



TOWNtalk

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL
VOLUME 18 ISSUE 6 • MARCH 2022

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On the Front Burner



It's that time of year yet again – Budget Season! Of all the many issues we address on an annual basis, our budget is ultimately the most important because it allows us to provide the services that make a difference in the lives of the people we serve. The annual budget translates the values of the Chapel Hill community into a plan of action for services, programs and projects, and resources for providing services.

Our budget strategy took a detour over the past two years as we had to prepare for and respond to the needs of

the pandemic and recovery. Thankfully, from an economic perspective, we fared much better than we anticipated. The Council provided staff with direction for how to spend excess funding, including some of that money going into the fund balance to make sure we continue to have a safety net if we fall on hard times.

As you know we have had several discussions with the Council related to our compensation and benefits. We took an important step in addressing our pay issues with the approval of Phase I of the Comp and Class Study in January. As we prepare for the FY '23 budget, we are acutely aware of the need to take the next steps in addressing compression issues and remaining competitive in our effort to retain and recruit excellent employees.

Between now and June, Council will seek feedback from the community, and Town staff will work with the Council

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In the Spotlight



Have you ever started something and wished you had the drive to cross the finish line?

Amy Harvey (CaPA) achieved Certified Municipal Clerk (CMC) designation in 2008. Immediately she pursued the Master certification. And then life happened.

"I knew it was important to finish what I started," Amy said.

Thirteen years later, Amy achieved Master Municipal Clerk (MMC) designation through the International Institute for Municipal Clerks.

"I want to thank the Town's current and former council members, town managers, and department heads for valuing educated professionals," Amy said. "Thank you to Sabrina Oliver for believing in and encouraging me and others to seek not only the CMC designation but also the MMC. Thank you, Christina Strauch and CaPA colleagues, for helping me to find balance in taking time for the trainings and the ongoing daily Town processes and priorities."

Amy is one of 72 active North Carolina municipal or county clerks who have

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Many departments are involved with keeping large crowds safe and cleaning up when the party is over. Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Public Works, Parking Services, Parks Maintenance and other departments are making plans for crowds on Franklin Street if UNC beats Duke in the Final Four Saturday.

April Is for the Earth!

The Town of Chapel Hill is excited to celebrate our planet the entire month of April, and we hope you'll get the chance to get outside and celebrate with us.

"We have learned so much about how the things we do to our planet today will have impacts on our future," said Chapel Hill Mayor Pam Hemminger. "Take time this month to learn something new about the impacts of climate change and how we can all make better decisions for a stronger climate future and a more sustainable planet. Let's also be sure to enjoy what we want to protect by doing things like planting a garden, cleaning up trash from a waterway, or taking a walk and simply breathing in the spring air that we often take for granted."

The Town's Climate Action and Response Plan has 97 actions that are designed to lower the emissions that cause climate change, help us adapt to our changing climate, protect our local environment, and strengthen our community's resilience. This work includes actions like:

- Developing energy efficiency and resiliency programs to support our residents who are most impacted by climate change;
- Converting more of our outdoor lighting to high-efficient LED fixtures (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5s29KgdxXlo>);
- Adding more electric vehicles to our fleet and building more public charging stations for our community (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eb3s6c9bOdY>);
- Updating our land development regulations to make them more climate friendly and responsive;
- Building out a town-wide network of biking and walking paths;
- Expanding our rainwater sensor technology to enhance flood alert systems; and
- Developing community programs that support individual and neighborhood-level action.

We have a list of things you can take advantage of all month long:

- Leave your keys at home, and take Chapel Hill Transit. We've even added a few electric buses to the fleet.
- Plug in your electric or hybrid car at new [electric vehicle charging stations](#) throughout town
- Take a [Green Way StoryWalk®](#) at Pritchard Park, Homestead Park, or Umstead Park for an Earth-day-themed story.
- Visit Chapel Hill Public Library for Earth Day book lists and book displays for youth and adults. While you're there, share a photo on social media in front of the Library's Earth Day window display.
- Drop unwanted medications at Chapel Hill Police Headquarters so they don't end up in our waterways or in the hands of someone they aren't meant for. The drop box is in the

ACTIVITIES

GET OUTSIDE

RESOURCES

APRIL IS FOR THE EARTH



#CHAPELHILLEARTHDAY



Police Headquarters lobby at 828 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., which is open between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday–Friday.

- Visit public art at Southern Community Park. Artists Laura Haddad and Tom Drugan created a series of landscape art installations made from salvaged boulders and trees. The installations reveal different environmental elements.
- Three area artists will be painting colorful murals around select storm drains in Chapel Hill to highlight the importance of clean stormwater management. Follow Community Arts & Culture for real-time updates!

There are a few date-specific opportunities to check out as well.

- Family Concert with Latin GRAMMY Award-winning artist Mister G | Friday, April 15 4–5 p.m. | Chapel Hill Public Library
- Chapel Hill Public Library Volunteer Workday | Saturday, April 23 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m. | Pritchard Park
- Nature Walk and Cyanotype Prints Workshop | Sunday, April 24 | Bolin Creek | Times vary by attendee age

To learn more about Earth Month activities, resources, and outside opportunities, visit chapelhillarts.org/earthday.

Chapel Hill and Orange County celebrated **Creek Week** in March with 25 public events and activities, including bird walks, volunteer work days, green infrastructure tours, and more. Three weeklong activities included a county wide cleanup challenge, community science Biothon, and a virtual 5k. Most of the 65 athletes who participated in the 5K were from Chapel Hill! Creek Week was also part of the regional Creek Week run by the Clean Water Education Partnership. CWEP ran the 5K and the Biothon.

Want to get involved with next year's Creek Week? Reach out to **Sammy Bauer** (Stormwater) at sbauer@townofchapelhill.org.

Thanks to everyone who participated! Special thanks to: Mayor Hemminger and Jeanne Brown for helping promote Creek Week; Town Council for approving the Creek Week proclamation; Dale Morgan and the Explore More team at the Library; Keith Dodson, Wes Tilgman, and Robb English in Parks and Rec for helping plan and mark the 5K routes; Ran Northam (CaPA) for helping with the Mayors video and social media; Melanie Miller (CaPA) for helping with news releases and other promotion

Briefs

Atuya Cornwell

is the new Assistant Director for Parks and Recreation starting April 4. He will oversee day-to-day operations, including service provision, facility operations, programming, and staff. He will also manage special projects.

Atuya is a nationally Certified Park and Recreation Professional and has been recognized by the National Recreation and Park Association with awards and scholarships. A native of Charlotte, he holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise and Sports Science from UNC-Greensboro and a Master of Business Administration degree with a concentration in government services from Pfeiffer University.



Becky McDonnell has joined Communications and Public Affairs. She has been with the Town in both Building & Development Services and the Planning Department for about five years. Becky works part-time with Brenton Hodge and Matt DeBellis supporting both advisory boards and records management.



The **Chapel Hill Police Academy** is well underway. Seven cadets (above) are honing a variety of skills.

The Police Department's progressive approach to community policing starts within the academy. The cadets have already met one-on-one with our Crisis Unit Counselors, who help them understand scenarios involving mental health needs. The cadets have also learned elements of criminal law and juvenile law. They've gone through firearms training and a defensive driving course. The cadets work out several times a week, so say hello if you ever see them outside Police Headquarters!

Take the Compost Pledge!

As Town employees, we are encouraged to take actions that help reduce the effects of climate change in the community. One meaningful action each of us can take is to commit to producing less waste. By reducing what we need, reusing as much as we can, recycling what's possible, and composting the rest, we help reduce landfill waste and greenhouse gas emissions.

Thanks to the support of Orange County Solid Waste and the NC Department of Environment Quality, Town employees can now easily collect food waste and compost it at many accessible locations around the community.

How? Watch a short video at [youtube.com/watch?v=YEAmQE0yvLc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEAmQE0yvLc), then head over to Chapel Hill Public Library to pick up a free compost pail. Fill up your pail, then take it to one of several convenient drop-off sites, rinse, and repeat. The

program begins on Friday, April 1. Get started before April 30 and register to win a sustainable prize.

You can compost all food scraps, including fat, oil, cheese, meat, bones, eggs, eggshells, flowers, plants, coffee, tea, filters, and plain uncoated paper. You can even compost pizza boxes and paper towels!

Empty your filled compost containers at Eubanks Road or Walnut Grove Church Road Waste and Recycling centers, or Chapel Hill, Carrboro, or Eno River Farmers Markets.



Library staff show off the new compost buckets.



Cal Horton Award Nominations

Who will you nominate?

Do you have a co-worker who goes above and beyond to do a great job? Nominate them for the Cal Horton Service Award! This award was established in 2007 to award Town employees for distinguished service of at least 10 years.

Pick up a nomination form at HRD or visit townofchapelhill.org/calhortonaward. Return completed forms to Human Resource Development Department by Thursday, April 14, 2022.

Verbal nominations will be accepted. Contact a member of the W. Calvin Horton Selection Committee for assistance.

The winner will be announced at Employee Appreciation Day on May 20 at Southern Community Park.

OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

CAL HORTON AWARD



Exploring New Commute Options

Gas prices getting you down? There are other ways to get around Chapel Hill. Find how much you're spending on gas at gotriangle.org/calculator.

Take the bus

Read a book or catch up on office work while you ride the bus to work!

[Chapel Hill Transit](#) | [Go Triangle](#) | [PART](#) | [Orange County Transportation Services](#)

Park and Ride

If you live outside of town, drive in, park, and take a bus the rest of the way. Every mile saves \$ (and carbon emissions).

[Chapel Hill](#) | [Other Triangle Park & Rides](#)

DID YOU KNOW: All buses in the Triangle area have a bike rack. Watch the "How to Load Your Bike Onto a Bus" video and try it out at the practice station on Franklin Street (in front of Carolina Coffee).

NC Bicycle Laws are offered in six languages at gochapelhill.org/go-ch-bicycle-benefits.

Find lots of tips for commute options including cycling at gochapelhill.org/go-movement/go-bicycle.

Check with [Len Cone](#) for accessories to make biking safer (lights, bike bags, and more).

Walking or Rolling

You can get around without a car! Google Maps has a feature that will let you know how far it is and long it will take to get from one place to another. Click the walker to find out how long it will take for you to get there!

Carpool

Check out Share the Ride NC (sharetheridenc.org) to find a match near where you live!

Touch base with other employees in the Town that might be driving near where you live and take turns driving!

Vanpooling

[Commute with Enterprise](#) and share a ride to work with coworkers who live nearby. Everyone splits costs and driving.

Current Vanpool Routes

Go with a Buddy

Check out the Go Chapel Hill-Go Buddy Tab on gochapelhill.org for information for how to use various forms of transportation as well as a volunteer to ride along the first couple of trips when using a new commute option!

Vets On the Move

If you are a Veteran transitioning back into the community, explore [Vets On the Move](#) for ideas for beginning a commute



as well as a buddy option for the first few trips using a new commute option!

Birthday Club

Join the [Go Chapel Hill Birthday Club](#) and enjoy a fun package of birthday giveaways useful for trying new commute choices!

Be a winner with the Go Perks program!

Join the [Go Perks program](#) (from Share the Ride NC) and log your trips (including telework). Your name will be drawn for gift cards. The Town of Chapel Hill has had many winners. You could be one too!

Len Cone is always here to help you map your route using any commute option. She has lots of helpful items that make using alternative transportation easier! Send your questions to lccone@townofchapelhill.org.

Compliments

Robbin Justice Jones (Parks and Recreation) was commended by Ms. Charley Foster Norwood for an outstanding celebration for senior citizens at Hargraves Center. “Her attention to the guests left nothing to be desired. The details that she provided included teaching and assisting them as she taught them lovely gift making techniques. ... I want it documented how patient she was with each of us at that celebration.”

Compliments for TOWNtalk! John Richardson (Sustainability) said, “Great issue! You and your team are doing really nice work!”

Jonathan Brown (Transit) was commended by a longtime transit customer for being cheerful and polite. “He always tells his riders to ‘have a nice day’ in a very sincere way, and goes the extra mile in telling new riders where they can catch the bus they need or reminding them when their stop is coming up.”

In the Spotlight: Amy Harvey

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completed this training. She spent 220 training hours to earn her CMC (2008) and about 400 training hours to earn her MMC (2021).

These trainings cover leadership, laws, human resources, finance, technology, and topics that include almost all Town departments.

“I’m not a subject matter expert in any of these areas, but I know many of you are,” Amy said. “I also get to see connections between departments and functions that others might not get a chance to see.”

“My profession easily feels invisible, because many tangible aspects such as meeting notices, minutes and records become commonplace. It’s also hard to describe and less tangible because Clerks across the profession hold multiple roles

based on the jurisdiction’s needs. I expect that some of you can relate to wondering if your work is important and I think it’s important to take a moment to recognize its importance to the Town.”

“Some see appreciation as being in the spotlight or a physical pat on the back. For me, I will know that you appreciate my work through service. Let’s celebrate this accomplishment by letting me share some hard-to-find knowledge or work together as a team on projects. I encourage the Town’s leadership to continue to provide opportunities and valuing educated professionals. As an employee, take advantage of this benefit as it will help you grow and improve the Town.”

Ask the Ombuds

Avoiding the Muck of Misunderstandings— and How to get Unstuck from the Muck

In a typical day, people often visit me because they are having problems with colleagues or neighbors. These usually arise out of misunderstandings that haven’t been addressed and have therefore festered into feelings of distrust and frustration. The continued communication disconnect has grown into a wall of suspicion and frustration. It can take a lot of time to peel back the many layers of distrust that have developed over multiple interactions with that other person before we can even begin to discuss how to change the conversation.

What if we used different tools early on in our conversations? What might happen if we clarified those misunderstandings before they festered? How would we do that?

In a March 2020 *Forbes* article, “Five Tips For Communicating With Clarity As A Leader,” Shiloh Holmes shares some tips that promote effective information exchanges. They apply to all communications—conversations, email, and texts. Those steps are:

- (1) Slow things down-It’s ok to back up and go over something again, and to ask the other person to do so as well.
- (2) Be sure you have a mutual understanding of what words mean. For example, what does it mean to say someone

“disrespected” you, or that someone was “freaking out?” What actually happened that caused you to come to that conclusion?

- (3) Be an active listener. Slow your mind down to listen to what someone else is saying. We often stop listening to the other person after the first sentence or two and spend the rest of the time thinking about what we want to say when we get our chance to talk. We therefore miss a lot of important information.

- (4) Ask questions in different ways. For example,

- What do you mean when you say X?
- I’m not understanding. Can you tell me more about X?
- I’m missing something here. Can you go over that again?
- Did I understand you correctly? Did you say X?
- Can we stop for a minute? I need time to think about what you’ve said.

- (5) Get comfortable with pauses and silence in a conversation. Many of us are uncomfortable with silence and will jump in to fill the void. Allow room for silence and you might be surprised at what emerges.

Your Ombuds can help you practice these skills and provide guidance if you are feeling stuck. We can meet in person, on Teams, Zoom, or by phone: 919-260-3153 or abadrock@townofchapelhill.org.

The Ombuds is a confidential, independent, neutral, and informal resource for all Town employees and members of the public.



wellness @ work

UNC HEALTH | FAMILY MEDICINE
TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

Lunch and Learn: Have you Herd about Immunity?

Join us wherever you are through Zoom for a review of commonly recommended vaccines at 12 p.m. Wednesday, April 20.

- What are the commonly recommended adult vaccinations?
- What are the best resources for finding out about vaccinations?
- What about vaccine adverse reactions?
- What if I'm hesitant about vaccines?



The presenter is Shelby Tungate, Ambulatory Care Pharmacy Resident at UNC Medical Center.

RSVP to Liska Lackey by 5 p.m. Monday, April 18 at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796. Liska will send you the Zoom link.

It's Time to Do the Annual Health Risk Assessment!

This year, there are two parts to the HRA:

- Questionnaire (required), and
- Biometric screening (optional but encouraged)

HRA Questionnaire

Complete in UNC My Chart by June 3 to ensure that cost sharing for insurance is waived. If you don't want to do the questionnaire through UNC My Chart, you can fill out a paper copy and it will be entered on your behalf.

How to Use UNC My Chart

If you are signed up to UNC My Chart, you will receive a message with the questionnaire attached. If you do not have UNC My Chart, go to UNCHealthcare.org and click on My UNC Chart.

Biometric Screening

Clinics will be held at the Wellness Clinic in the lower level of the Public Housing office at 317 Caldwell St. Ext. You don't need to make an appointment.



Learn your numbers—cholesterol, diabetes, blood pressure, and weight; meet with Wellness Clinic Staff, and get a free insulated lunch bag!

April Clinic Dates:

Thursday, April 7, 9 to 1
Friday, April 8, 9 to 1
Thursday, April 14, 9 to 1
Thursday, April 21, 1 to 5
Friday, April 22, 9 to 1
Thursday, April 28, 9 to 1
Friday, April 29, 9 to 1

Visit chapelhillwellnessatwork.org for updates.

Belaying at the Workplace

Are you interested in belaying and/or rock climbing? Learn everything you need to know to pass a certification test from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. April 26 at the Community Center Climbing Wall.

Wear comfortable clothes, closed toe shoes, and some type of pants (skirts and dresses are fine **only** if you have pants underneath). We will provide harnesses and climbing shoes/helmets if you want them.

Sign up by April 19: Contact Liska Lackey at llackey@email.unc.edu or 919-968-2796. The session will be led by Keith Dodson and Jenna Hambleton from Parks & Recreation, and is open to all employees, pre-65 retirees, and dependents 13 and older.

What's next? Take your test during an open climb session. Once you are belay certified you will be able to participate in climbing sessions at the wall.

ON THE FRONT BURNER

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to identify our priorities for next year. We have also restarted discussions for the five-year budget strategy to give us a chance to look a little further out and create a comprehensive plan for budgeting.

I encourage you to follow along in the budgeting process and please feel free to pass your questions and thoughts.

For more information about the budget, visit www.townofchapelhill.org/budget.

Got News?

Achievements • Weddings • Babies



Send your news to info@townofchapelhill.org.
Got photos? Send them too!

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Please recycle.

