

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
AUGUST 09, 2022**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on August 09, 2022, 1:00 p.m., Justice and Administration Building, Room A201, 401 Grindstaff Cove Road, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Brian McMahan, Chairman
Boyce Deitz, Vice Chair
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Tom Stribling, Commissioner
Gayle Woody, Commissioner

Don Adams, County Manager
Heather C. Baker, County Attorney
Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to the Board

Chairman McMahan called the meeting to order.

(1) PUBLIC SCHOOL CAPITAL GRANT: Dr. Dana Ayers, Superintendent and Jake Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent, were present for this item.

Dr. Ayers stated the purpose of appearing before the Board was to discuss the Public School Need Based Grants. They applied last year, but was not awarded. The award went to school systems that already had a project in place or partially completed. The state opened the opportunity again on September 1st, so they were applying again.

Mr. Buchanan stated there was a new funding source for schools that had not been available before in this form at these levels of funding. It was a bipartisan issue with a lot of support. All indications were that this was something that would be in place moving forward. There would also be increased competition going forward to be awarded the grants.

He presented: Public School Capital Funds NC Lottery Revenue 2022 NBPSCF Grant Program:

(a) Lottery Capital Funds:

- Public School Building Capital Fund (1987):
 - Original funding – corporate tax revenue
 - \$100 million/year
 - ADM based allotment
- Needs Based Public School Capital Fund (2017):
 - Joint application process
 - Critical facility needs
 - Local matching funds
- Public School Repair and Renovation Fund (2021):
 - \$30 million/year 1...\$50 million/year 2 onward
 - Equal allocation to 100 counties
 - Repair, renovation, expansion of classroom facilities

(b) NBPSCF (2021 Changes):

- SL 2021-180 (state budget)
 - Creates Article 38B in G.S. 115C
 - Significant changes to the NBPSCF

- Increases maximum grants:
 - \$30 million – elementary schools
 - \$40 million – middle schools
 - \$50 million – high schools
- Broadens eligible uses: New buildings, additions, repairs and renovations
- Revises local matching requirement: Range from 0% to 35%
- Changes eligibility criteria:
 - Adjusted market value of taxable real property
 - NC Department of Revenue (data source)
- Eliminates 5-year ineligibility for PSBCF: ADM based allotments resumed – FY21-22 Q2 Funds
- Eliminates 5-year restriction to reapply NBPSCF: Priority for applicants with no grant in past 3 years
- Prior NBPSCF recipients may apply for increase:
 - Project not yet under construction
 - DPI shall prioritize these applications
- Agreement/reporting requirements unchanged
- (c) NBPSCF:
 - Application evaluation criteria:
 - Prior recipients applying for an increase.
 - Counties designated as Tier 1 areas.
 - Counties with greater need and less ability to generate tax revenue.
 - Counties with a high debt to tax revenue ratio.
 - Projects that address critical deficiencies.
 - Projects with new construction or complete renovation.
 - Projects that consolidate two or more schools.
 - Counties that have not received a grant in three years.
 - State date of project construction.
 - Percentage of District ADM served.
 - Grant awards since program inception:
 - \$30 million in 2017 – 4 grants (4 counties)
 - \$141 million in 2018 – 13 grants (12 counties)
 - \$73 million in 2019 – 6 grants (6 counties)
 - \$115 million in 2020 – 14 grants (9 counties)
 - \$395 million in 2021 – 42 grants (28 counties)
 - Anticipated funding – FY2022-23 grant cycle:
 - \$208,252,612 appropriation in SL 2022-74
 - \$100,000,000 needs based capital reserve per SL 2022-74
 - \$123,000,000 excess net lottery revenue per GS 18C-164
 - \$134,797,544 directed grants per SL 2022-74
 - \$296,455,068 Total (excess lottery revenue TBD)
 - FY2022-23 submittal and award schedule:
 - July 27th – Information webinar Q&A
 - July 28th – Publish local match requirements
 - August 1st – Application and guidance materials
 - September 1st – Application deadline
 - ---- Application review period
 - ---- Grant award announcement

Mr. Adams stated that some of the changes from last time included broadening eligible uses. Also, the previous matching requirement for the county was 5%, but had been increased to 15%.

Mr. Buchanan stated that they did not have concrete numbers that day of what the 15% match would be as the architect was working on the estimates for them. Initially, the indication was that the application would be due in November. During the informational webinar, they discovered the application would be due September 1st, so, they had a very quick turnaround. He and Dr. Ayers intended to take the item to the School Board meeting on August 30th to ask for permission to submit the application.

Mr. Adams stated he would place this on the August 16th agenda and if the Board was not prepared to make a decision at that time, he would request a special called meeting prior to September 1st. He recognized the vision of both Boards for adding the extra \$100,000 in the budget process to allow the school system to have the Request for Qualifications and an architect on hand.

He presented:

(d) Needs based public school building capital fund:

- Program eligibility and local matching requirements – fiscal year 2022-2023
- Jackson County:
 - NCDOR Assessed Real Estate Value: 10,559,583,792
 - NCDOR Sales Assessment Ratio: 1.0000
 - Adjusted Market Value: 10,559,583,792
 - 2021 Eligibility Status: Y
 - Local Match Required: 15%

(e) Needs based public school capital fund grants using the old numbers:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>5% Match</u>	<u>15% Match</u>
Fairview Cafeteria and Classrooms	\$8,306,128.00	\$415,306.40	\$1,245,919.20
SMHS Stadium ADA Upgrades and Track on Jones Street	\$7,124,940.00	\$356,247.00	\$1,068,741.00
Blue Ridge Gym/Performance Space and Classrooms	\$14,451,360.00	\$722,568.00	\$2,167,704.00
	\$29,882,428.00	\$1,494,121.40	\$4,482,364.20

Mr. Buchanan noted that these were all projects that both the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners had been discussing for a long time. These were items they had identified, as a community and had been working through the process of getting to the funding level for each project.

Chairman McMahan stated that he had been involved in this process for 20 years and some of these projects were on the table 20 years ago.

Mr. Adams presented:

(f) Articles 40 and 42 Sales Tax:

	FY 2019-2020	FY 2020-2021	FY 2021-2022	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2025-2026
Articles 40 & 42 Total:	\$3,417,313.65	\$4,073,484.13	\$4,575,686.91	\$4,804,471.26	\$5,044,694.82	\$5,296,929.56	\$5,561,776.04
School Capital Expenditures:	\$3,417,313.65	\$4,073,484.13	\$4,575,686.91	\$4,804,471.26	\$5,044,694.82	\$5,296,929.56	\$5,561,776.04
Capital Improvements transfers out							
ADA upgrade SMH							
Baseball	(\$463,800.00)						
BRS water/sewer	(\$68,400.00)						
School safety projects			(\$4,009,447.00)				
	(\$532,200.00)		(\$4,009,447.00)				
Capital Reserve Projected amounts available after commitments:							
School Capital Reserve 06/30/21							
Balance		\$2,735,148.01					
New Year Addition			\$1,706,511.24	\$1,983,954.26	\$2,242,777.82	\$2,513,612.56	\$2,778,459.04
Balance Available		\$2,735,148.01	\$432,212.25	\$2,416,166.51	\$4,658,944.32	\$7,172,556.88	\$9,951,015.92

(g) Options to fund SCC and K-12 from Article 46 Sales Tax:

	<u>FY18-19</u>	<u>FY19-20</u>	<u>FY20-21</u>	<u>FY21-22</u>	<u>FY22-23</u>	<u>FY23-24</u>	<u>FY24-25</u>	<u>FY25-26</u>
Projection Amount	\$1,457,471.62	\$1,632,001.60	\$2,065,208.89	\$2,305,472.41	\$2,420,746.03	\$2,541,783.33	\$2,668,872.50	\$2,802,316.12
Cumulative total	\$3,710,463.35	\$5,342,464.95	\$7,407,673.84	\$9,713,146.25				
SCC Health Sciences Bldg. Debt Payment		(\$878,364.94)	(\$857,187.50)	(\$838,137.50)	(\$819,087.50)	(\$800,037.50)	(\$780,987.50)	(\$761,937.50)
Transfer to School Improvement Projects			(\$182,293.00)	(\$3,400,000.00)				
New year additional after debt payment			\$1,025,728.39	(\$1,932,665.09)	\$1,601,658.53	\$1,741,745.83	\$1,887,885.00	\$2,040,378.62
Cumulative Total	\$3,710,463.35	\$1,243,937.01	\$2,269,665.40	\$337,000.31	\$1,938,658.84	\$3,680,404.67	\$5,568,289.67	\$7,608,668.29

Mr. Adams noted that if all projects were funded, it would take several years for design, bid and construction, so they needed to make sure they were looking at several years' worth of revenues. After receiving the new construction numbers from the architect and if they could show they had the cash available over the next three years, in his opinion, all that would stop them moving forward would be if this was not a priority of the Board.

General discussions were held.

Chairman McMahan stated that if they found out by the end of the calendar year they did not get the grant, the Board would be in a position to pull out portions of these projects and have conversations about what they could fund.

Mr. Buchanan stated that there were future grants that could be available, but he would make the argument that they should not wait for a potential grant to do what they were able to do.

Dr. Ayers stated that these were their priorities before the grant came along. Regardless of the grants, those projects were their primary focus. She thought they should continue on the path they were on, with the grants being a possible bonus.

Chairman McMahan stated that if they were not awarded the grants by the end of the year, they would have better numbers from the architect. He thought they should go ahead and put a plan in place to identify how they were going to deal with these projects.

Mr. Adams stated they were planning to do a five-year capital plan for the schools regardless of the grants. The second round of grants just delayed the process. He agreed, they did not need to wait for future grants. After this round of grants, no matter how they were awarded, they needed to do a five-year plan utilizing the numbers and start making priorities based on the funds they knew they had.

Commissioner Jones asked if ARPA funds could be used for these school projects?

Mr. Adams stated that ARPA funds could be used for any general governmental purpose. The 15% obligation for the three projects would be over a three-year period. If they did not get grants for all three projects, it would open up the 15% for planning purposes.

Commissioner Woody suggested a letter from the Commissioners showing their total support of the application. There was not always a positive relationship in every community between boards of commissioners and boards of education, but they worked so well together and the history of that was very important.

Commissioner Deitz stated that if they had funds and there was a part of a project they could in some way put together, he wanted them to do that and not tie it to something to the point that it could not be done. Looking back at other projects, like the Fine and Performing Arts Center, that they talked about for years, once they had the project completed, everyone was so glad to have it. Kids could have been using these things and it could have been good, but they waited all these years to do it.

Chairman McMahan stated that he was interested in seeing the numbers from the architect. He thought they should move ahead with the capital planning regardless of what would happen with the grants. They could have specific numbers for each project broken down and be ready to start at the first of the year. They had money in the bank ready to use and they needed to use it.

Mr. Adams stated he would get the numbers to the Commissioners as soon as he could on Friday.
Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

Dr. Ayers noted the ribbon cutting ceremonies for the preschools at Blue Ridge School, Cullowhee Valley School, Scotts Creek School and Fairview Elementary. Also, in collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department, they would hold the first Back to School Bash on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Cullowhee Recreation Center. They were giving away backpacks, school supplies and many other items such as sports physicals and haircuts.

Commissioner Woody also noted that Mountain Projects was sponsoring an event to give away new tennis shoes and socks to students.

(2) PICTOMETRY AGREEMENT: Tabitha Ashe, Tax Administrator, presented a proposed agreement for the Pictometry project. The funds had already been approved in the budget. The public would continue to see the ortho images online from the straight flyovers. The Pictometry product used multiple cameras for the flyovers to produce oblique imagery at a property level.

This would be a great product for the Tax Office and Emergency Management. It would not eliminate the need for field appraisers, but would help them tremendously with measurements or views in office. This product would be used internally by various county agencies. They would also be receiving new ortho images as well, which were accessible by the public.

She shared sample photos of the ortho and the oblique imagery.

General discussions were held.

Mr. Adams stated that since this was a multi-year contract, the Board would need to approve. That year's funding was in the budget with a total price of \$225,678.00. The primary use would be for the Tax Office, but there were values for other agencies as well.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(3) EXCISE TAX REFUNDS RESOLUTION: Ms. Baker stated that several months ago she mentioned that the General Assembly was looking to pass legislation to allow Boards of Commissioners to delegate the County Manager or the County Finance Officer to authorize Excise Tax Refunds. The legislation passed and was effective as of July 1st.

She presented a resolution for consideration that would delegate the County Manager to authorize the refund and required the Finance Officer's approval to follow the Finance Office's normal procedure for disbursement. The refund requests would then no longer have to come before the Board for a decision. The request would still have to comply with the statute of being requested within six months when the overpayment was made.

Mr. Adams stated that Ms. Fox could include any refunds in her monthly report.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

The Board took at ten-minute recess.

Chairman McMahan called the meeting back to order.

(4) NC OPIOID SETTLEMENTS: Mr. Adams stated that Commissioner Woody had brought up the idea of bringing in professionals to start discussing the opioid epidemic. He wanted to share information about the settlement and the process that the agreement required the county to go through to decide how the funds would be expended.

Many other organizations in the state were putting together information to help give guidance to counties on how to proceed forward. This would not be an overnight process. It would take time for planning and eventual decision making. This could be a regional process or a targeted area.

They were thankful for the funds that would be awarded, but it was over an 18-year period and would not be enough funds at one time to solve the opioid crisis. This would require partnerships between multiple organizations to work on for years to come. The information he would provide could be found at ncopioidsettlement.org, which was the primary resource being used.

He provided the Board with the following information: North Carolina Opioid Settlement:

(a) About Opioid Settlement: North Carolina was part of a historic \$26 billion agreement that would bring relief to communities impacted by opioids. These funds would be used to support treatment, recovery, harm reduction and other life-saving programs and services in communities throughout the state. North Carolina's Opioid and Substance Use Action Plan lays out concrete strategies to advance prevention, reduce harm and connect people to the care they needed.

(b) Opioid Settlements: In 2021, Attorney General Josh Stein announced a historic \$26 billion agreement. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the state and local governments directed how opioid settlement funds would be distributed and used in the state. To maximize funds flowing to North Carolina communities on the front lines of the opioid epidemic, the MOA allocated 15% of settlement funds to the state and would send the remaining 85% to North Carolina's 100 counties and 17 municipalities.

As they were awarded, Ms. Baker had worked on this for months with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC). The NCACC lobbied for counties statewide in order for the opioid settlement dollars to be distributed to counties versus the state.

(c) 18-year payment to Jackson County during 2022-2038: \$3,270,043.

- Spring 2022: \$125,635
- Summer 2022: \$276,293
- Summer 2023: \$218,670
- Summer 2024: \$263,739
- Summer 2025: \$271,506
- Summer 2026 and 2027: \$168,370 each year
- Summer 2028: \$194,078
- Summer 2029 and 2030: \$200,199 each year
- Summer 2031: \$172,834
- Summer 2032 – Summer 2038: \$144,307 each year

(d) How should counties and cities spend their settlement funds: The MOA offered local governments two options:

- Under Option A, a local government may fund one or more strategies from a shorter list of evidence-based, high-impact strategies to address the epidemic.
- Under Option B, a local government engages in a collaborative strategic planning process involving a diverse array of stakeholders and may then fund a strategy from the list or a longer list of strategies included in the national settlements.

(e) Exhibit A to NC MOA high-impact opioid abatement strategies: In keeping with the National Settlement Agreement, opioid settlement funds may support programs or services listed below that serve persons with Opioid Use Disorder or any co-occurring Substance Use Disorder or mental health condition.

(f) Exhibit B to NC MOA additional opioid remediation activities:

- Part One: Treatment
- Part Two: Prevention
- Part Three: Other strategies
- Address the needs of criminal justice involved persons

- Address the needs of pregnant or parenting women and their families, including babies with neonatal abstinence syndrome
- (g) Exhibit C to NC MOA – Collaborative Strategic Planning Process under Option B.

Southwestern Commission and Vaya Health would be conducting a meeting at the Department on Aging on August 16th, with MAHEC as a sponsor of the event. The recently hired NCACC Director of Strategic Health and Opioid Initiatives was also slated to attend. The new director would be pulling together statewide best practices and providing information to counties as resources in the months ahead.

At a previous meeting, Commissioner Woody mentioned Dr. Albert Kopak of MAHEC speaking to the Board. There were several items in the information that were in Dr. Kopak's area of study and expertise in the Criminal Justice Diversion Program and addiction treatment for incarcerated persons. He proposed to continue these conversations by bringing experts to the Board over a period of time to present information.

He wanted to bring multiple experts to the Board that represented the different types of programs that may or may not be funded. He reached out to Shelly Foreman of Vaya Health and wanted to start with a psychiatrist to present to the Board, from a medical standpoint, about opioid addiction. Then, he could start bringing in other experts.

As the next step, he would want to start an internal staff committee to begin discussions. Also, the Board would need to choose which process they wanted to use to identify the priority for the funds. The decision of the Board would be how they would plan to move forward. He encouraged the Board to look at the website at the types of services they could fund with the monies.

General discussions were held.

Commissioner Woody stated there was such a difference in approaches in urban and rural areas. Opioids touched everyone in the community. She asked that Mr. Adams be cognoscente of this when he brought experts in because the way an urban area handled this would not be relevant to what they would have, as far as resources. The regional impact would also be different than in an urban area.

Mr. Adams stated that Surry County was not much larger than Jackson County and they had done a lot of work on this issue. He would recommend they take a look at what they had done as they had similar resources. As they started developing these plans, they could look regionally and internally.

He had several discussions with Cris Weatherford, DSS Director, regarding foster care and group services. When looking at family rights, many times they needed access to mental health services and substance abuse services. Mr. Weatherford was trying to come up with concepts and ideas to help the system that would eventually better serve the child and free up social worker time to make faster and better determinations for children.

This could be a conversation within the county to better assist foster care children. They may identify things that directly related to opioid treatment, but they may also identify things that may improve services as a whole, with or without these funds that they may want to consider during the budget process.

When dealing with serving the citizens, substance abuse was a large problem, but it was part of a larger social problem they dealt with in all of their organizations. He thought there would be a lot of items identified to move forward to improve services that were directly and indirectly related to opioid abuse.

Commissioner Stribling suggested to use billboards throughout the county to show the overdoses each month. This would put it out in front of everyone because too many people swept this under the rug. It needed to be brought to light. They needed to know how many people were dying. The citizens needed to know each month. He also suggested forming an opioid committee to include individuals from fields such as doctors, first responders, DEA, police, health department, rehab counsellor, recovering addict and a parent.

Mr. Adams stated that from a prevention standpoint, media campaigns were mentioned as a fundable method under Option B.

Chairman McMahan stated he thought they had to take into consideration, no matter what they decided to do, that the dollars would run out at some point. Then, the burden would fall on tax funding to supplement or take the place of. When they started having conversations about staff, facilities or programs, they would have to keep in their mind that once they started something, they had to be prepared to end it or fund it in perpetuity with other sources once this money ran out. That could become even more complicated when they got into regional concepts.

Mr. Adams stated that there was a pathway for this type of planning process to engage diverse stakeholders. This would fall in line with the blueprint they had been given on how to proceed forward to develop a plan.

General discussions were held.

Chairman McMahan asked if there was a timeline to expend the funds?

Mr. Adams stated that it was his understanding that the funds were distributed over 18 years and the county would have to account and report on them. They could go through an organized process to try and figure out where would be the best and most appropriate place to expend these funds. The next steps would be to participate in the regional meeting on August 16th to start getting information. He would begin to line up presenters to come before the Board. He encouraged the Board to share ideas with him after they had the opportunity to read through the information to help him organize their next steps.

Informational item.

(5) ARPA - NONPROFITS: Mr. Adams stated that the U.S. Treasury related final ARPA rules on January 27, 2022. The new rules contained a provision related to revenue replacement that would greatly simplify the county's ability to use these funds. The new rules would allow counties to utilize up to \$10 million of these funds to replace revenues. The county's entire \$8,534,411 allocation could be utilized in this fashion.

These additional revenues could be used for any local government public purpose. This new provision would greatly simplify the county's ability to utilize these funds by removing the federal OMB Purchasing and Contracting Guidelines when expending these funds. The county would still have to follow all local government purchasing and contracting NC laws when expending these funds.

The county moved forward with several projects utilizing ARPA funds. These projects included:

- (a) \$1,210,451 used for public safety.
- (b) \$2,174,495 used to match a \$2,174,498 grant from Dogwood Health Trust to build a domestic violence shelter and to conduct a study regarding homelessness.
- (c) \$600,000 used to match the NC Great Grant broadband infrastructure program.
- (d) \$4,549,492 ARPA funds remain available.
- (e) Other ARPA conversations had been held that related to responding to the negative impacts of the public health emergency. These discussions included:
 - AWAKE facility needs.
 - Developing a non-profit application for those who perform human service functions.
- (f) Other concepts that had been discussed included:
 - Broadband. There would be additional opportunities through the upcoming NC CAB Grant Program.
 - Building of parks.
 - Affordable housing.

(g) It was requested that the Board move forward with reviewing the AWAKE facility needs and to entertain the needs of other nonprofits that performed human service functions. He proposed to invite WAKE to the Board to discuss their physical needs. The AWAKE project would be a good model to assist in reviewing other human service nonprofit needs within the community. Examples of why this would be a good model included:

- AWAKE's primary mission was to serve child abuse victims. One of ARPA's primary uses had always been to respond to the negative impacts of a public emergency. It was determined that the pandemic greatly exacerbated problems, such as child abuse and other social issues. Funding human service nonprofits followed the original intent of ARPA.
- The request was a one-time expense. AWAKE was attempting to repair and update its existing facility. AWAKE had developed multiple partnerships to meet their physical space needs. These partnerships ranged from real property donations to a significant fundraising effort. This effort would significantly reduce the financial request to the county.
- There was a long history of the county partnering with AWAKE in assisting the victims of child abuse. This went beyond financial support. AWAKE partners with other county organizations, such as the Sheriff's Office and Social Services. It would not be possible to serve these victims without AWAKE.

Chairman McMahan asked if there was an idea of the amount?

Mr. Adams stated it was approximately \$65,000. They had raised funds through donations that they needed for renovations. The intention would not be to fund large programs. Through their conversations, it was his understanding that this would be assistance for one-time expenses, such as a vehicle, etc. That was why he stated this was a good model. AWAKE had made a lot of effort to take care of this need prior to coming to the Board. This would show that the Board wanted to partner with nonprofits, but not be the sole funder.

Commissioner Woody stated that she thought that as a Board, they needed to make a decision about how much of the ARPA funds remaining they wanted to designate toward nonprofits. The reason was because she thought they needed to make a level playing field. If they started by asking one entity how much they wanted and they gave it to them, it would set the bar at a certain level and expectation.

It may not appear that they were being equitable in looking at the needs across the board. She thought they should decide how much money was going toward nonprofits before a nonprofit presented to the Board. They would then have a pool of money that people could apply for a one-time expense.

Chairman McMahan stated that he thought they could look at it from two perspectives. They could say this was a special pot of money that they had been given the opportunity to expend to meet needs within the community. They were going to take those needs on a case by case basis.

The AWAKE request would be an example of a valuable organization in the community that had a need and approached the county. He thought they needed to figure out a way to fund this request, whether it be through ARPA, contingency or the regular budgetary process. He thought this would be a great allowable use if they wanted to use ARPA money.

The other perspective would be to take the remaining \$4.5 million and set a certain percentage for each category, such as nonprofits. Then, they would be limiting what they could use for certain areas. If they did that, they needed to decide what the categories would be and what the percentages would be before they went further. He thought the first decision they needed to make would be if the Board wanted to create categories and percentages? Or, did they want to hold the pot as a whole and take it case by case?

Commissioner Woody stated that she liked the idea of the categories since this was a one-time opportunity with the ARPA money. Because they were a small county, they had the freedom to use the funds as they saw fit. That did not happen very often. She would like them to have those categories so they could look back and say there were permanent changes or permanent opportunities they had created.

When they looked at the community, there were bridges, buildings and rock walls built by the WPA or the CCC. Those had far reaching implications in the community. She felt there was a legacy they could leave also.

Helping AWAKE with their building would certainly leave a legacy, as that would be an ongoing service. If they did not make those designations, it would be put here or there, as needs would arise, but it would not be as intentional to her. She would like to have that discussion.

Commissioner Jones stated they took the \$8.5 million from the ARPA funds and they had increased it up to \$10.7 million by partnering with Dogwood Trust. He thought as they looked down the road, that type of partnership of matching funds with various entities was another avenue to look at.

Mr. Adams stated that in the beginning, categories had been part of the conversation. He would mention that AWAKE specifically had been mentioned since the beginning. They have had this need and the reason the Board was not dealing with this at budget time was because they had discussed setting up an application process.

He did not single out AWAKE and was not making them more valuable than other nonprofits. AWAKE did not own a building, but were able to get a building donated. Also, they were able to fundraise and had maxed out their partnerships. They were at a point to make decisions on the renovations. He thought AWAKE had held off in anticipation of this conversation.

Chairman McMahan inquired about AWAKE's timeline for the project?

Mr. Adams stated they would really need to know prior to December.

Chairman McMahan suggested to go ahead and invite AWAKE to present their request. Regardless of where the funds came from, he did not think there was a single one of them that did not want to support AWAKE and recognized the huge impact they had on the community for the children. They could work out the details of how they were going to fund it at a later date.

Going back to Commissioner Woody's point, how did the other Commissioners feel about the categories? If they were going to go with this concept, they would need to, as a Board, come up with the categories and how they would allocate the remaining amount. He asked the Commissioners their thoughts about categories or did they want to leave it as a whole pot to use at their discretion.

Commissioner Deitz stated he thought they should leave it as a whole pot.

Commissioner Jones stated that he thought whole pot.

Commissioner Stribling stated that he thought whole pot.

Chairman McMahan stated he thought whole pot also.

Commissioner Woody stated that she thought categories.

Mr. Adams stated that the AWAKE request was a good model to start with as they were already a nonprofit, in the human services business and the county contracted with them. There was a lot of value in this. They could start an initial process with the county's existing partnerships already established. They would also want to know the other partnerships of the organization and had they done other things to achieve their goals.

They wanted to work with existing nonprofits to see if they had any needs of single purchases, not ongoing costs. That way, the county could be a partner and not a primary funder in what they were attempting to accomplish. That was why he thought this was a good model.

Informational item.

(6) STATE OF EMERGENCY: Chairman McMahan stated there had been some discussion about the Governor lifting the State of Emergency for North Carolina. They had been under a state of emergency for two and a half years. The Governor's action was set to take place on August 15th. Local states of emergency were in place that mirrored the state.

In his capacity as Chair, under state law, he had the authority to declare a state of emergency locally. He wanted to hear from staff if they felt they were in a position to also lift the local declarations. He thought there was a point in time where they had to move on.

Mr. Adams stated that the county had consistently moved forward with the state and followed the directions and actions of the Governor's Office and Health and Human Services. If the Chairman removed the county from a local state of emergency, that would be consistent with what had been happening for the last two and a half years.

He had conversations with Shelley Carraway, Health Director and Todd Dillard, Emergency Management Director. Ms. Carraway was comfortable with the Chairman moving forward to remove the local state of emergency since legislative actions were done to empower the State Health Director. Ms. Carraway believed that empowerment removed the need for a local state of emergency, from her standpoint.

Mr. Dillard had stated that as far as he understood, any opportunities related to grants regarding this state of emergency had passed. So, there was no need to maintain a state of emergency to make them eligible for state funding.

Chairman McMahan asked the Board if they were comfortable with moving forward to cancel the State of Emergency?

Consensus: *Move forward to cancel the local State of Emergency.*

(7) SUPPLEMENTAL PAID LEAVE POLICY: Mr. Adams stated that on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, the Board of Commissioners approved a State of Emergency Leave (SOE) policy. This policy permitted employees paid leave time due to COVID-19 infection or exposure, to care for sick family members, to manage other eligible COVID-19 issues and a work absence due to the public closure of a county facility during the actual state of emergency.

The SOE Leave Policy was developed to address a specific emergency. When that State of Emergency ended, the policy would no longer be in effect. It was proposed to structure another leave category to use for unknown extenuating circumstances which may occur in the future. The Board of Commissioners would be the authority to authorize and approve paid leave under the Supplemental Paid Leave (SPL) Policy.

It was apparent COVID-19 would continue to have an impact on the workforce and require employee absences due to isolation/quarantine periodically. Therefore, Human Resources recommended any remaining SOE leave balances be converted to the to the SPL so it may be available for use by those employees, should the need arise. No additional leave would be provided employees other than that allotted previously under SOE.

Commissioner Jones asked if these hours had already been included in the budget?

Mr. Adams stated yes.

Consensus: *Add this item to the next regular meeting agenda for consideration.*

(8) OTHER BUSINESS: None.

There being no further business, Commissioner Stribling moved to adjourn the meeting. Chairman McMahan seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Angela M. Winchester, Clerk to Board

Brian Thomas McMahan, Chairman