

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

February 21, 2022
OTHERS PRESENT

Rick McVey, Chairman
David Owen, Vice Chairman
Nathaniel Hall
Jeremiah Jefferies
Steve Oestreich
John D. Dickerson
William Carter (Remote)

Bryan Miller, County Manager
Carla Smith, Clerk to the Board
Brian Ferrell, County Attorney (Joined Remote)

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in regular session on Monday, February 21, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the Historic Courthouse.

WELCOME:

Chairman McVey called the meeting to order and paused for a moment of Silent Prayer. Then the Board of Commissioners and all the guest in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The following individuals appeared before the Board to make public comments:

Laura Pichardo: 8621 Old US Highway 29 in Pelham, NC. I created a list of items of things that could be improved in the county.

We could add meeting reminders to our government webpage. So someone like me, who has a job that is very time consuming could receive an alert so that we are more informed about what's going on in our county. So that if we spot any area we can help with, we are able to provide quicker feedback and help our tax payers save some money.

Internet issues and opportunities for broadband. I noticed that on January 8th you talked about this. So my questions are: Can we push for more publications on the government website? I saw it on Facebook. I was lucky enough to be following your pages. So it could have more public statements. On the January 28th meeting, I also noticed that you all had noticed about the Rockingham County's Digital Inclusion Plan, which they have publicized. They were talking about how they were going to close the gaps of areas where people may not have broadband. They said that 60% of their county is rural and only 40% is actually urban. I wanted to make you aware that on the government's page they have issues another \$350 million from the FCC for rural broadband. I think this is a great opportunity to apply for those funds as well because I don't see any Federal agency retrieving those funds once they are issued. They are not going to ask for them back. That is also part of our \$31 trillion deficit for the country, but we should not be apologetic for someone else's mismanagement. So if we have the opportunity to apply for those funds, we should go for it. The window to apply for the GREAT grant, which is on the

Governor's webpage, is open until April 4th. I wanted to offer my assistance, if possible, for the grant writing if anyone needs help to meet that deadline. It's a great opportunity to apply for. I would also like to ask how much of the current funds have we used for broadband? Can we have more transparency in that area. I noticed in the summer that a Spectrum representative came to the County. Can we have more of those public relations announcements.

On page 2, I have some other areas of improvement. I hope everyone has an opportunity to check out CoSquare here at the square. It's an opportunity for people who are working from home. It has great internet access. It is a very comfortable environment to work in. If any of you have the opportunity to come in for a few minutes and sit with us, you will feel the atmosphere. You have an opportunity to have your lunch there it is fairly comfortable.

LAURA PICHARDO, MBA

Phone: (336) 587-1729, LRPCHRD@GMAIL.COM

WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/LAURA-PICHARDO-MBA-NC-USA

Dear Caswell County Commissioner and County Manager,

The following are callouts for areas of improvement for the continuous development of our country.

Areas of Improvement

- We need to have calendar meeting reminders that can be downloaded to our email accounts or phones. This will provide additional transparency



- Can we have **continuous updates regarding the development and implementation of Broadband** access to our Caswell County residents?
 - Please push on this issue more. Can we have public statements any updates?
 - Do we have a Digital Inclusion Plan this is in reference to Rockingham Co.'s plan in expanding broadband access.
 - Do you need assistance for grant writing so that we can receive additional grants from the states to expand Wi-fi in Caswell County? Pichardo can provide assistance.
 - How are we using our current funds for broadband?

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Other Areas of Improvement:

- Leaking roof at the Co Square
 - It is a great investment in our community, this space needs to be advertised more.
 - It is a safe space to work.
 - Please fix the roof.
 - The Staff can indicate which areas are leaking.
- Repave Main Street, it will improve the presentation of the street and it could help local businesses.
- Energy efficiency in county buildings.
 - How are we being energy efficient?
 - Do we have motion sensor lighting?

Elin Claggett, 108 Jaye Lane, Providence, NC

As you all know, my public record request that was initiated last December has not been answered. The District Liaison, Robin Braswell of the State and Local Government Finance Division, recommended that I contact the NC DOJ's Public Protection Section for assistance regarding NC Public Records.

According to the NC Attorney General, the Public Records Act imposes obligations on all local government officials to: Allow the public to obtain copies of public records — as promptly as possible upon request. Caswell Co. Public Records policy, adopted Oct. 21, 2019, states “Public Records orders shall be completed within a reasonable period of time . . . “

Questions asked December 30, 2021:

- ** When will the June 30, 2021 annual budget audit be available and what is the cost?
- ** Does Ms. Vaughn continue to receive the equivalent of full-time pay while working with the current Finance and Assistant Finance Directors? In 2018, her salary as Finance Director was \$58,512.
- ** Additionally, a 4th CPA consultant, Mr. Isley, is to be paid \$210/hr. How many days do you anticipate retaining his services in the initial 6 months?

Additional Question asked over a month ago on January 20, 2022:

- ** How much has Caswell Co. Government paid for total legal/attorney fees in 2020 and 2021?

The UNC government listing of salaries for county attorneys in NC in 2018-2019 reported that Caswell Co. Attorney, Mr. Ferrell, was paid an annual retainer of nearly \$50,000 plus professional fees totaling \$163,439. When compared to 10 other counties that have 20-30,000 population, this is high. At least 4 of these counties have a full time attorney while other county attorney wages range from \$48,000 in Cherokee Co. to \$119,000 in Hertford Co. Additionally, DSS compensation of \$71,235 (2018) was paid to a second local attorney and a third attorney, Mr. George Daniel, has worked with the tax department. Attorney salaries have been renegotiated and undoubtedly increased significantly since 2018. There may be additional legal

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fees for issues such as BYHS bond, property sales, spending of relief funds, and redrawing of election districts.

Your management team is failing. Maybe the County Attorney can advise the Manager on legal terms “reasonable time” or “as promptly as possible.” Typically audits are due to the State on October 31st with a 30 day extension if needed. I would think a reconciled budget & audit of the last fiscal year would be optimal, if not essential, for your upcoming budget discussions. I asked questions with easily accessible, uncomplicated answers. These questions are not going away so perhaps today during the comment portion, any one of you could ask them publicly.

Benton Kay Covington Thompson: 284 Blanch Rd, Blanch NC 27212

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Caswell County Commissioners

Regarding decision to leave Square intact

FACTS:

African enslavement dating back to 1526 in colonies continuing with founding in 1776 and until 1863 with the end of Civil War and President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation

1767: 41,000 enslaved AfricanAmericans in province of NC

1790 census: whites 69,988; blacks 100,572

1860 : Numbers of slaves increased to 331,059

Caswell County Slave Numbers were: 1800 2,788; 1819 4,299; 1860 9,355

Whites: 1850 8,399; 1860 6,570

Caswell county’s latest census totals of 22,544 includes: white 64.5%, black 32.3%, Indian .88%, Asian 0.6%, multiracial 1.8%, Latino 4.6%. We are no longer just white and never have been.

I was born in Caswell County and have lived here my entire life except for 3 years for nursing school, growing up on a farm which my father owned. I interacted with tenant farmers, both black and white living there. I visited in their homes but attended totally segregated schools through high school and in nursing school. Afterwards, working at the Memorial Hospital in Danville, Virginia, I cared for white and black patients and working with a racially diverse staff. I continued the remainder of my career in Caswell County including NC DOC, HomeHealth, teaching at BYHS and retiring at Health Department serving all races and cultures.

I must admit my own racism and I work hard on facing it and striving to recognize my part in and seek to weed out this flaw.

We, as privileged whites, have an opportunity to make a move that indicates our past is not more important than our present and our future. My maternal great grandfather served in the Confederacy as a 14 year old but I have no desire to memorialize him or those who served with him in the most prominent place on our square. We are the United States of America not the Confederate States of America. That is our past. Suggestions for positive changes:

1. Moving monuments from the Square to the recommended area.
2. Request Piedmont Community College, Caswell Campus Agricultural Department design a plan of landscaping Square.
3. Seek current or former Caswell residents submit a nonpolitical/nonmilitary design of no/low maintenance representing peace/ harmony to be erected in area of FORMER CONFEDERATE SOLDIER.

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4. Seek Caswell Arts Counsel as a cooperative agency in developing guidelines/selection referring to Board of Commissioners for final approval.
5. Seek donations/fundraising through Chamber/public to cover the cost of project.
6. Bright Leaf Hoedown dedication and celebration of the newly restructured Square and relocation of old monuments beginning a new focus of togetherness for all Caswell County residents.

Cc: The Caswell Messenger, Charles Blackwell

RECOGNITIONS:

There were no recognitions.

AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Commissioner Dickerson asked to add Solid Waste issues to the agenda. Chairman McVey said he will place that as item 9 on the agenda under the discussion items. Commissioner Oestreicher asked to amend the agenda to add the salary study. Commissioner Owen asked to amend the agenda for the closed session to add NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, condition of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or perspective public officer or employee.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** to approve the agenda as amended. (Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Carter and McVey voted in favor)

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. February 11, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Owen and **carried unanimously** to approve the consent agenda. (Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Carter, and McVey voted in favor)

PRESENTATION:

VAYA HEALTH:

Brian Ingram, CEO of VAYA Health, came forward to do the presentation. VAYA Health is the local management entity/ managed care organization. What that means in simple terms is that VAYA has the responsibility of paying for services and managing the care of individuals that need assistance with mental illnesses, substance use, or intellectual developmental disabilities. We are all tied up in Medicaid transformation like a lot of other organizations.

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Caswell County and Vaya Health: A New Partnership

Prepared for Caswell County
February 21, 2022

There was a consolidation that occurred and was effective January 1st. At some point near the last of December the County made the decision to stay with VAYA. It is the organization that Cardinal consolidated with. Hopefully these are the characteristics the county saw in VAYA that gave you the confidence in our ability to work with you. We believe in having folks on the ground and engaged in day to day activities here. We have 9 new counties, and what we offer each of those counties is the same kind of experience that we had in situations like this where new counties came under our management. That is all about continuity of care for members and ease of operations for our providers. These same characteristics have held true with that with an absolute minimum of disruptions.

Vaya's Strengths

PROXIMITY

Local presence in all counties with robust and transparent communication and data sharing

ACCOUNTABILITY

Consolidation minimizes member and provider impact and reduces county burden

COLLABORATION

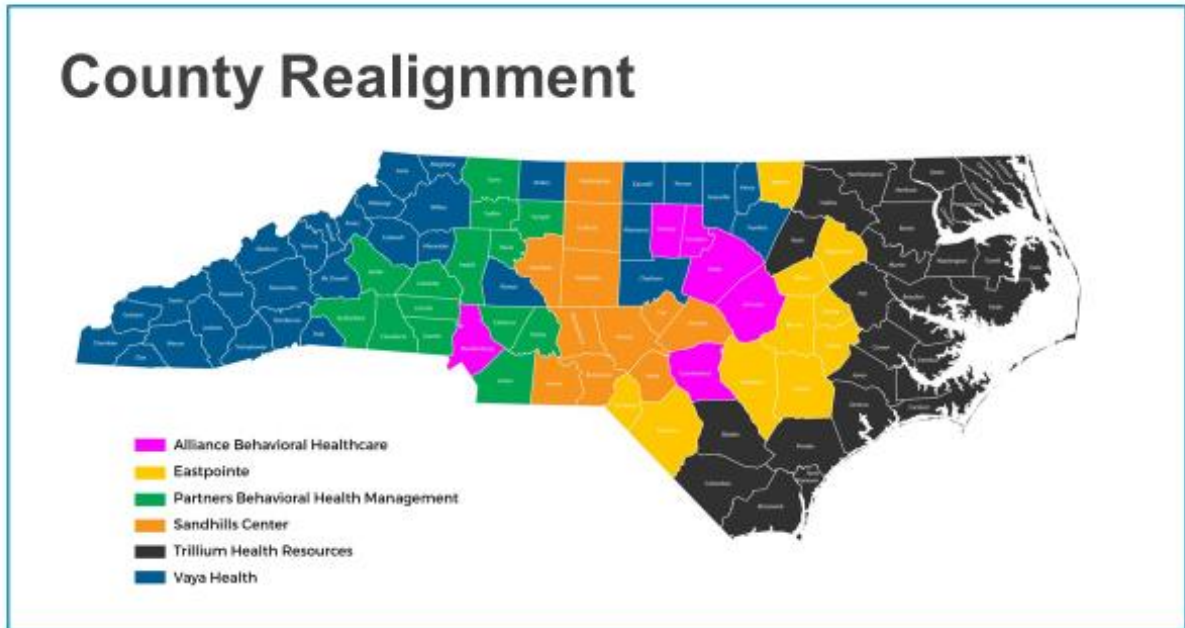
On the ground relationships with DSS, law enforcement and other county stakeholders to meet community and crisis needs through innovative solutions, programs, and services

STABILITY

Real-time follow-through and decision-making with a proven record of success through innovation

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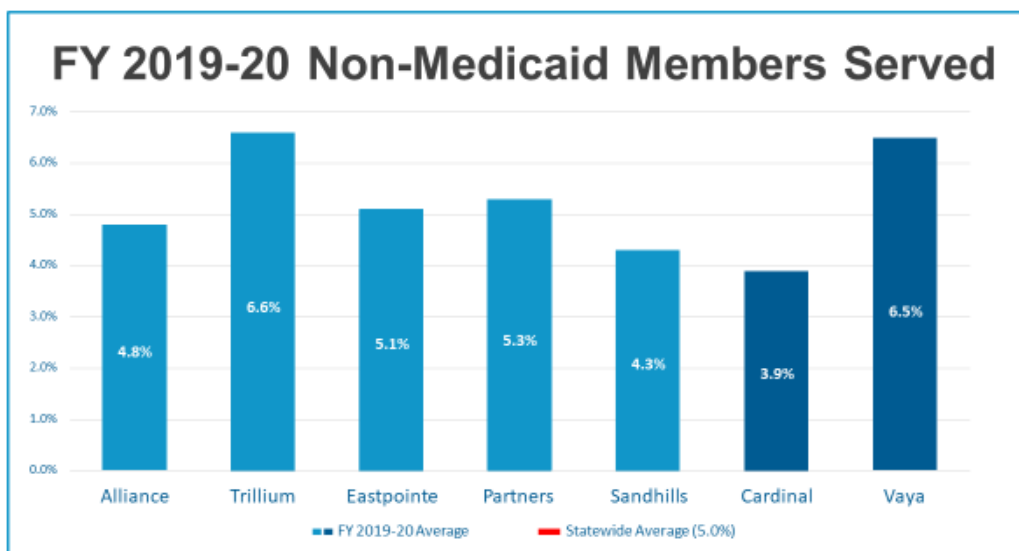
The consolidation set off a chain reaction all across North Carolina, where counties made decisions about which local management entity/ managed care organization they wanted to have a relationship with. When the dust settled this is what the map looks like. We have a total of 31 counties.



A department has certain performance standards that are really important for us to be reporting at. It's about what you can expect and our track record. For example, there are only 2 LME/MCOs in the state that end up with a perfect report card, and VAYA is one of them. So the things that are most important, we do very well on. That's important because that means your citizens are going to get the best possible care and the best possible management of their needs. Probably the most vulnerable time for someone is when they get out of the hospital. If you have ever had an inpatient stay, you know they spend a lot of time on discharge planning and making sure that you're going to be safe and well taken care of. VAYA does the same thing. The follow-up after discharge is the transition to community living. Individuals who have been placed in residential programs that don't need to be there is an area we've excelled with. Things as simple as being sure you have a primary care physician, which many of our members we find out do not. So they have inadequate health care. Simple things like that, we make sure we get

- One of two LME/MCOs that has consistently met all required benchmarks
- Follow up after discharge from inpatient facility, FBC or ADATC rate at 61% for Medicaid
- Doubled requirement through the Transitions to Community Living Initiative by 194%
- Integrated Care (I/DD annual PCP visit) – never missed the target

Statewide Leader on DHHS “Super Measures”



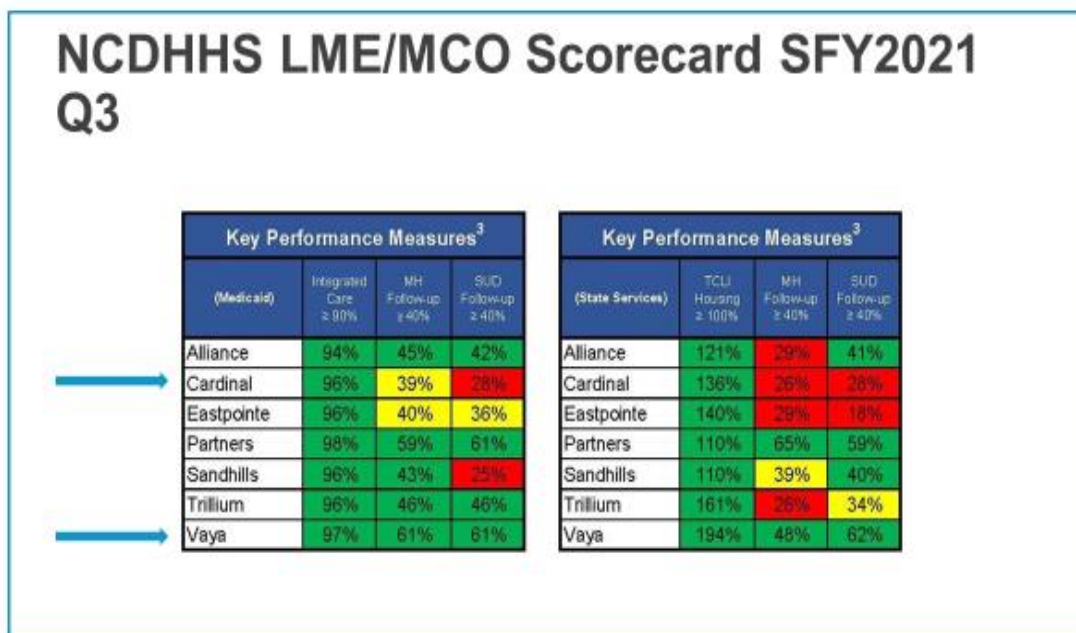
This is important if you care about efficiency or effectiveness. What this means is that for the limited amount of funding we receive for individuals that do not have Medicaid is the most difficult population for us to manage. There is a small amount of money but a large amount of services. VAYA is second best in the state. That means for every dollar we get on a per capita basis more people receive care for that dollar. So under our management you should expect more services to have access to care.

Commissioner Oestreicher said he just spoke with somebody about 10 days ago and they were having trouble finding a personal care physician. How do you do that in an area where that is

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hard to do? Brian Ingram said at this time we are not responsible for physical health needs. We will become responsible in December as part of a Medicaid transformation. There will be a tailored plan so we will have the responsibility then for the management of individuals' physical health needs. That limited performance indicator that I mentioned was just related to a specific population and providers we were working with directly because of the need there. That would not be the sort of thing we would be involved in a day-to-day basis right now. Beginning in December we will have to have a network of physicians so that someone could call our call center and find access to care that way.

This is just a report card and green is good. The point here is just to show you the kind of improvements you should expect based on our track record.



Investing in Local Relationships to Improve Access to Care in Caswell County

Consolidation Update



The original consolidation date of **April 1, 2022** was moved up to **January 1, 2022**.

- Nine counties from Cardinal Innovations chose to join Vaya
- All Cardinal members and recipients from the nine counties were successfully transitioned to Vaya with no break in care
- 99% of members and recipients stayed with their existing provider
- We maintained existing care management relationships whenever possible
- CFAC regions established and CFAC board representatives will be appointed by January 31

The going live of a county like Caswell is a lot of work, but we try to make it as seamless as possible. We've put a lot of resources into that and our goal is to handle things so that nobody understands all the things happening behind the scenes. All the members that were Cardinal members become our members. There is very little that change for them. The same providers they went to when Cardinal was responsible are the same they will go to when we're responsible. We do this for the ease of continuity of care for the members and providers.

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Consolidation Update - Providers

- Successfully contracted with 95% of Cardinal Innovations providers
- Offered numerous training opportunities and created regular communication channels (website, bulletins, Q&A sessions, office hours) for transitioning providers
- Project team worked through the holidays to ensure Cardinal providers were onboarded to Vaya claims system with minimal disruption and able to get paid for services effective January 1
- Established a dedicated provider Command Center to promote “white glove” customer service and fast resolution of issues

95% of Cardinal’s providers became our providers. The command center is staffed with subject matter experts primarily for providers to navigate any sort of problems that they were having. For members we have a call center that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.

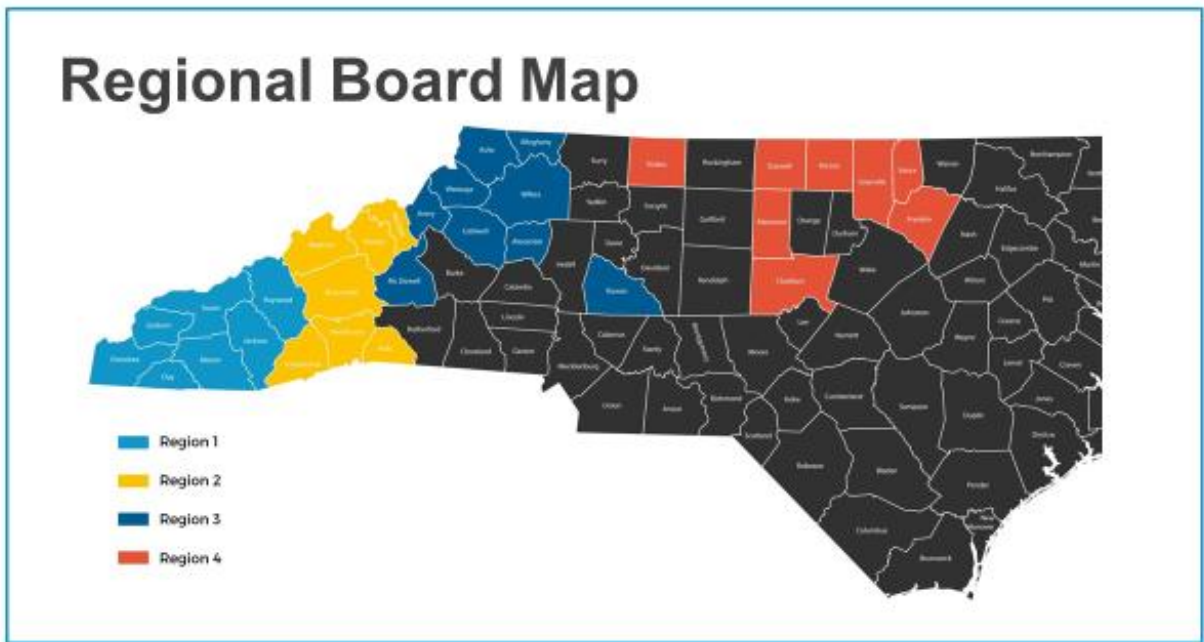
- NCDHHS Secretary approved the governing board structure recommended by Vaya’s County Commissioner Advisory Board
- Vaya has four regional boards that are each represented on the governing board
- The regional boards help ensure Vaya’s governing board is responsive to local needs and will create opportunities for regional collaboration
- All Boards of Commissioners for our 31 counties have each selected people to serve on the four regional boards. Representatives must be either a county commissioner or county official such as DSS and Health Directors
- Each regional board met in January and appointed two members to the governing board
- New governing board will meet in February

Governance

When the General Statute last had a change in the law regarding governance for our organizations, I don’t think anyone anticipated organizations like ours becoming as large as they have. So to make sure we’re getting adequate input from counties. We asked for an alternative

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board structure, which means we broke our catchment area into four separate regions. Each county appoints one county commissioner, manager or someone associated with the county to that regional board. We are pleased to have Commissioner Jefferies and Aisha Gwynn as your representatives on the regional board. The four regional boards met in January and appointed two members to our governing board. We're having our first Board of Director's retreat, VAYA 2.0, on Thursday and Friday with our new members. This goes to the same challenge we had with the consumer and family advisory councils, which are very important to us. They are representative of our members and their families. They follow the same path where they are organized into four regions. They also made four appointments to our board of directors.



Here is the regional map, and Caswell is in region 4 in red.

Expansion of Services and Support

Promises Made, Promises Kept

Completed

- Assigned regional director to county – Cara Townsend-Dohner
- Embedded care manager at Caswell County DSS
- Single Point Assessment operational in partnership with Caswell County DSS and Youth Villages
- Vaya's regional directors are engaging with local community collaboratives

In Progress

- Establish a Comprehensive Care Center within the Caswell County
- Enhance supports to Caswell DSS through closer connectivity, collaborative care management model, and building a full continuum service model within the county
- Quarterly reporting to county leadership around performance and outcomes for members in Caswell County

Brian Shuping came up to talk about the updated services and enhancements. Brian also introduced Cara Townsend-Dohner, the Regional Director, who will give quarterly updates. Cara will bring county specific data as to what services our citizens are seeking and what providers we have. When we came into the county we met with Dianne Moorefield and her staff at the Department of Social Services (DSS), where you as a Board have heard lots of challenges with DSS getting services for kids and placements. One of the things we did immediately was increase their options for services. We also committed to having a staff embedded at DSS. Her name is Shantae Bowers. We have a youth village, which is a child specific provider that's doing on-site assessments, which has taken a burden off of families who were having to travel out of the county for assessments. One of the commitments we made was to building more services in the county. We are not ready to talk about our comprehensive care center yet, but we are courting providers and hoping to have more robust services in a month or two.

Similar to the performance standards, we're always happy to provide the level of care someone needs. One of the things we are especially conscientious about is having people be able to live and work in the community. Intermediate care facilities are really reflective of our desire to let people live in the community. We are very focused on recovery and independence.

Setting the Standard

Supporting independence for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities

- Among the seven LME/MCOs in the state, Vaya has the fewest members in ICF-IDD and state-operated facilities—26% fewer individuals than neighboring LME/MCOs
- Vaya's care model is being used as a guide for other LME/MCOs to follow

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We're Here For You

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

BOARD OF ELECTIONS UPDATE:

Chairman McVey asked didn't the Board of Commissioners ask the Board of Elections to come before them a couple of meetings ago. The County Manager said yes. Chairman McVey then asked if there was a problem because the Board of Elections did not come to a meeting yet. They sent remarks rather than coming before the Board. The County Manager said it is his

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understanding that there are several times that they meet at the same time as the Board of Commissioners. Maybe not at the same time, but on the same days. The Elections director has provided the Board with some information. Chairman McVey said we asked to see them. The Chairman didn't think the County Manager needed to go over the materials. County Manager Miller said there was one thing he wanted to point out which was that there was about \$20,000 of CARES Act funding that was not spent. The Board of Elections had requested to know what questions you may have for them in writing. If the Board pleases, we're happy to pass those questions along or tell the Board of Elections that the Board of Commissioners requires you at our next meeting. The Chairman said he doesn't think we're going to prepare any questions for them. They need to come before this Board and then we will ask our questions.

SOLID WASTE ISSUES:

Commissioner Dickerson said he wanted to talk about revamping the solid waste ordinance. This was originally discussed many months ago. Actually it was a meeting that took place with the District Attorney's office, Sheriff's Department, Solid Waste, the County Manager, and myself. It seems there is a problem with the ordinance as it is currently worded. We cannot hold people accountable for illegally dumping trash in our compactor sites. Not only that, but there are no damage recovery provisions strong enough to get the actual damages fixed. A lot of times they have been dumping construction equipment, especially at the one in Semora. If they damage that hydraulic component in that compactor and you try to go after them civilly, it creates all kinds of issues. There was a lot of discussion about how to make sure the county didn't get stuck with that tab. In addition to that, the contingent ordinance is too low for people coming into this county dumping trash that we have to dispose of. There are many problems at the Virginia line. Maybe you haven't seen the latest photograph floating around of a pickup truck slam full of garbage being dumped in the Pelham area. Take a look it's on Facebook. We have been talking about this way too long. We have additional burdens being placed on the taxpayers by people bringing garbage in that they illegally dump. We're not stopping it. That adds to the compounding problems of not only the cost of hauling it away but the damage that it does. Mr. Fuqua can correct me if I'm wrong, but Mr. Dickerson thinks it was like \$1600 for one of those hydraulic units when it went out. It wasn't cheap. When are we going to do something about this? When are we going to have the county attorney fix the wording in the ordinance. We can discuss it and put an end to this abuse of the Caswell County taxpayers.

County Manager Miller said the ordinance is complete, and a copy has been provided to Mr. Fuqua. He is currently reviewing the ordinance. So internally we are ready for the meeting. Have you had an opportunity to review it A.J.? Mr. Fuqua said he has been through it once but would like to go over it one more time. The county Manager said he thinks we are ready for the meeting. Commissioner Dickerson said he would like to see that happen as soon as possible so we can put it on the agenda and address it. The County Manager said if he remembers correctly

the full board wants to meet with the Sheriff, the District Attorney, and others. Commissioner Dickerson said whatever the next step is they are all for it.

SALARY STUDY UPDATE:

The County Manager said he gave a brief overview in our special meeting previously. This salary study touches every employee and the Board of Commissioners. It increases the Board of Commissioners pay by the equivalent of 10% and the average increase for a county employee is 19% with a 15% overall from year to year. The increase would cost without benefits \$1,454,740 per year. With benefits, roughly \$1,745,688. There are still a couple of things Mr. Miller need to work through. County Manager Miller said he can show the Board how to pay for it; not just one year but for four or five years. We can pay for it for each of the five years until our debt service drops off to such a level that it's sustainable by itself without using ARPA funding after that. We would use a large amount of ARPA funds throughout the process to offset the years until the jail actually falls off. Mr. Miller thinks the jail falls off after year five of the implementation of the salary study. By using debt service, lapsed salaries, the detention center refinancing, the sale of home health savings, a little bit of money from the health department fund balance to fund health department operating increases, some budget reductions, and some ARPA money we will be able to pay for it without a tax raise. The methodology set by the salary study consultant was to bring everybody up to the minimum. After that, a one percent increase was proposed for every year since they were hired. The County Manager said he changed that from every year you've been in your position to a half percent for every year you have been in your current position to get it down to a more manageable number that the Board can feel good about passing. The County Manager said he would be happy to answer any questions you have. Currently 20% of our employee base makes under \$30,000. If you approve the manager's recommendation only 2% will make under \$30,000. It will be the recommendation of the County Manager that the Board make a minimum salary of \$30,000. Making that minimum salary threshold for \$30,000 will cost an additional \$11,000, if the recommendation is approved. If not approved the cost to move all county employees to \$30,000 or the equivalent thereof would be \$139,000. Out of the \$1.4 million only \$251,236 are longevity related increases. The rest is just bringing our employees up to the minimum. The Board has in the past given some employees increases while other employees did not receive an increase. The Board has elected to give dollar increases rather than percentage increases. The County Manager said he would advise against both of those simply because when you do that, what you do is create salary compaction. So you are making less of a gap between social worker I and social worker II, if those are two of the classes that's affected. Then it provides less incentive. If you are only going to make \$300 more a month to move from social worker I to social worker II, employees won't see the benefit in doing the extra work required. That's what is referred to as salary compaction. One other thing the County Manager wanted to clear up, when reverting back to our previous conversation about the payroll system, is that our department heads for the most part did a fantastic job communicating with their

employees about what they needed to do and bringing them up to speed on Executime. But there were some communication errors in some departments. But the majority of the department heads did what they were asked to do and the Board heard that tonight in the comments such as our employees knew it was coming and our employees had prepared for it. The other piece of the County Managers recommendation is there were a number of employees in the consultant salary study that were scheduled to get zero increase because the consultants thought they were already at what level they needed to be. Unfortunately, Mr. Miller doesn't think that is what the Board thinks is important. What he has heard the Board say multiple times is that we believe in our Sheriff's office, we want to support our Sheriff's office, and we want to support our emergency services folks. Emergency Services were among the largest department to receive zero. What that did was create situations where you were neither providing funds to emergency services department to attract or retain employees. And this has been heard from the Sheriff's office, 911, and emergency services departments that their departments are hurting when it comes to recruitment and retention. So the County Manager went in and built in a base of 7%. 7% ties into the CPI, the consumer price index, and is the lowest increase any county employee would receive. That lets them, at the very minimum, be able to buy the same loaf of bread, the same gallon of milk, and the gallon of gas they did last year at this time. So every employee would receive at minimum a 7% increase, but there are some fairly large increases. Some employees could stand to see a 45% increase. That is based on the half percent, longevity, and moving those employees up to their minimum wage for that position. There were a total of three options from the consultant. At the next meeting, the County Manager plans to share all three of those options with the Board. County Manager Miller said he will explain why the first two options are not affordable for the county. The third option the county can afford it, but it does nothing to help the Sheriff's office, EMS, or 911 with recruitment and retention. The other thing it does not do is keep county employees up with the inflation rate or the consumer price index which has increased 7% over the last year.

Commissioner Carter asked if the Sheriff's Department patrol officers' salary will be compatible to other counties. The County Manager said he met with the Sheriff many times. Orange County is starting their officers at \$51,000 and the County Manager doesn't think we will be able to compete with them. So what they did in the salary study to reach that minimum pay range is they took the average of seven or eight counties and based on the duties and responsibilities of those officers, they rated them anywhere from 70-100%. Most county employees landed in that 90-100% range. There were some individuals that just because of the size of the county, the number of residents we have in the county, or the number of employees that report to us, they were rated lower than their counterparts in other counties. So a worker at DSS may be rated at 98-100%, but because our county is smaller and we have fewer departments, my rating would have been around 70% rather than 100%. You see that in several upper management leadership positions throughout simply because of what's perceived to be required. County Manager Miller said he

will be the first to tell you, that he doesn't necessarily agree with that, but that's what the consultant brought for us.

Then Commissioner Carter asked if we had any plan with EMS and Sheriff's Department for new hires to have to stay in the county for a minimum of 2 years. What you run into is other counties are paying more money and Caswell County is becoming a training ground. Mr. Carter thinks we need to require EMS and the officers stay here 2 years. The County Manager said Commissioner Carter you are right. We do spend a lot of money on training employees and equipment. The bulletproof vests are fitted for each individual officer. If that officer leaves, we just lose that bulletproof vest. The County Manager said he understands what Commissioner Carter is saying, but he doesn't know that legally we can make a requirement like that because North Carolina is a right-to-work state. Other counties are offering incentives with claw back provisions attached to them. If the Board wants us to look at things like that, we definitely can look at things like that, but that is separate from the classification pay increases.

Commissioner Dickerson said not Orange, Guilford or other counties with much higher cost of living, but is there a comparison of the starting salaries for the Sheriff's Department here versus counties like Rockingham, Pennsylvania, and Person Counties. Is there any kind of breakdown of that kind of information that makes this comparison with the ones we're actually competing with? The County Manager said unfortunately Orange, Guilford, Granville, Alamance and Durham are the ones we are competing against because our officers leave here and go there. So it would be unfair not to include those in the study, but they are weighted to some degree. We also have Rockingham and Person included. The County Manager said he does have that information and he is happy to share it with the Board.

Commissioner Carter asked if the salary study will bring all the county employees up to par for a while and the County Manager said it does. Then Commissioner Carter asked how we were going to pay for this. The County Manager asked Mr. Carter to give him a minute because he was trying to find an answer to Commissioner Dickerson's Sheriff's Office question. Then Mr. Miller said he will talk a little about how we can pay for this. Commissioner Dickerson said the County Manager could get that information to him later. Mr. Dickerson said he wanted the immediate surrounding counties. We could hypothetically pull in Granville and Guilford, but the real competition is coming from the closest geographically located counties and Mr. Dickerson would like to see what they are paying. County Manager Miller said he would get that information to Commissioner Dickerson. Then Commissioner Dickerson said that certain employees were not scheduled to get an increase yet you went back and looked at it and deemed that you wanted 7% across the board. Commissioner Dickerson would like to know what the original study says. The County Manager said he was going to give the Board all three options that the consultant recommended. The Board will be able to see the numbers on all three options plus the manager's recommendation.

The County Manager said if the Board remembers before we started the salary study, he sent out an email to the Board saying we are looking at using Alamance, Durham, Chatham, Granville, Guilford, Orange, Person and Rockingham Counties for comparison. If anybody has any issues with that or would like to see some of those counties taken off or some different counties added to let him know. He didn't receive any feedback but those are the ones we used. Those counties were derived from the work session between the MAPS Group and department heads. The MAPS Group asked where are we losing employees and that is the reason those counties were chosen. Commissioner Dickerson said if you want to start matching apples and oranges, you are talking about a county with a much higher cost of living. You better be looking at some real serious revenue coming into this county in the future. We need economic development and diversified tax base, and not all of this falling on our taxpayers or property taxes. We have to think in a big frame going forward. We don't only have this, but we have the increase for the high school coming up. That is a lot of money that will need to come up in the future. We got to be smart about how we do this. The County Manager said he agrees. That is why he put together a plan to show you how you can do it without raising taxes.

Commissioner Owen asked if the Board could get the salary plan sooner than waiting until the agenda comes out. The County Manager said he is still working on the manager's recommendation, but he will be happy to give the Board the three options that the consultant gave and get the Board the manager's recommendation as soon as he can. Commissioner Owen said he had two other things. Just for the Board to consider and remember, there are a lot of variables in this plan that Mr. Owen has heard that will keep us from having a tax increase to cover this. Mr. Owen just wants the Board to make sure we look at those variables because one of those is debt reduction. If something happens and we have to go into a large debt again that changes it all together. That means there's probably going to have to be a tax increase. Mr. Owen wants the Board to look at those variables and get a feel for what variables can cause the county the most problems if something were to happen. The other thing we need to remember is we do have that casino coming along. What that is going to do is put further strain on our EMS and law enforcement services. There is no doubt with traffic and the number of people increasing, we know what that brings. We just need to be aware of that because we will probably be asked to increase the number of patrol members from the Sheriff's Department. Rightly so, we need to look at that and see if there's a way to do it because it is going to put a strain on our services. What Mr. Owen doesn't want to happen is that we put that strain on our EMS and Sheriff's Office and then our county residents have to suffer because of that. Just a couple of things for the Board to keep in mind as we go forward with the salary study. Commissioner Carter said the casino has been delayed a year.

Commissioner Oestreicher then said to County Manager Miller that he is a visual kind of guy. He would like to see what the cost and plans are going to look like. Not per person but in some breakouts. How these increases are assembled and the components that are in each one. Also

where the money comes from because you described that it is coming from multiple sources and the duration of these sources. When the money runs out, will you put them on another source. Mr. Oestreicher wants to see a graphical presentation and understanding components. Commissioner Oestreicher said it is a complicated proposal that you are talking about. The County Manager said he already has that ready, but it's really not complicated. Mr. Miller understands with the multiple funding sources how it could seem complicated. But once you look at it, you'll see the same sources are used for multiple years, and it's really fairly simple. The biggest complication is visualizing how the debt services falls off and in year five how the debt service drops off \$800,000. With the other things being in place it becomes self-sustainable without the use of ARP funds. Mr. Oestreicher said that is what he would like to see. Commissioner Oestreicher asked if they would get this information before the next meeting so they can digest it. County Manager Miller said absolutely.

Commissioner Carter wanted to know if the Board was going to approve the salary study or not. County Manager Miller and Chairman McVey said it will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

HEALTH DEPARTMENT COMMERCIAL SPACE RENTAL AGREEMENT:

The County Manager said our county attorney has reviewed the lease. Our Health Director is with us tonight and Mr. Miller asked Jennifer Eastwood to go over the basic components of the lease and maybe some recommendations from our county attorney.

Jennifer Eastwood said looking at the lease, it's 1,700 square feet of space. The landlord will be building two additional office spaces for us that's included in the lease agreement. It's \$1,850 a month for \$22, 200 per year and it is a three-year lease. The landlord is responsible for sewer, water and maintenance of the space. We would be responsible for utilities. Commissioner Oestreicher said it looks like we would be responsible for a fair bit of what goes on in that shopping center in the common area. The County Manager said Commissioner Oestreicher I think you are right, and our county attorney has identified all that stuff. If we can let the attorney give his recommendation and legal recommendations it will probably solve a lot of those issues that you might have. Commissioner Oestreicher thinks this is a one-way street straight out of our bank account. The County Attorney, Brian Ferrell, said the form has a number of deficiencies on it. What we got was the landlord's standard shopping center lease form. That's not a very good fit for this particular deal. Brian Ferrell has proposed a number of revisions to the form itself. It runs on for some 30 pages, but he thinks we need something more in the 10-page range to get this relatively straightforward lease done. Mr. Ferrell said he understands what Commissioner Oestreicher was mentioning, and there are a number of other terms we need to work on. If the Board is inclined to move forward at the basic monthly lease rate at the term provided, County Attorney Ferrell said he is happy to work on a much paired down form that accomplishes the goals of getting the county in this space on the basic terms that parties have agreed to without

having this onerous 30-page shopping center lease that's more suited for a more complex deal than this one needs to be.

Commissioner Oestreicher said this leaves us responsible for virtually all of his costs. He doesn't think that is what we had in mind. County Attorney Ferrell said this is structured as a triple net lease, and this is just a straight monthly lease rental and not a triple net as contemplated in the form. The attorney said it's his guess that we just got the standard shopping center lease form and it is without a lot of customization for the particular situation here. Commissioner Oestreicher said he expects this agreement to come back a lot smaller and with a better definition of what we would actually wind up paying. The county attorney said he has marked it up and if we decide to use this form at all another option is going with the standard North Carolina realtor form commercial lease agreement. Attorney Ferrell said he has talked with the County Manager about switching the form because this one is so complex. If we go with the form the attorney has already marked up, about half of the terms survived. Commissioner Oestreicher said he would be in favor of scrapping this lease completely because who knows what else is lurking in there. The county attorney said there is a lot there, but he has read it and is familiar with it. It does follow a standard complex shopping center lease form that he has reviewed the basic provisions for a number of times previously. There is a lot there, but we don't need all of it. Simplifying is the way to go. Some landlords are just wedded to their forms, and if that's the case, we'll whittle it down. However, if he's willing to go with a basic standard realtor form for this particular lease, great, we'll start there. If the Board is comfortable with the basic term, the attorney is happy to continue and finalize the form to get the arrangement to reflect the understanding that the Health Director has presented to you. So if the Board wanted to, you could approve the lease with the lease rate subject to final county attorney approval, and Brian Ferrell will work through it with the landlord. That's one option and of course you have the option of just bringing the final back and take a look at it one more time. Mr. Ferrell said he was not aware of any time constraints associated with this, but Jennifer can speak on that.

Jennifer Eastwood said she was sure if the landlord had anyone who's ready to rent it, then he will rent it to someone else. Mrs. Eastwood said then we will just find another space.

Commissioner Owen said he would rather wait until we have the finished document and Commissioner Oestreicher agreed. Commissioner Owen said he didn't want her to lose the space but he wanted to make sure that we know what we're getting and what we are getting in for.

Jennifer said he has a construction crew that needs something to do right now and if the understanding was that we were going to go ahead with the lease, he was going to have them start the construction process. Commissioner Owen said he has no issue with the price, but it was so much in the lease that comes into the county's bucket. Mr. Owen said he is not sure that is right to begin with, but he thinks we need to protect our interest as much as we can.

Commissioner Oestreicher said you're finding this at this price, and you've got the funds to cover it. That's fine, but if we can get a lease that limits us to this kind of liability, that's fine. To be responsible for paving the parking lot, putting up a marquee, and all that other kind of stuff is not. Jennifer Eastwood said I think we're all on the same page with that, and that's what the county attorney was reviewing it for. Mrs. Eastwood said she thinks the attorney found all those places where we would hesitate, so she thinks we are all on the same page. Commissioner Oestreicher said he agrees with Commissioner Owen and would like to see the finished agreement before we make any decision.

Chairman McVey asked if everybody was in favor of postponing this until the county attorney comes back with the final lease. So no action was taken.

COUNTY MANAGER'S UPDATES:

The County Manager had no updates.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Oestreicher: He had two updates and both are positive. Really good news, Commissioner Oestreicher just learned that Spectrum-Charter has put in the wiring or the capability in the Stoney Creek Area per the RDOF project. He couldn't comment on how many people have hooked up on it, but it looks like it is there waiting to be connected to. They are starting to do what they said they were going to do, and they are doing it pretty quickly. That's extremely encouraging. As I put out on social media, if you see a Spectrum-Charter truck in your neighborhood, put the shotgun down and your hand out to welcome them because they are there to do a good service for you. They will be doing hand tags on doorknobs for people to sign up.

The second part is in our work session, I talked about updating the Comprehensive Plan for the county and the fact that we needed to get a steering committee started on that. I am not sure if I need a consensus or just an agreement from the Board, but what I am proposing is that we start with an executive recruiting board of Scott Oakley as chairman, Tony Foster, myself, and Matthew Hoagland. Then we will build a steering committee of about 12 people with members that would represent the agri-business area, education, real estate, the city of Yanceyville and town of Milton, tourism, and community members. Unless someone has any objections that's how I propose to start on the steering committee for the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Dickerson asked has the Planning Board had any input on this. Commissioner Oestreicher said the Planning Board has had an opportunity at least once a year for the last 9 years to comment on this, and they haven't yet.

Commissioner Carter: I asked Bryan Miller a couple weeks ago if he had got anybody to look at the sound system. I had noticed and had several people talk to me about this. It's a lot of echo in that courtroom. It is hard to hear the commissioners on the other end like Mr. Dickerson or Mr. Jefferies say anything. Mr. Jefferies has also said it is hard for him to hear. County Manager

Miller said we've had several discussions about the sound in the courtroom, and several discussions that relate to the lack of sound barriers in the courtroom. The prevailing thought was way back when the courthouse had curtains up on every window there were no problems hearing anything. We're going to be doing a series of testing to see how that affects sound in the courtroom. We are discussing options. Commissioner Carter said I think we need to do something and one thing that would solve the hearing is for everybody to have boom mics. If we had boom mics, then you'd be able to hear what everybody is saying. Commissioner Carter said the sound got a little better when the new system was put in two years ago. Paula and I made adjustments on each one of those mics. I don't know if they got out of sequence or what. They may need to be adjusted, but to solve the problem of hearing it would be good if everybody had a boom mic. I don't know how much they would cost, but everyone was interested in wearing one, you can look into the cost. The County Manager said we can look into that.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **March 7, 2022 – Board of Commissioner Meeting at 9:00 am**

CLOSED SESSION:

A **motion** was made at 7:54 pm by Commissioner Owen and seconded by Commissioner Jefferies and **carried unanimously** to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential, which privilege is hereby acknowledged NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1) and to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, condition of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or perspective public officer or employee, which privilege is hereby acknowledged NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6). (Commissioner Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Carter, and McVey voted in favor)

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Dickerson, seconded by Commissioner Carter and **carried unanimously** to return to open session at 8:27 pm. (Commissioner Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Carter, Oestreicher, Owen and McVey voted in favor)

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made at 8:28 pm by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Owen and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Commissioner Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Carter, and McVey voted in favor)

Carla R. Smith
Clerk to the Board

Rick McVey
Chairman

February 21, 2022