

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GREENE**

RESOLUTION

Official Censure of Derek Burress, Commissioner, Greene County, N.C.

WHEREAS, the Greene County Board of Commissioners, hereby Censure Derek Burress, Commissioner, Greene County, NC., for continued and repeated displays of disrespect, aggression, anger and hostility towards the members of the Greene County Board of Commissioners, Greene County Manager, employees of Greene County and County contractors;

WHEREAS, the Greene County Board of Commissioners does not condone, approve or support the behavior of Commissioner Burress as detailed below;

WHEREAS, Greene County has an obligation to provide a safe work place free from harassment for all its employees. The County is further obligated to take corrective action to eliminate harassment and a hostile work environment immediately upon becoming aware of such;

WHEREAS, Greene County is an equal employment opportunity employer and does not discriminate because of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, or other non-merit characteristics;

WHEREAS, during numerous Commissioner meetings, Commissioner Burress has yelled; jumped out of his seat; slammed his hands and papers down; thrown paper; and waved his hands above his head in an aggressive and intimidating manner. Further, he has made disparaging and demeaning comments directed at other County Commissioners, the County Manager, County employees and County contractors implying wrongdoing and lack of truthfulness without substantive evidence thus promoting a work environment that certain employees and independent contractors have characterized as “hostile”;

WHEREAS, after becoming angry about a closed session, Commissioner Burress yelled, jumped out of his seat, pointed at other Commissioners, slammed down papers, threw his pen down, and refused to go into closed session without “all county employees” present. Commissioner Burress called out the Economic Developer for Greene County and the technology provider for the Greene County Commissioners’ Meetings, by first name and stated that he was improperly included in a prior closed session, implying wrong doing by the other Commissioners and/ or staff. When the County Attorney attempted to calm him by passing him a note stating that the closed session would involve a real estate closing, Commissioner Burress slammed the note down on the rail above the attorney’s head, leaned over the attorney and yelled at her demanding to know “what real estate closing”. Commissioner Burress then wadded the paper up and threw it. Thereby furthering a feeling of hostility in the work environment;

WHEREAS, Commissioner Burress has abused his position as a County Commissioner in order to insert himself into the evaluation, performance and management of several of the Greene

County Departments; thereby, undermining the position and authority of the Department Heads and County Manager; and making some employees feel as if they are “on trial” as reported by one Department Head. At least one other employee felt it necessary to make a formal complaint; threaten litigation against the County for the alleged “hostile” work environment; and demand “whistle blower” protection from retaliation by Commissioner Burress.

WHEREAS, Commissioner Burress has exposed the County to liability by publicly attacking a local business on Facebook as being dishonest without evidence to support such assertions;

WHEREAS, Commissioner Burress has violated the confidentiality of closed session by yelling during open session that the County Attorney found that the County had paid too much money for a procurement. Thereby, taking the finding of the County Attorney out of context and intentionally misleading the people of Greene County and slandering those involved with the purchase. The comments and feigned anger further undermined the position and authority of the Department Head in question and the County Manager with such behavior. As well as accusing the County Manager, Department Head and others of wrong doing without any evidence to support such accusations.

WHEREAS, Commissioner Burress has interfered with staff and management while executing their jobs. On or about February 24, 2022, Commissioner Burress came to the County Manager’s office in person and unexpected; and, began to yell at the County Manager and berate him over emails that Commissioner Burress did not receive. Other County employees, were present in the County Manager’s office for business purposes and heard and saw Commissioner Burress’s display of temper. Additionally, all employees within the office suite were disturbed from the execution of their duties as they could hear Commissioner Burress yelling. Further, Commissioner Burress initiated this confrontation with the County Manager even though he had been previously made aware that the Superintendent of Greene County Schools had already apologized for unintentionally omitting Commissioner Burress from the email and the County Manager and Administration Staff had nothing to do with the emails he was complaining about. The actions of Commissioner Burress undermine the authority of the County Manager and further concerns of a hostile work place for all employees that witnessed or heard the yelling. In another instance, Commissioner Burress confronted a Transportation employee regarding her Facebook posts while the employee was working a table at the Senior Center providing information to senior citizens regarding the services of Greene County Transportation. Commissioner Burress accused the employee of “not liking” him and had screen shots of the employee’s Facebook posts. The employee found the accusations intimidating;

WHEREAS, after being directed by the Chairman of the Board to refrain from yelling, Commissioner Burress stood up and continued to yell, challenging the Chairman with: “you think I’m being mean? This is not mean. I can be evil. Ask my mother”;

WHEREAS, during a Commissioner’s meeting on June 5, 2023, during his comments section, Commissioner Burress attempted to incite an argument with the County Manager when he took a statement of the County Manager, made in private conversation, prior to the meeting, out of context and openly and publicly accused the County Manager of calling him gay.

Commissioner Burress proceed to yell and angrily exclaim that “I am not gay” numerous times; and,

WHEREAS, during a Commissioner’s meeting on June 5, 2023, during his comments section, Commissioner Burress disparaged the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, stating that their conferences were nothing but a “good meal and beer” providing no benefit to the Commissioners and is an unnecessary expense. Thereby misleading the public that the Board of Commissioners have wasted taxpayer money eating and drinking alcohol. Commissioner Burress intentionally ignored the numerous educational, networking, legal guidance and other benefits provided by the NCACC to the Greene County Commissioners, Manager and employees for the benefit of Greene County Citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Greene County Board of Commissioners officially, and for the record of the Board of Commissioners, that the Greene County Board of Commissioners does not condone, approve or support the inappropriate behavior of Commissioner Burress in the above referenced or similar incidents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Greene County Board of Commissioners is officially, and for the record, *CENSURING* Commissioner Burress regarding the above conduct and any failure to correct said behavior will result in further action deemed necessary and appropriate per the Board of Commissioners.

Adopted this the 19th day of June, 2023.



Greene County
Board of Commissioners


Bennie Heath, Chairman

ATTEST: 
Kyle DeHaven, Clerk to the Board