

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING August 8, 2005

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: William L. Hammer, Chairman
W. Darrell Robertson, Vice-Chairman
Wesley E. Bolick
W. Norris Keever
Larry Yoder

STAFF: Rick French, County Manager
Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

MEDIA: Gary Herman, The Taylorsville Times

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, August 8, 2005 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hammer called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

*****SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS*****

The following recognitions were acknowledged:

Thomas Young

Commissioner Keever recognized Thomas Young, DSS Attorney, for being selected to present his proposal in reference to criminal case Crawford vs. Washington at the 68th Annual National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Commissioner Keever also thanked Mr. Young for his work as the DSS Attorney.

Larry Elder

Commissioner Yoder presented a Key to the County to Captain Larry Elder in appreciation for his acts of heroism and bravery on Thanksgiving Day 2004. Commissioner Yoder explained that Captain Elder responded to a domestic violence call on Thanksgiving Day to find a mobile home in flames with occupants still inside. Captain Elder risked his own life to enter the home 3 times to remove the occupants.

Commissioner Yoder thanked Captain Elder for his service to the Alexander County Sheriff's Department and the citizens of the county.

Sheriff Hayden Bentley presented a Service Beyond the Call of Duty Award to Captain Elder for saving the lives of 3 people on Thanksgiving Day 2004. Mr. Bentley presented the award on behalf of the entire Sheriff's Department staff and Captain Elder's fellow employees.

Captain Elder thanked the citizens for their support, his fellow officers for the job they do, and Highway Patrol Trooper Tim Tarleton who also responded to the call that day. He also thanked God for protecting him as well as Mr. Tarleton.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Rev. Brent Dula, Beulah Baptist Church, gave the invocation and also led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Keever stated that H1779 (Property Tax Paid with Vehicle Registration) had been approved by the General Assembly and was awaiting the Governor's signature. He also noted that the bill would not go into effect until 2009.

Commissioner Keever felt that the Board should approve a resolution supporting the efforts of Representative Joe Kiser who has presented an amendment that would require the General Assembly to pick up any unfunded county expenses that exceeded the Help America Vote Act. He explained that the federal government had appropriated \$50 million; however, the state of North Carolina had not appropriated anything towards these expenses. The Board agreed to discuss this issue later in the meeting.

Commissioner Keever also stated that the General Assembly had threatened to take between \$30 and \$40 million from the education budget for teacher assistant positions. He pointed out that the General Assembly continued to pass on more expenses to the local government causing property taxes to increase.

Commissioner Keever also mentioned that Jack Hoke, Alexander County Schools Superintendent, had been named the 2005-2006 Regional Superintendent. The Board congratulated Mr. Hoke.

Commissioner Yoder stated that he attended the Library festival held at the National Guard Armory on July 30, 2005. He commended Gary Hoyle, Library Director, and his staff for the outstanding job they do for the children in the county.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Keever suggested the discussion of the approval of a resolution in support of Representative Joe Kiser's proposal be placed as Agenda Item 8A.

Commissioner Keever made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE BANK FOR E911 PROJECT FINANCING

Jennifer Herman, Finance Director, informed the Board that she had received 4 proposals for the E911 communications equipment and building renovation project at a total of \$475,000. She recommended using RBC Centura for the installment financing who submitted a proposal of 3.29% interest with semiannual payments for 4.5 years. Ms. Herman did point out that there were bank fees of \$100 included in the proposal; however, she noted that the total fees and interest were lower than the other bank proposals received.

Ms. Herman stated that the proposal must be accepted in writing by August 15, 2005 and that the rate was valid through August 31, 2005.

Commissioner Keever made a motion to accept the proposal submitted by RBC Centura for the installment financing of \$475,000 at 3.29% interest with semiannual payments for 4.5 years and to approve necessary resolution. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

VETERANS SERVICE REPORT

Barbara Poole, Veterans Service Director, gave a report of operation and services for the Alexander County Veterans Service Office, which included the following information:

Office and Operations

- The Veteran's Office is a county office provided to act as an advocate to the veterans and their dependents in securing benefits from the Veterans Administration.
- County Service Officers are required to be accredited with the Veterans Administration and to receive updated training each year. To become accredited, officers must pass a test involving the Veterans Administration laws and regulations.
- The County Veterans Office is assisted by the N.C. Division of Veterans Affairs, which had district offices throughout the state. They also provide some financial assistance to the County Veterans Offices.

- All files on veterans and dependents are confidential as they deal with financial and medical information.

Summary of Benefits Provided:

- Medical and prescription drugs
- Pension for veterans and widows
- Compensation for service connected disabilities
- Insurance – life and Champ VA
- Education / vocation rehabilitation
- Home loans
- Burial and grave markers
- Home visits to housebound
- State scholarship for children of N.C. Veterans
- Department of Defense benefits – Tricare Insurance and I.D. cards
- Many miscellaneous

Benefits Provided for Calendar Year 2004

- Expenditures as reported by the Veterans Administration paid to Alexander County veterans and dependents totaled \$3.8 million including compensation / pension, education / training, and insurance and indemnities.
- The Veterans Administration also reported expenditures for medical and prescription drugs at \$2.8 million.
- Disability pension claimants received a reimbursement on out-of-pocket medical which totaled \$270,925 in 2004. This is in addition to regular monthly benefits they receive.
- Assisted two 100% service connected veterans in securing automobile grants of \$11,000 each. These provide equipment or assistance in purchasing an automobile suitable for their disability.
- Assisted one 100% service connected veteran in securing a housing grant of \$50,000 to build a home to meet his service-connected disabilities.
- A total of 3,057 veterans or dependents were assisted in this office in 2004.

Ms. Poole urged anyone with questions about eligibility to call or come by her office. She also thanked all veterans for their service to this country and for giving us the freedom we have today.

Commissioner Bolick expressed his concerns with the federal government not providing enough funding to properly care for veterans. He also noted that more veteran's hospitals were closing.

Ms. Poole informed Commissioner Bolick that Representative Virginia Foxx had organized a Veterans Advisory Committee that she would be a part of and she noted that this issue would be discussed by the committee.

Commissioner Robertson stated that Ms. Poole did a good job and he conveyed his appreciation to her for her work on behalf of the entire Board.

CONSIDERATION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION POLICY

Sandra Gregory, Human Resources Director, presented a revised Workers' Compensation Policy for consideration by the Board. Ms. Gregory explained that the changes made to the policy would allow for more controlled costs associated with workers' compensation and more cost efficient and managed medical care. She also noted that the proposed policy would better inform employees of their benefits and provide a reporting structure compliant with the N.C. Industrial Commission and OSHA deadlines.

Ms. Gregory reviewed several key elements of the proposed policy, specifically Section 4 (Reporting Requirements) and Section 6 (Light Duty Policy). She discussed differences in costs associated in employees going to the emergency room verses a personal doctor in cases of injury and she informed the Board that a Safety Committee would be formed to investigate accidents in order to eliminate repetitiveness in injuries and determine why accidents and injuries are occurring. Ms. Gregory also noted that some training would be done to reduce accidents and costs.

Commissioner Robertson pointed out that Section 4(C) stated that the Human Resources Department "shall be responsible for all medical recordkeeping for injured employee and maintenance of OSHA...forms as required by law." Commissioner Robertson suggested some type of documentation that designated the Human Resources Director as the person responsible for all employee records to comply with HIPPA.

At this time, Commissioner Kever was excused from the Commissioners' Meeting. The time was 6:46 PM.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the revised Workers' Compensation Policy and to allow the County Manager to designate the Human Resources Director as the person responsible for maintaining medical record information to comply with HIPPA requirements. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

AIR QUALITY ACTIVITY REPORT

Sylvia Turnmire, Director of Planning & Development, gave a report on air quality activity since April 2005. She stated that since that time, 3 high ozone action days were forecasted as

unhealthy or Code Orange with an air quality index of 100. Those days were June 24, July 26, and July 27, 2005

Ms. Turnmire informed the Board that action steps within the air quality action plan were put into effect during the high ozone days including notifications by telephone, fax, and email, and flying flags of corresponding color. She stated that orange flags were flown at the designated locations of Bethlehem Elementary School, Alexander County Senior Center, and Shurtape Technologies, Inc. She also pointed out that County employees as well as daycares, industries, and the school system were mindful of the ozone level by doing the following on July 26-27, 2005:

Building Inspections: Returned to office 2 hours earlier, reduced the number of trips by 5 on the average week, vehicles refueled before 10:00 AM.

County Maintenance: Discontinued mowing at 10:00 AM, utilized flex time on July 27th by mowing from 7:00 AM to 10:00AM.

EMS: Postponed training on July 25th saving 31.6 vehicle miles traveled, refrained from showing a new employee around the county saving 40 miles on July 27th vehicles refueled after 6:00 PM.

Fire Inspections: Consolidated and rescheduled Bethlehem area inspections until July 28th saving 30 vehicle miles traveled.

Health Department: Started work one hour earlier and returned one hour earlier, no vehicles were fueled either day.

911 Addressing: Rescheduled addressing of new structures until July 28th.

Summer Day Camp/Alexander County School System: postponed a field trip for one site and returned early from a field trip at another site.

Mother Hubbard's Nursery: remained indoors on July 26th and outdoor activities were scheduled prior to 10:00 AM on July 27th.

Mitchell Gold Child Care Center: outdoor activities were scheduled prior to 10:00 AM on July 26th and July 27th.

Ms. Turnmire pointed out that the ozone monitor had not recorded an exceedance of the 8-hour maximum this ozone season. She stated that the highest value to date was recorded at 0.81ppm on June 24, 2005, which was a Code Orange day. This is below the standard of 0.85ppm. She also noted that the value for July 26, 2005 was 0.63ppm and the value for July 27, 2005 was .051ppm.

Chairman Hammer thanked the County employees and others who participated in refraining from exposure during the high ozone days.

APPROVAL OF PUBLIC COMMENT PROCEDURES

Rick French, County Manager, presented the proposed Public Comment Procedures previously discussed at the July 25, 2005 Commissioners' Meeting. He explained that this was in response to H635 that became effective on July 11, 2005 requiring at least one period for public comment per month at regular meetings.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the Public Comment Procedures as presented. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to speak during the Public Comment Period.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS:

Chairman Hammer presented the following appointments and reappointments to County boards and committees:

A. BOARD OF HEALTH

Appoint Dr. William Southworth (replacing David Linzey, term expires 2/2008)

B. JOINT NURSING & ADULT CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Reappoint Ruth Whitener 1-year terms
Appoint Max Smith.
Appoint Angela Johnson
Appoint Phyllis Douglas
Appoint Susie Barkley

C. REGION E AGING COMMITTEE (WPCOG)

Reappoint Phyllis Douglas 3-year term

D. COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAM

Appoint Steve Eaton

Chairman Hammer made a motion to approve the appointments and reappointments as presented. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #7 - #9

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #7 - #9, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #7 – To appropriate \$3,125 for the Mitchell Gold Bob Williams Too Project.

Budget Amendment #8 – To amend the budget for completion of the DSS building addition project. To amend the budget for updated cost estimates of the E911 Communications project. To amend the General Fund budget for a decrease in transfer from the DSS capital project.

Budget Amendment #9 – To increase the budget for the 2004 Urgent Repair Program for interest earned on grant funds.

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #7 - #9. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CONSIDERATION OF HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT RESOLUTION

Chairman Hammer briefly reviewed the amendment proposed by Representative Joe Kiser discussed during the Commissioner's Report. He requested that County staff prepare the resolution after approval.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the resolution regarding the amendment proposed by Representative Joe Kiser and the Help America Vote Act. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the following items during Other Business:

- A. The addition at DSS is complete from a budgetary standpoint. A total of \$1,084,760.68 has been incurred out of \$1,216,700. The Employment Security Commission will be relocating into the addition later this month. An open house will also be scheduled for later this year.

- B. The N.C. Office of State Budget and Management has formally signed off on the \$150,000 request for the Alexander County Health Department renovation costs related to establishing a dental clinic.
- C. The lights at Dusty Ridge Park are scheduled to be installed very soon. This takes this project down to the wire but we should still make the deadline of August 31, 2005.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from July 25, 2005 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for July \$1,496.97 and Tax Refund Requests for June \$461.07.
- C. Approval of Resolution to the Honorable Members of North Carolina's Congressional Delegation from Alexander County.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 5, & 6) TO PREVENT DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:03 PM to prevent the disclosure of confidential information and to discuss contractual matters and personnel issues pursuant to N.G.S.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 5, & 6). Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Robertson made a motion to adjourn at 9:00 PM. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

William L. Hammer, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board