

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING January 28, 2008

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

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

MEDIA: Stephanie Cass, The Taylorsville Times

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, January 28, 2008 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Robertson reviewed two legislative changes discussed by the General Assembly in the last session including possible requirements for counties to take over responsibility of the phone system for court services as well as sharing in the cost of building roads, both of which are currently fully funded by the state. He stated that this was yet another example of the state passing its responsibilities onto undeserving counties.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Yoder requested the addition of a special recognition before moving forward with regular agenda items.

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

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

Chairman Yoder recognized Joe Ferguson for being named Golf Professional of the Year by the Mountain Chapter – Carolina's Section of the Professional Golfer's Association of America. Chairman Yoder stated that Mr. Ferguson was very active in civic clubs and golf tournaments that raise money for various causes.

Mr. Ferguson thanked the Board for the recognition.

2007 NC AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Chairman Yoder explained that the NC Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service honored volunteerism in the state by recognizing individuals that made a significant contribution to their community through volunteer service. The NC Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service was given to the following individuals:

Dr. Joel Inman – Serves as team doctor for the Alexander Central High School Varsity Football Team. He also began a clinic for physicals, completed after hours and at a reduced rate, for any school athlete. Dr. Inman consults with the school nurse frequently regarding the health status of students and also takes many calls at home from parents and athletes alike with injury concerns. He chairs the School Health Advisory Council and is the CPMA and BTI Leader at the Hiddenite Church of God.

Robert Gwaltney – Oversees the care and maintenance of the grounds, parsonage, and church building at Reformation Lutheran Church and serves as Property Committee Chairman. He has volunteered in any way needed at the church for the past 40 years and has saved the church a tremendous amount of money. His most recent project was organizing the painting of the upstairs Sunday school rooms and replacing the shingles on the parsonage. Mr. Gwaltney is also a former tour guide volunteer for The Hiddenite Center.

Nita Wagoner -- Was instrumental in starting Hospice and Home Care of Alexander County 22 years ago and has been a volunteer for the organization ever since. She was responsible for recruiting the first volunteers and donations. She works hard to develop and adopt policies that form the framework of Hospice and she supports the mission statement. Ms. Wagoner serves as a Hospice Board Member and also chairs the Nominating Committee and the By-Laws Committee.

In addition, Chairman Yoder announced that Dr. Joel Inman had also received the NC Medallion Award which would be presented at a special luncheon in Greensboro on February 13, 2008. Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board, explained that the NC Medallion Award was given to only 20 individuals throughout the state each year for exemplary volunteer service.

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

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Brook Bidy, Chamber of Commerce Board Member, announced the scheduling of the Alexander County Chamber of Commerce Annual Membership Banquet to be held on Monday, February 18, 2008 at the ACHS Auditorium and Cafeteria. He stated that the President's Reception would begin at 5:30 PM with awards being presented at 6:00 PM and dinner being served at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Bidy informed the Board that reservations were \$25 per person or \$400 for a corporate sponsorship to include a table seating 6 persons and one student. He asked that RSVP's be submitted by February 8, 2008.

PUBLIC HEARING: PROPOSED INSTALLMENT FINANCING FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE BETHLEHEM BRANCH LIBRARY BUILDING

Rick French, County Manager, presented documentation and a resolution to approve an installment financing contract for \$370,000 with RBC Centura Bank to finance the purchase of the building currently housing the Bethlehem Branch Library located at 45 Rink Dam Road. He informed the Board that staff received proposals from 6 banks on January 23, 2008 for a term of 4.5 years with 9 semiannual payments and he noted that RBC Centura submitted the lowest interest rate proposal at 2.63%.

Commissioner Odom inquired as to where the funding to purchase this building would be generated from. Mr. French replied that the funding would be taken from the General Fund.

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

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to proceed with the installment financing and to approve the resolution and necessary documents for the purchase of the Bethlehem Branch Library building for \$370,000 to be financed through RBC Centura Bank. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

DSS ANNUAL REPORT

Karen Hoyle, DSS Director, began by introducing several members of the DSS Board that were present at the meeting including Chairperson Gladys Hill, Vice-Chairman Norris Keever, and Benjamin Patterson. Ms. Hill presented selected program highlights for DSS from fiscal year 2006-2007, which included the following information:

- 21,717 clients were seen at the reception desk and 332 work permits were issued.
- 828 reports of alleged child abuse, neglect, and/or dependency were received, 613 were actively investigated involving 1,063 children. Children taken into custody by court order totaled 31. The average number of children in foster care each month was 41.
- Licensed or re-licensed 28 foster homes for children.
- Placed 26 children in adoptive homes and finalized 13 adoptions.
- Subsidized day care for an average of 396 children per month, allowing clients to maintain employment or receive job skills training. The total value of day care vouchers issued was \$1,384,097.
- Investigated 29 reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elderly/disabled adults. Of those, 4 clients were determined as being abused, neglected, or exploited and were provided with protective services. The agency served as court-appointed guardian for 2 adults.
- Served an average of 98 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. Congregate Nutrition had an average monthly attendance of 91 and a monthly average of 38 families receiving home delivered meals.
- Collected \$2,008,839 in child support payments for children, established 83 paternities and 220 support obligations, and initiated 4,105 enforcement actions ranking 8th in the state.
- Issued an average of \$287,321 per month in food assistance to 1,375 households for a total value of food stamps issued of \$3,447,850.
- Received an average of 44 applications per month for Adult Medicaid and 228 applications for Family Medicaid. An average of 153 new children per month was enrolled and an average of 26 children per month participated in North Carolina Health Choice. Each month, an average of 5,445 individuals was enrolled in the Medicaid Program.
- Special Assistance for individuals in Adult Care Homes averaged 104 per month with an average payment of \$475 per month.

- Through the Work First Family Assistance program, 43 recipients obtained jobs and became self-sufficient.

Ms. Hill also discussed the total expenses and share of cost for DSS which included breakdowns of funding spent by department and the percentage of cost sharing between county, state, and federal governments.

The Board conveyed their appreciation for the report.

SAFETY PROGRAM REPORT

Sandra Gregory, Human Resources Director, gave a report on the Alexander County Safety Program, which was established in order to provide a safe working environment for employees and to comply with OSHA and NCACC requirements. She stated that the Safety Team, created on March 1, 2006, held its first official meeting on March 28, 2006 and she noted that the Worker's Compensation Policy was the only safety policy in place when the Team began its efforts.

Ms. Gregory presented a slide show presentation that included the following information related to the Safety Program:

Minimum Requirements / Completion Status

- Claims management – 100%
- Develop departmental emergency action plans and evacuation drills – 90%
- Departmental safety inspections – 100%
- Departmental safety training – 95%
- New employee orientation training – 100%

Goals

- Complete emergency action plans and evacuation drills by the end of 1st quarter 2008
- Complete departmental training
- Reduce worker's compensation expenses
- Reduce departmental recordable, lost time, and non-recordable injuries by 50%
- Reduce the number of motor vehicle accidents countywide
- Become proactive versus reactive
- Implement a rewards program
- Maintain yearly required training
- Investigate accidents immediately
- Reduce property and liability claims
- Become #1 western region safety program

Ms. Gregory thanked everyone involved in the development and continued progress of the Safety Program. She also introduced Shanna Caviness from Marsh Consulting who gave an update on

worker's compensation statistics for Alexander County from 2003 to 2008 (period ending December 31, 2007) which included losses, claims by cause, benchmarking, lag time, and costs.

Ms. Caviness reported that the highest loss for Alexander County occurred in FY 2005/2006 and that the most common cause was strain or injury followed by motor vehicle accidents. In comparison to 4 similar counties, Alexander County ranked the second lowest in the cost of claims at \$689,691 and the fourth lowest in the number of claims at 144. She also pointed out that reporting lag time had tremendously improved since FY 2003/2004. She estimated the impact the cost of claims (\$689,691) had on Alexander County in the past 5 years as approximately 14 additional employees that could have been hired in that time period.

She discussed the strengths in the County's program which included management commitment, staff leadership, Safety Committee commitment, the Return to Work Program, claims management, and regulatory compliance and she gave the following recommendations for continuous improvement:

1. Focus on energy.
2. Create and maintain a culture of safety value.
3. Highlight successes.
4. Continue to enhance the overall Safety Program.
5. Understand broader strategies and align safety goals appropriately.

Chairman Yoder thanked Ms. Gregory and Ms. Caviness for their reports.

RESOLUTION LEVYING AN ADDITIONAL ONE-QUARTER CENT COUNTY SALES AND USE TAX

Rick French, County Manager, presented a Resolution Levying an Additional One-Quarter Cent County Sales and Use Tax for the Board's consideration. He stated that 83% of Alexander County citizens voted in favor of the sales tax on January 8, 2008 and he explained that approval of this resolution was needed to move forward with enforcement of the tax.

Mr. French pointed out that the sales tax would take effect in April and that the County would begin receiving revenues from the tax in July, which would allow the County to get started with funding architect fees for the design work of the new jail.

Commissioner Hammer pointed out that revenues generated from the ¼ cent sales tax would only allow the County to begin on the jail project and would not pay for the entire project.

Commissioner Bolick thanked the citizens for taking the time to vote on January 8, 2008.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the Resolution Levying an Additional One-Quarter Cent County Sales and Use Tax as presented. Commissioner Odom seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BOARD APPROVAL FOR P.A.R.T.F. (PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND) GRANT APPLICATION FOR AQUATICS CENTER

Rick French, County Manager, briefly discussed the meeting held immediately prior to the Commissioners' Meeting which allowed for public comment on the County's application for a PARTF grant. He reiterated that the County would be applying for a \$500,000 grant for an aquatics center.

Mr. French stated that the proposed site for the aquatics center was located behind the ACHS football practice field off Liledoun Road. He also noted that the County Recreation Department would operate the center once completed.

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to approve the grant application to the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund for a grant of \$500,000 for an aquatics center. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BUDGET ORINANCE AMENDMENTS #29 - #34

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #29 - #34, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #29 – To increase the Resource Center budget for additional funds reallocated from the Criminal Justice Partnership Program. To increase the DSS budget for an additional allocation of Crisis Intervention grant funds. To increase the Bethlehem Library budget for a donation received. To increase the Court Facility budget for the purchase of a couch for the Clerk of Court's Office and new carpeting for various areas of the courthouse. To budget for the transfer of 12/31/07 fund balance of landline 911 fees to the General Fund in accordance with Session Law 2007-383 approved by the General Assembly in August 2007.

Budget Amendment #30 – To budget for the transfer of 12/31/07 fund balance of landline 911 fees to the General Fund in accordance with Session Law 2007-383 approved by the General Assembly in August 2007.

Budget Amendment #31 – To transfer funds between departments for the allocation of annual insurance premiums for property and liability and worker's compensation.

Budget Amendment #32 – To transfer funds between departments for the allocation of annual insurance premiums for property and liability and worker's compensation.

Budget Amendment #33 – To transfer funds between activities of the NC Highway 127 CDBG projects as approved by the NC Department of Commerce, Division of Community Assistance.

Reappoint Dale Graham
Reappoint Steve Cloninger
Reappoint Angelia Bowman
Reappoint Jon Presnell
Reappoint Kim Cowart
Reappoint Jerry Ratchford
Reappoint Dusty McAlpin
Reappoint Gloria Hamilton
Reappoint Suzanne Rhinehart
Reappoint Mark Gwaltney
Reappoint Avery Harrington

E. HISTORIC COMMITTEE

Appoint George Holleman
Appoint Gary Bebber
Appoint Jim "Burkie" Jennings
Appoint Opal Harrington
Appoint Larry Yoder

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve the appointments and reappointments as presented. 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. Bids for the Hiddenite Water & Sewer project will be opened on February 6, 2008 at the County Administration Building. Bid results will be reported at the February 11, 2008 Commissioners' Meeting and a low bidder recommendation will be made at the February 28, 2008 Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Our Annual Legislative Luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, January 30, 2008 at 12:00 Noon at the CVCC/Alexander Center.

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to approve the County Manager's Report. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the January 8, 2008 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Amendment to the Longevity Policy.

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 Bolick made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:40 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 Odom 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 8:50 PM. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board