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**Gaston County Board
of Commissioners**

GASTON COUNTY

COMMISSIONER'S COURT

NORTH CAROLINA

MARCH 9, 2021

The Gaston County Board of Commissioners (BOC) met in Special Session on March 9, 2021, immediately following its Work Session, at 6:50 pm in the Harley B. Gaston, Jr. Public Forum, Gaston County Courthouse to consider the establishment of an Intergovernmental and Interagency Task Force on Homelessness in Gaston County.

Chairman Tom Keigher presided with Commissioners Allen R. Fraley, Vice-Chairman; Chad Brown, Bob Hovis, Tracy L. Philbeck and Ronnie Worley in attendance.

Commissioner Kim Johnson was not in attendance.

Also present were Dr. Kim S. Eagle, County Manager; Jonathan L. Sink, County Attorney; Donna S. Buff, Clerk to the Board.

2021-068 Commissioner Keigher - BOC - To Establish an Intergovernmental and Interagency Task Force on Homelessness in Gaston County

Chairman Keigher advised that homelessness is a concern in the County as it is nationwide; BOC is creating the Intergovernmental and Interagency Task Force on Homelessness to better understand the extent and challenges of homelessness to coordinate with ongoing efforts and to develop or reinforce action steps to reduce homelessness.

He advised that he would appoint Commissioner Philbeck to chair the task force that will provide a written report to BOC and each municipal board/council by November 30, 2021; task force will be made up of representatives from the BOC, each municipal board/council, faith community, DHHS (Health Division and Social Services Division), County Police, United Way, Salvation Army, Gaston/Lincoln/Cleveland Continuum of Care Planning Committee and Catherine's House Sisters of Mercy.

Chairman Keigher called for a motion to approve.

Commissioner Brown introduced the motion to approve and Commissioner Fraley provided the second.

Chairman Keigher called for discussion.

Commissioner Worley advised he had spoken with two individuals in the parking lot via phone that are interested in serving on the task force.

Commissioner Philbeck thanked (Reverend R.) Dwayne Burks (Gaston County's Resource Connection Gateway) who has worked countywide trying to address homelessness; advised the task force's goal is to provide leadership, resources and to bring people together to impact the homelessness issue; thanked the County Manager for putting this together and asked her to comment on the issue.

The County Manager advised there is a stipulation for the municipalities to opt out; staff did some research to secure a professional facilitator and is talking to John Bennett from Queens University about serving in that role; want to have a robust schedule in terms of milestones and activities

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leading up to the November deadline; appreciate the opportunity to help convene the discussion countywide and will assign someone from staff to help support that effort.

Commissioner Philbeck advised the task force will be well organized with the right facilitators and will provide a written report that can bring about some type of change.

Commissioner Brown added that (law enforcement) in the municipalities/towns know a lot about the homeless in their respective communities, and what is going on and this needs to be part of the meetings.

Commissioner Philbeck advised he had learned from others that homeless children make up 30% of the homeless population.

Hearing no further comments, Chairman Keigher called for the vote, and the BOC unanimously approved **2021-068**.

Adjournment

Chairman Keigher adjourned the Special Meeting of March 9, 2021 at 6:58 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

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