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**Gaston County Board
of Commissioners**

GASTON COUNTY

COMMISSIONER'S COURT

NORTH CAROLINA

NOVEMBER 9, 2021

The Gaston County Board of Commissioners (BOC) met in Regular Session at 6:13 pm on November 9, 2021, immediately following its Work Session, in The Harley B. Gaston, Jr. Public Forum, Gaston County Courthouse.

Chairman Tom Keigher presided with Commissioners Chad Brown, Bob Hovis, Kim Johnson, Tracy L. Philbeck and Ronnie Worley in attendance.

Vice-Chairman Allen R. Fraley was not in attendance.

Others present included Dr. Kim Eagle, County Manager; Jonathan Sink, County Attorney; and Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the Board.

Upon request of Chairman Keigher, Commissioner Worley led those assembled in the Invocation and Commissioner Philbeck led in the Pledge of Allegiance during the preceding Work Session.

Agenda Revision/Approval

- **ADDED/** *To Approve the Minutes of Regular Meeting of October 26, 2021 - Section I., Item B.*
- **ADDED/** *Commissioner Worley - Budget & Strategy - To Accept and Appropriate Additional State Grant Funds for FY21 from the NC Council for Women for the Cathy Mabry Cloninger Center (Divorce Filing Fees - \$4,125; Marriage License Fees - \$2,319) - Section III – Consent Agenda, Item M.*
- **MOVED TO DECEMBER 14th AGENDA/** *Commissioner Hovis - Finance – To Amend Gaston County ARPA Grant Project Ordinance 2021-264 to Approve and Appropriate Funding for an ARPA Grants manager to Oversee and Manage ARPA Project Funding for Five Years to be Funded by Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for H.R. 1319 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (\$535,159) - Section III – Consent Agenda, Item K.*
- **ADDED/** *Section IV., Non-Consent Item C – Employee Mask Mandate*

Chairman Keigher advised the County Manager requested Item K of the Consent Agenda be moved to the December 14th Agenda.

Commissioner Worley requested an item be added to the Non-Consent Agenda to discuss and consider action on the current Face Mask Mandate for County employees.

Chairman Keigher stated that it would require a unanimous vote by the BOC.

On motion introduced by Commissioner Worley and seconded by Commissioner Hovis, the BOC unanimously added Non-Consent Item C – Face Mask Mandate for County Employees.

On motion introduced by Commissioner Hovis and seconded by Commissioner Brown, the BOC unanimously approved the Agenda of November 9, 2021 with changes as noted above.

Approval of Minutes

On motion introduced by Commissioner Philbeck and seconded by Commissioner Worley, the BOC unanimously approved the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 26, 2021.

Citizen Recognition

The Honorable Donnie Loftis, newly appointed NC General Assembly 109th District Representative, advised that in his first week, he voted on Redistricting Bills for the House, Senate and

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Congressional (districts); he commented it was an open and transparent redrawing process, and all maps were drawn inside of the NC Legislative Building. He noted he is honored to serve as the 109th Representative and is looking forward to serving the citizens and working with the Board of Commissioners to accomplish great things for the County.

Consent Agenda

On motion introduced by Commissioner Philbeck and seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the BOC unanimously approved the Consent Agenda as follows:

2021-304 Commissioner Brown - BOC - Proclamation - To Proclaim Veterans Day, November 11, 2021 in Gaston County

2021-305 Commissioner Brown - County Manager - Proclamation - To Proclaim November 13-21, 2021 as Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week in Gaston County

2021-306 Commissioner Worley - Budget & Strategy - To Approve Administrative Policies and Procedures for the Community Development Block Grant for Neighborhood Revitalization (CDBG-NR) Program as filed with the Clerk to the Board

2021-307 Commissioner Brown - DHHS (Health Division) - To Accept and Appropriate the Non-Federal Share of Medicaid Fees Received from the NC Medicaid Managed Care Plans for Separate Directed Payments (\$1,386,028) per Budget Change Request:

Account Description	Account Number	Amount
MCS Separate Directed Payments	011-05-5111-0000-410019-22219	(\$1,386,028)
MCS Separate Directed Payments	011-05-5111-0000-560000-22219	\$1,386,028

2021-308 Commissioner Brown - DHHS (Health Division) - To Accept and Appropriate Additional Medicaid Fees Received from the NC Medicaid Prepaid Health Plans for Care Management Services (\$500,000) per Budget Change Request:

Account Description	Account Number	Amount
CC4C/OBCM Payments	011-05-5110-0000-410019-22COM	(\$500,000)
CC4C/OBCM Payments	011-05-5110-0000-560000-22COM	\$500,000

2021-309 Commissioner Brown - DHHS (Social Services Division) - To Authorize Bid Award to Two Hawk Workforce Services for Services to be Provided for the Adult and Dislocated Workers Program through the Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) (\$720,427)

2021-310 Commissioner Brown - DHHS (Social Services Division) - To Authorize Bid Award to Gaston College for Services to be Provided for the Youth Program through the Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act (WIOA) (\$306,856)

2021-311 Commissioner Brown - DHHS (Social Services Division) - To Accept and Appropriate Federal Funds from the Consolidated Appropriations Act and the American Rescue Plan Act for Food and Nutrition Administrative Cost in the Amount of \$150,250 per Budget Change Request:

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Account Description	Account Number	Amount
FNS: Consolidated Approp. Act	020-05-4790-0000-420000-22521	(\$40,360)
FNS: American Rescue Plan	020-05-4790-0000-420000-22522	(\$109,890)
FNS: Consolidated Approp. Act	020-05-4790-0000-560000-22521	\$40,360
FNS: American Rescue Plan	020-05-4790-0000-560000-22522	\$109,890

2021-312 Commissioner Brown - DHHS (Social Services Division) - Proclamation - To Proclaim the Month of November 2021 as Adoption Awareness Month

2021-313 Commissioner Keigher - EDC - To Accept and Appropriate the NCDOT Rural Economic Development Division's Building Reuse Grant Funds for Project Repel and Provide the Required 5% Match in an Amount Not to Exceed \$3,250 per Budget Change Request:

Account Description	Account Number	Amount
Bldg Reuse Grt: Project Repel	041-07-4920-4920-420001-22527	(65,000)
Fund Balance Appropriated	041-99-9900-0000-490000	(3,250)
Transfers to CIP	041-98-9800-0000-580040	68,250
Transfers from CIF	040-98-9800-0000-480041	(68,250)
Bldg Reuse Grt: Project Repel	040-07-4920-4920-540006-22527	68,250

2021-314 Commissioner Brown - Hope United Survivor Network - To Accept and Appropriate Fund Balance for the Carry Forward of the July 2020 through September 2021 Donations for The Cathy Mabry Cloninger Center, The Lighthouse and Hope United Survivor Network in the Amount of \$98,187 per Budget Change Request:

Account Description	Account Number	Amount
Fund Balance Appropriated	010-99-9900-0000-490000	(\$86,110.10)
Donations (Shelter Revenue)	010-05-5810-5582-415001	(\$2,604.07)
Donations (Shelter Expense)	010-05-5810-5582-560000-08162	\$88,714.17
Fund Balance Appropriated	010-99-9900-0000-490000	(\$8,834.50)
Donations (CAC Revenue)	010-05-5810-5585-415001	(\$113.33)
Donations (CAC Expense)	010-05-5810-5585-560000-16282	\$7,896.83
Kara's Klost Donations	010-05-5810-5585-560000-20045	\$1,051.00
Fund Balance Appropriated	010-99-9900-0000-490000	(\$525.00)
Donations (HUSN Expense)	010-05-5810-0000-560000-22218	\$525.00

2021-315 Commissioner Worley - Budget & Strategy - To Accept and Appropriate Additional State Grant Funds for FY21 from the NC Council for Women for the Cathy Mabry Cloninger Center (Divorce Filing Fees - \$4,125; Marriage License Fees - \$2,319) per Budget Change Request:

Account Description	Account Number	Amount
NCC4W Marriage Lic Grt (Yr 2)	010-05-5810-5582-425081-21557	(\$2,319)
NCC4W Marriage Lic Grt (Yr 2)	010-05-5810-5582-560000-21557	\$2,319
NCC4W: Divorce Filing Fee (yr 2)	010-05-5810-5582-425101-21558	(\$4,125)
NCC4W: Divorce Filing Fee (yr 2)	010-05-5810-5582-560000-21558	\$4,125

Non-Consent

2021-316 Commissioner Keigher - BOC (County Attorney) - To Accept the Resignation of County Attorney Jonathan L. Sink, Effective Immediately Upon the Adjournment of the Commissions' Regular Meeting of November 9, 2021

Commissioner Philbeck introduced the motion to approve and Commissioner Worley provided the second.

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Chairman Keigher called for discussion.

Commissioner Philbeck wished Attorney Sink the best of luck in his future endeavors. He stated it had been a pleasure serving with him and thanked him for his service and friendship.

Commissioners Worley and Brown expressed similar sentiments and wished him the best in his future endeavors.

The County Attorney thanked the Board for allowing him to serve Gaston County for almost two years. He noted that he began his employment the day after the (COVID-19) State of Emergency had been declared in the County and he expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to navigate through that difficult time with the Board and staff; he will carry a lot of memories and friendships with him. In conclusion, he complemented the "first-rate talent" that had been assembled in Gaston County and expressed his gratefulness for having been a part of it.

Chairman Keigher called for the vote, and the BOC unanimously approved **2021-316** as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners accepts the resignation of County Attorney Jonathan L. Sink, effective immediately upon the adjournment of the Commissions' Regular Meeting of November 9, 2021.

2021-317 Commissioner Keigher - BOC (County Attorney) - To Appoint Deputy County Attorney Courtney C. Rogers to the Position of Interim County Attorney, Effective November 10, 2021

On motion introduced by Commissioner Philbeck and seconded by Commissioner Brown, the BOC unanimously approved **2021-317** as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Gaston County Board of Commissioners hereby appoints Deputy County Attorney Courtney C. Rogers to the position of Interim County Attorney, effective November 10, 2021.

2021-000 Commissioner Worley – Face Mask Mandate for Gaston Employees

Commissioner Worley stated masks should be optional for employees that are in private offices or automobiles, or where social distancing is possible, unless they are dealing directly with the public.

Commissioner Brown stated he thought this was already the policy; noted his support for removing mask mandates.

The County Manager confirmed it is the current policy as written. She is monitoring the data with the Health Director and the County is currently at substantial spread (for COVID-19), which is one level above moderate. The Health Director is comfortable with removing the mask mandate completely once the County reaches the moderate level; will be happy to provide policy language to the Board. Employees currently have the flexibility to remove masks if they are in an office alone and able to socially distance.

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Commissioner Worley stated he spoke with an employee that was under the impression that masks were required even when they were alone in their office.

Chairman Keigher pointed out that County employees working in the Courthouse must abide by the Courthouse (State) rules. He concluded no additional action is necessary at this time; the County Manager should reiterate the current policy to employees.

The County Manager confirmed that clarification would be provided; she hopes the mandate can be removed altogether very soon.

Appointments

On motion introduced by Commissioner Philbeck and seconded by Commissioner Keigher, the BOC unanimously reappointed Mr. Brian Bookout to the **Council on Aging/Home and Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee** to a term ending November 30, 2024.

On motions introduced and seconded, the following individuals were unanimously reappointed to the **Fire Advisory Board**:

<u>Motion Introduced</u>	<u>Seconded</u>	<u>Appointee</u>	<u>Term Ending</u>
Commissioner Philbeck	Commissioner Keigher	Mr. Kevin Gordon	November 30, 2022
Commissioner Worley	Commissioner Philbeck	Mr. Jeffery Hovis	November 30, 2022
Commissioner Keigher	Commissioner Philbeck	Mr. Matt Kanupp	November 30, 2024
Commissioner Keigher	Commissioner Philbeck	Mr. Barry Joye	November 30, 2024

On motion introduced by Commissioner Philbeck and seconded by Commissioner Keigher, the BOC unanimously appointed Mr. Hunter Peak to the **Economic Development Commission** to an unexpired term ending December 31, 2023.

On motion introduced by Commissioner Philbeck and seconded by Commissioner Keigher, the BOC unanimously reappointed Commissioner Bob Hovis to the **Centralina Council of Governments (COG)** to a term ending November 30, 2022.

On motions introduced by Commissioner Philbeck and seconded by Commissioner Worley, the following individuals were unanimously appointed/reappointed to the **Fireman's Relief Fund Trustees** to terms ending November 30, 2023:

Mr. Jimmy Johnson	Ms. Amber Beatty	Mr. Chad Belcher	Mr. Klent Craft
Mr. Robert Foy	Mr. Harold Fullbright	Mr. Virgil Harper	Mr. Jeffery Hovis
Mr. Steven Johnson	Mr. Pete Martin	Mr. Jeffrey Peterson	Mr. Deany Phillips
Mr. Mike Rhyné	Mr. Ron Sadler	Mr. Gordon Walker	

Commissioners Committee Reports

Commissioner Hovis reported today he attended **The Gaston Business Association Economic Outlook for 2022** at the CaroMont Ballpark; it was a great event; the speaker gave a detailed presentation on the various facets of the economy; will have the County Manager forward that information to the BOC.

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Commissioner Philbeck reported the **Homeless Task Force** should have its recommendation ready by December; look forward to making that presentation to the BOC.

County Manager's Report

The County Manager advised she placed two documents (Year in Review Summary and CY 2021-2022 Work Plan) at each member's seat. She presented key highlights as follows:

Re: Year in Review Summary: The County accomplished a tremendous amount over the last calendar year; this information is categorized by three broad priorities she articulated when hired over two-years ago.

- **1st Priority - Long-Term Financial Stability:** Two key accomplishments for the County in this category - 1) structural imbalance that the BOC has corrected as part of the current year budget; 2) Long-Term Capital Planning, creation of a Community Investment Fund and the way the County is approaching capital planning for facilities and infrastructure needs countywide in a long-term fashion that is very strategic.
- **2nd Priority - Employee & Community Engagement:** Several items are listed; two accomplishments include conducting the first-ever Workplace Culture Survey that is yielding lots of detailed information by department, that is being utilized to make decisions; another is the mass vaccination clinics and the collaborative effort the County underwent; she noted there was no guide for how to develop and implement this initiative, and she is extremely proud of how staff put that on the ground to serve the community.
- **3rd Priority - Culture of Innovation & Performance:** The BOC adopted its first organizational Strategic Plan that is being used frequently as management works internally to make sure work is aligned with Board's priorities and management is able to measure its success and make necessary adjustments. A **Data Team** has been established, which involves making sure internal staff decisions, and the items the County Manager brings to the BOC for recommendation, are based on data; a data driven mentality at the County is extremely important; County Manager pulled together staff to devote time and brainpower to having a more robust approach to how the County utilizes and collects data; staff is working on an open data portal that will enhance transparency.

This (list) is a fraction of what staff was able to accomplish over the last year; County Manager is happy and honored to serve as the messenger of their work.

Re: CY 2021-2022 Work Plan: Many of the items on this report are familiar to the BOC; have foreshadowed some items as part of the recommended budget and there will be intentional, detailed discussions over the next calendar year. The first is the *(Uniform) Fire District Tax Rate Analysis* and structural governance analysis/audit; the BOC will receive updates on that process soon. The other items *(Library Service Delivery Evaluation, Park Facility & Field Evaluation, Stormwater & Erosion Services "One-Stop-Shop" Analysis, Annual School & College Capital Allocations Analysis (Paygo v Debt), Comprehensive Public Safety Campus Evaluation and Employee Access & Use of Health Services Evaluation)* are in process at one level or another. Several of these items are internally facing; for example, the Employee Access & Use of Health Services (Evaluation) involves evaluating our current relationship with Kintegra and how that benefit can be better utilized or enhanced for our employees. The Public Safety Campus Evaluation is also underway. Ongoing dialogue and feedback will continue.

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Re: End of Calendar Year: She noted that she had some conversations with the Clerk about the calendar year coming to a close and an evaluation survey has been developed for both positions. This will allow for more individualized feedback, based on a set of questions. The BOC will receive a similar report from the Clerk and will receive the survey questions later this week.

Chairman Keigher called for any comments or questions; none was heard.

County Attorney's Report

No report. Just another "thank you".

Chairman Keigher bid the County Attorney farewell and stated he hopes everything goes well with his new position.

Other Matters

Commissioner Philbeck advised that he spoke with the County Manager and asked that his remaining salary for 2022 be paid in crypto currency and staff is working on that. A lot of states are paying their employees in crypto currency; it is the wave of the future. He stated he believes it would be good to offer this to employees as well. States are fighting over trying to be first to utilize the crypto currency market and for the County to be ahead of the curve, would be very innovative and creative; it will allow the County to attract a different type of employee.

The County Manager advised it is an intriguing question; staff is doing its research; management has had some preliminary conversations with IT staff.

Commissioner Philbeck advised that the Mayor of New York is taking his first three salaries in bitcoin; and many NFL and baseball players, in their new contracts, are being paid via crypto currency. Miami is vying to pay its employees in crypto currency and are creating innovative ways to replace property taxes by using fee revenue yielded from crypto currency. It involves a lot of moving parts but would be good for our employees. He concluded that an investment of \$1,000 in gold ten years ago would be worth \$978 now; the same investment in bitcoin would have made someone a multimillionaire.

Commissioner Brown advised the NC Mining Commission will be meeting in The Harley B. Gaston, Jr. Public Forum on November 15th. He also noted that Friday is his son's 12th birthday and wished him a Happy Birthday.

Commissioner Worley advised that he and Commissioners Philbeck and Fraley serve on the County Attorney Search Committee for the new Attorney's position; he and the Chairman met with the County Manager yesterday and the advertisement (for the position) will occur later this week; he is looking forward to reviewing the applications.

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Adjournment

Chairman Keigher called for a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting.

On motion introduced by Commissioner Philbeck and seconded by Commissioner Worley, the BOC unanimously adjourned the Regular Meeting of November 9, 2021 at 6:42 pm.

(All aforementioned documents are on file with the Clerk to the Board.)

Tom Keigher, Chairman
Gaston County Board of Commissioners

Donna S. Buff
Clerk to the Board

SEAL