

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING July 12, 2010

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Larry G. Yoder, Chairman
Ryan Mayberry, Vice-Chairman
W. Darrell Robertson

ABSENT: Wes Bolick
Harold M. Odom

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, July 12, 2010 in the CVCC / 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

Chairman Yoder gave the invocation and also led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Commissioner Robertson presented a Key to the County to Helen Hammer in recognition of her service to the citizens of Alexander County.

William Hammer mentioned that his mother graduated from Taylorsville High School on May 30, 1945 and went to work as a legal secretary for Attorney Ray Jennings the following June. She also worked for Mr. Jennings while he was chairman of the state Republican Party. Ms. Hammer has been a Notary Public since 1949, ran for Clerk of Court in 1976, and served on the Board of Elections from 1979-1989. Mr. Hammer stated that his mother had been involved in the legal work for many major projects in the county including Alexander Railroad, Alexander Hospital, Schneider Mills, Lewittes, Broyhill Furniture, Alexander County Water Corporation, Rescue Squad, East Alexander Park, Bethlehem/Sugar Loaf/Highway 16 South Water Districts, Brushy Mountain Golf Course, and WTLK/B86. Ms. Hammer officially retired June 18, 2002.

The Board thanked Ms. Hammer for her contribution to her family, church, and the community.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Yoder requested the Board and the public keep DSS Director Karen Hoyle, who is battling complications from surgery, and her family in their prayers.

He stated that Commissioner Odom was also in the hospital and was doing well. He is expected to return home tomorrow.

Chairman Yoder mentioned that Commissioner Bolick was out of town and would not be attending the meeting.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Yoder requested the addition of a resolution relating to collective bargaining be added as Agenda Item #10A.

Commissioner Mayberry 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

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

VETERANS OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT

Barbara Poole, Veterans Service Officer, provided the Veterans Service Office Annual Report, which included the following information:

- 4,477 contacts were made in 2009. This number has doubled since 2006 due to many veterans being laid off from jobs, Korean / Vietnam veterans reaching retirement age, and Gulf / Iraq veterans seeking aid for disabilities.
- Benefits paid to Alexander County Veterans totaled \$10.8 million in 2009, \$9.9 million in 2008, \$7.7 million in 2007, and \$4.0 million in 2006. This includes compensation and pension, education and vocational rehabilitation, and medical care in the home. There are 769 Special Unique Veterans in Alexander County that require special assistance through the VA medical system as they are unable to travel to the VA facilities for care.

- The veteran population for 2009 was 2,966.
- The increase in workload for each service office has caused many offices to now only see veterans from their county; however, Alexander County has not implemented this policy.
- Scholarships are available for children of veterans who entered service from NC. Applications are due to the Veteran's Office by the middle of February.
- Four remodeling grants of \$4,100 each were used to remodel homes for wheelchair accessibility.
- Four van and accessory grants of \$11,000 each were used to help purchase or make a van accessible for 100% service connected wheelchair bound veterans.
- Four veterans were placed in a 99-bed unit nursing home in Salisbury.
- Others assistance provided by the Veterans Service Office includes burial, life insurance, home loans, appeal assistance, securing military medals, military retiree benefits, and all NC benefits such as special license plates, and fishing and hunting licenses.

Ms. Poole announced that beginning Wednesday, July 14, 2010, a new Veteran's Office will be open at the Bethlehem Branch Library on Wednesdays from 9:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Veterans will need to schedule an appointment as files will not be available at that location until the veteran is seen.

Commissioner Mayberry inquired about the new VA clinic in Hickory. Ms. Poole explained that the new clinic offered mental health services as well as vision, audiology, primary care needs, and medication needs. She also noted that physicians in Salisbury could transfer patients to the Hickory facility upon request by the veteran.

CHURCH ROAD WATER PROJECT

Rick French, County Manager, presented several documents related to the Church Road Water Line for consideration. Those items included:

- A proposal from McGill Associates for engineering services.
- A capital project ordinance.
- A resolution to establish a policy for contracting with small and minority firms.
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He explained that approval of these items was necessary to receive grant funding from the NC Rural Center for this project.

Commissioner Mayberry asked when the project would begin. Mr. French replied that construction should begin in November of December 2010 and would take approximately 6 months.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve all four documents as presented. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ALEXANDER COUNTY PURCHASING POLICY

Rick French, County Manager, distributed a proposed Purchasing Policy for County departments, stating that the policy followed NC General Statutes' requirements for financing and purchasing. The policy outlines purchase orders procedures, formal and informal bidding requirements, and service contracts. Mr. French explained that the policy was simply to formalize procedures already practiced by the County.

Commissioner Mayberry felt the County needed a purchasing agent to buy supplies for all County departments. Mr. French replied that all supplies were currently being ordered by the Finance Department.

Commissioner Robertson questioned the need for emergency purchasing provisions in the policy. Mr. French responded that an amendment could be placed in the policy.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the Alexander County Purchasing Policy. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CELLULAR TELEPHONE ALLOWANCE POLICY

Rick French, County Manager, stated that the Cellular Telephone Allowance Policy was being proposed in order to ensure that cell phones used by County employees supported business functions and improved efficiency of operations.

He explained that emergency departments such as Sheriff's Department, EMS, Emergency Services, and Animal Control would be allowed to use County-owned cell phones. No personal calls are allowed on these phones. Other eligible employees will be provided a taxable cell phone stipend through payroll in the amount of \$35 per month. Mr. French informed the Board that approval and implementation of this policy would eliminate approximately 40 County-owned phones.

Commissioner Mayberry voiced concerns that the use of County-owned cell phones would be included in the employee's taxable income. He felt that was unfair to the employee if the phone was not being used for personal calls.

Commissioner Robertson pointed out that employees receiving a stipend would not be required to give their personal number to anyone they didn't feel comfortable giving it to. Commissioner Mayberry disagreed, pointing out that Section III stated that employees receiving the stipend were required to provide their number to supervisors, co-workers, and other officials as determined appropriate by the department head. Commissioner Robertson stated he had a problem with that portion of the policy.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the Cellular Telephone Allowance Policy with the above mentioned issues being addressed. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ALEXANDER COUNTY LICENSE PLATE AGENCY

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed several documents related to the License Plate Agency, which included:

- Lease for building owned by Terry & Bucky Foster.
- License Plate Agency Contract.
- Lease Agreement for Equipment.

He stated that staff was working with the Town on establishing two ADA van parking spots, one in the free parking area across the street from the proposed location and one around the corner. Interviews for the three positions will begin tomorrow.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve both leases and the contract. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

NCACC VOTING DELEGATE

Chairman Yoder requested a voting delegate for the NCACC Annual Conference to be held in Greenville on August 26-29, 2010.

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to appoint himself as voting delegate for the conference and Chairman Yoder as alternate. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

AMERICAN RECOVERY & REINVESTMENT ACT UPDATE

Rick French, County Manager, reported that \$6,308,607,101 in ARRA funding was appropriated to North Carolina through the end of 2009. Alexander County received \$24,155,963 for the following projects:

Safety Net programs - \$2,403,232

Human services - \$248,727
Unemployment insurance increases - \$7,244,990
Workforce Investment Act - \$359,918
Highway & bridge projects - \$1,349,916
Transit/rail/air - \$966,891
Weatherization - \$305,644
Community Services Block Grant - \$122,491
Housing & community development - \$100,000
Local school districts - \$1,754,163
Education stabilization - \$1,473,092
DENR programs - \$2,078,749
Public safety stabilization - \$3,661,047
Justice & public safety - \$78,588
Federal direct awards & spending - \$2,008,515

Mr. French advised that these were not local government programs.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #1 - #3

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #1 - #3, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #1 – To increase the Health Department budget for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program Funds received.

Budget Amendment #2 – To increase the Solid Waste Fund budget for a Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant from the NCDENR Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (local matching funds \$1,271).

Budget Amendment #3 – To increase the Tax Office budget for travel costs for a 3-week training session in Raleigh for the new license plate agency. To budget for start-up and operating costs of the new license plate agency.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #1 - #3. Commissioner Mayberry 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 provided an estimate of \$20,224 for the Ellendale project mentioned by David White and Ned Little at a recent meeting. There have been no funds budgeted for the project at this time.

- B. An Alexander County Crisis Meeting will be held on July 27, 2010 at CVCC at 1:00 PM. Participants include staff from DSS, Sheriff's Department, Health Department, School System, Smoky Mountain Center, and New River Behavioral Health. Involuntary commitments will be one of the key topics discussed.
- C. The deadline to submit nomination forms to the NC Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service for the Governor's Volunteer Service Awards is August 27, 2010.
- D. A community meeting for residents of Barrett Mountain will be held on July 15, 2010 at 7:30 PM at CVCC to discuss wildfire risks and safety. Dennis Wahlers, Forestry Service Ranger, will be present to inform citizens of fire risk prevention methods.

RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO FEDERALLY MANDATED COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Chairman Yoder stated that the US House of Representatives recently passed the Public Safety Employer – Employee Cooperation Act as a part of another bill for military appropriations. He explained that this legislation was an inappropriate federal intrusion into public employment matters that should be decided by local elected officials.

Commissioner Robertson pointed out that this legislation was introduced under the cover of HR4899 which would appropriate much needed funding for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. He felt that it should be policy that bills could not be presented in this manner being forced to stand on their own for approval.

Commissioner Mayberry mentioned that US Senators Richard Burr and Kay Hagan has stated their opposition to the collective bargaining bill.

Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve the resolution in opposition to federally mandated collective bargaining. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the June 14, 2010 Work Session and the June 21, 2010 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for June \$1,970.02 and Tax Refunds for June \$2,248.08.
- C. Request for property foreclosure sale refund.

Commissioner Robertson 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 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 Mayberry 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 7:52 PM. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board