

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING** May 17, 2010

**ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

PRESENT: Larry G. Yoder, Chairman
 Ryan Mayberry, 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, May 17, 2010 in the CVCC / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, NC.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

The following announcements were heard:

Industrial Timber

Craig Larson, President of Industrial Timber, stated that the industry, which began in 2006 with 20 employees, now employed 120 and planned expand to weekend shifts. They began making approximately 1,500 wood frames per week for upholstery furniture companies, a number that has grown to over 10,000 per week. He stated that Industrial Timber planned to create 40 additional jobs to include corporate and office personnel.

Rocky Face Park

Chairman Yoder announced that the County had received a PARTF grant for the Rocky Face Park Project, noting that the match for the grant was the donation of the land; therefore, no taxpayer dollars were used.

Sam Erwin, WPCOG, stated that 24 projects out of 85 applications were funded this year, with this project receiving the second highest points in the 13-county area.

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, as well as Dan McClure and Wendell Kirkham from Carolina Land & Lakes were present and spoke briefly.

Alexander Industrial Park

Mr. Icenhour reported that the Alexander Industrial Site had been selected as one of 10 Best Small Industrial Sites in North Carolina. There were 34 entries submitted to the North Carolina Railroad Company who challenged communities to submit sites for recognition as part of its *Progress in Motion* forum.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Bolick called on Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, for a report on the Highway 127 bridge repair.

Mr. Greene discussed a meeting held on May 13, 2010 between NCDOT, Engineer David Poindexter, inspectors, and County staff. At this time, no total closures are predicted. He reported that two lanes would be open from 6:00 am until 7:00 pm each day; one lane will be closed from 7:00 pm until 6:00 am Sunday through Thursday with no work performed on weekends or holidays. Message boards will go up no later than May 26th on both sides of the bridge and work will begin June 1st with an anticipated 45 days to complete. Mr. Greene assured the Board that 911 Communications will have contact with the inspector at all times and emergency services will have access to cross the bridge.

Commissioner Robertson congratulated Parker French, son of County Manager Rick French, who graduated from Liberty University this past Saturday.

Chairman Yoder mentioned that the Grand Re-Opening of the Bethlehem Branch Library was held last Thursday, May 13, 2010. He stated that renovations were completed by County staff and that the open house was a success.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Yoder requested the addition of Budget Amendment #46 and the removal of Agenda Item #7 (Presentation of Bids for Cardiac Monitors) for further review.

Chairman Yoder made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments were given:

Bethlehem Water Request

Meagan Spainhour requested a hardship grant to extend County water along George Hall Lane, just off Teague Town Road. She explained that she had toxic levels of naturally occurring arsenic in her well water and was forced to purchase bottled water to drink, cook, etc. However, she stated that bathing in water contaminated with large amounts of arsenic could cause skin cancer and she noted that she had two small children that consumed the water for two months. Ms. Spainhour pointed out that a filtration system would cost \$10,000. A current water line is located within a half mile.

Rick French, County Manager, stated that he was meeting with Kevin Greer with the City of Hickory tomorrow about a number of water issues and would discuss this project with him. He will then contact Ms. Spainhour with their findings.

Ellendale Water Request

David White, Ellendale Fire Department, discussed the lack of static pressure and water availability at the hydrant located on Highway 64/90 at the Head Start building. During a simulated fire exercise performed by the fire department on April 5, 2010, it was determined that there was insufficient water flow and pressure at this location that would be detrimental in the event of a fire at either Head Start or the Ellendale Elementary School. He also noted that the elementary school barely had enough water to flush the toilets or operate the dishwasher. He requested the County consider a better water supply for this area.

Ned Little provided a list of residents in the area that had extremely low water pressure and would be willing to hook onto County water if supplied.

CELEBRATING EARTH DAY THROUGH THE ARTS

Josh Mitchell, Solid Waste Director, announced the winners of the second annual "Celebrating Earth Day through the Arts" contests held for local sixth graders with the theme of recycling.

Beau Bradshaw from West Alexander Middle School, son of Kevin & Meredith Bradshaw, was the winner in the essay contest.

Ally Hager, daughter of Brent & Melissa Hager, and Hannah Bailey, daughter of David & Tammy Bailey, both from West Alexander Middle School, were the co-winners of the poetry contest.

Rebecca Keaton from East Alexander Middle School, daughter of James & Elizabeth Danley was the winner of the poster contest.

Mr. Bradshaw read his essay. Ally Hager and Hannah Bailey read their poems. Rebecca Keaton was not present to show her poster.

Mr. Mitchell provided each winner with a \$50 cash prize supplied by the Retired Teachers Association.

CONTRACT FOR BETHLEHEM FIRE & RESCUE

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, presented a proposed contract between Alexander County and the Bethlehem Fire Department to provide light rescue services within their fire district. He explained that, although a first for Alexander County, this was a growing trend in surrounding areas, pointing out that Catawba County had two fire/rescue squads and that the majority of fire departments in Caldwell County also provided rescue services.

He stated that the fire department purchased rescue tools for basic vehicle extrication services in the early 80's. Having the light rescue designation gives the department the opportunity to expand their services and also makes them eligible for grant funding. Mr. Greene reported that 18 members of the Bethlehem Fire Department had attended 160 hours in training to become certified as rescue technicians. Mr. Greene explained that the proposed contract would not change the response of the Alexander Rescue Squad.

Shannon Lowrance, Bethlehem Fire Department Chief, felt that adding light rescue services would benefit the citizens of Bethlehem, especially with the number of accidents that occurred on Highway 127, and would also open the door for additional funding. He also noted that this would allow his members to have the same training as the Alexander Rescue Squad so that they could work better together.

Josh Reese, Captain, clarified that the department would still assist with fires, but noted that having certified rescue technicians and tools would only increase response time to provide better care to a patient.

Commissioner Robertson felt an attachment to the contract was needed such as the minutes from the meeting held between the fire department and Rescue Squad held 18 months ago or possibly a letter from each organization stating that they agreed upon the change. He also expressed concerns with the Board considering a contract which stated "Bethlehem Community Fire & Rescue" before the department had officially been granted the name and the charter changed by the Secretary of State. Commissioner Robertson also asked if Item #7 should include volunteer members of the fire department as well as the Board of Directors.

Mr. Greene replied that he would consult the County Attorney regarding Item #7.

Commissioner Bolick asked if the department was capable of providing water rescue. Mr. Lowrance replied that the department currently had a water craft and at least 8 members trained for water rescue service. The department also has agreements with local land owners for use of additional equipment if needed. However, Mr. Reese pointed out that additional grant funding received by providing rescue service would allow the department to purchase more equipment, including such for water rescue.

Chairman Yoder wanted to ensure that both parties had a working relationship and that everyone was on the same page for the safety and welfare of the citizens.

Terry Foxx, Alexander Rescue Squad Captain, provided some statistics regarding the number of members, training obtained by those members, budget, etc. He stated that the Rescue Squad's biggest concern with this proposal was the availability of response to calls during daytime working hours, pointing out that the Rescue Squad had a full-time employee who worked 8:00 AM-5:00 PM Monday through Friday.

Commissioner Mayberry asked if the fire department felt they had an adequate number of volunteers to respond to daytime calls. Mr. Lowrance believed there would be an adequate number of both fire department and Rescue Squad volunteers.

Keith Millsaps, Rescue Squad Board President, stated that the Rescue Squad didn't care for Bethlehem's plan when the meeting was held 18 months ago and honestly still didn't; however, he noted that response time was important when considering the needs of the citizens. He also noted that no other meetings had been held to work out details between the two organizations.

Commissioner Robertson stressed the importance of making sure this process was done correctly and efficiently because other departments would pursue the rescue aspect in the future. He felt a definition of light rescue needed to be determined for when departments moved up to other levels of rescue (medium, heavy, specialized) so that a solid document could be established.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to table consideration of the contract with the Bethlehem Fire Department until a meeting could be held between the fire department and the Rescue Squad to come to an agreement and define light rescue to become part of the agreement. He also asked for clarification on Item #7 of the contract regarding inclusion of volunteer members as well as defining a process on changing the contract when the department moved up from light rescue to other levels. He asked that this be completed in time for consideration at the next Commissioners' Meeting scheduled for June 7, 2010. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion.

There were some questions regarding whether or not an AHJ form needed to be signed in order for the fire department to submit the application to change their charter to include light rescue. It was decided that those issues along with others needed to be discussed at the meeting between the two organizations before the June 7, 2010 meeting.

There being no further comments, the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

UPDATE ON THE ARRA GRANT FOR FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, recalled that the Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Department was awarded \$2,008,515 in ARRA fire station construction funding. He called upon Shannon Lowrance, Bethlehem Fire Department Chief, for an update on that project.

Mr. Lowrance reported that an environmental assessment was currently underway, a process that could take 4-6 months or possibly up to one year. McGill Associates is administering the assessment. He stated that the assessment must be completed before the Department of Homeland Security would allow construction to begin. FEMA added approximately \$20,000 to cover costs associated with the environmental assessment.

He informed that Board that in the meantime, the Board of Directors had worked with contractors and had signed a letter of intent with Bobbitt Design Build from Raleigh, NC, who had constructed 28 fire stations within the past 10 years, to serve as General Contract subject to agreement on costs and a proposal. Bobbitt will sub-contract all work to local companies and individuals.

Commissioner Robertson questioned the use of an out-of-town general contractor instead of someone local as well as the signing of a letter of intent with Bobbitt without a proposal. He also asked if an attorney had reviewed the steps taken so far.

Mr. Lowrance replied that the department published an ad in the Hickory Daily Record requesting contractors and only received two responses. He also stated that Bobbitt was chosen based on their design and qualifications of building fire stations, and that Mackie Johnson was the architect. Mr. Lowrance stated that plans were to allow the County Attorney to review everything before the department entered into an agreement with anyone.

Commissioner Robertson pointed out that by signing a letter of intent the department had agreed to enter into a contract with Bobbitt. Mr. Lowrance clarified that they intended to contract with Bobbitt subject to agreement on design, costs, etc. Commissioner Robertson expressed concerns regarding the legality of such action and felt that needed to be investigated by an attorney. Mr. Lowrance stated that he would be glad to allow an attorney to review the paperwork.

Commissioner Mayberry thanked the fire department for their hard work on this project as well as Mr. Greene.

REPORT ON FULL-SCALE EXERCISE

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, explained that grant funding was given to the County in late 2008 to be used for massive evacuation training. In July 2009, this training was held with 4 adult care facilities and staff was able to provide those facilities with a template to aide them in developing their evacuation plan. A table top exercise was also conducted in January 2010 with Valley Nursing Center.

He provided an update and photos of a full-scale exercise held at Valley Nursing Center on May 1, 2010. The following organizations took part in the exercise:

ACHS HOSA & ROTC students	Guilford County EMS mobile bus
Alexander County 911 Communications	Hiddenite Fire Department
Alexander County Emergency Management	Iredell County EMS
Alexander County EMS	NC Emergency Management
Alexander County Sheriff's Department	Sugar Loaf Fire Department
Alexander Rescue Squad	Taylorsville Junior Firefighters
American Red Cross	Taylorsville Fire Department
Baptist Regional Advisory Council	Taylorsville Police Department
Caldwell County EMS	Valley Nursing Center staff
Catawba County EMS	Wittenburg Fire Department
Frye Regional Medical Center	

Mr. Greene advised that 94 individuals participated in the exercise, which was a simulation of a tornado striking Valley Nursing Center with multiple victims. Ultimately 21 victims were transported to Frye Regional Medical Center. Needs for future joint training and equipment were identified. He stated that he was compiling comments from participants to improve upon what was learned.

He thanked all those who participated and took part in the event.

EMS WEEK PROCLAMATION

Bradley Earp, EMS Director, stated that Emergency Services Week was May 16-23, 2010. He also noted that May 19th had been nationally recognized as EMS for Children Day. The goal is to promote education to prevent injuries and illness.

He informed the Board that Alexander County EMS had 3 crews and one Supervisor Quick Response vehicle in operation at all times. He also explained that EMS was a system that began with the 911 dispatchers when a call was received, then moved onto first responders from fire departments and the Rescue Squad to begin care, then followed up with the EMS Department arriving on the scene to provide medical care and transport.

Mr. Earp stated that there were currently 28 full-time staff and 19 part-time, all of which were well trained and prepared.

Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve the proclamation declaring the week of May 16-23, 2010 as EMS Week in Alexander County. Commissioner Odom seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER RESOLUTION

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to approve a resolution declaring the first Thursday of May of each year as National Day of Prayer in Alexander County. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

PROCLAMATION IN HONOR & RECOGNITION OF MEMORIAL DAY

Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve a proclamation in recognition of Memorial Day and thanking our local servicemen and women for their sacrifices. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Chairman Yoder also noted that a Memorial Day Celebration would be held on Sunday, May 30, 2010 at the courthouse.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHURCH ROAD WATER LINE

Rick French, County Manager, announced that notice had been received from the NC Rural Center that the County would be awarded a \$317,000 grant to install an 8-inch water line on Church Road. The water line will begin at 64/90 West and run 2.8 miles to Liledoun Road. He advised that plans were to begin construction in October 2010.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, presented the following appointments and reappointments to County boards and committees:

Planning & Zoning Commission – Appoint Bud Caywood for 2 years.

WPCOG Workforce Development Board – Appoint Sharon Wilson and reappoint Karen Hoyle, both for 2 years.

Mr. French also noted that there was one vacancy on the Joint Nursing & Adult Care Advisory Committee as well as 3 vacancies on the Town Planning Board of Adjustments. Someone from the Sharpes area is also needed on the Planning & Zoning Commission.

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

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #42 - #46

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #42 - #46, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #42 – To increase the Health Department budget for additional revenue received. To increase the Medical Examiner budget for expenses through June 2010. To increase the DSS budget for TANF Emergency Contingency Funds (ARRA funds). To transfer funds from DSS In-Home Services to DSS General Assistance. To budget for Senior Center General Purpose funding through the WPCOG (25% local match required). To increase the Senior Center budget for activities funded by donations.

Budget Amendment #43 – To increase the transfer from the Solid Waste Fund to the Landfill Closure Fund for annual monitoring costs related to closure and post closure care.

Budget Amendment #44 – To increase the fire department budgets for annual support on fire reporting software.

Budget Amendment #45 – To decrease the Revaluation Fund budget due to investment earnings lower than original estimates.

Budget Amendment #46 – To budget for 4 cardiac monitors for EMS.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #42 - #46. Commissioner Odom seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS

The following issues were discussed during Other Business:

- A. The first budget work session needs to be scheduled. Mr. French suggested either Tuesday, May 25th or Wednesday, May 26th at 6:00 PM.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to schedule a budget work session on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at 6:00 PM at the County Administration Building. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

- B. Mr. French stated that the pre-construction meeting for the 6-mile Vashti Road Water Project, funded by CDBG and Rural Center grants, is scheduled for June 1, 2010.
- C. Commissioner Bolick pointed out that only 13% of the county's registered voters showed up to vote during the primary. He stated that a second primary would be held in June and he encouraged every registered voter to come out, noting that many veterans died to allow us this opportunity.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the April 19, 2010 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for April \$1,771.93 and Tax Refunds for April \$2,126.03.

Commissioner Odom made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Mayberry 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 THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Chairman Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 8:02 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 Mayberry 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 8:35 PM. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board