



# TOWNtalk

NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL  
VOLUME 18 ISSUE 7 • APRIL/MAY 2022

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## On the Front Burner

The Fiscal Year '22 budget restored some of the funding we reduced in previous fiscal years, and also invested in our future with improved recurring revenues. This put the Town in a strong position to recover from the immediate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and restored our focus on long-term priorities, especially those that require an ongoing commitment, such as climate action, social equity, and infrastructure.

As we consider the budget for FY '23, it is our hope that we have emerged on the far side of this global pandemic, and we recognize that our world will be returning to a "new normal", that will

require us to remain flexible during this time of transition. In the face of our many challenges, we are optimistic.

A municipal budget is an expression of the community's values, and I believe this year's recommended budget reflects the values of Chapel Hill. First and foremost, it invests in the people who provide the Town's services, our employees. In addition to new funding to support the first phase of the Compensation and Classification Study, there is an additional \$1.9 million in the budget to provide cost of living increase of 4% of market for those who have worked for us for less than four years and 5% for those who have been here for five or more years.

This tiered approach is one way for us to address some of the compression issues that have vexed us for years. Another important step is the addition of \$200,000 to address very specific compression problems throughout the organization. We believe these critical steps have gone a long way in making the Town more

*(continued on p. 6)*



To celebrate Earth Day on April 22, Public Housing staff planted flowers and unveiled a new bike rack at Airport Gardens on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard! Employees who helped with the improvement include Julian Gerner, Roy Richardson, Aaron Klomparens, Jonny Mazurek, Eric Dudley, Stacey Todd, Michelle Richardson, Robert Whitaker, and Faith Brodie.

## Police Department Holds Awards Ceremony

The Chapel Hill Police Department recently held its annual awards ceremony, celebrating the selfless work of the Guardians of the Hill.

Awards included Officer of the Year **Kyle Stuart**, and employee of the year, Crisis Counselor **Cortney Fisher**. Officers were also recognized for many life-saving actions. In all, more than 20 employees received awards.

School Resource Officer **Kurt Gurley** received the Herman Stone Award, along with **Chief Chris Blue**. The Herman Stone Award is named for former Chief Herman Stone, who was renowned for his relationship with the community. The characteristics of a Herman Stone Award



*Kyle Stuart and Police Chief Chris Blue*



*Cortney Fisher and Police Chief Chris Blue*

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## Employee Appreciation Day Is Back!

On behalf of the Employee Appreciation Day Committee, I am writing to share what we are cooking up for this year's celebration on Friday, May 20 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- Hamburger and hotdog cookout with all the fixin's and sides, cooked on site by Al's Burger Shack!
- Delicious ice cream, hand-scooped on site by Mapleview Farms!
- Fun and games, including corn hole, Bingo, and great door prizes!
- Free tote bags, sunglasses, and more branded merch at the departmental Swag Swap!
- The announcement of the 2022 Cal Horton Award!

**Are you psyched yet?** We sure hope so. Department directors are collecting information for delivery/takeout options, provided by Mel's Commissary. We want everyone—even those who can't get away from work—to be celebrated.

Oh wait! There's one more thing...

We are working on a 2022 Employee Appreciation Playlist that will provide the soundtrack for the event—and we need your help! Share your favorite upbeat party tunes at [bit.ly/3y4hdjz](https://bit.ly/3y4hdjz) and you just might hear them at the picnic.

—Susan Brown (Library) and the Employee Appreciation Committee



## New Mural at South Estes Neighborhood Created by Molly Rose Freeman

The Office of Public Housing invited Molly Rose Freeman to collaborate with residents to create a mural in the South Estes Community. She was inspired by lush and thriving gardens in many yards in the neighborhood.

"When I came back to visit again, I ended up drawing for hours with kids who lived in the neighborhood, talking about our favorite foods and what we liked to cook. They showed me what they were growing: tiny watermelons, towering okra, bright orange Thai chilis (they dared me to eat one, naturally!) Older residents shared with me about foods they ate on special occasions, what they'd grown in their gardens when they were young, dishes that had meaning for their families. They described making health drinks with pennywort, fish dishes with ginger and lemongrass, holiday meals with sweet potatoes and fried chicken.

When I talked about using this theme of gardening and food traditions with Faith Brodie, the director of Public Housing and the woman who first envisioned this project, she

said "Food brings people together. Everyone loves to eat!" She was right: food connects people to each other, to their cultures, to memories, to the land. And so the mural became an expression of those connections, a collage of plants that had special meaning for the residents: okra, tomato, hibiscus, watermelon, and pennywort. Each one represents a favorite recipe, a childhood memory, a celebration of home."

Molly had intended to invite residents to help paint the mural, but the plan changed after children started asking questions about the mural, and asked if they could paint. She asked them to paint anything they could find in a garden, and they painted apple trees, flower buds, broccoli, pears, insects, painted characters from video games, signs that said "Open" and "Welcome," and a portrait of Molly as Cat in the Hat!

The mural is named "Community Garden," which refers to the literal gardens and also the community as a place



to put down roots and the networks that hold a community together.

Molly says, "May your gardens, and your communities, grow healthy and strong!"



# Briefs

## Nate Broman-Fulks

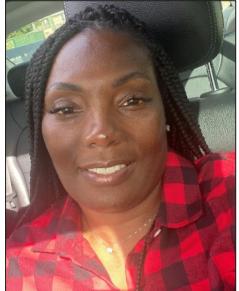
is the new Assistant Director for Affordable Housing and Community Connections. Nate joined the Town in 2017. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of South Carolina and a Master of Public Administration and Master of International Studies from North Carolina State University. For almost five years, Nate has worked with the affordable housing team to implement the Town's affordable housing work plan and performance measurement systems.

Nate and his wife Kristi are the parents of three daughters and a newborn son.



## LaTonya Cameron

(Housing) will be assisting with recertifications and tenant activity. She comes to us from the private sector where she has managed as many as 400 apartments at a time. She is a graduate of Benedict College. LaTonya has a very positive attitude, tireless energy, and the ability to help make things happen! In her time of self-care, she likes to travel, shop, and enjoy time with her family.



Congratulations to **Matt Cecil** (Transit) on being accepted into the 2022 Transportation Mid-Manager Program. This is a competitive leadership development seminar conducted by the Eno Center for Transportation and is designed for mid-level leaders working in cross-functional transportation roles in transit, government, and the public and private sectors.

## Amy Edwards

(Transit), our longest-serving Transit Operator, has been selected as Driver of the Year for Urban Transit systems by the NC Public Transportation Association. She has maintained a perfect safety record while traveling more than 1,500,000 miles in 34 years.



Amy is incredibly dependable, loved by her customers, respected by her team members, and always the first to offer help. You will see her driving for almost every Tar Heel Express event, helping with special shuttles or filling in on a Safe Ride route. Amy has set a high standard for Chapel Hill Transit operators!

## Teresa "Terri" Gil

is the Police Department's newest Crisis Counselor. Terri is an East Chapel Hill High School graduate. She has experience working with trauma-focused therapy and substance abuse groups. Terri taught English in South Korea for two years. She has a B.A. in Psychology and Spanish from UNC-Charlotte and an M.A. in Mental Health Counseling at Campbell University.



## Brittany Johnson

(Police) won First Place in her weight division at the USA Powerlifting Association Ladies of Steel competition on May 7. This was her first time competing after training for five months. She plans to compete again in the fall. In the photo (l-r): husband Marc Johnson, Brittany, and Coach Kristin McCarthy.



## Justin Matthews

(Fire) is our new Assistant Fire Marshal. Justin has more than 15 years of career fire service experience and most recently served as Captain/Fire Prevention Specialist for Burlington.



**Paul McLaughlin** (Parks and Recreation) is our new Aquatics Specialist. Paul has been with the Town as a lifeguard for more than six years. Paul has ample experience in coaching youth sports and pool operations.

Congratulations to **Kathryn McMillan** (Transit) on achieving the Certified Local Government Purchasing Officer (CLGPO) certification. The requirements include experience with government purchasing, courses on government finance and purchasing, and an exam. Kathryn has dedicated herself to improvements of her skills to help us make the best use of our funding, and keeping us in compliance with Federal, State, and local regulations.

**Kevin Robinson** has been promoted to Senior Manager of Planning & Park Operations! Kevin has been employed with the Town for 6.5 years. Under his leadership numerous facility improvements have been made. Kevin has a Bachelor's degree from NC State University, and prior to coming to the Town, he had nearly 20 years of maintenance, operations, and leadership experience.



**Alexandria Rudd** (left) and **Ashley Badstein** (right) (both Police) have successfully completed field training. Please join the training staff in congratulating them on their accomplishment, welcoming them to the career field, and wishing them luck on their journey as Guardians of the Hill!

## Police Department Signs Pledge on Women in Law Enforcement

The Chapel Hill Police Department has signed the national 30x30 Pledge to strengthen the representation and experiences of women in law enforcement. The goal of the 30x30 Pledge is for women to make up 30% of police recruit classes by 2030 and support women throughout their careers in policing.

"Representation is a critical part of the thoughtful, community-based policing we are known for here in Chapel Hill," said Assistant Chief Celisa Lehew. "We are passionate about this pledge. I started here as an officer, and I know firsthand the opportunities are endless."

The 30x30 Pledge addresses recruitment, assessment, hiring, retention, promotion, and agency culture. Collectively the actions work to promote stronger community policing outcomes.

"This pledge comes at a great time. We are in the process of recruiting cadets for our next police academy, happening this fall," said Lehew.

Learn more about the pledge at [www.30x30initiative.org](http://www.30x30initiative.org).



## Ask the Ombuds

### Three ways to end that "Endless Discussion"

Someone came to me recently complaining about a meeting that they attend regularly. The person said it seemed as though they would discuss a topic in one meeting and be done with it, and then somebody would bring it up again in the next meeting as if the subject was still up for discussion. The meetings always ran over time, and they were unable to address important new issues because they kept rehashing the old ones.

It became clear as we talked through the issue that the conversations, and meetings themselves, lacked closure. One item's discussion would bleed into another without any form of closure. People would jump from topic to topic—even with an agenda—and it was unclear to everyone what was decided and who was doing what. In other words, each conversation and topic needed closure before moving to the next one.

This type of closure is necessary in meetings. It is not enough to schedule a meeting and support the conversation. Conversations also need closure. Otherwise, the issues, topics, or feelings feel unresolved and will show up repeatedly, meeting after meeting.

## May Is Bike Month!

The Town of Chapel Hill and Go Chapel Hill-UNC-Carrboro support special events during the month of May to celebrate Bike Month. Chapel Hill is committed to being a community where bicycling and walking are safe and convenient everyday choices.

May 14: Bicycles, Sweet Ice, and Bike Rack Art, 1–3 p.m., Chapel Hill Community Center; young artist workshop, electric bike demonstrations, helmet fittings, and more.

May 16–22: National Bike to Work Week. Ride your bike to work any day (or every day).

May 21: Bike on Bus Workshop, 9 a.m.–noon, Chapel Hill Farmers' Market: Try out loading a bike onto a bus.

June 10: Vets on the Move Jim Huegerich Bike Ride, 6 p.m., Hargraves Community Center. Jim Huegerich was instrumental in development of the Town's Vets on the Move program. This special bicycle ride will have a short Vets on the Move ceremony.

For more events, visit [gochapellhill.org](http://gochapellhill.org). Look for #BikeTheTriangle on social media.



Here are three tips for closing your discussions:

1. **Ask** a question to decide whether it is time to close the conversation.
  - Is there anything we missed in this discussion?
  - Does anyone have anything to add?
  - What else do we need to cover on this topic?
2. Then, **summarize** the discussion.
  - Rename the underlying issue, problem, or topic
  - Rephrase the main points of the discussion
  - State the end result, next steps, or action items.
3. Finally, **plan** for closure.
  - If there is an agenda, be sure to start the closure process at least 5–10 minutes before the end of the allotted time for that topic.

Not sure if this will work? Suggest that your group try it out in all your meetings for a month. Assess the impact it has on your team and outcomes. I'm going to predict that it will improve your meetings!

Anita Badrock, Town Ombuds 919-260-3153 (private cell)  
919-265-0806 (office) | [abadrock@townofchapellhill.org](mailto:abadrock@townofchapellhill.org)

# Compliments

**James Alston** and **Orlando Currie** (Public Works) were commended by David Lee Bouldin for being friendly, courteous, cheerful, and hard-working. "Their politeness and enthusiastic demeanor is very much appreciated."

**Aris Dixon, Homero Plancarte, Justin Smith, and Kyle Rhude** were thanked by Wendy Wilborn Couch for helping get her mother to the hospital. "They were so kind and helped my mom get to where she needed to be so quickly, efficiently, and safe."

Cheryl Barbour Stout thanked **Chapel Hill Transit** for providing shuttle service for UNC's commencement ceremony on May 8. "Commencement is the most important event of the year with our graduates and their families coming to campus for the ultimate celebration of years of hard work. While it is a special day for these graduates and their families, it is also Mother's Day. I know staff gave up time to be with their families or just celebrate the day to make this service happen. So, many thanks to you and your team for supporting another successful Commencement."

## Departments work together to keep Chapel Hill safe and clean

From Brian Litchfield: Transit Team—thank you for your good work on April 4 and for demonstrating your commitment to safety, customer service, professionalism and teamwork, by proving service to our customers and communities through the challenges of game day traffic. I know it's not easy to operate buses in Chapel Hill/Carrboro on normal days—and game days show why you are the best of the best.

Thanks again to our EOC planning team members for helping plan and prepare for last night.

Thanks to Joe McMiller, Melissa Patrick, Monica Richards, and Doranda Cole for helping staff the Town EOC, event shuttles, and run service—y'all rock.

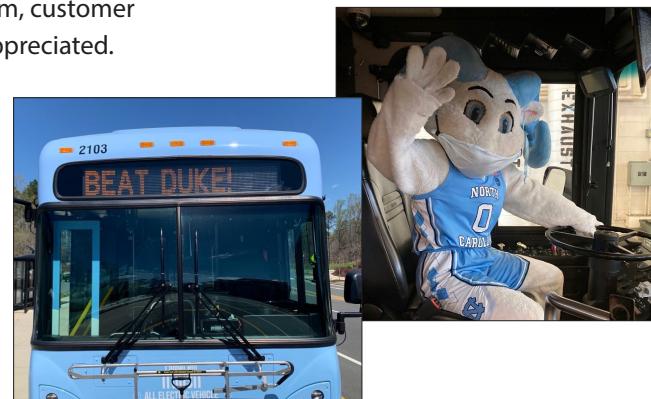
Special thanks to Operators Thomas Baldwin, Amy Edwards, Eddie Fuller and Tiara West for helping with the game day shuttles—your professionalism, customer service, and dedication are appreciated.

Y'all make Chapel Hill Transit special and make it possible for us to support our communities and funding partners during special events. I'm proud to be part of your team.

From Town Manager Maurice Jones:

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of you for your excellent work during the last few weeks in preparing for and successfully executing the plans to provide our community a safe environment in which to celebrate a couple of history making victories. Your attention to detail, your professionalism, and your commitment to your work made both of the Duke celebrations ones to remember for many here in Chapel Hill. Although we were looking forward to one more Franklin Street Party last night, the Heels came up just a little short of the title. I'm confident however that this community will have many more opportunities to celebrate the team's success during the next few years.

Thanks for being wonderful ambassadors for our organization.



If you ever need a name for something...  
...Mel B is your mar/comm pro for the job!

**Melissa Bartoletta** (Library) ran a naming process for a new public art festival that will start in 2023. It's spearheaded by Orange County Arts Commission but is county-wide in scope. The festival will bring 20 to 30 public art sculptures and installations to the downtowns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough. It is a major planning effort and it could not go much further without a name.

Mel stepped up and volunteered to run a process—and she killed it. She did deep research on best practices, and

ran a great process that was inclusive, creative, and rooted in market research. She communicated throughout to the larger stakeholder group—and fielded tough questions along the way, as well as batting down the cries of "Let's just vote so I can pick my favorite!" This week, she is presenting findings and recommendations to the larger group and is, of course, doing so in a polished and professional way.

Wanted to share my kudos for her for being willing to take this on—and for the excellent job she did.

—Susan Brown, Library Director



Thanks to the **Chapel Hill Transit Operations Leadership team** for their ongoing commitment to facilitative leadership, learning, and teamwork. We appreciate the work they are putting in to improve their leadership skills and develop as a team—this is not easy work, however, they continue to show a commitment to developing as leaders within Transit/Town and are willing to put in the work to achieve improvements.



## wellness@work

UNC HEALTH | FAMILY MEDICINE

TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL

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

Complete the HRA by June 3 to ensure that your cost sharing for health insurance will be waived.

This year, there are two parts to the HRA:

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

#### HRA Questionnaire

Complete the questionnaire in UNC My Chart ([myuncchart.org](http://myuncchart.org)). 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, sign up at [myuncchart.org](http://myuncchart.org).

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.

#### 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!

#### May Clinic Dates:

Thurs, May 12, 1 to 5

Fri, May 13, 9 to 1

Thurs, May 19, 9 to 1

Visit [chapelhillwellnessatwork.org](http://chapelhillwellnessatwork.org) for updates.

### Police Awards Ceremony

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recipient are commitment to service, commitment to the values of fairness and respect for the individual, loyalty to the agency and to the community, and a demonstrated desire to serve people.



Chief Chris Blue and Kurt Gurley



Officer Kurt Gurley

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### Lunch & Learn: OTC Medications

Join us for a Wellness@Work Lunch & Learn: Navigating the OTC Aisle, from 12 to 12:45 p.m. Wednesday, May 18.

We'll talk about basic "rules" for using OTC medications, how to read labels, common active ingredients, and more. The presenter is Andrew Rich, Pharmacy Resident at UNC Medical Center.

RSVP to Liska Lackey by 5 p.m. Monday, May 16 at [llackey@email.unc.edu](mailto:llackey@email.unc.edu) or 919-968-2796. Liska will send you the Zoom link.

### Required Safety Training

The Office of Risk Management is working with Human Resource Development to provide Workplace Safety & Security Training. All employees are required to complete two courses by June 3, 2022.

Employee Workplace Safety Training promotes workplace safety awareness and safety responsibility for all staff. Employee safety training reinforces safe work practices and prevention of workplace accidents and injuries.

The training is available through Cornerstone ([knowandgrow.csod.com](http://knowandgrow.csod.com)) or at [thehive.townofchapelhill.org/services/hrd/risk\\_mgmt/security](http://thehive.townofchapelhill.org/services/hrd/risk_mgmt/security). If you view the video on The Hive, please send Tom Clark ([tclark2@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:tclark2@townofchapelhill.org)) the employee's name, department, date of training, and name of the training.

### ON THE FRONT BURNER

(continued from p. 1)

competitive in the marketplace for talent. Our goal is to keep the great employees we have and recruit the best possible candidates for our vacant positions.

We have several work sessions scheduled with the Council before a final vote is taken on June 8th. I will keep you apprised of any significant changes and the final outcome of the Council's vote.

TOWNtalk, a publication for and about Town of Chapel Hill employees, is issued monthly September through June. It is printed on recycled paper. Please recycle.

