

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING November 20, 2006

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

ABSENT: Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

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

MEDIA: Micah Henry, The Taylorsville Times

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, November 20, 2006 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Robertson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Keever gave the invocation and also led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

*****SPECIAL RECOGNITION*****

The following recognitions took place:

Representative-Elect Ray Warren

Vice-Chairman Robertson mentioned that Ray Warren, who was recently elected to serve as a member of the N.C. House of Representatives, was present at the meeting. He stated that Mr. Warren would take his oath of office in January 2007.

Key to the County

Vice-Chairman Robertson, on behalf of the entire Board, presented a Key to the County to Commissioner Norris Keever in appreciation of his dedicated service to the citizens of Alexander County. Vice-Chairman Robertson stated that Commissioner Keever had served faithfully and diligently. He also pointed out that Alexander County had gained some much-needed respect from the N.C. Association of County Commissioners thanks to Commissioner Keever's efforts.

Commissioner Hammer stated that it had been a privilege and an honor to serve with Commissioner Keever and he noted that Commissioner Keever had served on numerous boards and committees that required a lot of his time. He thanked Commissioner Keever for his hard work and dedication.

Commissioner Bolick thanked Commissioner Keever for always making himself available and for taking the appropriate time to get all the facts together to make an informed decision. He stated that he appreciated being able to work with Commissioner Keever and that he would miss him.

Commissioner Keever stated that it had been a pleasure to serve with his fellow Board members, the department heads, and staff for the last 4 years and he conveyed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve the county.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Vice-Chairman Robertson reported that Chairman Larry Yoder had broken his leg on Saturday, November 11, 2006 and had been at Iredell Memorial Hospital since that time; however, he stated that he had spoken to Chairman Yoder's wife, Hazel, around 5:20 PM today who informed him that the doctors were sending him home. Vice-Chairman Robertson stated that Chairman Yoder had a bad break, had been battling an infection, and still needed some surgery and he asked everyone to remember him in their prayers.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

2006 N.C. AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Vice-Chairman Robertson explained that the N.C. Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service honored volunteerism in North Carolina by recognizing individuals, groups, and businesses that made a significant contribution to their community through volunteer service. The N.C. Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service was presented to the following individuals:

Eloise Davis – One of the largest advocates of the YMCA by working as a liaison. She serves on the YMCA Management Council, Membership Committee, Special Events Committee, and the Capital Campaign Committee. She is present at every YMCA event to help in any way possible by serving food, monitoring youth, being a counselor at camp, or campaigning in the community for the new YMCA facility.

Raymond Stafford – Serves as Secretary and Patient Coordinator for the Brushy Mountain Shrine Club and as a liaison to new families in need of Shrine assistance. He has been a member of the Brushy Mountain Shrine Club for 23 years. Mr. Stafford is also on the Hospital Committee for the Oasis Shrine Temple and volunteers each year at the local Relay for Life through the American Cancer Society.

Fred Lackey – Served in the position of National Treasurer for the Ruritans for 3 years which lead to the organization meeting its financial goals and becoming more aware of its needs and goals to help the community. Since joining Ruritan, he has been elected as Zone Governor, District Governor, National Director, National Treasurer, and is currently running for the position of National Vice-President.

The Board congratulated these individuals for the receipt of this prestigious award.

PUBLIC HEARING: INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE GRANT FOR LIBERTY RELOAD SERVICES

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, stated that Liberty Reload Services had applied for an Industrial Development Incentive Grant relating to the construction of a distribution facility located at 33 W.E. Baab Industrial Drive. He explained that the public benefit derived from making the improvement consisted of new employment opportunities and an expanded tax base. Mr. Icenhour also noted that Liberty Reload would create at least 6 new jobs that would pay at or above the average county wage and would invest approximately \$1.4 million in property, renovations, and equipment.

Mr. Icenhour informed the Board that the proposed Industrial Development Incentive Grant would consist of a payment to the company equal to a percentage of the property taxes paid by the company for the first 5 years after completion of the new capital investment with 90% being the highest percentage in the first full year decreasing to 50 percent in the fifth year.

Vice-Chairman Robertson called the public hearing to order and requested any public comment. There being no public comment, Commissioner Hammer made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Keever made a motion to approve the Industrial Development Incentive Grant for Liberty Reload Services. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING NOVEMBER AS NATIONAL ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Karen Hoyle, DSS Director, briefly discussed the Children Services Program and introduced Carl Williamson, Children Services Program Manager. She informed the Board that Mr. Williamson had given a tremendous amount of attention to moving children through the foster care system into a permanent home, which had resulted in 30 foster children being adopted in Alexander County last year. Ms. Hoyle pointed out that there were currently 40 children in foster care and she mentioned the importance of spreading awareness on behalf of the hundreds of foster children in North Carolina who were waiting for a loving family. She presented the Proclamation Designating November as National Adoption Awareness Month and urged the Board's support.

Commissioner Kever made a motion to approve the Proclamation Designation November as National Adoption Awareness Month. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BEST PRACTICE AWARD FROM THE N.C. ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY DSS DIRECTORS

Karen Hoyle, DSS Director, announced that for the second year in a row Alexander County's Work First Program had won a Best Practice Award from the N.C. Association of County DSS Directors. She pointed out that only 10 awards were presented across the state. She also introduced Phil Bowman, Work First Program Job Developer.

Mr. Bowman discussed the "Keep the Home Fires Burning" Project that allowed for wood to be provided to individuals who needed heat in emergency situations. He thanked Ideal Frame and Hancock & Moore for their donation of wood blocks and he noted that many private citizens had donated wood. He also thanked the County for the use of an old Department of Transportation building for wood storage.

CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM RANKING

Karen Hoyle, DSS Director, stated that 3 years ago, the Alexander County Child Support Program had ranked 24th in the state. She stated that due to several state performance guideline changes and a great Child Support Program staff led by Tammy Hoyle, Child Support Supervisor, who was introduced to the Board, Alexander County ranked 7th in the state as of September 30, 2006.

Ms. Hoyle informed the Board that there were currently 1,000 child support cases in the county and she noted that staff collected approximately \$170,000 in child support payments each month.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2005-2006 DSS ANNUAL REPORT

Karen Hoyle, DSS Director, presented the 2005-2006 DSS Annual Report, which included the following selected program highlights:

- **21,282** clients were seen at the reception desk and **273** work permits were issued.
- **819** reports of alleged child abuse, neglect, and/or dependency were received and **576** were actively investigated involving **1,188** children. There were **29** children taken into custody by court order. The average number of children in foster care each month was **43**.
- Licensed or re-licensed **26** foster homes for children.
- Placed **39** children in adoptive homes and finalized **30** adoptions.
- Subsidized day care for an average of **375** children per month, allowing clients to maintain employment or receive job skills training. Total value of day care vouchers issued was **\$1,258,800**.
- Investigated **22** reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elderly / disabled adults. Of those **22** reports, **4** clients were determined to be abused, neglected, or exploited and were provided protective services. The agency served as court-appointed guardian for **2** adults.
- Served an average of **100** adults and **4** children per month through the Community Alternatives Program enabling clients to remain in their own homes instead of being placed in nursing homes. Average monthly attendance for Congregate Nutrition was **95** and monthly average of families received home delivered meals was **30**.
- Collected **\$1,819,417** in child support payments for children, established **75** paternities and **189** support obligation, and initiated **2,835** enforcement actions.
- Issued an average of **\$272,650** per month in food assistance to **1,294** households. Total value of food stamps issued was **\$3,271,796**.
- Took an average of **45** applications per month for Adult Medicaid and **226** applications for Family Medicaid. An average of **165** new children per month was enrolled in Medicaid and an average of **30** children per month participated in North Carolina Health Choice. Each month an average of **5,362** individuals were enrolled in the Medicaid Program.
- Special Assistance for individuals in Adult Care Homes averaged **102** individuals per month with an average payment of **\$491** per month.

- Through the Work First Family Assistance Program, 57 public assistance recipients obtained jobs and became self-sufficient.

Ms. Hoyle discussed total expenses and federal, state, and county share of cost for DSS. She pointed out that Medicaid was the largest expense at 76.73% of the entire DSS budget. She also stated that Medicaid cost the County \$1.7 million last year and she urged help from the legislation regarding this expense.

Ms. Hoyle informed the Board of several new duties that DSS staff would be required by the state to perform including enforcement of all child support orders, fishing license waivers for individuals taking part in Food Stamp, Medicaid, or Work First Programs, and voter registration and declinations for any new program applicant or anyone coming in for a review, change of address, etc. Ms. Hoyle pointed out that no additional state funding would be appropriated for these new duties.

The Board thanked Ms. Hoyle and her staff for a job well done.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #21 AND #22

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #21 and #22, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #21 – To increase the Governing Body budget for an IBT Water Meeting expenses (\$265) and contract fees for Mark III employee benefits consulting services (\$38,600). To increase the Economic Development budget for land surveying expenses for an economic development project. To increase the Inspections budget for the purchase of a fax machine. To increase the Bethlehem Branch Library budget for donations received.

Budget Amendment #22 – To account for the remaining MUNIS software training costs in the Finance Department budget.

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #21 and #22. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. The meeting with representatives along the Catawba River Basin and Duke Energy to discuss the Inter-Basin Transfer is scheduled for December 11, 2006 at 9:30 AM in Lincolnton. Sylvia Turnmire, Commissioner Hammer, and Mr. French are planning to attend.

- B. The Board of Commissioners will hold a joint work session with the Jail Committee on Monday, November 27, 2006 at 6:00 PM to discuss the elements of the feasibility study and to give Architect Jack Hemphill direction.
- C. The *draft* regular meeting dates for the first 6 months of 2007 are January 8 & 22, February 5 & 19, March 12 & 26, April 16, May 7 & 21, and June 11 & 26, 2007. Mr. French stated that the January 22nd meeting may need to be changed due to a conflict with the Chamber Annual Banquet.
- D. The Annual Employee's Appreciation Luncheon is scheduled for Friday, December 1, 2006 at CVCC. Porky's BBQ is providing the food for this special event.
- E. The School of Newly Elected Commissioners is scheduled for January 24-26, 2007 in Hickory. Please contact Judy Feimster of Jamie Starnes if you would like to attend.
- F. Commissioner Kever announced his resignation from all boards, committees, and task forces on which he was currently serving and he thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the Regular Commissioners' Meeting on November 6, 2006.

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

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 4, 5, & 6) TO PREVENT DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Vice-Chairman Robertson made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:55 PM to prevent the disclosure of confidential information and to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Kever seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Kever made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

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W. Darrell Robertson, Vice-Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board

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