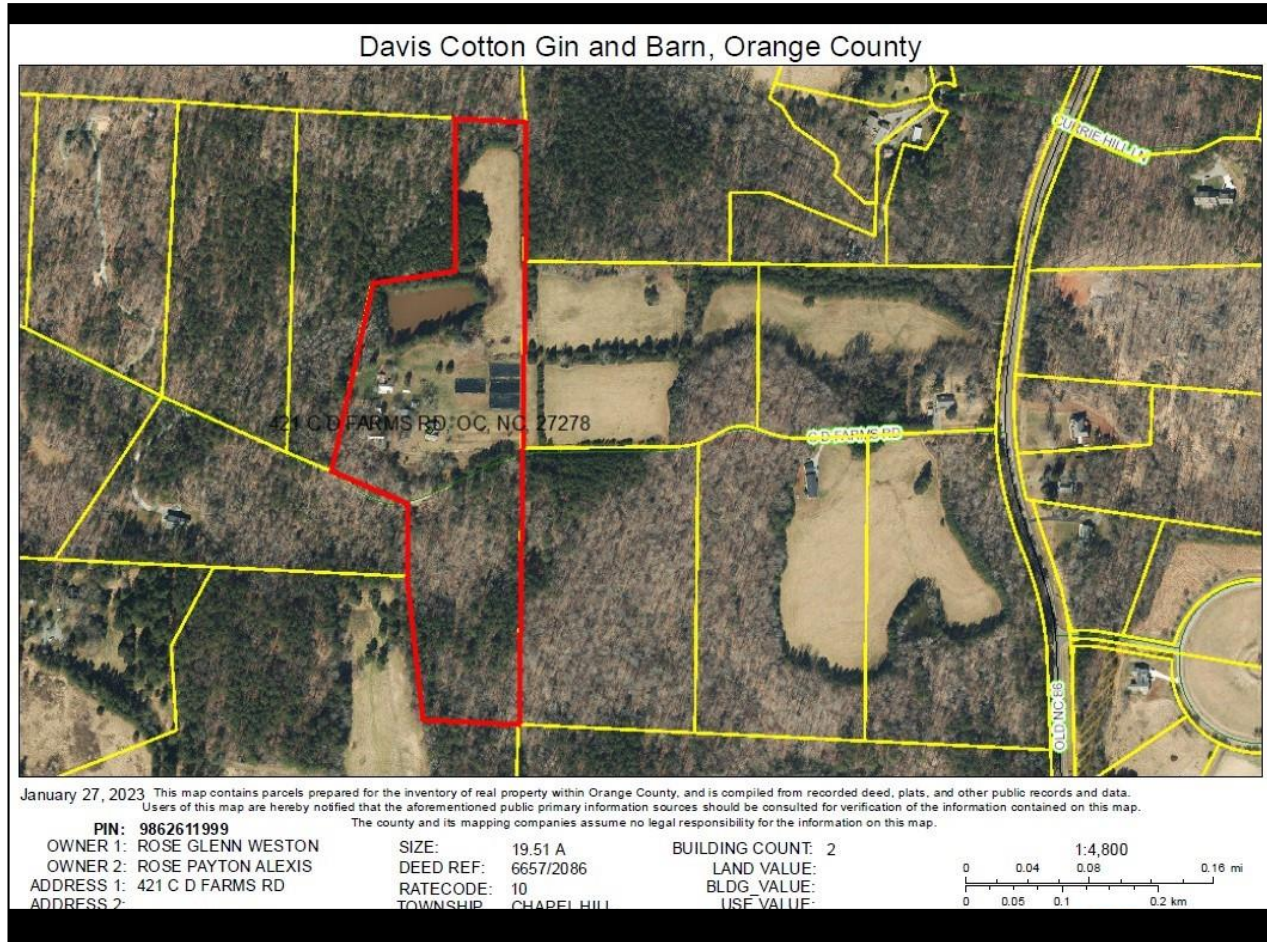
The historic landmark designation process involves several steps culminating with the adoption of an ordinance by the BOCC for each individual landmark. The HPC adopted a motion at its November 2, 2022 meeting stating that the Davis Cotton Gin and Press possesses special historical and/or architectural significance and is worthy of landmark designation. The November 2, 2022 meeting minutes are provided as Attachment 2. (This is the fourth of the four landmark applications approved by the HPC on November 2, 2022. The other three properties were approved by the BOCC in June 2023.)

The application material for this property (Attachment 1) was then submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for review and comment as required by State law. The SHPO provided a positive review (Attachment 3). The next step is for the HPC and BOCC to hold a joint public hearing as required by the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Following this joint public hearing, the BOCC and the HPC will take into consideration public comments, if any. It is projected that the HPC will then present a final draft landmark ordinance to the Board of Commissioners for consideration and adoption, likely at a November 2023 Business meeting.

Peter Sandbeck, Cultural Resources Coordinator with the Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks and Recreation reviewed the background information for the item, and made the following presentation:

Slide #1



Peter Sandbeck said it is rare, but not unheard of, to designate an object as a landmark. He said cotton was not a big crop in Orange County, but residents in the southern part of the county did start growing it after the Civil War and it proved to be a good cash crop. He said this was a community cotton gin used by many farmers.

Slide #2

Davis Farm Cotton Gin and Press: proposed parcel of approx. 1.5 acres for landmark designation



Slide #3



Peter Sandbeck said efforts will be made to restore the barn.

Slide #4



Peter Sandbeck said wagons were parked under the door and cotton was unloaded and hauled into the upper story.

Slide #5





Slide #6



Peter Sandbeck said the red arrow points to the cotton press where the cotton was pushed down and pressed.

Slide #7



Peter Sandbeck said the door with the red error could be moved to remove the pressed cotton bales. He said the blue arrows point to push poles which people used to push the cotton into the press. He said this was a manual press as opposed to steam powered or horse powered as some were.

Slide #8



Slide #9



Peter Sandbeck said once this box was full of cotton, the screw would be turned and pressed down.

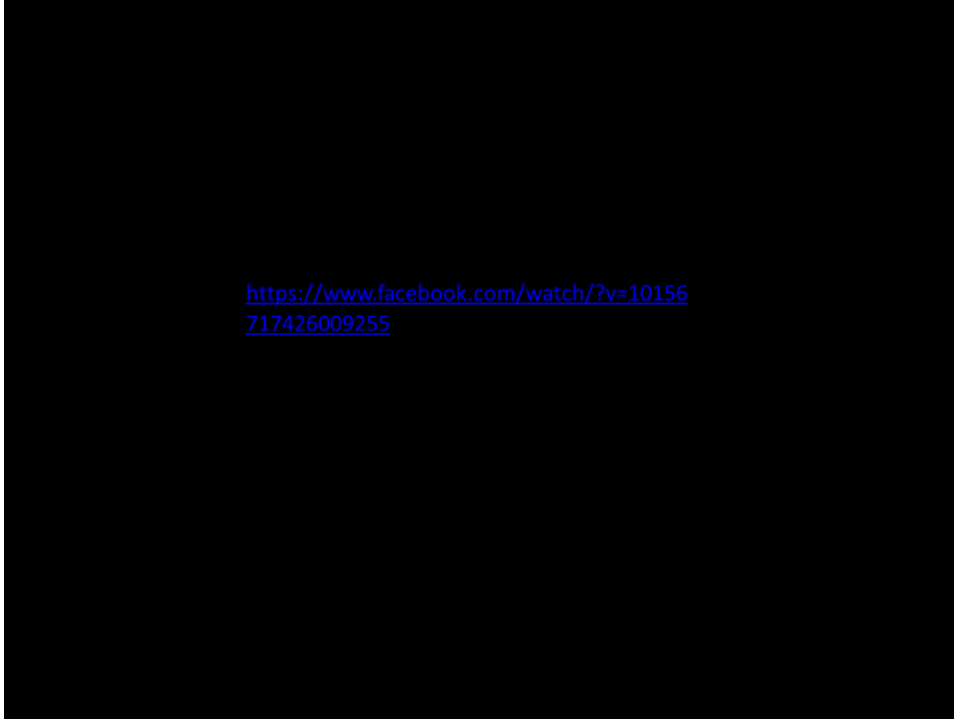
Slide #10



Slide #11



Slide #12



Peter Sandbeck then played a video depicting a similar functioning cotton gin to demonstrate how the Davis Cotton Gin once operated.

The following Historic Preservation Commission members were present for the public hearing: Chair Art Menius, Vice-Chair Paul Noe, Steve Peck, Anne Whisnant, and Todd Dickinson.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair McKee, seconded by Commissioner Fowler, to open the public hearing.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

No one was signed up to speak during the public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fowler, seconded by Vice-Chair McKee, to close the public hearing.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

Chair Bedford said she looks forward to this coming back for approval in November.

Commissioner Richards thanked the property owners for preserving the cotton gin and making it available for landmark designation. She said it is great that they have this connection to history and the desire for preservation.

Commissioner Hamilton asked if the cotton gin could become operational as part of the barn renovation.

Peter Sandbeck said he hopes to get someone who restores antique equipment like this to assist with that task. He said it is a work in progress.

Vice-Chair McKee said he appreciates that the property owners recognized the cotton gin for what it was and were willing to work to save it. He said he is sure it is restorable.

Commissioner Fowler said this was very interesting to learn about and thanked Peter Sandbeck for his thorough work.

**b. Public Hearing on Close Out of CDBG-CV Grant for Emergency Housing Assistance**

The Board held a public hearing on closing out Orange County's Federal Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds.

**BACKGROUND:** On August 25, 2020, Governor Roy Cooper announced the availability of \$28 million from federal Community Development Block Grant – Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funding to be disbursed by the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR) to support rental and utility payments and prevent evictions for those with a demonstrated need.

Orange County applied for the CDBG-CV funds to be used with the County's existing Emergency Housing Assistance (EHA) fund, which provides financial assistance to help Orange County residents with low incomes secure and maintain stable housing. Assistance was available to households in Orange County that earn no more than 60% of the area median income and had an urgent need for housing assistance. The total amount awarded to Orange County was \$900,000.

In accordance with closing out the grant, Orange County must hold a public hearing to obtain residents' comments about the program's impact and how it was administered. In addition to this public hearing, residents had from September 15 through October 15, 2023 to submit comments to the Housing Department's Community Stability Manager, Libbie Hough, via email, in writing, or by phone.

(In January 2023, the program instituted a cap of \$6,000/calendar year and moved to assisting households in Orange County that earn no more than 30% of the area median income, except in the cases of eviction, utility disconnections, and exiting homelessness. Since July 2023, income has not used to qualify for assistance; however, the household must document notice of eviction, imminent utility disconnection, or that they are exiting homelessness. These changes were made as funding for the program depleted CDBG-CV funds and transitioned to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.)

**Municipal updates**

- County EHA staff served as the program administrators for CDBG-CV awards given to the Town of Carrboro and the Town of Hillsborough. This meant that clients applied for assistance from the County, and the County invoiced the Towns for those expenses. County CDBG-CV funds covered the Town of Chapel Hill as the town is a CDBG direct service recipient and could not draw down further assistance.

- The Town of Carrboro has expended all funds (\$900,000) and is currently in its close out process. The Town of Hillsborough will have expended its funds by this fall (\$600,000) and begin its close-out process thereafter.

**Unique households served:** Many households applied multiple times throughout the life of the grant.

Locality	CDBG-CV	ARPA	HOPE	Lifetime Total Households
Orange County	228	400	75	703
Carrboro	198	562	120	880
Chapel Hill	173	1,119	160	1,452
Hillsborough	215*	84	69	368
<b>Funding Stream Totals</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>2979*</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>Total Households 3,403*</b>
*Numbers will increase by end of 2023				

Minutes from this hearing will be approved by the BOCC at an upcoming meeting. The approved minutes along with any comments provided to the Housing Department (Libbie Hough) during the required 30-day window will be submitted along with all close-out documentation to the North Carolina Department of Commerce in November.

Libbie Hough, Community Stability Manager for the Orange County Housing Department, reviewed the background information for the item.

Commissioner Portie-Ascott asked if any of these funds were used for housing rehab.

Libbie Hough said HOME funds are available through the Community Development division of the Housing Department for people needing housing rehab and repair. She said some CDBG funds can also be used for this purpose, but the CDBG-CV funds had another focus.

A motion was made by Commissioner Portie-Ascott, seconded by Commissioner Hamilton, to open the public hearing.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

No one was signed up to speak during the public hearing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fowler, seconded by Commissioner Portie-Ascott, to close the public hearing.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

**6. Regular Agenda**

**a. Consideration of Increased Allocation for Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools Board of Education Members**

The Board approved a resolution approving a request for an increased monthly allocation for members of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (CHCCS) Board of Education.

**BACKGROUND:** On September 7, 2023, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Board of Education approved a resolution requesting an increase to be considered by the Board of County Commissioners. The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools Board of Education requests an increase in Board members' stipends – from the current stipend of \$334 per month (or \$4,008 per year) to \$1,118 per month for five Board members, the Board Vice Chair receiving \$1,263, and Board Chair receiving \$1,409 per month. This is an increase of \$784 per month or \$9,408 per year for a

single Board member, and a combined increase of \$71,088 per year for all Board members together, including the higher rates for the two Board leadership positions.

It is proposed that this become effective January 1, 2024, after the November 2023 Board of Education election, including the new Board's selection of Chair and Vice Chair for 2024. As it reflects an expense allowance, North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) 115C-38 requires Board of County Commissioners' approval, consistent with the procedures described in NCGS 153A-92, before it can go into effect.

Under North Carolina General Statute 115C-38, and per the authority set in North Carolina General Statute 153A-92, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) sets the compensation of board of education members annually during the budget approval process:

"The tax-levying authority for a local school administrative unit may, under the procedures of G.S. 153A-92, fix the compensation and expense allowances paid members of the board of education of that local school administrative unit. Funds for the per diem, subsistence, and mileage for all meetings of county and city boards of education shall be provided from the current expense fund budget of the particular county or city. The compensation and expense allowances of members of boards of education shall continue at the same levels as paid on July 1, 1975, until changed by or pursuant to local act or pursuant to this section."

Based on this, the Manager recommends the Board of Commissioners consider the new monthly stipend rates of \$1,118 per month for CHCCS Board members, \$1,263 for the CHCCS Board Vice Chair and \$1,409 for the CHCCS Board Chair. The annualized cost of this action would be \$71,088. Funding for the remainder of FY 2023-24 could be provided through an increase in the County's current expense funding towards Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools by appropriating fund balance.

Bonnie Hammersley reviewed the background information for the item. She explained that if new money is allocated to CHCCS for this increase, the General Fund Appropriation Policy for Local School Districts requires that Orange County Schools (OCS) also receive a funding increase, resulting in a total allocation between both districts of \$60,822 from the county's fund balance. She noted that the Orange County Schools Board of Education does not currently want to increase their board stipend rates. She said the last time there was an increase was February of 2022 when CHCCS requested a 2.5% wage increase for Board of Education members. She said the school district used its existing funds for this increase, so this did not result in a required funding increase to OCS, whose Board of Education also did not want to increase the board stipend rates at that time.

Chair Bedford clarified that the \$60,822 would double the next budget cycle since this calculation is only for half of a fiscal year.

Bonnie Hammersley said that is correct.

Commissioner Portie-Ascott asked if CHCCS currently has the funds

Bonnie Hammersley said the school board would have to provide the answer to that question.

Commissioner Fowler asked what the compensation is for school boards in surrounding counties.

Bonnie Hammersley said she doesn't have that information.

Commissioner McKee said if this request is approved and additional funding is allocated to OCS, the Board does not have any input on how that money is used.

Bonnie Hammersley said the Boards of Education determine how any money provided is spent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Riza Jenkins, CHCCS Board of Education member, spoke about her own personal experience in support of the request to increase compensation for Board of Education members. She said the reality is that the work of the school board takes effort and time, as the commissioners are well aware from their service as well. She said it may seem that she does well for herself now, but that was not the case a few short years ago or thirteen years ago when her family first moved here. She said she declined to run for school board for years due to the time commitment she couldn't manage while also raising three children. She said the child care it would have required was a cost her family couldn't support, and getting to meetings on time and staying late just wasn't possible. She said even now that her children are older, she still has to take time off of work, ask friends or pay for transportation for her children, just to attend meetings. She said sometimes her son walks home after an evening practice, her daughters wait for thirty minutes or more outside of their dance class, and sometimes her kids are just unable to do some of the activities they want because they do not always have someone to take them and pick them up. She said the current stipend offsets some financial barriers, but it isn't enough compensation for the 800-1,000 hours spent per year doing the work of the school board. She said school board members must also take on the cost of ensuring their own personal safety. She said when she first attended an information session on becoming a school board member, the members at the time were two-parent households, high wage earner households, or retired or semi-retired individuals. She said she appreciates the contributions of all school board members past and present, but representation from the communities whose needs they are trying to meet matters. She said as the only solo parent on the board and a woman of color, she knows that representation matters and while she has the privilege of a college and advanced degrees to help her overcome many of her own personal struggles, many of the voices that should be at the table may or do not. She said she wants to see more diversity on the board of education and increasing the stipend isn't the only way, but it will help decrease the barriers for some community members.

Following public comments, Vice-Chair McKee said he would like to discuss this topic at a joint meeting with the CHCCS Board of Education and then have the request come to the Board as part of the budget. He said he would also rather have any increase apply to both Boards of Education.

Chair Bedford said there are two decision points if the Board chooses to act tonight. The first is to determine an amount for the increase and the second is to determine whether or not to use new funds.

Commissioner Richards asked if the alternative to new funding is for the Board of Education use money already allocated for the increase, and in that case there would not be a requirement to give funds to OCS. She said she is concerned about the timing because once money is given, the next year this amount is in the continuation budget for CHCCS. She said this creates a false baseline since it's mid-year.

Commissioner Fowler said she tried to find school board rates online. She said the time commitment may be less than as a Commissioner, but school board members probably receive even more emails and sometimes meet even later. She said she is willing to increase the stipend, and suggested increasing to \$10,000 a year for board members, \$11,250 for the Vice-Chair and \$12,500 for the Chair. She said she is open to providing new funds, or having the school board find the money in their current fund balance.

Commissioner Portie-Ascott said she thinks that representation does matter and acknowledges that it is a lot of work to serve the community and wants people to be fairly compensated. She said she is in support of the school board using their fund balance for the increase now and to revisit this request as part of the budget cycle.

Commissioner Hamilton said, having served on the CHCCS school board, she understands the work required and supports a raise. She said she is concerned about the timing



of this request. She said it is a significant increase and thinks pay information should be gathered from comparable districts around the state, and an estimation of the cost in order to establish a basis for the increase. She said she wants to be clear about why the request has happened when asked rather than an arbitrary amount. She said she feels this needs to be part of the school system's budget request and cannot support this at this time.

Chair Bedford said she fully supports an increase in compensation for Board of Education members, but agreed with others that this should be part of the CHCCS budget request and that additional information is needed to establish the amount of the increase. She suggested the school board set aside money for reimbursement for transportation, child care, and other costs relevant to service as needed. She said this could be an interim and even possibly a long-term option. She said she thinks it would be wise and transparent to wait for the budget season, but would also give the school board permission now to use their own funds.

Vice-Chair McKee said he's uncomfortable not knowing the amounts other school boards are compensated across the state and not having had a deeper discussion. He reiterated that he would like to wait for the budget season.

Commissioner Richards said utilizing fund balance is already an issue, so she is uncomfortable with telling CHCCS to take it out of their fund balance. She said there needs to be a work session at some point around fund balance. She said she believes representation is important also, and some assessment needs to be done to determine the appropriate level of compensation. She said she also supports the request being part of the budget process and getting more information.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair McKee, seconded by Commissioner Fowler, to deny the request to increase the allocation for CHCCS Board of Education members at this time, and bring it back as part of the budget process with comparables and other assessments.

Commissioner Fowler made a friendly amendment to clarify that the comparables should be local.

Commissioner Portie-Ascott asked if the Board of Education can do Chair Bedford's suggestion without the Board taking any action.

Chair Bedford said they can do that at any time, and asked John Roberts to verify.

John Roberts said that's correct.

Commissioner Richards said Chair Bedford's suggestion could also provide an indication of the current need.

Commissioner Fowler said she is in favor of Chair Bedford's idea but thinks there are other costs that this type of set-aside may not cover. She said she believes the current stipend should be at least doubled but agrees that having local numbers for comparison would be helpful to make the increase the most accurate.

## **VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

### **7. Reports**

None.

### **8. Consent Agenda**

- Removal of Any Items from Consent Agenda
- Approval of Remaining Consent Agenda
- Discussion and Approval of the Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Vice-Chair McKee, seconded by Commissioner Hamilton, to approve the consent agenda.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS****a. Minutes**

The Board approved the minutes of the September 12, 2023 Work Session, as presented.

**b. Resolution Authorizing Sale of Property for the Sheriff's Office**

The Board approved a resolution authorizing the sale of surplus ammunition for the Person County Sheriff's Office.

**c. Fiscal Year 2023-24 Budget Amendment #2**

The Board approved budget, grant, and capital project ordinance amendments for Fiscal Year 2023-24.

**d. Approval of the Proposed Memorandum of Understanding between Orange and Durham Counties for the Storage and Implementation of the Mobile Poultry Processing Unit**

The Board authorized the County Manager to designate Cooperative Extension managerial staff to enter a start date, sign, and monitor the attached Memorandum of Understanding between Durham and Orange counties, and to further execute any amendments or extensions of the Memorandum of Understanding.

**e. Change in BOCC Meeting Schedule for 2023**

The Board amended its meeting calendar for 2023 to hold a work session on November 10, 2023 at the Bonnie B. Davis Environmental and Agricultural Center, 1020 US 70 West in Hillsborough from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

**f. Boards and Commissions – Appointments**

The Board approved appointments to boards and commissions as reviewed and discussed during the October 10, 2023 Work Session.

**9. County Manager's Report**

Bonnie Hammersley reminded the Board that there is no meeting next week and the next meeting is November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**10. County Attorney's Report**

John Roberts said the legislature has not adjourned and is currently focused on redistricting. He said there is no real check on what they can do, and a decision will happen soon since there isn't much opposition. He said there is a new provision in the state budget, which is a revamping of the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations. He said this commission is given extensive authority to investigate local governments and public entities. He said he will gather additional information on this issue and provide an update to the Board.

Commissioner Fowler asked if it's true that the legislature doesn't have to comply with FOIA requests now.

John Roberts said the Legislative Records Custodian now has the discretion to withhold many documents and records from the public view.

Vice-Chair McKee asked how that was legal.

John Roberts said the Freedom of Information Act applies to federal agencies, not state governments. He said the legislature and Governor adopt and pass the State Public Records Act.

**11. \*Appointments**

None.

**12. Information Items**

- October 3, 2023 BOCC Meeting Follow-up Actions List

**13. Closed Session**

None.

**Adjournment**

Before adjournment, Chair Bedford reminded Commissioners about the Cooperative Extension Breakfast on Thursday morning. She also reported that she and Commissioner Hamilton are taking a tour of the proposed site for the Orange Grove Rd. waste and recycling center on Friday.

A motion was made by Commissioner Fowler, seconded by Commissioner Hamilton, to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUS**

Jamezetta Bedford, Chair

Recorded by Tara May, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Submitted for approval by Laura Jensen, Clerk to the Board