

**MINUTES
BURKE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED MEETING**

The Burke County Board of Commissioners held a recessed meeting (budget retreat) on Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at the Lake James State Park Visitors Center - Paddy's Creek, 2229 Lake James State Park Road, Nebo, NC. The agenda, in its entirety, was posted to the County's website, www.burkenc.org, several days prior to the meeting. Those present were:

COMMISSIONERS: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Chairman
Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman
Randy Burns
Johnnie W. Carswell

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Phil Smith (Sick)

STAFF: Brian Epley, County Manager
Margaret Pierce, Deputy County Manager/Finance Director
J.R. Simpson, II, County Attorney
Kay Honeycutt Draughn, Clerk to the Board
Various Department Heads

MEDIA: Sharon McBrayer, Reporter, The News Herald
Marty Queen, Reporter, The Paper

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brittain called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion: To approve the agenda as presented.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Jeffrey C. Brittain, Scott Mulwee, Randy Burns and Johnnie W. Carswell
ABSENT:	Phil Smith

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

CM - DAY 1 RECAP

Brian Epley, County Manager, presented a brief overview of topics discussed during the first day of the budget retreat. He touched on the asset inventory and assessment, the housing study results, the capital improvement plan updates, the public safety performance analysis, and the pay & classification study results. Mr. Epley then reviewed the itinerary.

HEALTH - OPIOID USE DISORDER

Danny Scalise, Local Health Director, and Dr. Katie Varnadoe, Human Services Planner, facilitated a joint presentation on the historical overview of opioid use, the opioid settlement, and strategies for addressing the opioid crisis. Highlights of their presentation were as follows:

EMPOWERING BURKE COUNTY ADDRESSING SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER & MAXIMIZING OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS MARCH 8, 2024 DANNY SCALISE II, MBA, MPH, CPH, FACHE KATIE VARNADOE, EDD, MBA, CPH	CONTENTS •History •Examining Root Causes •Review of NC MOA •Current Strategies •Vision for the Future
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HISTORY

Circa 10,000 BCE Opium used medicinally and spiritually by Greeks.	Circa 4,000 BCE Written references to opium poppy found in southern Mesopotamia
Circa 2500 BCE Therapeutic papyrus of Thebes lists 700 remedies using opium	Circa 750 BCE Opium because widespread in Europe, Middle East, and North Africa
17th century Turks ate opium for pleasure, and it was smoked in China, East Indies, and Vietnam	18th century Anti Opium Movement cites Opium Dens

19th century

Use of Opium in Britain, Western Europe, and America was as common as aspirin use today.



1906

US began initiatives to reduce illicit drug trade with opium traffic in the Philippines

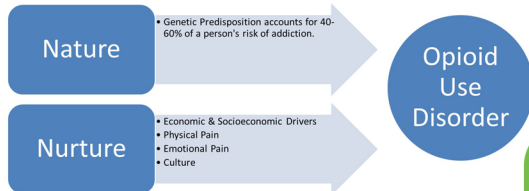


Purdue Pharma

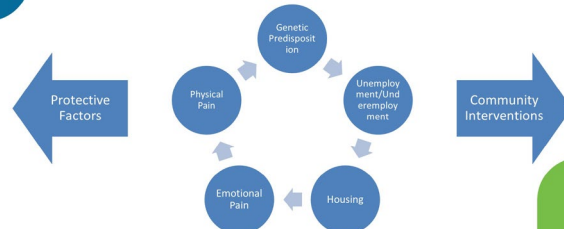
- 1911-1990s – Opioid pain medications used for acute pain or cancer pain.
- 1952 – Sacklers take over Purdue Frederick Company
- 1987 – MS Contin (morphine sulphate) approved (first morphine dosage for 12 hours in lieu of 4 to 6)
- 1990 – First fentanyl patch Duragesic approved
- 1995 – OxyContin approved (first oxycodone dosage for 12 hours in lieu of 4 to 6 - FDA believed this would mean less abuse) Purdue begins heavy marketing
- 1998 – Actiq (fentanyl) approved to treat cancer breakthrough pain

EXAMINING ROOT CAUSES

HISTORICAL ROOT CAUSES OF OUD



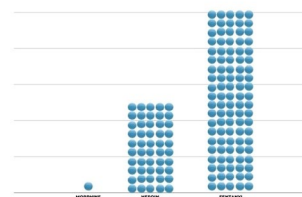
TODAY'S ROOT CAUSES



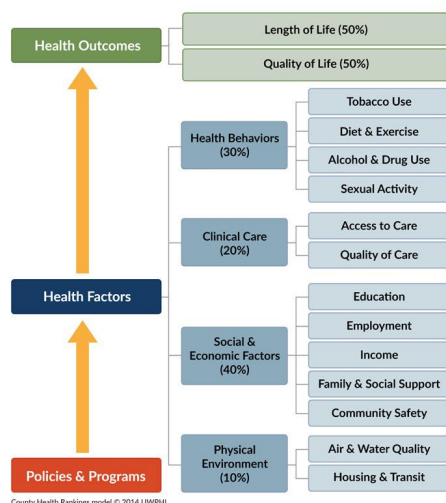
PERPETUATING FACTORS



A Fatal Ratio



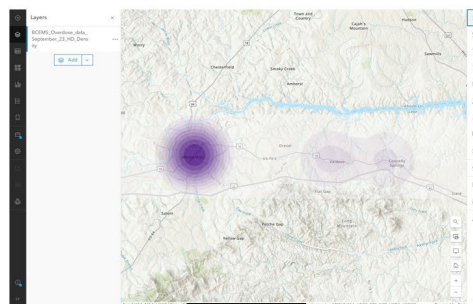
WHY DO YOU CARE?



WHERE

HEAT MAPPING & DATA TRACKING

- In FY23-24, we have invested in technologies to help us identify where overdoses are occurring and trends that might help us prevent future overdoses. (ARC GIS, ODMAPS, REDCap, EMS Software)
- What we have found:
 - Overdoses are happening along major highways
 - Overdoses are often not happening at a person's place of residence

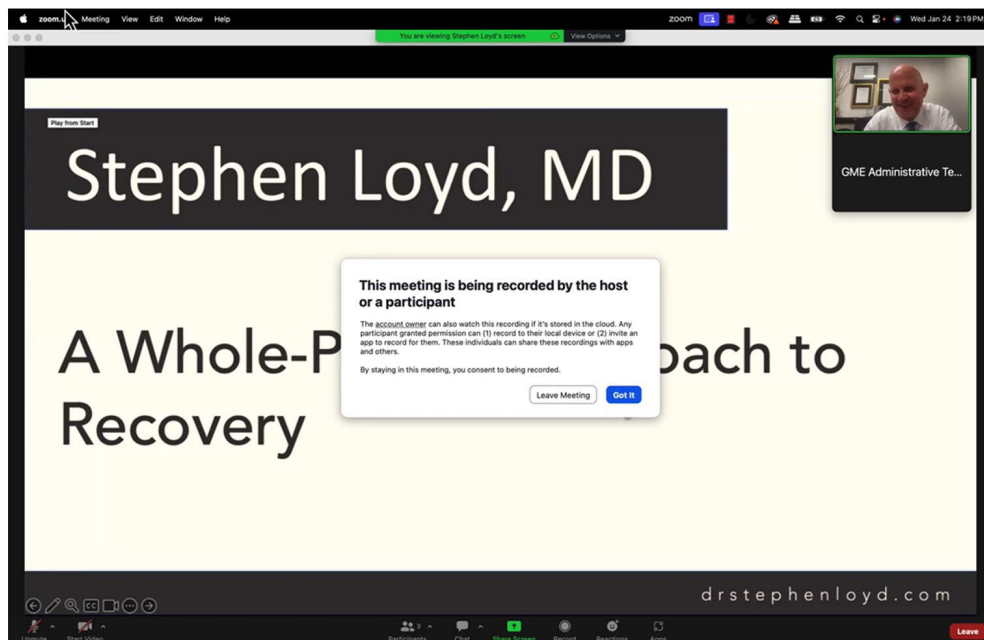
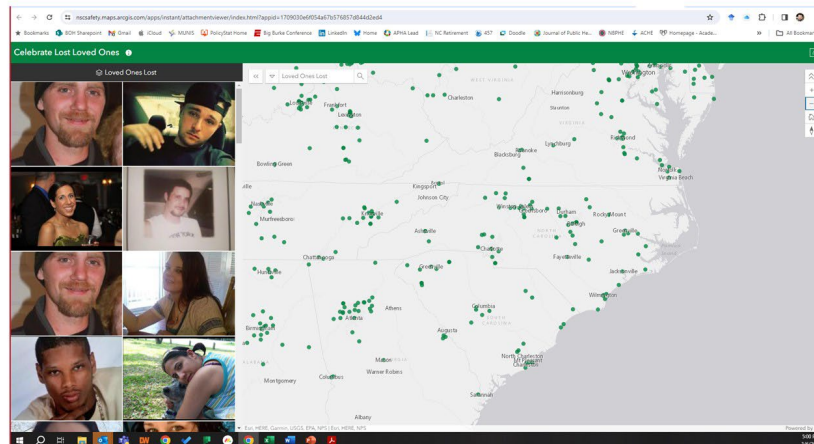


WHO

Calendar Year 2023

Overdose deaths

- 41 males
- 25 females
- Average age 43.5 years



The video depicted above was played during the presentation and discussed a whole-person approach to recovery. The video is hereby incorporated into the meeting minutes by reference.

NATIONAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT & NC MOA	DIRECTING & APPROVING SETTLEMENT EXPENDITURES • NC MOA outlines process for selecting approved interventions • Option A & Option B- what's the difference? • Exhibit C- Collaborative Strategic Planning • What happens after completion of the Strategic Plan?
TODAY	
APPROVED STRATEGIES 	SELECTION OF STRATEGIES • Opioid settlement planning group • Option A strategy: Collaborative Strategic Planning • Strategies requested: • Support sustainability of future strategies • Align with county priorities: workforce development • Required for the completion of Option B of the NC MOA
SUD PROJECT MANAGER • Grant management • Strategic planning coordination • Systems coordination • Oversight of approved strategies • In 2024: • Bimonthly updates • Strategic plan for expenditures • Public facing site for opioid settlement updates • Regional network development	NALOXONE DISTRIBUTION • 244 Boxes of nasal Narcan purchased • \$41/box • 2 doses per box • 34 boxes distributed • HD strategic goal: 1000 doses/year 
PEER MENTOR NETWORK • Option A: #1 Collaborative strategic planning • Requested Amount: \$30,000 • Term: January 16, 2024-June 30, 2025 • Outcomes: • Recovery advisory council • Support & mentoring for newly certified peers	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT • Option A: #1 Collaborative strategic planning • Requested Amount: \$30,000 • Term: January 16, 2024-June 30, 2025 • Outcomes: • Qualitative data collection from individuals with lived experience • English & Spanish "voices of recovery" • Destigmatization • Platform to spread message of hope

CONSULTING SERVICES • Option A: #1 Collaborative strategic planning • Requested Amount: \$65,000 • Term: January 16, 2024-June 30, 2025 • Outcomes: • Strategic plan to access option b strategies • Feasibility & sustainability studies for selected strategies • Third-party non-binding recommendations to board of commission	OVERDOSE FATALITY REVIEW • Option A: #1 Collaborative strategic planning • Requested Amount: \$1,500 • Term: January 16, 2024-June 30, 2025 • Outcomes: • Arc GIS license • Recovery asset "inventory" system • Data collection & mapping for OFR/PHAST team
OTHER STRATEGIES 	COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH • BJA Recovery Court: \$500,000 • BJA Harbour: \$600,000 • Dogwood Health Trust: \$625,000 • Sunrise RCC Grant: \$50,000 • LEAD, REENTRY • BSAN & Community Outreach • Community Paramedicine
 Total request • Total request \$126,500 • Total previously approved: \$310,000 • Total deposits from FY22-23: \$1,745,171 • Total unallocated amount*: \$1,308,671 • Expected FY 23-24 deposits: \$3,430,198 Data Dashboard - NC Payment Schedule - North Carolina Opioid Settlements (ncopioidsettlement.org) *Upon approval of requested strategies	
THE FUTURE	

WE ENVISION A COUNTY WHERE NO ONE SUFFERS FROM THE EFFECTS OF SUBSTANCE USE • What is your vision for the future? • How can we track our progress? Introducing BCOR.info • Burke County is a leader in Opioid Abatement strategies • MAT Grand Rounds • Regional Partnerships- Fletcher Group What's next? How do we continue to build resiliency in response to Xylazine, Meth, etc.?	
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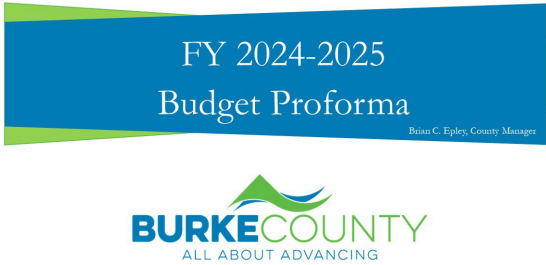
Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. Commissioner Burns raised inquiries about the cause of the opioid crisis. Mr. Scalise provided insights into the historical context of drug laws and the evolving landscape of opioid consumption, leading to a dialogue about historical perspectives and cultural variations. Concerns were raised about the source of the crisis, whether it was the prevalence of illegal drugs versus overprescription. Dr. Varnadoe speculated on the correlation between overdose occurrences and drug distribution along the I-40 corridor. Mr. Scalise shed light on the demographics of overdose victims and the complexities of substance use disorders. Commissioner Carswell highlighted socioeconomic factors contributing to drug accessibility. Mr. Scalise emphasized the stigma around mental health in society. Mr. Epley noted the downstream effects of overdose on the foster care system. Discussions also touched on the coding of overdose cases in emergency rooms and the use of opioid settlement funds for preventive measures. Chairman Brittain expressed his initial skepticism about the feasibility of Option B outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement, which was assuaged by Dr. Varnadoe's explanation. The discussion extended to community perceptions of intervention strategies, with hopes that education and outreach could shift public opinion positively. Dr. Varnadoe introduced the newly launched <https://bcor.info/>, offering transparency and data access regarding opioid funding and intervention strategies. Chairman Brittain expressed appreciation for the presentation and their efforts.

RECESS OF MEETING

The Board took a 14-minute break at 10:11 a.m. and the meeting resumed at 10:25 a.m.

BUDGET PROFORMA FY 24 - 25

Brian Epley, County Manager, delved into the intricacies of the budget pro forma for Fiscal Year 2024 - 2025. He explored key components such as revenue projections, expenditure allocations, and strategic financial planning initiatives to provide a comprehensive overview of the budgetary framework, outlining both challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Highlights read as follows:



**FY 2024-2025
Budget Proforma**
Brian C. Epley, County Manager

FY 23-24 Commissioners' Strategic Plan

FOCUS AREA 1: COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT
To invest in cultural capital and advancement strategies that promote participative governance that elevates a community to live, work and play – while also positioning Burke County as a community of choice.

FOCUS AREA 4: FISCAL STEWARDSHIP
Pursuit of the high-performing organization model that ensures high quality, transparent and efficient use of public resources.

FOCUS AREA 2: ECONOMIC GROWTH & SUSTAINMENT
Promotion of Burke County as a business and economic center in the region through recruitment of new industry, creating a healthy business climate for existing businesses.

FOCUS AREA 5: EMPLOYER OF CHOICE
To promote a professional value-based employee centric workplace that promotes innovation, performance, and integrity, and differentiation.

FOCUS AREA 3: PUBLIC SAFETY & WELL BEING
To ensure the safety of our residents through efficient and effective public safety agencies.

FY 2023-2024 Commissioners' Top Priorities

Comprehensive human capital pay and classification study – including job description reviews and market-based wages

Pursue Substantial Equivalency (OSHR) and modernization of all Burke County Personnel Policies

Identify census track data specific to broadband availability and pursue grant based public-private expansion that aims to cover more than 90% of Burke County households

Consideration of County wide referendum to support Article 46 sales tax referendum

Implementation of a county-wide Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Facilities Master Plan including funding policies, execution strategies and project timelines

WHAT IS HIGH PERFORMANCE.....


Good

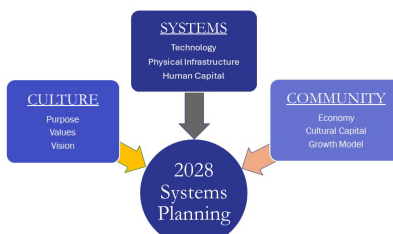

Better


Best



High Performance

Long Term Strategy



ReAct / ReBuild / ReThink
FY 2024-2025

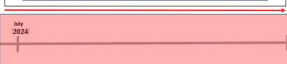
Stabilizing / Normalizing



Re-Act

- Complete CULTURE Re-Set
- Targeted Pay Adjustments
- Personnel Policy Modifications
- Employee Communication
- Revision Management

Sustained Innovation & Performance



Re-Build

- Purpose / Values / Culture
- Evaluate Economies
- Commissioners Strategic Plan
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Pay / Classification Study
- Community Partnerships
- Long Term Fiscal Planning

Re-Think

- Service Delivery Model
- Long Term Priorities
- Traditional Beliefs
- Leverage Technology

Re-Act

- Targeted Pay Changes February 2023.....✓
- Modified Personnel Policies & 401k Contribution.....✓
- Employee Meetings & Leadership Communication.....✓

2% COLA.....February 2023

5% COLA.....July 2023

Longevity Consolidation & Lump Sum

Performance Bonus Program

Introduction of Pay and Classification Study

5% 401k Contribution

Expanding Fringe Benefits

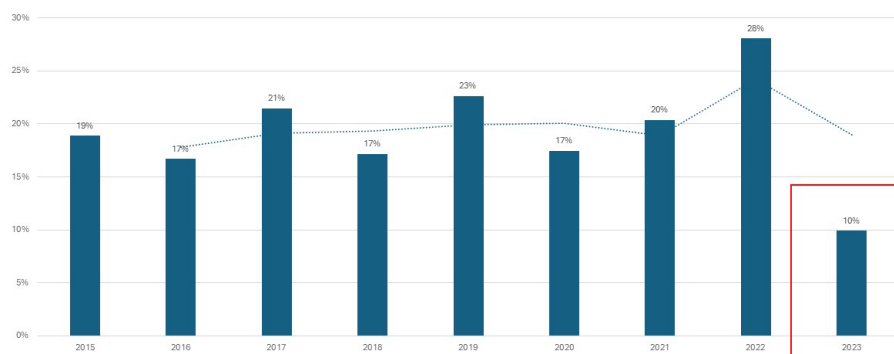
YMCA Corporate Membership Opportunity

Employee Meetings & Communication

Seasonal Bonus – December 2023

Investment in Outcomes

Talent Retention Rates

**Re-Build**

- Strategic Plan Development.....✓
- CIP Plan & Funding Strategies.....✓
- Revaluation & Tax Rate Management.....✓
- Pay & Classification Study.....✓
- Community Partnerships & Education.....✓
- Maintain Organizational Fund Balance.....✓

O-D-I

Centralized Administration & Vertical Integration

Intentional Cultural Investments

Monthly Department Head Meetings

Strategic Plan Mobilization – Housing, AIA, Broadband, Pay & Class

Education Investment

Zero Based Priority Budget

Tax Rate Reduction

Re-Think

- Leverage Performance Base Pay Incentives.....✓
- Capitalize on Process Efficiency Gains..... In Progress
- Cultural Investment & Ease of Communication..... In Progress
- Intentional Operational Contingency Planning..... In Progress

PURPOSE DRIVEN
& VALUE LED

PERFORMANCE
BASED &
MEASURED
OUTCOMES

BUDGET RE-
ENGINEERING &
EFFICIENCY
ENHANCEMENTS

TEAM CENTRIC

GOOD / BETTER /
BEST

Fiscal Year Budget 2024-2025

OPPORTUNITIES

- Incremental Tax Base Growth
- Stabilized Equity
- Tax Collection Rate Escalations
- Managed Performance (Q1 & Q2)
- Operational Re-Engineering
 1. EMS Billing
 2. Pharmacy Formulary
 3. Enterprise Business Envelope
 4. Revenue Maximization
 5. Avoidable Cost Strategies
- Paid Time Off Policy
- Declining Employee Turn-Over

CHALLENGES

- Capital Cost Escalation
- Public Safety Funding Needs
- Employee Compensation
- Education Funding
- Rising Cost of Doing Business
- Risk Management
 - Employee Wellness
 - Workers Compensation
 - Operational/Legal Liability

+

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2024-2025 Budget Opportunities

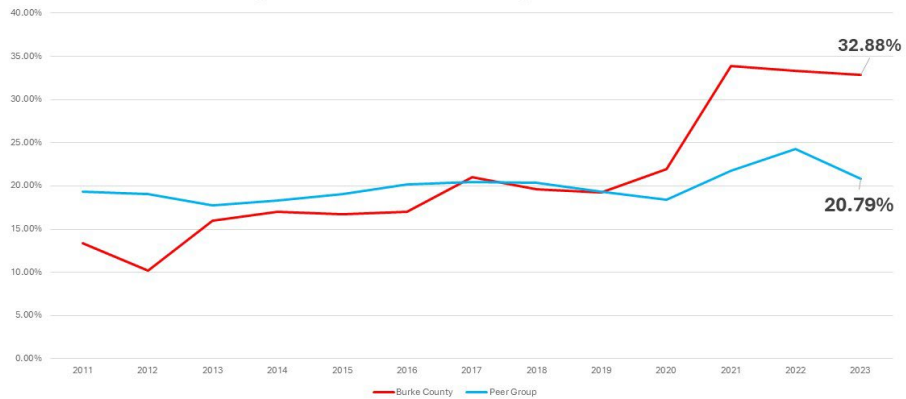


Tax Base Change by Fiscal Year



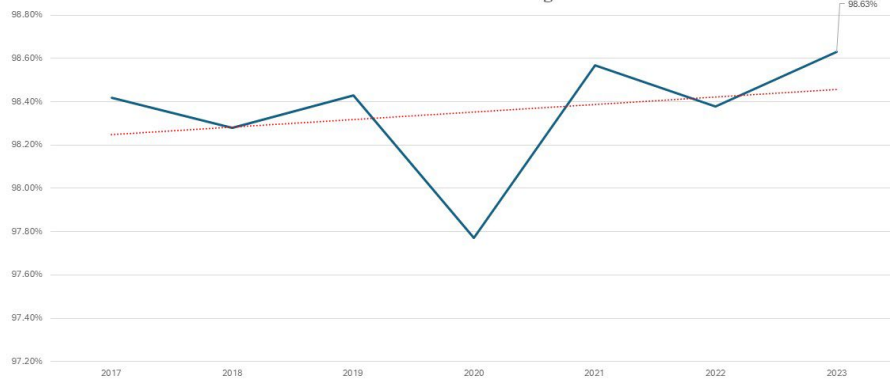
Stabilized Equity

Unassigned Fund Balance Percentage - Peer Comparison



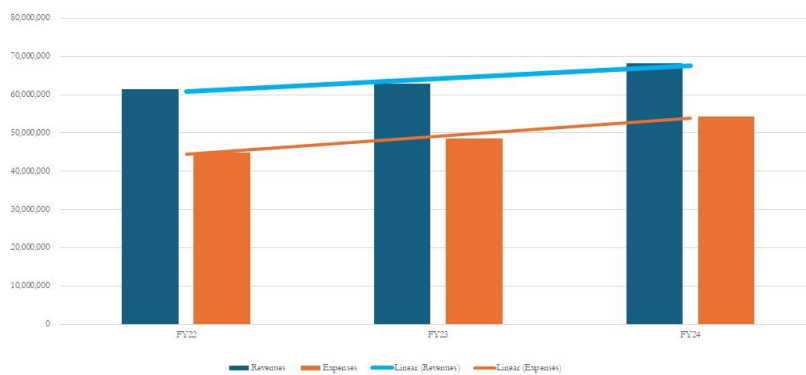
Improving Collection Rate

Tax Collection Percentage



Q1 & Q2 Managed Performance

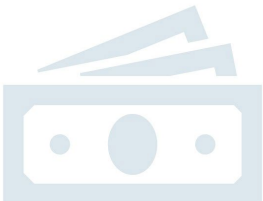
General Fund July-December

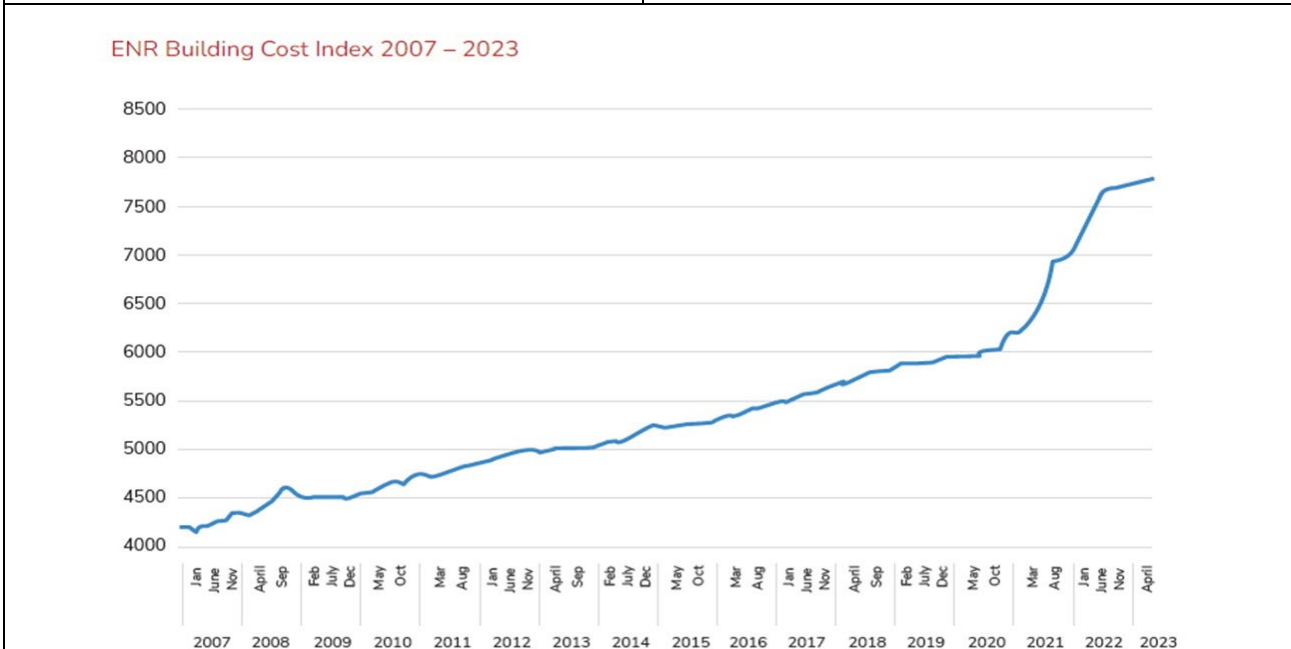


FY 2024-2025 Budget Re-Engineering	
Strategy	Amount & Impact
1. EMS Billing.....	\$ 250,000 increased revenue
2. Pharmacy Formulary.....	\$ 1,000,000 decreased cost
3. Enterprise Fund Business Envelope.....	\$ 750,000 reduced subsidy
4. Revenue Maximization (sales tax).....	\$ 700,000 increased revenue
5. Over Time & Part Time Labor Cost Avoidance.....	\$ 300,000 decreased cost
Total Budget Flexibility	\$ 3,000,000

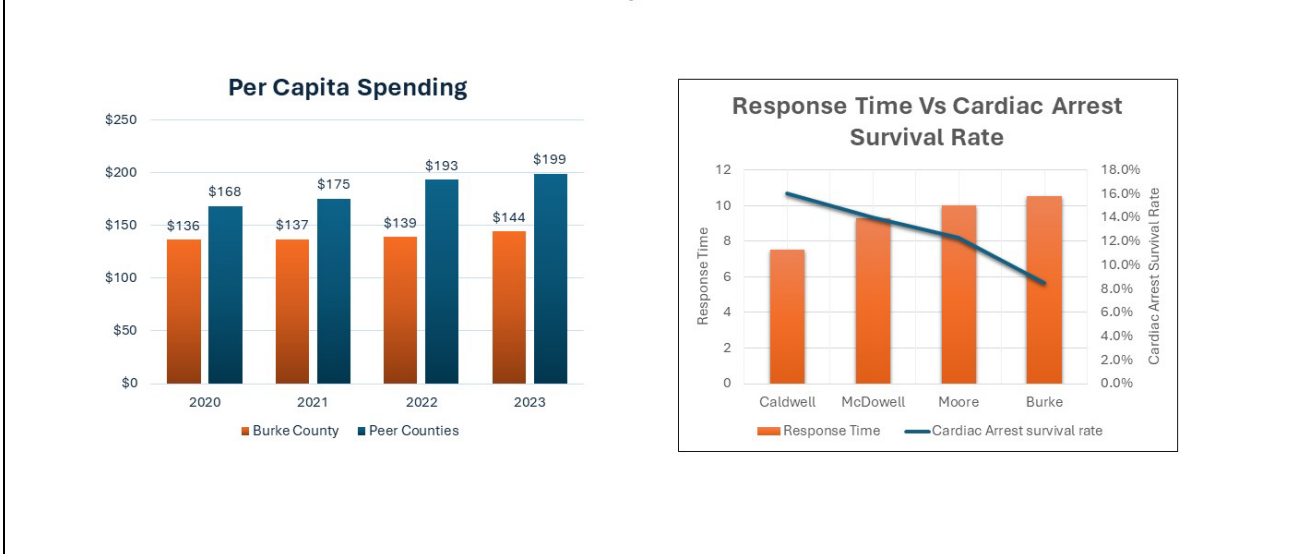


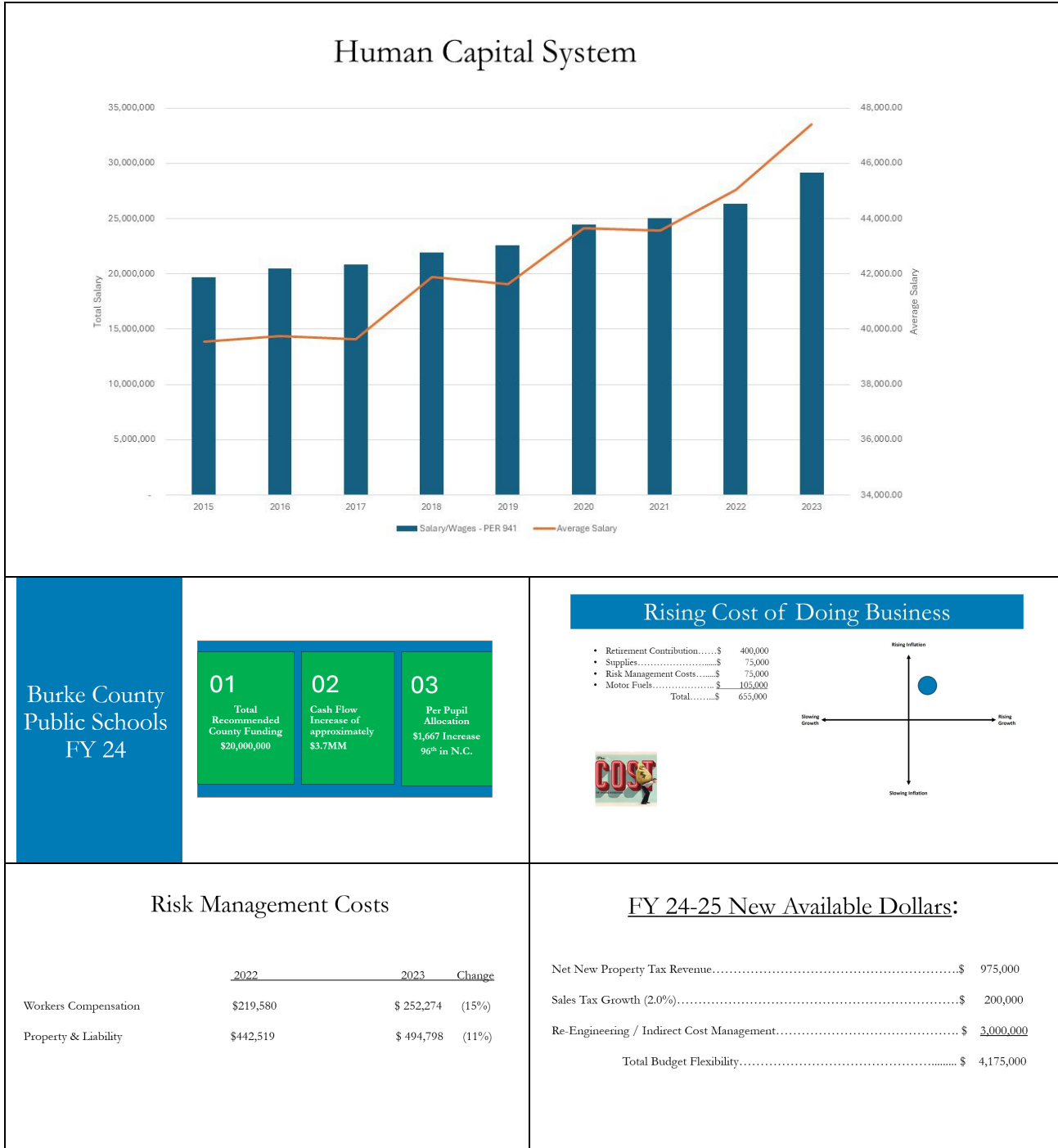
**2024-2025
Budget
Challenges**





Public Safety Investment





This space is intentionally left blank.

FY 24-25 Strategic Plan Budget Considerations:

Employee Compensation 3.0 % COLA.....	\$ 960,000
Employee Wellness.....	\$ 600,000
Personnel Allocation.....	\$ 350,000
Public Safety Performance Improvement.....	\$ 500,000
Public Education Funding.....	\$ 250,000
Inflationary Cost of Doing Business.....	\$ 655,000
Human Services Building Sinking Fund.....	\$ 350,000
Commissioner Prioritization.....	\$ 510,000
Total Strategic Plan Considerations	\$ <u>4,175,000</u>

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments. There were none.

LUNCHBREAK

Chairman Brittain called for a motion to recess for lunch.

Motion: To recess for lunch at 11:36 a.m.

RESULT: **APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER: Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman
AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Scott Mulwee, Randy Burns and Johnnie W. Carswell
ABSENT: Phil Smith

Motion: To resume the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

RESULT: **APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER: Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman
AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Scott Mulwee, Randy Burns and Johnnie W. Carswell
ABSENT: Phil Smith

BOC - BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' STRATEGIC PRIORITIZATION

County Manager Epley extended an invitation to the Board to engage in a strategic prioritization exercise. Initially, they were tasked with evaluating focus areas and capital improvement items selected in the previous year, with options to remove, retain, modify, or introduce new items. Each goal was reviewed and the majority of them were unchanged because they were already ongoing or in process. Subsequently, they were encouraged to indicate new items of high value by placing dots accordingly. Each Commissioner received seven (7) dots for operational items and five (5) dots for capital items. The results of the exercise were as follows:

Focus Area 1: Community Advancement	
Hire a PIO – all goals / areas	3 dots
Identify census track data specific to county-wide broadband availability and pursue grant-based public-private expansion that aims to cover more than 90% of Burke County households.	0 dots

Conduct a county-wide housing assessment and needs based analysis that will help promote innovative workforce housing strategies.	0 dots
Community Beautification Strategies including roadside litter cleanup efforts.	0 dots
Develop Asset Inventory Analysis (AIA) for all water and sewer infrastructure with a focus on investment return and potential future expansion options to underserved areas.	0 dots
Prioritize trail development & parks / recreation support.	0 dots
Increase citizen engagement & participation on county boards and committees.	0 dots
Develop and modernize land use zoning administration.	0 dots

Focus Area 2: Economic Development

Construct shell buildings.	4 dots
Enhanced support for Burke Development Incorporated – including product development, talent development, and brand marketing investments.	1 dot
Evaluate economic impact & future partnerships for increased development of Hickory Regional Airport.	1 dot
Leverage infrastructure funding inside the Burke Business Park.	1 dot
Foster workforce development strategy partnerships with BDI, BCPS, and WPCC to advice talent pipeline supply.	0 dots
Pursue mega-site classification and enhanced partnerships with NCEDP and other regional site location strategies.	0 dots
Business friendly public policy and innovative support for existing industry and business expansion.	0 dots

Focus Area 3: Public Safety & Well Being

Identify and improve public safety performance metrics for all public safety functions.	2 dots
Evaluate all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) base locations and equipment life cycle management strategies – specifically analyze all 5 & 6 mile response areas with a goal of reducing county wide average response times.	2 dots
Effective use of opioid settlement funding including collaborative partnerships to develop a regionally based substance abuse resource center.	0 dots
Take a proactive approach to cleaning up dilapidated properties and educating citizens on existing solid waste ordinances and policies.	0 dots
Continued support for all VFDs including strategies that lower DOI ratings (i.e. Daytime staffing, satellite stations, municipal hydrant expansion, ect.)	0 dots
Promote innovative public health strategies that produce and improve overall community health ranking.	0 dots

Focus Area 4: Fiscal Stewardship

Evaluation of efficiency and cost savings of a Burke County Municipal Solid Waste Cell Development.	4 dots
Consideration and county-wide referendum to support Article 46 sales tax adoption.	2 dots
Identify and pursue available national / state grant funding.	1 dot
Modified: Ongoing implementation of a Comprehensive Capital Improvement and	0 dots

Master Facility Plan including funding policies, project timelines, and execution strategies.	
Modified: Adoption of Maintain a minimum fund balance policy of 25% to ensure stability in the financial health of Burke County.	0 dots
Identify lean principles with a focus on process re-engineering to create budget flexibility through operational efficiency gains across the organization.	0 dots
Develop industry best practices financial policies including debt management parameters.	0 dots
Strategically leverage ARPA spending plan on one-time expenditures to maximize county priorities.	0 dots
Business model review and recommendations to ensure self-sustainment for Burke County's enterprise funds.	0 dots

Focus Area 5: Employer of Choice	
Modified: Comprehensive pay & classification study including job description reviews and market-based wages. Implement recommended Option No. 3 – Employees below the minimum would move to the minimum or receive a 2% adjustment (whichever is greater), then all employees would receive a 0.5% adjustment multiplied by their years in the position, capped at 15 years. If any employee's current salary is higher than that calculation, they would retain their existing salary.	5 dots
Results and incentive-based wellness programming.	2 dots
Pursue substantial equivalency (OSHR) and modernization of all Burke County personnel policies.	0 dots
Evaluation and improvements of county fringe benefit package with a focus on competitiveness, value add propositions, and cost sustainability.	0 dots
Support of modern and flexible working space.	0 dots
Employee focused training and development plans.	0 dots

Capital Improvement Plan Items	
Health & Human Services (Relocation/Build)	10 dots
EMS Base Planning	3 dots
Indian Hills Pump Station	3 dots
Existing Sewer Infrastructure	2 dots
Fonta Flora Trail System	1 dot
Library Expansion	1 dot
Jonas Ridge Phase I	0 dots
Joans Ridge Phase II	0 dots
East Burke Convenience Site	0 dots
Animal Services	0 dots
Courthouse Improvements	0 dots

Images of the prioritization sheets are as follows:

 FOCUS AREA 1: COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Identify census track data specific to county-wide broadband availability and pursue grant based public-private expansion that aims to cover more than 90% of Burke County households. 2. Conduct a county-wide housing assessment and needs based analysis that will help promote innovative workforce housing strategies. 3. Community Beautification Strategies including roadside litter cleanup efforts. 4. Develop Asset Inventory Analysis (AIA) for all water and sewer infrastructure with a focus on investment return and potential future expansion options to underserved areas. 5. Prioritize trail development & parks/recreation support. 6. Increase citizen engagement & participation on county boards and committees. 7. Develop and modernize land use zoning administration. NC = No CHANGE HIRE A P.I.D. - ALL GOALS/AREAS		 FOCUS AREA 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Enhanced support for Burke Development Incorporated – including product development, talent development, and brand marketing investments. 2. Evaluate economic impact & future partnerships for increased development of Hickory Regional Airport. 3. Foster workforce development strategy partnerships with BDI, BCPS, and WPCC to advance talent pipeline supply. 4. Leverage infrastructure funding inside the Burke Business Park. 5. Pursue mega-site classification and enhanced partnerships with NCEDP and other regional site location strategies. 6. Business friendly public policy and innovative support for existing industry and business expansion. CONSTRUCT 3 4 SHELL BUILDING(S) NC = No CHANGE
 FOCUS AREA 3: PUBLIC SAFETY & WELL BEING FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Identify and improve public safety performance metrics for all public safety functions. 2. Effective use of opioid settlement funding including collaborative partnerships to develop a regionally based substance abuse resource center. 3. Evaluate all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) base locations and equipment life cycle management strategies - specifically analyze all 5 & 6 mile response areas with a goal of reducing county wide average response times. 4. Take a proactive approach to cleaning up dilapidated properties and educating citizens on existing solid waste ordinances and policies. 5. Continued support for all VFDs including strategies that lower DOI ratings (i.e. Daytime staffing, satellite stations, municipal hydrant expansion, ect.) 6. Promote innovative public health strategies that produce and improve overall community health ranking. NC = No CHANGE		 FOCUS AREA 4: FISCAL STEWARDSHIP FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Implementation of a Comprehensive Capital Improvement and Master Facility Plan including funding policies, project timelines, and execution strategies. 2. Adoption ^{Maintain} of a minimum fund balance policy of 25% to ensure stability in the financial health of Burke County. 3. Identify and pursue available national/state grant funding. 4. Identify lean principles with a focus on process re-engineering to create budget flexibility through operational efficiency gains across the organization. 5. Develop industry best practices financial policies including debt management parameters. 6. Evaluation of efficiency and cost savings of a Burke County Municipal Solid Waste Cell Development. 7. Strategically leverage ARPA spending plan on one-time expenditures to maximize county priorities. 8. Business model review and recommendations to ensure self-sustainment for Burke County's enterprise funds. 9. Consideration and county-wide referendum to support Article 46 sales tax adoption. M = MODIFY ONGOING NC = No CHANGE
 FOCUS AREA 5: EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Comprehensive pay & classification study including job description reviews and market-based wages. 2. Pursue substantial equivalency (OSHR) and modernization of all Burke County personnel policies. 3. Evaluation and improvements of county fringe benefit package with a focus on competitiveness, value add propositions, and cost sustainability. 4. Support of modern and flexible working space. 5. Results and incentive-based wellness programming. 6. Employee focused training and development plans. 1. IMPLEMENT OPT. 3 NC = No CHANGE		CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN ITEMS Jonas Ridge Phase 1 Jonas Ridge Phase II Easte Burke Convenience Site Animal Services Health & Human Services (Relocation/Build) EMS Base Planning Courthouse Improvements Fonta Flora Trail System Library Expansion Indian Hills Pump Station Existing Sewer Infrastructure

Note: Commissioner Smith completed his prioritization exercise at a later date and his priorities were as follows:

Focus Area 1: Community Advancement	
Conduct a county-wide housing assessment and needs based analysis that will help promote innovative workforce housing strategies.	2 dots
Develop and modernize land use zoning administration.	2 dots
Hire a PIO – all goals / areas	0 dots
Identify census track data specific to county-wide broadband availability and pursue grant-based public-private expansion that aims to cover more than 90% of Burke County households.	0 dots
Community Beautification Strategies including roadside litter cleanup efforts.	0 dots
Develop Asset Inventory Analysis (AIA) for all water and sewer infrastructure with a focus on investment return and potential future expansion options to underserved areas.	0 dots
Prioritize trail development & parks / recreation support.	0 dots
Increase citizen engagement & participation on county boards and committees.	0 dots

Focus Area 2: Economic Development	
Foster workforce development strategy partnerships with BDI, BCPS, and WPCC to advice talent pipeline supply.	1 dot
Construct shell buildings.	0 dots
Enhanced support for Burke Development Incorporated – including product development, talent development, and brand marketing investments.	0 dots
Evaluate economic impact & future partnerships for increased development of Hickory Regional Airport.	0 dots
Leverage infrastructure funding inside the Burke Business Park.	0 dots
Pursue mega-site classification and enhanced partnerships with NCEDP and other regional site location strategies.	0 dots
Business friendly public policy and innovative support for existing industry and business expansion.	0 dots

Focus Area 3: Public Safety & Well Being	
Evaluate all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) base locations and equipment life cycle management strategies – specifically analyze all 5 & 6 mile response areas with a goal of reducing county wide average response times.	1 dot
Identify and improve public safety performance metrics for all public safety functions.	0 dots
Effective use of opioid settlement funding including collaborative partnerships to develop a regionally based substance abuse resource center.	0 dots
Take a proactive approach to cleaning up dilapidated properties and educating citizens on existing solid waste ordinances and policies.	0 dots
Continued support for all VFDs including strategies that lower DOI ratings (i.e. Daytime staffing, satellite stations, municipal hydrant expansion, ect.)	0 dots

Promote innovative public health strategies that produce and improve overall community health ranking.	0 dots
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Focus Area 4: Fiscal Stewardship

Evaluation of efficiency and cost savings of a Burke County Municipal Solid Waste Cell Development.	0 dots
Consideration and county-wide referendum to support Article 46 sales tax adoption.	0 dots
Identify and pursue available national / state grant funding.	0 dots
Modified: Ongoing implementation of a Comprehensive Capital Improvement and Master Facility Plan including funding policies, project timelines, and execution strategies.	0 dots
Modified: Adoption of Maintain a minimum fund balance policy of 25% to ensure stability in the financial health of Burke County.	0 dots
Identify lean principles with a focus on process re-engineering to create budget flexibility through operational efficiency gains across the organization.	0 dots
Develop industry best practices financial policies including debt management parameters.	0 dots
Strategically leverage ARPA spending plan on one-time expenditures to maximize county priorities.	0 dots
Business model review and recommendations to ensure self-sustainment for Burke County's enterprise funds.	0 dots

Focus Area 5: Employer of Choice

Modified: Comprehensive pay & classification study including job description reviews and market-based wages. Implement recommended Option No. 3 – Employees below the minimum would move to the minimum or receive a 2% adjustment (whichever is greater), then all employees would receive a 0.5% adjustment multiplied by their years in the position, capped at 15 years. If any employee's current salary is higher than that calculation, they would retain their existing salary.	1 dot
Results and incentive-based wellness programming.	0 dots
Pursue substantial equivalency (OSHR) and modernization of all Burke County personnel policies.	0 dots
Evaluation and improvements of county fringe benefit package with a focus on competitiveness, value add propositions, and cost sustainability.	0 dots
Support of modern and flexible working space.	0 dots
Employee focused training and development plans.	0 dots

Capital Improvement Plan Items

Health & Human Services (Relocation/Build)	2 dots
Fonta Flora Trail System	1 dot
Indian Hills Pump Station	1 dot
Existing Sewer Infrastructure	1 dot
EMS Base Planning	0 dots
Library Expansion	0 dots
Jonas Ridge Phase I	0 dots
Joans Ridge Phase II	0 dots

East Burke Convenience Site	0 dots
Animal Services	0 dots
Courthouse Improvements	0 dots

 FOCUS AREA 1: COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Identify census track data specific to county-wide broadband availability and pursue grant based public-private expansion that aims to cover more than 90% of Burke County households. ●● 2. Conduct a county-wide housing assessment and needs based analysis that will help promote innovative workforce housing strategies. ●● 3. Community Beautification Strategies including roadside litter cleanup efforts. ●● 4. Develop Asset Inventory Analysis (AIA) for all water and sewer infrastructure with a focus on investment return and potential future expansion options to underserved areas. ●● 5. Prioritize trail development & parks/recreation support. ●● 6. Increase citizen engagement & participation on county boards and committees. ●● 7. Develop and modernize land use zoning administration. ●● NC = No CHANGE HIRE A P.I.O. - ALL GOALS/AREAS ●●●●●	 FOCUS AREA 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Enhanced support for Burke Development Incorporated - including product development, talent development, and brand marketing investments. ●● 2. Evaluate economic impact & future partnerships for increased development of Hickory Regional Airport. ●● 3. Foster workforce development strategy partnerships with BDI, BCPS, and WPCC to advance talent pipeline supply. ●● 4. Leverage infrastructure funding inside the Burke Business Park. ●● 5. Pursue mega-site classification and enhanced partnerships with NCEDP and other regional site location strategies. ●● 6. Business friendly public policy and innovative support for existing industry and business expansion. ●● NC = No CHANGE CONSTRUCT SHALE SHELL BUILDING(S) ●●●●●
 FOCUS AREA 3: PUBLIC SAFETY & WELL BEING FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Identify and improve public safety performance metrics for all public safety functions. ●●●●● 2. Effective use of opioid settlement funding including collaborative partnerships to develop a regionally based substance abuse resource center. ●●●●● 3. Evaluate all Emergency Medical Services (EMS) base locations and equipment life cycle management strategies - specifically analyze all 5 & 6 mile response areas with a goal of reducing county wide average response times. ●●●●● 4. Take a proactive approach to cleaning up dilapidated properties and educating citizens on existing solid waste ordinances and policies. ●●●●● 5. Continued support for all VFDs including strategies that lower DOI ratings (i.e. Daytime staffing, satellite stations, municipal hydrant expansion, ect.) ●●●●● 6. Promote innovative public health strategies that produce and improve overall community health ranking. ●●●●● NC = No CHANGE	 FOCUS AREA 4: FISCAL STEWARDSHIP FY 23-24 GOALS 1. Implementation of a Comprehensive Capital Improvement and Master Facility Plan including funding policies, project timelines, and execution strategies. ●●●●● 2. Adoption of a minimum fund balance policy of 25% to ensure stability in the financial health of Burke County. ●●●●● 3. Identify and pursue available national/state grant funding. ●●●●● 4. Identify lean principles with a focus on process re-engineering to create budget flexibility through operational efficiency gains across the organization. ●●●●● 5. Develop industry best practices financial policies including debt management parameters. ●●●●● 6. Evaluation of efficiency and cost savings of a Burke County Municipal Solid Waste Cell Development. ●●●●● 7. Strategically leverage ARPA spending plan on one-time expenditures to maximize county priorities. ●●●●● 8. Business model review and recommendations to ensure self-sustainment for Burke County's enterprise funds. ●●●●● 9. Consideration and county-wide referendum to support Article 46 sales tax adoption. ●●●●● M = MODIFY ONGOING NC = No CHANGE

FOCUS AREA 5: EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FY 23-24 GOALS M 1. Comprehensive pay & classification study including job description reviews and market-based wages. NC 2. Pursue substantial equivalency (OSHR) and modernization of all Burke County personnel policies. NC 3. Evaluation and improvements of county fringe benefit package with a focus on competitiveness, value add propositions, and cost sustainability. NC 4. Support of modern and flexible working space. NC 5. Results and incentive-based wellness programming. NC 6. Employee focused training and development plans. 1. IMPLEMENT OPT. 3 ●●●●●●●● NC = NO CHANGE	CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN ITEMS Jonas Ridge Phase 1 Jonas Ridge Phase II Easte Burke Convenience Site Animal Services ●●●●●●●● Health & Human Services (Relocation/Build) ●●●●●●●● EMS Base Planning ●●●● Courthouse Improvements Fonta Flora Trail System ●●●● Library Expansion ●●●● Indian Hills Pump Station ●●●●●●●● Existing Sewer Infrastructure ●●●●●●●●
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CLOSING COMMENTS

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for comments from the outgoing Board members: Scott Mulwee and Johnnie W. Carswell. Vice Chairman Mulwee expressed his commitment to work hard during the remaining 9-months of his term. His efforts were always centered around what is right for the citizens and what is right for the employees. He conveyed gratitude towards the employees, recognizing them as the County's most valuable asset. Vice Chairman Mulwee expressed how proud he was to work for the County and that he desires to see the organization continue to advance. He emphasized that this is not the end of the road. He praised County Manager Epley for his diligent work in executing the Board's vision. Commissioner Carswell echoed the sentiment that the employees are the backbone of the County. He expressed how sad he was to go, worrying that some of the progress made toward the opioid crisis would lose momentum and that a rehabilitation facility would no longer be prioritized. Through his connection as the President of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, he expanded Burke County's reach and represented the County in Washington, D.C. He praised Dr. Varnadoe for spearheading opioid response making Burke County a leader in the state. He also praised County Manager Epley and the hardworking county staff.

Chairman Brittain opened the floor for questions or comments from the audience. Treg McGee, Director of Parks and Recreation, expressed his deep disappointment regarding the outcome of the primary election. He emphasized his appreciation for the significant contributions made by Vice Chairman Mulwee and Commissioner Carswell to the Parks & Recreation Department and the community of Burke County. Mike Willis, Fire Marshal, echoed this sentiment, underscoring the widespread respect held for them throughout the County and the privilege it is to work alongside them. County Manager Epley likened the organization to a close-knit family, affirming the County's positive trajectory and the imperative of sustaining the momentum. Mr. McGee expressed his hope for Vice Chairman Mulwee and Commissioner Carswell to consider future runs for office. Mark Delehant, Director of General Services, conveyed appreciation for the Board's prioritization of becoming an employer of choice.

ADJOURN

Motion: to adjourn the meeting at 1:14 p.m.

RESULT: **APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**

MOVER: Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman

AYES: Jeffrey C. Brittain, Scott Mulwee, Randy Burns and Johnnie W. Carswell

ABSENT: Phil Smith

Approved this 16th day of July 2024.



Scott Mulwee, Vice Chairman
Burke Co. Board of Commissioners

Attest:



Kay Honeycutt Draughn, CMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board