

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING August 4, 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: Micah Henry, The Taylorsville Times

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, August 4, 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

Rev. Wes Hammer, Stony Point Tabernacle, gave the invocation and also led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Hammer mentioned United Way's "Bark in the Park" held on Saturday, August 2, 2008 at Matheson Park. He hoped that this would continue as an annual event.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Susan Jenkins discussed the lack of housing for citizens suffering from mental illnesses, noting that all of the income-based apartments were at capacity and that Section 8 Housing regulations were so strict that it was impossible to provide housing to individuals. She felt it was important to provide a location for those who have been diagnosed with a mental illness but were capable of living independently with the exception of minor assistance with doctor appointments, medication, etc. She informed the Board that productive citizens were being placed in nursing homes where they did not belong because there was no where else for them to go. Ms. Jenkins pointed out that there were currently 27 empty buildings in Alexander County that could be used for this type of facility or as a place for people to relax and talk to someone about their problems.

She also mentioned the current transition from Foothills to Smoky Mountain but noted that there was still a two month waiting list to receive services and that there was no full-time doctor on staff.

Ms. Jenkins stated that the mental health system across the state was struggling and she asked that the Board support and fight for people with mental illnesses by advocating in Raleigh or even filing a class action suit.

UPDATE ON SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER / Foothills MERGER

Don Pagett, Foothills Area Director and CEO, began by honoring Commissioner Robertson with a mounted gavel in appreciation for his service as Foothills Mental Health Board Chairman from October 1999 to November 2003.

Mr. Pagett briefly discussed the transition to the Smoky Mountain Center effective July 1, 2008 and reviewed the reasons that Smoky Mountain was chosen as the best fit for Foothills as well as progress made thus far with staff.

Tom McDevitt, Smoky Mountain Area Director, stated that he had a good relationship with the leadership in Raleigh and he discussed plans to take part in a hospital pilot program and to reopen a detox center previously operated by Foothills at the Caldwell/Burke County line. He also mentioned mobile crisis teams and funding needs.

Claudia Earle, Central Region Director, discussed current efforts to hire a full-time clinician as well as promotion of mental health resources.

At this time, Commissioner Robertson presented a Key to the County to Don Pagett on behalf of the Board for his leadership as Area Director for Foothills LME.

CONSIDERATION OF WORK FIRST PROGRAM

Karen Hoyle, DSS Director, was present to discuss the Work First Program, introducing Sherry Hart, Work First Supervisor. Ms. Hoyle explained that several changes had been made to the program several years ago to improve effectiveness which had resulted in the program reaching the #2 participation rate in the state last month. She also noted that several counties from across the state had contacted staff to study how Alexander County operated its program.

Ms. Hoyle explained that every two years the Department of Social Services prepared a plan for the Work First Program to be submitted to the NC Division of Social Services, stating that the first step was to notify the state as to whether the county was requesting to be standard or electing. She recommended that Alexander County remain a standard county and she noted that the DSS Board of Directors had also voted to retain this designation.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion that Alexander County remains a standard county in relation to the Work First Program. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

NORTHEAST WATER PROJECT

Rick French, County Manager, provided photos of work being done on Johnny Wike Road and he noted that crews were also finishing up on Sulphur Springs Road.

He stated that the project was a little behind schedule but noted that engineers planned to catch up as progress continued.

HIDDENITE SEWER PROJECT UPDATE

Rick French, County Manager, informed the Board that crews were currently working on a pump station and were still boring at the intersection of Old Mountain Road and Highway 90. He also stated that the County Attorney was working on sewer easements, which should be completed this week.

JAIL PROJECT UPDATE

Rick French, County Manager, reported that he and Jennifer Herman, Finance Director, had met with Jack Hemphill, Jail Architect, to discuss moving forward with improvements to the courthouse to include the heating/cooling system, sally port, and renovations to meet ADA standards. This portion of the project could be bid this year. He also stated that staff would be meeting with the LGC in September regarding funding.

Mr. French mentioned that he, Chairman Yoder, and Commissioner Hammer met with Superior Court Judge Michael Beale on July 28, 2008 where Judge Beale was updated on progress made and future plans.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #2

Rick French, County Manager, presented Budget Amendment #2 to budget for the purchase of a personal watercraft trailer with funds donated to the Sheriff's Office during the 2007-2008 year.

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #2. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

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

A. SMOKY MOUNTAIN LME BOARD

Appoint Karen Hoyle

B. LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Appoint Kathy Bunton 2 ½ years

C. SENIOR CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Reappoint Jean Lamberth 2 years

D. *SPECIAL APPOINTMENT*****

Appoint Alexander County LEPC as 08-09 Hazard Mitigation Task Force

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. The Alexander County School System Opening Session will be held on Wednesday, August 20, 2008 at 8:30 AM in the ACHS Auditorium.
- B. The County has applied for a \$500,000 Rural Center grant for the Vashti Road waterline extension and will apply for a \$750,000 CDBG later in the year. This additional line will be bid separate from the Northeast Water Project.

- C. Revenue from the Article 46 sales tax was received in July. The NCACC projected Alexander County's collection at \$50,000 per month; however, proceeds were much lower at \$23,337.38.
- D. Speaker Joe Hackney and Majority Leader Hugh Holliman will be holding a meeting on August 22, 2008 from 3:00-5:00 PM at the CVCC / Alexander Center to answer questions and provide information about any matter of interest regarding state government.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests for July \$2,992.81 and Tax Refund Requests for July \$247.04.
- B. Minutes from the July 21, 2008 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- C. Scheduling of Clean Alexander Day – October 25, 2008.
- D. Forgiveness of EMS bill for volunteer firefighter.

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

Commissioner Hammer stated that it was customary to forgive EMS fees for county volunteers and he took this opportunity to thank all volunteers for their service and contribution.

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

Chairman Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:30 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 Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Hammer made a motion to adjourn at 8:31 PM. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board