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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     March 28, 2011

**ALEXANDER COUNTY**  
**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**PRESENT:**    W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman  
                  Ryan Mayberry, Vice-Chairman  
                  James “Burkie” Jennings  
                  Judy M. Moose  
                  Larry G. Yoder

**STAFF:**        Rick French, County Manager

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, March 28, 2011 in the CVCC / 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**

Melissa “Miss Mel” Hager, Children’s Librarian, gave the invocation and Greg Foster, Communications Director, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Boy Scouts Troop #245 from Bethlehem assisted in leading the pledge to earn their citizenship and community badge.

Ms. Hager stated that she lead programs for children ages birth to 18 years and mentioned several ongoing programs such as baby time, preschool story time, and the Ya Ya Young Adult Book Club. She also discussed the TPH program which is offered in conjunction with the school system and the Spilled Bean for poetry, art, and praise writing.

Mr. Foster provided a few statistics from the 911 Communications Center for 2010, which included:

187,003 phone calls received – 18.8% increase from 2007  
44,479 calls for assistance received – 24.6% increase from 2007  
570,613 radio transmissions – 19.4% increase from 2009

**\*\*\*SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT\*\*\***

Rick French, County Manager, announced that a groundbreaking ceremony for the Alexander County Law Enforcement and Detention Center would be held on Friday, April 8, 2011 at 3:00 PM at the construction site. A reception will follow at the CVCC / Alexander Center. He stated that the public was welcome to attend.

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Yoder discussed a recent NCACC bulletin which informed counties that the state may pass a law that would require counties to house state inmates. He stated that he was against any such action noting that our jail was already overcrowded and that this was a burden that counties could not afford.

Commissioner Jennings pointed out that Senator Dan Soucek was a member of the committee that was discussing this new law. He urged other commissioners and the public to contact Senator Soucek and voice their opposition.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Mayberry 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.

## **PUBLIC HEARING: NCDOT ABANDONMENT PETITION FOR A PORTION OF SR1438**

Patrick Norman, District Engineer Division 12, and Steve Rackley, Division Bridge Project Manager, discussed a proposal from NCDOT to abandon the bridge on Childers Loop, built in 1959, that rated a 26 during its last inspection in October 2010, which is below the level for safe travel.

Several board members questioned the cost to either replace the decking on the bridge or replace the bridge completely instead of abandonment. Mr. Rackley replied that replacing the decking would cost approximately \$50,000 but he noted that continual maintenance would be required and deck replacement would be needed every 2 years. A total bridge replacement would cost between \$250,000 to \$500,000 depending on environmental issues and right-of-ways. He pointed out that if the bridge was torn down, NCDOT would construct a turnaround on both sides.

Chairman Robertson called the public hearing to order and requested comments. The following comments were given:

### **Public Comment**

Lana Davidson informed the Board that removing the bridge would create two dead end roads that would make it difficult for property owner Betty Daniels who has entrances to her land on both sides of the bridge. She felt that DOT had not properly maintained the bridge by allowing the floor boards to deteriorate and not replacing the tar/gravel mixture on top which has chipped away and left boards exposed. There is also damage left from a road scraping blade. Ms. Davidson pointed out that an earth retaining wall to one side of the bridge is leaning and that boards that were removed from the bridge had been tossed there adding to the instability. She provided photos of the bridge taken on March 12, 2011; however, she added that when she visited the bridge yesterday, almost all of the boards had been removed. Ms. Davidson stated that the only acceptable solution was to repair the bridge.

Betty Daniels stated that the bridge was present when her family purchased the property in 1953. She was not in favor of constructing a new bridge because it would be three times longer than the current bridge and would prevent her from entering her property from either side. Ms. Daniels stated that DOT had never maintained the road or scraped during the winter. She provided a petition that contained 225 signatures against closing the bridge.

Clay Daniels asked why DOT felt that repairs to the bridge would only last 2-5 years when the bridge had stood for over 50 with no repairs. He also agreed that DOT had not maintained the bridge like they should have.

Commissioner Jennings asked if it was typical procedure to remove the bridge planks before a public hearing. Mr. Rackley replied that the bridge was not safe for travel and that many citizens would simply remove the barricades and continue to use the bridge. However, Commissioner Jennings pointed out that the bridge had been closed since November 10, 2010 and that the planks were just removed this past week.

Commissioner Yoder inquired about a culvert instead of a new bridge or bridge repair. Mr. Rackley stated that it would cost between \$100,000 and \$200,000 to install a culvert; however, he noted that the area was very rocky and that there would be many more environmental issues to deal with because of disturbance of the creek bed.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Jennings made a motion to urge DOT to replace the decking on the bridge and make the necessary repairs to make the bridge safe for travel. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Mr. Rackley advised that the Division Engineer would ultimately make the final decision but would take the Board's recommendation into consideration.

## **SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER REPORT**

Shelly Foreman, Planning & Public Affairs Director for Smoky Mountain Center, reported that in January 2011, Smoky Mountain issued request for proposals for a full continuum of adult and child mental health and substance abuse services in an effort to establish a provider that could offer a range of crisis response, psychiatric, and outpatient services. Six proposals were received with only 4 meeting the criteria. She informed the Board that RHA had been chosen and she introduced Mike Rhodes.

Mr. Rhodes stated that RHA was a private not-for-profit agency providing residential, outpatient, and community-based services in NC, GA, & TN with headquarters located in Asheville. Plans are to begin July 1, 2011 and a goal has been set to expand within the year to increase capacity of walk-in centers and mobile crisis management, and provide a facility-based crisis safe zone to avoid hospitalization.

Kathy Smith, also from RHA, added that this transition would provide either a licensed clinician or someone well experienced 24/7 for 365 days per year.

## **COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAM ANNUAL REPORT**

Holly Yongue, DSS Children's Services Program Manager, reported that the Community Child Protection Team reviewed 12 cases in 2010 including 9 child welfare cases, 2 fatalities, and one other case (referral from juvenile court counselor). She reviewed steps taken to engage the community in providing input into child welfare law such as identifying child mental health as the highest priority need and beginning discussions with the school system to utilize licensed social workers or counselors currently on staff for children during the day.

She discussed efforts to promote reporting of child abuse including accessing the government PEG channel, public service announcements televised in waiting rooms, and the internet. Staff can provide training to any agency in the community.

Ms. Yongue advised that the most reoccurring cases reviewed were substance abuse, domestic violence, and parenting skills. There are currently programs available for substance abuse and parenting skills as well as for domestic violence offenders. She mentioned the need for state funding for prevention efforts and briefly discussed needs identified by the team including:

- mental health services
- substance abuse services
- lack of local residential placements for children in county
- lack of public transportation

- lack of in-county emergency shelter
- no hospital/urgent care
- lack of funding to address these areas

The Board thanked Ms. Yongue for her report.

### **CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH PROCLAMATION**

Holly Yongue, DSS Children's Services Manager, presented a proclamation declaring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Alexander County.

She mentioned several events taking place in April including the pinwheel garden planting on Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup> at 12:00 Noon at the courthouse, a bullying event on April 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM at CVCC for children 8 years and up, and a child abuse educational program on April 28<sup>th</sup> at Taylorsville Presbyterian Church. All events are free and open to the public. Ms. Yongue also mentioned that the Links Program group (13 years and up in foster care) designed a tie dye t-shirt for staff which would be worn to the pinwheel garden planting on Friday.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the proclamation and declare April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **STATE OF THE COUNTY MESSAGE 2010**

For the sake of time, Chairman Robertson made a motion to postpone the reading of the State of the County until the next meeting. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **RESOLUTION TO CHANGE ALEXANDER COUNTY'S REVALUATION SCHEDULE FROM 2013 TO 2015**

Rick French, County Manager, distributed a resolution which would, upon approval, delay the revaluation schedule from taking place in 2015 instead of 2013. He noted that the last revaluation occurred in January 2007 and that NC general statutes require revaluation every 8 years.

Chairman Robertson explained that the County changed to a 4-year revaluation process when property taxes were continually increasing to avoid sticker shock but noted that postponing was a better option now that the rate had stabilized.

Commissioner Mayberry also pointed out that postponing revaluation would save approximately \$500,000 in the County budget.

Chairman Robertson made a motion to approve the resolution to delay revaluation until 2015. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS**

Rick French, County Manager, requested the Board appoint him to the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for a one-year term.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the appointment. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #38 - #40**

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #38 - #40, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #38 – To increase the landfill budget for the annual distribution from DENR for the electronics recycling program.

Budget Amendment #39 – To transfer funds between line items for the 2008 Scattered Site Housing CDBG program according to the budget revision submitted to the NC Department of Commerce.

Budget Amendment #40 – To increase the Sheriff's Department budget for purchase of a 1999 Chevy box truck from the Iredell County Sheriff's Department auction.

Commissioner Jennings made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #38 - #40. Commissioner Moose seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

The following issues were discussed during Other Business:

- A. NCACC District Meeting for our district will be held on Thursday, April 7, 2011 at the Holiday Inn Express in Wilkesboro. Pre-registration is necessary but there is no fee to attend.
- B. In response to Commissioner Yoder's earlier comments about counties housing state inmates, Mr. French reported that this would affect Alexander County by \$230,000. Senator Soucek has been contacted with this information.

- C. Staff received a letter from DENR stating that the County's application for water projects through the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund had been denied. The next funding cycle is September 2011.
- D. According to Representative Virginia Foxx, the Bethlehem community did not meet the criteria for a new zip code.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Minutes from the February 21, 2011 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for February \$16,780.86 and Tax Refunds for February \$3,540.62.

Commissioner Yoder 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 Robertson made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 8:09 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**

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 9:10 PM. Commissioner Jennings seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

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W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman

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Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board