

**PERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**MARCH 7, 2022**  
**OTHERS PRESENT**

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Gordon Powell  
C. Derrick Sims  
Kyle W. Puryear  
Charlie Palmer  
Patricia Gentry  
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Heidi York, County Manager  
Brenda B. Reaves, Clerk to the Board  
S. Ellis Hankins, County Attorney

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Person, North Carolina, met in regular session on Monday, March 7, 2022 at 7:00pm in the in the Person County Office Building.

Chairman Powell called the meeting to order and offered an invocation. Vice Chairman Sims led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Chairman Powell stated a need for an agenda adjustment for 1) a request from the Board of Education for the Board of Commissioners to authorize signature on the needs-based capital infrastructure grant application and to approve a 5% match contribution if the grant is awarded and 2) Closed Session #1 per General Statute 143-318.11(a)(5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease.

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Sims and **carried 5-0** to add the two items as Chairman Powell requested above and to approve the agenda as adjusted.

**INFORMAL COMMENTS:**

The following individual appeared before the Board to make informal comments:

Mr. Jimmie Whitfield of 699 Charlie Reade Road, Timberlake asked the Board to provide a listing of the COVID relief funding spent to date as well as provide citizens an update on the transition plan of the potential shutdown of the Duke Energy power plants.

**March 7, 2022**

**DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Puryear and **carried 5-0** to approve the Consent Agenda with the following items:

- A. Approval of Minutes of February 7, 2022,
- B. Approval of Minutes of February 22, 2022,
- C. Budget Amendment #13,
- D. Budget Amendment #14,
- E. Budget Transfer to Correct Budget Amendment #11,
- F. Authorization for Golden LEAF Site Program Application, and
- G. Person County Health Department Fee Request

**NEW BUSINESS:**

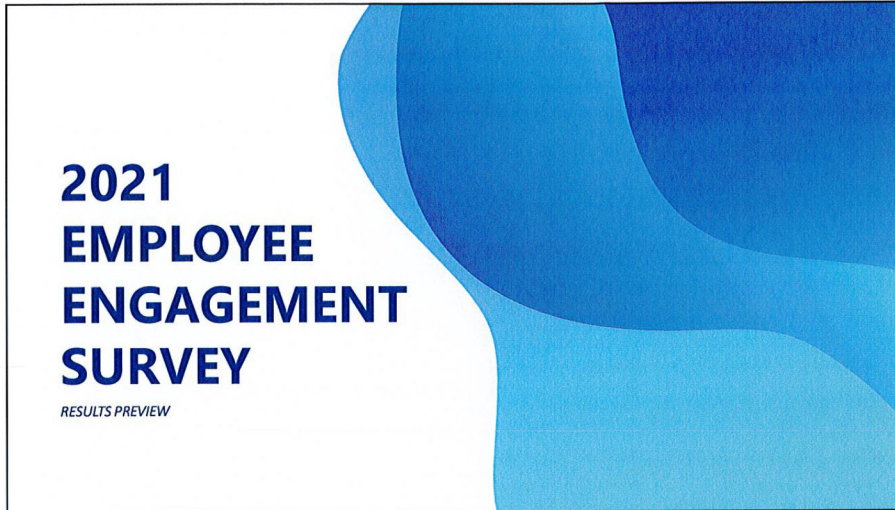
**2021 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS PRESENTATION:**

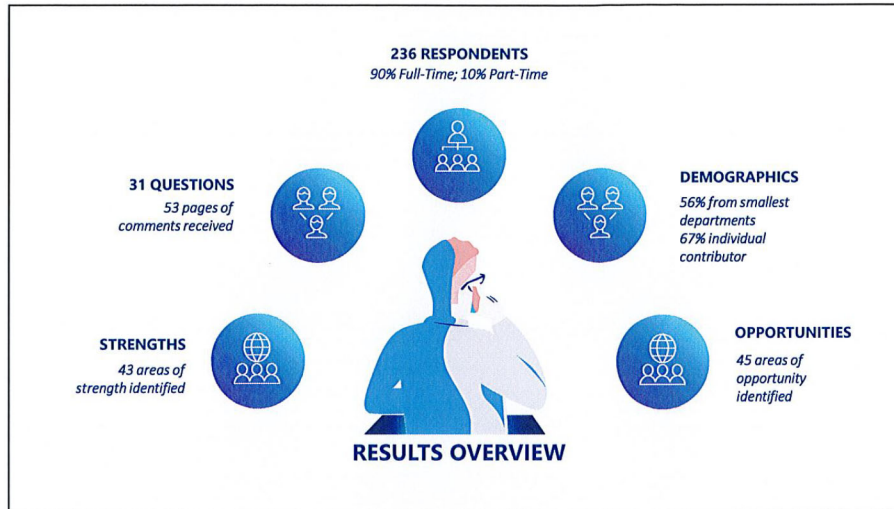
Human Resources (HR) Director, Miranda Harrison stated the Person County HR team completed an employee engagement survey in February 2022. The survey's design allowed staff to gather qualitative and quantitative data from employees about strengths and opportunities of Person County as an employer. The results of the survey, along with other important measures such as turnover and exit interview results can help the County set priorities that will have a positive impact on employee engagement, retention, and recruitment.

Ms. Harrison noted it was the intention of the Person County HR department, in collaboration with County leadership, to utilize these results to develop an action plan that capitalizes on the strengths and opportunities identified. A preliminary action plan was included as one topic of this survey results presentation as Ms. Harrison requested the Board's consideration was given to feasibility and impact when identifying items of highest priority. Some action items of significant importance include:

- development of a program for succession planning;
- increased emphasis on employee recognition and appreciation;
- development of tools to support accountability;
- review and updates to pay structure and practices; and
- expanded employee training and development opportunities.

Ms. Harrison shared the following results preview presentation related to the 2021 Employee Engagement Survey:

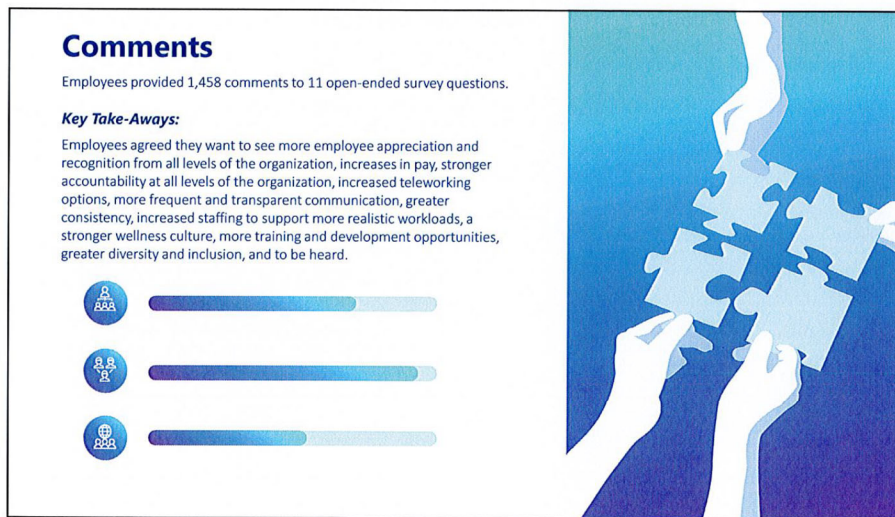
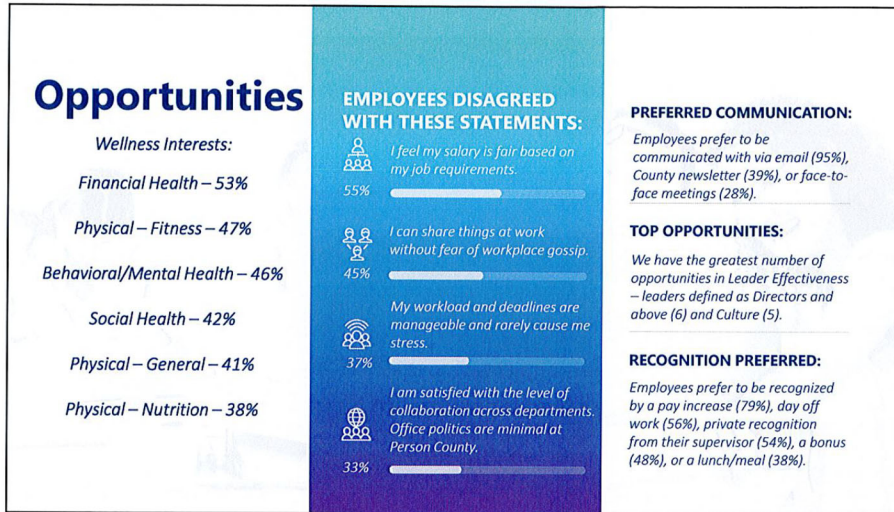





Ms. Harrison stated employees identified interaction with supervisors, overall satisfaction and benefits as top strengths.

Ms. Harrison stated employees asked for more diversity and leadership training, development opportunities and more support with staffing workloads.




3/7/2022






### Action Plan

Survey results will drive priorities and action plans. An employee engagement survey will be conducted annually to evaluate the effectiveness of our action plan.







-  Leaders will provide an action plan with quarterly updates.
-  Employees will be encouraged to engage in improvement efforts.
-  Community partners will assist us in reaching our goals.



### Action Plan Details

The primary goal is to maintain strengths and capitalize on opportunities. Balancing survey results with resource demands, priorities will focus on maximizing impact and increasing employee engagement.

**Key Initiatives:**  
Efficiency improvements in the recruitment and onboarding process; enhanced training and development offerings; a County policy review (including the teleworking policy); improvements in the performance management process to drive an accountability culture; more frequent communication across the organization; and a proposal to comprehensively review total compensation structure and practices.

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Ms. Harrison noted the Action Plan would include a countywide communications plan, policy review and a HR Audit. She recommended an internal/external audit that would review pay comparisons and equity so to more accurately portray job descriptions and to ensure base pay rate are in line with the market rate.

Ms. Harrison asked the Board for guidance and feedback noting the compensation structure/equity analysis for Person County was projected to take nine months to complete.

County Attorney, Ellis Hankins said updated pay studies are needed from time to time and helps to protect the county from potential discrimination litigation.

Vice Chairman Sims asked Ms. Harrison the anticipated cost of the study to which she estimated between \$130,000-\$140,000 noting the County might have potential funding sources in place to fund the study. Ms. Harrison indicated the cost of implementation of the results of the study of course were unknown at this time. Ms. Harrison confirmed that Person County has not ever had a comprehensive HR Audit; the last study completed was a compression study in Fiscal Year 2020.

Commissioner Gentry asked if each employee knew their total compensation package to which County Manager, Heidi York stated the job postings include a hiring range or rate for the salary only. Highlighting the total cost and benefits to employees may help recruit and retain employees.

Commissioner Gentry advocated for a Public Information Officer as well as the new website as possible solutions to distribute to the community what is being done in county departments.

Chairman Powell said exit interviews are important to know why people leave county employment.

Commissioner Palmer asked staff how many full time and part time employees does the County have to which Ms. York stated there are 400 full time and approximately 268 part time (seasonal) employees.

Commissioner Puryear stated support for programs for supervisors to acknowledge their staff's value as a member of the team for positive impact.

Ms. Harrison stated her willingness to move forward with the RFP for the study once the Board was ready to proceed. Ms. York stated that she could include the study in her Recommended Budget for Board consideration to fund.

The Board commended county employees for the good work they do for the citizens.

**March 7, 2022**

**REVIEW OF BOARD APPOINTED BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:**

Commissioner Gentry asked staff if an assessment to determine which boards and committees might not be relevant. County Manager, Heidi York stated there are currently 27 boards and committees on the Clerk’s rosters. In addition, there are also 10 non-county boards and committees that request a Commissioner Representative to serve on those.

County Attorney, Ellis Hankins said many of the boards and committees are statutorily required for policy decisions, i.e., ABC Board, Board of Elections, Board of Equalization and Review, Board of Health, Industrial Facilities & Pollution Control Financing Authority, Planning, Social Services Board, Tourism Development Authority and the Workforce Development Regional Board and some of the other boards and committees serve only in an advisory function. Both types of boards and committees solicit citizen participation.

Commissioner Gentry asked Mr. Hankins if there was a conflict of interest with a commissioner or commissioners serving on the Board of Equalization and Review to which Mr. Hankins stated he did not see a conflict of interest for the commissioners to serve in the quasi-judicial appeal process for the taxpayers.

Vice Chairman Sims asked Commissioner Gentry if she was OK with the commissioner assignments to which she affirmed. Commissioner Palmer told Chairman Powell that he had a conflict with the meeting time for the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council to which Chairman Powell stated he would talk with him about it.

**A REQUEST FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO AUTHORIZE SIGNATURE ON THE NEEDS-BASED CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT APPLICATION AND TO APPROVE A 5% MATCH CONTRIBUTION IF THE GRANT IS AWARDED:**

Dr. Peterson, Superintendent for Person County Schools requested for the Board of Commissioners to authorize its Chairman to sign the needs-based capital infrastructure grant application and to approve a 5% match contribution if the grant is awarded. The grant application is due on March 15<sup>th</sup> and requires a 5% match from the County. The amount required for the match would be \$1.5M. County Manager, Heidi York stated the match could be covered in the \$10M borrowing that the County is planning in the upcoming Fiscal Year. Dr. Peterson noted the projected award date was April 2022 and would be used for a new elementary school as a remedy to facility needs.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Gentry and **carried 5-0** to authorize the Chairman to sign the needs-based capital infrastructure grant application as requested by the Board of Education and to approve a 5% match contribution if the grant is awarded.



**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:**

Chairman Powell reported the Airport Hangar was projected to be completed in April. County Manager, Heidi York added a change in the fire suppression equipment would not significantly delay the completion but would extend past April.

Chairman Powell said half of the funding for the Airport Runway Extension Project had been received with the other half to be received by June 30<sup>th</sup> for a total of \$12M; he noted a timeline has been developed for this project.

Chairman Powell reported the DOT project to extend the four-lanes 501 North has been ongoing since 1996.

**MANAGER’S REPORT:**

County Manager, Heidi York reported departmental budget meetings are underway as she works to prepare her Recommended Budget.

**COMMISSIONER REPORT/COMMENTS:**

Vice Chairman Sims had no report.

Commissioner Gentry proposed to rescind the County’s March 16, 2020 along with Amendment One dated April 7, 2020 Declaration of a State of Emergency relating to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus/COVID-19, and asked the County Manager to research if the Board of Commissioners could rescind the local state of emergency, even as the Governor of the state of NC has not rescinded the state declaration.

Commissioners Palmer and Puryear reiterated their appreciation for the hard work of Person County employees.

**CLOSED SESSION #1**

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Sims and **carried 5-0** to enter into Closed Session at 8:30pm per General Statute 143-318.11(a)(5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease with the following individuals permitted to attend: County Attorney, Ellis Hankins, County Manager, Heidi York, Clerk to the Board, Brenda Reaves, Assistant County Manager, Katherine Cathey, Planning Director, Lori Oakley, and John Hill, Director of Arts, Parks and Recreation.

Chairman Powell called the Closed Session #1 to order at 8:32pm.

**March 7, 2022**

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Sims and **carried 5-0** to return to open session at 9:03pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Puryear and **carried 5-0** to adjourn the meeting at 9:04pm.

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Brenda B. Reaves  
Clerk to the Board

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Gordon Powell  
Chairman