

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING August 6, 2007

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman
 Wes Bolick, Vice-Chairman
 William L. Hammer
 Harold M. Odom
 Larry G. Yoder

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, August 6, 2007 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Rev. Charles Cook, Berea Baptist Church, gave the invocation and also led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

*****SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT*****

Leeanne Whisnant, Health Director, discussed a recent nationwide food recall prompted by the Department of Agriculture due to reports of botulism in products manufactured by Castleberry's. She explained that botulism affected the central nervous system and could cause strokes and death. She also pointed out that the recall included several brand names of chili, gravy, beef stew, barbeque meats, French cut green beans, and pet food. Reports of botulism have been reported in Texas, Indiana, Hawaii, and New Mexico.

She informed the Board that Health Department staff has visited 120 sites in Alexander County and collected 62 cans of the recalled products from 13 of those sites; mostly from smaller

grocers, daycares, and campgrounds. She also noted that a message had been sent out on the Connect Ed system and that several public service announcements had been given on the local radio station. Medical providers and veterinarians have also been made aware of the recall.

Ms. Whisnant stressed the importance of citizens not opening these cans because the infection would become airborne and could be easily inhaled or absorbed into the skin if contact with the products occurred. She asked that citizens bag these items and bring them to the Health Department to be properly destroyed. She also mentioned that these products should not be fed to pets or animals.

Ms. Whisnant stated that a list of all items recalled could be found on several websites including www.fda.gov, www.usda.gov, www.ncagr.com, and www.castleberrys.com and she noted that Castleberry's was offering refunds for the products on their website. She also pointed out that citizens could contact the Health Department for that information as well.

The Board commended the efforts of Ms. Whisnant and the Health Department staff for informing the public.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Robertson discussed the request given to the Board at the last meeting for the countywide sale of malt beverages and wine 7 days per week. He stated that North Carolina General Statutes allowed counties two options in regard to this issue including the commissioners requesting the Board of Elections to place a referendum on the election ballot or to allow citizens to collect petition signatures totaling 35% of the registered voters of the county. Chairman Robertson stated that this issue could be placed on the agenda for consideration if any commissioner was interested; however, he suggested the option to collect petition signatures be considered. There was no further discussion or action taken regarding this issue.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

RECOGNITION OF ALEXANDER COUNTY SAFETY PROGRAM

Chairman Robertson recognized Sandra Gregory, Human Resources Director, who was recently awarded the Hubert Tarkenton Outstanding Achievement Award given by the North Carolina Association of Local Government Employee Safety Officials for the implementation of a safety program for Alexander County. He explained that Ms. Gregory began developing the safety program in March 2006 which qualified the County for a 1.5% discount with the NCACC group pool for fiscal year July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008 amounting to a savings of \$6,135. The County

is also on target for the maximum discount of 2.5%, or an additional \$10,000, for fiscal year July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

Chairman Robertson stated that Ms. Gregory's abilities had reduced worker's compensation costs by approximately \$342,919 in addition to the 1.5% discount savings. He also recognized the Safety Committee members including Ms. Gregory, Billie Walker, Jason Williams, and Russell Greene who ensure that policies and procedures are followed throughout the County.

Ms. Gregory thanked the Board, management staff, and members of the Safety Committee. She also mentioned that she hoped to have all aspects of safety covered in the County by the end of the year.

The Board congratulated Ms. Gregory on her accomplishment.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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

UPDATE ON UNSAFE STRUCTURE INSPECTION PROGRAM

Sylvia Turnmire, Director of Planning and Development, gave an update on the Unsafe Structure Inspection Program which began in January / February 2007. She pointed out that N.C.G.S. 153A-164 allowed inspectors to perform periodic inspections for unsafe, unsanitary, hazardous, and unlawful conditions in the county.

She reported that 119 properties had been inspected this year including 29 that were initiated by complaints. Of all properties inspected, 26 were located within Town limits and the remaining 64 were located within County limits. Ms. Turnmire stated that most violations related to framing, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and insulation. She also noted that 52% of properties inspected were stick-built residential, 34% were manufactured homes, and 14% were commercial.

Ms. Turnmire presented photos of several properties inspected including locations at Highway 16 North, Highway 90 East, Pritchard Road, Liberty Church Road, and Bowman Cutover. She explained that a determination was made regarding the best option for each individual case. Property owners are given appropriate time limits to make repairs or have any structures demolished if necessary.

Commissioner Odom asked what steps were taken if a property owner would not agreed to destroy or remove structures deemed unsafe and in need of demolition. Ms. Turnmire replied that N.C.G.S. 153A-164 gave the County the ability to place a lien on those properties and have the structures torn down.

Ms. Turnmire also informed the Board that a member of the Emergency Services Department staff was currently being trained for asbestos inspections and would be utilized for the unsafe structure inspections once his training was complete.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the state budget adopted last week which included the inter-basin transfer legislation, solid waste liability and recovery, solid waste tipping fee increases, and Medicaid relief. Mr. French reviewed each item as follows:

- The inter-basin transfer legislation passed will not impact the current case involving the Cities of Concord and Kannapolis; however, it will make the process more public for future inter-basin transfer requests.
- Solid waste legislation includes the state assuming all liability and recovery of pre-1983 county landfills.
- A tipping fee increase of \$2.00 per ton will take effect on December 1, 2007. Of this increase, 37.5 cents per ton will be appropriated to counties for solid waste services.
- Medicaid will be phased out over a 3-year period beginning on October 1, 2007 in exchange for the Article 44 sales tax and a portion of ADM monies. The formula for the Article 42 sales tax will change from per capita to point of delivery which will negatively impact smaller counties.
- Counties have the option to hold a referendum to enact a .4% land transfer tax, which would generate \$451,304 for Alexander County, or a ¼ cent point sales tax, which would generate \$467,394.

SCHEDULING OF WORK SESSION FOR SEPTEMBER

Rick French, County Manager, requested the Board hold a work session following one of the Commissioners' Meetings in October instead of September. He explained that the meetings in October would have much lighter agendas.

Chairman Robertson suggested the Board tentatively schedule a work session following the October 8, 2007 Commissioners' Meeting. The Board agreed.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #3 & #4

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #3 and #4, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #3 – To budget for the purchase of 4 Sheriff's Department vehicles ordered in fiscal year 2007 that arrived in fiscal year 2008. To increase the Animal Control budget by \$1,230 for donations received in fiscal year 2007 to improve ventilation in the kennel area. To increase the Animal Control budget by \$4,000 for donations received from the American Humane Association to build a separate cattery and purchase ventilated cat condos. To increase the Health Promotion budget for state funding approved after the County budget was adopted. To increase the Child Health budget for reimbursement of Public Health Nursing Training funds. To adjust the Child / Maternal Health budget for funding reallocation of Health Mother Health Child Block state funds. To increase the Family Planning budget for Title X funds.

Budget Amendment #4 – To increase the budget for cleanup and removal of rubbish on property in Stony Point.

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #3 and #4. Commissioner Odom 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 City of Hickory has declared a Stage 1 Drought throughout the Catawba River Basin and is asking customers to conserve water. Suggestions include not watering outside more than twice per week, turning off water while brushing your teeth, and repairing leaking faucets and toilets.
- B. The "Opening Session" for Alexander County Schools is scheduled for Tuesday, August 21, 2007 at Alexander Central High School at 8:30 AM.
- C. Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, has been nominated to serve on the Catawba Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross effective September 2007.
- D. The United Way Kick-Off Campaign will be held at noon on August 9, 2007 at Taylorsville Presbyterian Church.
- E. Chairman Robertson, Commissioners Odom and Hammer, and EDC Director David Icenhour will be attending the NCACC Annual Conference in Fayetteville on August 16-19, 2007.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the July 23, 2007 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for July \$7,688.48 and Tax Refund Requests for July \$1,281.46.
- C. Fire Department Contracts.

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

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:26 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 Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Bolick made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 PM. Commissioner Odom seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board