



FIRST TUESDAY

— Amplifying conservative voices. —

Another Wake-up Call Monthly Newsletter

Issue 46A | April 12, 2024



Show Them the Money!

They'll Find a Way to Spend It

At their March 7 regular meeting, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners engaged in one of their favorite activities – spending our money. Specifically, they discussed the allocation of funds for the North Carolina Recovery Housing Program (RHP). As taxpayers, we need to scrutinize how our hard-earned dollars are being spent, especially when it comes to government initiatives aimed at supporting disadvantaged community members.

The RHP, administered by the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Division, aims to provide stable housing to support individuals in recovery from substance use disorders onto a path to self-sufficiency. While the goal of assisting those in recovery is noble, concerns arise when we examine the approach taken by local government in handling these funds.

Fiscal Responsibility

First and foremost, it's crucial to address the issue of fiscal responsibility. As conservatives, we believe in prudent financial management and the avoidance of unnecessary spending. While supporting individuals in recovery is undoubtedly important, we must ensure that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently and effectively.

One concerning aspect of the RHP is the apparent lack of proactive planning. It

see *Show Them Money* on page 2

“Stop the Harm” Audit

Since July 2023, Buncombe County and the City of Asheville have been entrenched in what they dub the “Stop the Harm” audit. This initiative, recommended by the Community Reparations Commission and with a staggering price tag of \$174,375, aims to scrutinize both internal and external programs of the county and city governments. The chosen organization for this audit, Florida-based Carter Development Group, boasts an extensive portfolio in similar projects across the nation.

Concerns and Criticisms:

The audit's purported focus is on identifying and rectifying instances of harm, particularly within the African American community. However, its origins lie in the recommendations of a commission dominated by left-leaning voices, including incumbent Kim Roney, who is seeking reelection to the City Council this November. Roney, who aligns herself with the Democratic Socialists of America, has consistently advocated for the redirection of funds away from vital services, such as law enforcement, and into initiatives aligned with her political agenda.

Some citizens of Buncombe County have concerns over the disproportionate allocation of taxpayer funds to projects with dubious efficacy and ideological motivations. The reality is that our hard-earned money is being squandered on initiatives driven by a radical left-wing agenda, without proper oversight or accountability.

This “Stop the Harm” audit has been underway for months, yet its necessity and efficacy remain questionable. It comes at a time and was prompted by many of the same stimuli that finds the city's police force reeling from severe staffing shortages. Both the police staffing issues and the taxpayer funding of the Community Reparations Commission are directly

see *Stop the Harm* page 2

“The welfare state is not really about the welfare of the masses. It is about the egos of the elites.”

- Thomas Sowell

NC GOP Runoff '24

This May, North Carolina's Republican party faces pivotal decisions for two crucial roles: Lieutenant Governor and State Auditor. These elections are about affirming our values and governance principles.



North Carolina champions electoral integrity through its runoff mechanism, necessitated when no candidate secures over 30% of votes. This process, particularly pertinent for the 2024 primaries for lieutenant governor and state auditor, ensures officials embody the electorate's choice.

The Importance of Runoff Elections

Runoff elections ensure that leadership has majority party support, offering a direct say in representation and underscoring broad electoral backing.

Key Dates:

- April 25, 2024: Early voting begins.
- May 7, 2024: Deadline to request absentee ballots.
- May 11, 2024: End of early voting.
- May 14, 2024: Election Day, alongside the absentee ballot return deadline.

Eligibility: Restricted to registered Republicans and unaffiliated voters who previously selected a Republican ballot.

Tradition vs. Ranked-Choice Voting

The conservative preference for traditional runoffs over ranked-choice voting stems from its straightforward, transparent process, aligning with the integrity of democratic republic elections.

see *Runoff* page 3

Show Them Money

from Page 1

seems that funds were identified first, with discussions on how to spend them following afterward. This approach raises questions about the county's priorities and whether proper planning and assessment have been conducted to ensure the most effective use of resources.

Personal Responsibility

Furthermore, the RHP's requirement to provide stable housing for individuals in recovery for up to two years or until they secure permanent housing raises concerns about long-term dependency on government assistance. While temporary support is necessary in some cases, we must also prioritize initiatives that empower individuals to become self-sufficient and break the cycle of dependency.

As conservative taxpayers, we advocate for transparency and accountability in government spending. Citizens need to have a voice in decision-making processes, and for local officials to prioritize the needs of the entire community, not just select groups.

Call to Action

We urge fellow taxpayers to voice their concerns and provide feedback on the RHP before the local government makes any final decisions. Opportunities for public input, including public hearings and community meetings, are crucial avenues for citizens to express their views and ensure that taxpayer dollars are used wisely and effectively. Let's come together as a community to uphold principles of fiscal responsibility and ensure that government initiatives align with the best interests of all citizens.

Moving forward, we call on our elected officials to uphold principles of fiscal responsibility and to ensure that taxpayer-funded initiatives like the RHP are thoroughly planned, effectively implemented and aligned with the long-term goals of our community.

At their March 7 meeting, the Commissioners passed a resolution approving the Buncombe County RHP Citizen Participation Plan. This plan outlines how citizens will be involved in the planning, implementation, and assessment of the RHP. You can apply to serve on that committee.

Stop the Harm

from Page 1

attributable to the policies of our liberal local government representatives. Instead of focusing on bolstering public safety and infrastructure maintenance, taxpayer dollars are funneled into initiatives aimed at addressing so-called "systemic racism," a concept largely based on statistical inferences rather than documented instances of harm.



Questionable Recommendations

Recommendations made by the "Stop the Harm" audit include:

- Implementing policies aimed at achieving racial equity, which prioritizes diversity quotas over merit-based hiring practices.
- Utilizing taxpayer funds for initiatives perceived as ideologically driven rather than focusing on essential services.
- Mandating additional Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) training for city and county employees.
- Emphasizing community-based approaches to law enforcement by diverting resources away from traditional policing methods.
- Advocating for reparations programs that lack clear metrics for success and accountability.

Call to Action

Let's band together as a community to champion transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility from our elected officials. It's crucial that we ensure taxpayer dollars are allocated wisely and efficiently to tackle the genuine challenges confronting our community. Our taxes fund initiatives like reparations and homeless showers. Is this what we voted for?

Demand action! Contact your representatives and insist they stop funding without clear accountability and measurable success criteria. Better yet, perhaps they could focus on the real issues facing our community.

Consent Agenda: Asheville's Silent Spending

In its March 12, 2024 meeting, the Asheville City Council rapidly approved several high-value items under its "consent agenda." This procedural mechanism allows multiple items to be approved without individual discussion, raising transparency and oversight concerns among local citizens.



Key Consent Agenda Approvals

- 1. Community Engagement Software:**
 - Vendor: Cityzen Solutions, Inc. (d/b/a Public Input)
 - Cost: \$113,115 for a three-year term to enhance civic participation in decision-making.
- 2. Annual City Audit:**
 - Vendor: Cherry Bekaert, LLP
 - Cost: \$158,600 for FY 2024 audit services, with estimated future audits potentially costing \$521,900 over three years.
- 3. Work Planning and Tracking Software:**
 - Vendor: Envisio Solutions, Inc.
 - Cost: \$134,024 for a three-year subscription to improve city operations.
- 4. Carrier Playground Replacement:**
 - Vendor: Play By Design
 - Cost: \$420,000 for playground equipment and installation, plus a \$20,000 contingency for unforeseen expenses.
- 5. Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds:**
 - Lakeshore Villas: Up to \$23.5 million for 120-unit affordable housing.
 - Laurel Wood Apartments: Up to \$12.775 million for senior housing units.
- 6. Funding for Asheville PEAK Academy:**
 - Amount: \$501,384 from ARPA funds to enhance educational opportunities for low to moderate-income students.
- 7. Property Tax Refunds and Releases:**
 - Adjustments for January 2024: Standard monthly process to align with state statutes, no significant fiscal impact.

Exclusion of Bond Issuances from Total Fiscal Calculation:

While the total potential direct costs approved
see Consent Agenda on page 3

Consent Agenda

from Page 2

via the consent agenda items exceed \$1.3 million, the multifamily housing revenue bonds issued for Lakeshore Villas and Laurel Wood Apartments, totaling up to \$36.275 million, have been excluded from this calculation. These bonds are financed through the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville and do not impact the city's budget or tax dollars directly. They are guaranteed and repaid by the developments' revenues rather than taxpayer funds, thus making their exclusion from the total fiscal impact calculation appropriate. However, their inclusion in the listing remains crucial for transparency and public awareness of city-endorsed financial activities.

Not a Batted Eye in the House:

The consent agenda, carrying items with significant financial implications, was unanimously approved by the city council members without individual public discussion. This unanimous decision highlights a critical need for greater transparency and public engagement in the governmental processes that allocate substantial resources. Our community deserves clear and accountable decision-making, especially when it involves the public funds that we all work hard to contribute.

Call to Action:

Join us in advocating for this cause by signing our petition demanding that local government representatives ensure transparency and accountability in their fiscal decisions. Your voice can help shape a more transparent future for Asheville's governance. (<https://firsttuescons.com/responsibility-transparency/>)

Runoff

from Page 1

The forthcoming runoff elections for lieutenant governor and state auditor are a testament to the robustness of democratic republic processes. Participation is not just encouraged—it's essential for those who wish to see their values reflected in state governance.

Candidate Insights

Lieutenant Governor Race:

Jim O'Neill, Forsyth County's District Attorney, brings a wealth of prosecutorial experience. Serving his third term, O'Neill's initiatives, notably targeting sex offenders and chronic offenders, highlight his commitment to public safety.

Hal Weatherman, distinguished by his extensive political career including time

HHS Board Proposes Harm Reduction Program

At the latest Buncombe County Health and Human Services Board meeting held virtually on February 23, 2024, significant discussions unfolded regarding various updates and proposals. Among the topics, the most contentious was the presentation by Dr. Richard Needleman on behalf of the Health Committee.

Dr. Needleman introduced a novel initiative centered on harm reduction strategies. The proposal, termed "Smoking Supply Distribution for Harm Reduction," aims to implement a pilot project in Buncombe County. The project, championed by Dr. Shuchin Shukla, an addiction medicine specialist recently added to the department, seeks to complement existing harm reduction efforts by providing smoking paraphernalia to drug users.

While the program's proponents argue its evidence-based nature and potential benefits in reducing disease transmission and overdose risks, it has sparked a wave of debate within the board. Dr. Shukla

First Tuesday Conservatives – Asheville, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt advocacy organization under Section 501(c)4 of the IRC. Contributions or gifts to First Tuesday are not tax-deductible for IRS purposes.

<https://secure.anedot.com/first-tuesday-conservatives-asheville-inc/>

as chief of staff for former Lt. Gov. Dan Forest and former U.S. Rep. Sue Myrick, offers profound state governance insights. Weatherman's role as Madison Cawthorn's district director showcased his ability to navigate political tumult.

State Auditor Race:

Jack Clark boasts a Masters in Accounting and a CPA designation. He is educated, trained, and experienced in auditing.

Dave Boliek, an attorney, switched his party affiliation last July from Democrat to Republican.

As these critical dates approach, engagement in the democratic process is paramount. Ensuring our voices are heard and our values represented in North Carolina's governance is a duty and privilege.

emphasized the importance of considering equity in harm reduction strategies, further complicating the discussion.

The Subcommittee, along with Dr. Shukla, outlined the next steps, including further discussion and feedback at the March subcommittee meeting, with a potential presentation to the Board for consideration in the coming months.

In addition to this proposal, other updates were presented at the meeting:

- **SAFETY COMMITTEE UPDATE:** Dr. Dan Frayne presented data on racial equity within the system, emphasizing the need to understand and address disparities in outcomes for children in care.
- **OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE UPDATE:** Phillip Hardin discussed Medicaid expansion efforts and challenges faced by the Economic Services Department, including a significant increase in call volume and the exploration of AI solutions to manage it.
- **ENERGY PROGRAMS UPDATE:** Kelli Buckner shared insights into the challenges faced by the Energy Programs, particularly after taking over the program previously managed by a contractor. Despite increased volume, the department has managed to assist more clients, albeit with additional staff efforts.

In the realm of new business, Stoney Blevins, the HHS Director, presented the HHS Budget, seeking approval for its recommendation to be presented to the Commissioners. The budget proposal was unanimously approved by the Board.

In her Chairperson's Report, Amy Lenell emphasized the need to fill vacant positions on the Board, highlighting the vacancies in the Dentist and Engineer roles, urging members to reach out to potential candidates. *****

Help us save paper and money. Scan the QR code to subscribe to the digital version of our newsletter.



WHY ARE PEOPLE SUPPORTING THIS MAN?

by Dr. Carl Mumpower

Barring any unforeseen events, Donald Trump is the presumed Republican 2024 candidate for president.

How has a man with deep-seated personality flaws (narcissism, hysteria, anger issues, and high-conflict dedications), unrelenting legal hurdles (five on-going cases at last count), and across-the-spectrum media antagonism (negative over positive coverage at a ten to one ratio) managed to secure a nomination in the race for the most important leadership role in the free world?

Mind if we offer a few suggestions?

1. His courage button is bigger than his fear button – an illusive quality in conservative politicians.
2. He is not part of the imbedded leadership class that many Americans view as failing.
3. He runs mostly off his own batteries and not the group-think that characterizes a majority of opposition candidates.
4. He talks conservative values, but also does a better job of walking them than most of his conservative peers.
5. His approach to policy issues is more likely to be proactive than socially acceptable and reactive.
6. The relentless attempts to prosecute him read more sincerely as attempts to persecute him.
7. He speaks positively about America.
8. He understands and speaks to the traditional and mainstream values that our country was founded upon.
9. He gets America's unique success equation: LIBERTY + OPPORTUNITY + RESPONSIBILITY = PROSPERITY and doesn't pretend you can leave out pieces and produce the same outcome.




Grab Another Wake-up Call at French Fryz
2109 Hendersonville Road
Arden, NC 28704
(828) 684-0416

10. He has a track record of personal success in the real world versus image-based success in the make believe world of politics.

It may also be worth noting that one of the best ways to judge an individual's merit is by the character of his enemies.

Trump has lots of enemies. Notably, their deeds rarely reveal them as better people – just better pretenders...



Our Mission

First Tuesday is a conservative advocacy organization that amplifies the voices of Buncombe County conservatives through public events, social media, and other channels. We believe that all voices deserve to be heard, and we strive to give conservatives a platform to share their perspectives.

Our Vision

We envision a community of active and vocal WNC conservatives who are informed about the issues affecting our quality of life and who are willing to use their voices to influence the government, business, and media in a way that promotes conservative values.

Our Beliefs

- We believe that conservative values are essential to a healthy society, and we promote those values through our actions and our words.
- We believe that conservatives have a unique perspective to offer on a wide range of issues, and we share that perspective with the public.
- We believe diversity of voices is essential to a healthy democracy, and we promote that diversity.
- We believe that we can make a difference in the world by working together.

Visit us on the web:

<https://www.FirstTuesCons.com>

- Calls to Action
- Citizen Resources
- Local Government Activities News
- Local Govt Committees Information
- Newsletter Archives

Follow us on Social Media:

Twitter:
@AshevilleFirst

Instagram:
First.Tuesday.Asheville

Facebook:
FirstTuesday

First Tuesday Conservatives - Asheville, Inc.
4 Long Shoals Rd., Ste B459
Arden, NC 28704
828/348-4180