

**MINUTES OF THE GUILFORD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS /
GUILFORD COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
JOINT CAPITAL/FACILITIES COMMITTEE**

**Greensboro, North Carolina
October 23, 2023**

The Joint Capital/Facilities Committee, appointed by the Guilford County Board of Commissioners and Guilford County Schools Board of Education, met in a duly noticed meeting on October 23, 2023 at 3:00PM in the John H. McAdoo Conference Room, 201 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC.

Guilford County Board of Commissioners (BOC)

Present: Committee Co-Chair Commissioner Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding;
Commissioners Kay Cashion, Carly Cooke and J. Carlvena Foster.

Absent: None

Guilford County Schools (GCS) Board of Education (BOE)

Present: Board of Education members Bettye T. Jenkins, Khem Irby and Alan Sherouse.

Absent: Committee Co-Chair Deena A. Hayes

Also Present: County Manager Michael Halford (via virtual participation); Dr. Whitney Oakley, GCS Superintendent; Lisa Nolen, GCS Board Relations Director; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager; Andrea Leslie-Fite, Guilford County Attorney; Jose Oliva, GCS Chief of Staff; Julius Monk, GCS Deputy Superintendent of Business & Operations; Don Warn, Guilford County Finance Director; members of County and GCS staff, community partners, the public and media. Virtual participation was made available to the public and media partners.

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Committee Co-Chair Skip Alston called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A draft copy of minutes for the July 26, 2023 committee meeting were reviewed for accuracy. A motion was made by Commissioner J. Carlvena Foster, and seconded by Commissioner Kay Cashion, to adopt the July 26, 2023 committee meeting minutes, as presented.

By unanimous consent, the committee approved the July 26, 2023 meeting minutes.

III. BOND PROGRAM UPDATE

Dr. Julius Monk, Guilford County Schools (GCS) Deputy Superintendent of Business & Operations, introduced the item and shared that today's update will provide a comprehensive review of bond projects as of October 11, 2023.

Dr. Monk confirmed they are still seeing price increases for materials such as concrete and glass. He noted any site work with infrastructure items have pending material orders that are twelve (12) weeks out and spoke to ongoing shortages for skilled trade workers. Monk provided updates on Claxton Elementary and the current work to address car rider and staff parking layouts. He reported site footings are complete, and site grading and installation is currently underway.

Co-Chair Alston questioned the percentage completion of the Brooks Global Studies Elementary project.

Monks confirmed the project is 16% complete, but is based upon financial information.

Co-Chair Alston questioned if staff could share projected completion dates for each of the projects.

Monk introduced visuals of the construction in progress at the Brooks site and confirmed its expected completion date is July 2024. He noted the next three (3) months of the Claxton project will include mechanical, electrical, plumbing, wall insulation and framing work, with a projected completion date of August 2024. He noted the school should be ready for students in January 2025 and staff are planning a mid- school year move.

Monk reviewed current activities for Foust Robotics & Gaming Elementary School project and noted concrete floor slab and structural steel installation is underway, and discussed project goals over the next three (3) months.

Monk provided an update on construction activity at Kiser Middle School and confirmed the expected construction completion date is October 2025, with a mid-school year move in January 2026.

Monk discussed current construction activities for the Peck K-8 Expeditionary School and noted they will begin exterior finishes and roofing within the next three (3) months. He shared they project a construction completion date of November 2024 with a mid-school year move

scheduled in 2025. Monk shared a steel topping-off ceremony will be conducted at the school on October 30.

Monk introduced the deferred maintenance program and stated they are currently negotiating with an Information Technology Specialist to provide district-wide assessment that will include audio/visual (AV) upgrades for ten (10) high schools.

Dr. Whitney Oakley, GCS Superintendent, reviewed the \$6.3 million in project encumbrances.

Co-Chair Alston clarified that the project encumbrances are not for completed projects and questioned the budget for these projects.

Dr. Monk confirmed the remaining deferred maintenance budget is \$48 million.

Co-Chair Alston questioned when these projects would be completed.

Dr. Monk stated it could take several years to complete these remaining projects. He noted that, in January, he will work with County staff to identify what has been encumbered versus what has been expended.

Co-Chair Alston questioned if there will be any schools without sufficient heating resources this winter.

Dr. Monk shared that the deferred maintenance funding will cover full system replacements, but repairs will have to be made using annual capital/operational funds. He shared there are no plans to take any systems down during the winter season.

Dr. Oakley noted several of these projects are long overdue and they cannot determine when a system will stop functioning. She confirmed that, as GCS staff maintain and replace new parts, others will begin to fail and they are unable to replace every HVAC system with current bond funding before this winter.

Bettye T. Jenkins, GCS Board of Education member, spoke to the challenges when ordering parts and the inability to estimate when they will arrive.

Co-Chair Alston expressed his hope that there are plans in place for known issues.

Dr. Monk confirmed they currently have no known issues that would cause system failures.

Co-Chair Alston questioned the bond funds for deferred maintenance.

Commissioner Carly Cooke requested staff provide additional information regarding the deferred maintenance as this was the first time she was aware there were items to be capitalized with this funding source.

Halford shared bond projects must be bigger ticket items, but annual funding is allocated for deferred maintenance. He noted larger renovations for a new wing or replacement of a system would be covered under bond projects. Halford shared GCS has historically utilized both funding streams to cover projects and the current challenge is allocating projects across these funding sources.

Commissioner Cooke noted the decision to decrease the annual capital allocation to \$6.5 million was a result of assigning \$48 million towards deferred maintenance.

Don Warn, Guilford County Finance Director, spoke to the IRS guidelines related to major maintenance projects, such as HVAC systems, when tax exempt bonds are issued. He noted that the routine maintenance items discussed in Dr. Monk's updates need to be capitalized and then approved by bond counsel and our tax attorney.

Halford shared the \$2 billion in bond funds will not address as many projects as it would have a few years ago, and noted the dollars were adjusted to handle larger deferred maintenance needs. He confirmed the funding model included bond money and cash and shared staff will work to identify the correct funding sources on a monthly basis. Halford shared the primary challenge is to identify which items are capital improvements versus routine maintenance.

Co-Chair Alston questioned the \$48 million for deferred maintenance.

Dr. Oakley spoke to the Safety, Technology and Site improvements referenced in the presentation, and confirmed this funding is to address those larger maintenance projects.

Dr. Monk provided an example of a routine maintenance project that could not be paid for with bond funding versus a larger maintenance project that could be covered.

Commissioner Cooke questioned which schools would receive HVAC improvements under the deferred maintenance plan versus those that would receive AV upgrades.

Dr. Oakley shared five (5) schools will not receive upgrades.

Dr. Monk noted those schools will be placed on a list for upgrades during the next school year. He shared Grimsley, Madison Elementary, Ragsdale, Oakview and Cone Elementary are currently under contract for HVAC improvements and clarified that they may have a system repair need, such as chiller replacement, and existing capital funds would be used to address these projects.

Commissioner Cashion questioned the "Safe Schools" category and if staff are addressing of their needs from this viewpoint.

Dr. Monk confirmed the IT plans are to address technology backbone and infrastructure needs, and noted they are purchasing weapons detection systems and cameras, and they are installing safety vestibules in elementary schools to control access.

Dr. Oakley noted this deferred maintenance funding is only \$48 million out of the \$500 million allocated for these projects.

Commissioner Foster questioned if the "Safe Schools" category will address needs related to athletic areas and playgrounds.

Dr. Monk stated certain playgrounds have been prioritized as they are in need of full replacement, and confirmed staff are considering resurfacing tennis courts and track fields, as

well as addressing maintenance needs in locker rooms. He confirmed they are looking to upgrade Grimsley athletic fields and replace those lost in the construction process.

Commissioner Foster spoke to the need for security with regards to outside activities on campuses.

Dr. Monk confirmed they have a priority list that is not publicly available, but does include fencing and lighting for parking areas.

Khem Irby, GCS Board of Education member, questioned what projects could be added if savings were identified for certain projects.

Dr. Monk shared they will continue to look for savings opportunities. He reviewed next steps and noted they are working on program alignment.

Commissioner Cooke expressed her appreciation for the student enrollment plan review and questioned if staff were still working with the original numbers.

Dr. Monk confirmed they are utilizing the original numbers as they have observed decreases in enrollment in certain areas.

Commissioner Cooke noted the goal for the ten-year projects is to help make adjustments to construction.

Dr. Oakley noted Toyota and Boom had not announced their plans when these initial project plans were created.

Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager, noted that County staff have not received a list updated from the original version that was used to validate the \$48 million in deferred maintenance expenditures against the bond. He noted there may be certain expenditures that will not fall into the eligible use category.

Commissioner Cooke clarified that the \$6.3 million is a portion of the \$48 million that has been encumbered, and is not an additional amount.

Jones thanked the committee for the clarification and expressed his interest in conducting a review in order to develop an updated listing of the deferred maintenance projects.

Co-Chair Alston questioned the last time County staff reviewed the list.

Warn stated the last review was August 16.

Dr. Monk noted that any ineligible items would be covered with annual capital funding.

Dr. Oakley spoke to the benefits of the monthly staff meetings that allow them to review each project. She noted there will never be a stagnant list and noted each monthly meeting is topic-based and expressed her interest in continuing these conversations.

Co-Chair Alston requested staff work on an updated listing for October.

Dr. Monk stated that, from staff's perspective, the priority listing is still useful and noted County staff may have questions with invoicing, but projects like fire alarm system replacements should qualify for deferred maintenance funds.

Commissioner Cooke noted deferred maintenance and school safety were some of the priorities shared with voters who approved the bonds and expressed her hope that staff are working as hard as possible to ensure these funds are used as efficiently to complete as many projects as possible. She questioned the process for, and progress related to, inspection and investigation of safety communications in the schools.

Dr. Monk spoke to the application introduced to the schools and recent trainings conducted, and confirmed safety communications have been prioritized. He shared they are using weapons detention systems and cameras, in addition to replacing fire and intrusion alarm systems.

Dr. Oakley discussed the radio frequency technologies covered by federal relief funding and those covered under deferred maintenance. She spoke to the different pots of funding used to complete a variety of projects in the district, and noted ESSER-funded projects are near completion.

Jose Oliva, GCS Chief of Staff, noted they are finishing bids for some electrical work, but all equipment has been installed.

Commissioner Cooke spoke to visible signage regarding school construction and questioned if efforts are being made to inform the public on maintenance.

Dr. Monk discussed the bond program dashboard and noted it does not include deferred maintenance due to the volume of projects. He confirmed they will work with each school to clearly communicate their upgrades.

Commissioner Cooke expressed her interest in viewing the dashboard and spoke to the value of this work.

Commissioner Cashion thanked school staff for their placement of signage and spoke to the calls received. She questioned if updates are being shared during school PTA meetings so the word can be spread regarding the projects at their locations.

Dr. Monk confirmed there is a plan to increase communications in November.

Halford shared this type of back and forth is common with each bond issue and reiterated that, while it may appear disorganized, this is a normal process. He spoke to the multiple sources of funding utilized and spoke to upcoming discussions that might generate interest and potentially offset County funds.

Co-Chair Alston spoke to the benefit of receiving summaries or updates from the staff meetings in order to prepare for these committee meetings.

Warn spoke to the thresholds for capital bond funds use.

Halford shared he would work with Dr. Oakley to identify the best way to provide this information and clarified that the committee is requesting a report of what is being discussed during staff meetings versus approaching the Board for approval of things discussed during the meetings.

The committee members discussed threshold requirements.

Co-Chair Alston questioned a recent need for Lindley Elementary.

The committee discussed capacity and the ability to complete projects as quickly as possible.

IV. BOND PROGRAM DASHBOARD REVIEW

Dr. Monk thanked the County for its assistance in development of the dashboard and reviewed its functionality, including the ability to drill down project funding by school. He confirmed the dashboard would be updated monthly.

GCS BOE member Irby expressed her interest in including term definitions on the dashboard.

Dr. Monk introduced the definitions component and Irby suggested additional information by added at the individual school level.

Commissioner Cooke thanked staff and questioned the status of the Allen Jay project ordinance.

Dr. Monk noted the ordinance only allows funding for design work, and the dashboard shows a projected budget, not what has been approved, to date.

Commissioner Foster questioned how people will be directed to the dashboard.

Dr. Monk shared that, after today, they will work with GCS and Guilford County IT staff to publish the dashboard.

Dr. Oakley stated they will also receive public-facing communications support from GCEDA.

Commissioner Foster questioned if information is being distributed to the schools to share with parents.

Co-Chair Alston questioned if a sign with a QR code link to the dashboard could be placed at each school.

Dr. Monk confirmed they are working on these communications.

Halford noted that once the dashboard is public, they can receive feedback on how to improve and questioned the committee's interest in publishing the dashboard.

By general consensus, the committee directed staff to move forward with publishing the Bond Program Dashboard.

Commissioner Cooke questioned the need to distinguish between projects that are under development versus those that are currently active.

GCS BOE member Irby questioned if a disclaimer related to the data would be included on the site.

V. UPDATE ON SCHOOL CAPITAL FUNDING PLAN

Warn confirmed the plan is being followed based upon the guiding principles set forth by this partnership. He reviewed the debt model and discussed how the County plans to pay for debt service. Warn noted that current projections show a \$3.4 million deficit in 2028 and shared the County will present to the Local Government Commission (LGC) in December. He spoke to the bond issuance resolution that will be presented for BOC approval in January 2025.

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

Dr. Iulia Vann, DHHS-Public Health Division Director, provided an update on school-based health clinics and the need to offer additional services in areas where new schools are being built. She added that, over the past few years, her team has worked in partnership with GCS to identify areas of poverty, uninsured communities, areas with high rates of chronic illness and other social determinants of health to determine the best spaces and places for clinics.

Dr. Vann discussed how these clinics would be operationalized and noted that evidence-based processes would be used to create a school-based clinic alliance that would advance the work of clinics, communication and serve as a neutral third-party to administer the clinics.

Dr. Vann shared their conversations with Wake Forest Baptist partners, who are currently working with the Forsyth County Medical Alliance, and noted they have scheduled a meeting with this group to assist in developing a similar concept for Guilford County and GCS. She noted there is a clinic located in the Sylvia Mendez Newcomers School, and plans for clinics at Peck Expeditionary and the School for Visual Arts.

Halford stated there is some overlap between curricula at GTCC and GCS, and provided an update on initial conversations between County, GTCC and GCS staff.

Dr. Oakley confirmed they have had two meetings with the GTCC Board and have planned another meeting for November to discuss alignment of pathways. She spoke to the initial plan for a 400-student aviation program to alleviate some of the overcrowding in the northwest corridor.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Clerk to Board Robin Keller questioned the committee’s interest in scheduling its next meeting.

By general consensus, the committee scheduled its next meeting for January 24, 2024 at 3:00PM.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 4:53PM.

Commissioner Melvin “Skip” Alston
Committee Co-Chair

GCS Board of Ed., Deena A. Hayes
Committee Co-Chair

Robin Keller, Clerk to Board