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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING July 15, 2013

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, July 15, 2013 at the CVCC / Alexander Center in Room 103, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chairman Yoder gave the invocation and Commissioner Robertson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Vice-Chairman Yoder advised that the General Assembly had reached an agreement related to tax reform and that a vote was expected this week; therefore, the state budget should be approved within two weeks.

Chairman Jennings apologized for crediting the quote “The power to tax is the power to destroy” to Thomas Jefferson instead of Daniel Webster at the last meeting.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one was signed up to speak during the Public Comment Period.

LITERACY AND BUILDING COMMUNITY IN ALEXANDER COUNTY

Laura Crooks, Library Director, informed the Board that 14% of adults in Alexander County lacked basic prose literacy, meaning that approximately 5,200 people are either unable to read or can only read at the simplest level.

The following programs are available through the Alexander County Library in an effort to reach out to the community and provide access to information and opportunities:

- Young children – Baby Time for birth up to 12 months, Preschool Story Time for up to age 5, and Outreach visits to area preschools by the Children’s Librarian with developmentally appropriate books, music, and movement.
- School-Age Children – reluctant readers gain confidence from practice as they read to certified therapy dogs Abby and Kowboy.
- Summer Reading Program – encourages children and families to keep reading through the summer so they start school in the fall at the same reading level they had achieved when school ended in the spring.
- Teens – YA-YA’s book club, Teen Poetry Happens, and book themed Lock-Ins. Our teen programming is now recognized for excellence on the national level.
- Adults – Annual poetry readings and bi-monthly art exhibits by local and regional artists, Groundbreaking Reads summer reading program, Brevity internet-based book club, A/Muse literary and arts magazine, and Alexander Listening Library reading-on-the radio program.

Ms. Crooks stated that the library had been selected to take part in the soft launch of the Edge Initiative to strengthen libraries and better serve communities by identifying areas of improvement to public technology service. Her vision for the future includes availability of laptops to patrons which would provide extra computer stations as well as an opportunity for digital literacy training.

PRECISION MATERIALS BUILDING REUSE GRANT

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, announced that the NC Rural Economic Development Center had awarded Alexander County with a Building Reuse Grant in the amount

of \$25,000 for the benefit of Precision Materials who has pledged to create 5 new positions as part of the grant program. These funds will be used to upgrade lighting in the manufacturing area as well as renovate employee restroom and break room areas.

Precision Materials designs and produces a wide variety of parts from wood, plastic, fiberglass, and composite materials and can produce large volumes of replica parts customized to their clients' specifications. The company currently produces furniture for IKEA and Williams-Sonoma.

Mr. Icenhour added that the County's 5% match would be provided in-kind through time spent by the Economic Development staff preparing the grant application and administering grant funds.

DESIGNATION OF VOTING DELEGATE TO NCACC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to nominate Vice-Chairman Yoder to serve as Voting Delegate at the NCACC Annual Conference scheduled for August 22-24, 2013. Commissioner Moose seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

SALES TAX REPORT

Rick French, County Manager, reported that \$3,025,402 had been collected in sales tax revenue for the first 10 months of the 2012-2013 fiscal year which is \$25,159 more than this time last year; however, the hold harmless total is at \$80,893.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #1 & PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE #P-1

Rick French, County Manager, explained that Project Budget Ordinance #P-1 was to authorize the NC Rural Center grant funds and County match for Precision Materials as discussed earlier.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve Project Budget Ordinance #P-1. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted 4 in favor of the motion (Commissioners Jennings, Mayberry, Robertson, and Yoder) and one against (Commissioner Moose). The motion carried.

Mr. French advised that the purpose of Budget Amendment #1 was to increase full-time and part-time salaries and wages by 5% for the Sheriff's Department, Detention, Emergency Services, 911 Communications, and EMS and to increase the Detention budget for two new detention officer positions that were accidentally left out of the FY 2014 budget – the original budget only included 10 new detention officer positions instead of 12.

Commissioner Moose was opposed to the pay increases due to the amount already being taken out of Fund Balance and especially since most of these employees received a 2.5% increase less than a year ago. She felt this could create the need for a substantial tax increase next year.

Commissioner Mayberry stated that this amount would only be a small part of the current budget deficit and that property taxes would increase next year regardless.

Chairman Jennings pointed out that Commissioner Mayberry's statement regarding a definite tax increase next year was his opinion, not fact.

Commissioner Robertson added that part of these increases was due to the new detention center, which could generate revenue from the housing of out-of-county inmates in the amount of approximately \$800,000.

Commissioner Moose responded that revenue was projected not guaranteed and that no inmates from other counties had been taken in and no revenue generated as of yet.

Vice-Chairman Yoder had no problem with the pay increase and felt it was well deserved; however, he felt it was unfair for the Board to give raises to only these specific departments and not all departments.

Chairman Jennings was opposed to the pay increases due to increased unemployment, flat sales tax revenue, and uncertainty with the State Legislature tax reform decisions as well as the fact that all employees making under \$50,000 annually were recently given a 2.5% increase.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #1. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted 3 in favor of the motion (Commissioners Mayberry, Robertson, and Yoder) and 2 against (Commissioners Jennings and Moose). The motion carried.

Commissioner Mayberry pointed out that these increases would bring deputy salaries up to compare with surrounding counties and counties of similar size, as requested by the Sheriff.

Chairman Jennings questioned the net increase amount of 5% for someone traveling to work in a different county due to higher pay, especially when considering the cost of fuel and depreciation of automobiles.

Commissioner Moose did not want to be held responsible for taking part in such irresponsible action as this, noting that the taxpayers would be the ones to pay for it. She also stated that she didn't know anyone in the private sector whose salary had increased year to year and pointing out that most salaries had decreased.

Chairman Jennings agreed with Commissioner Moose and felt that the Board was not being responsible with taxpayer money.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rick French, County Manager, requested a work session be held on either July 22nd or July 29th to discuss some code enforcement issues.

After discussion, Commissioner Robertson made a motion to schedule a work session on Monday, July 22, 2013 at 6:00 PM at the County Administration downstairs conference room. Commissioner Moose seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$1,903.58) and Tax Refunds (\$2,866.78) for June 2013.
- B. Minutes from the May 29, 2013 and June 13, 2013 Work Sessions and the June 10, 2013 and June 19, 2013 Regular Commissioners' Meetings.
- C. County Management Records Retention & Disposition Schedule.

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for the regular meeting, Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to adjourn at 6:46 PM to reconvene in a work session. Commissioner Moose seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

James H. Jennings, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board

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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION July 15, 2013**

**ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

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

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

VISITORS: Andy Anderson, CVCC / Alexander Center Liaison
Wes Bunch, CVCC Financial Services
John Enamait, CVCC Business, Industry, & Technology
Jeremy Fortner, CVCC Board of Trustees
Dr. Garrett Hinshaw, CVCC President
David Icenhour, Economic Development Director
Norris Kever, CVCC Board of Trustees
Dr. Keith Mackie, CVCC Instructional Programs
John Watts, CVCC Board of Trustees
Brock Womble, Alexander County Schools Superintendent

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a work session with representatives from Catawba Valley Community College immediately following adjournment of the regular meeting.

CVCC / ALEXANDER CENTER EXPANSION PROJECT

Dr. Garrett Hinshaw, CVCC President, provided preliminary cost estimates for construction / renovation for Phase I welding/metallurgy for the CVCC / Alexander Center expansion which totaled \$818,000. He advised that the estimate, provided by ADW Architects, did not include equipment, environmental abatements, resurfacing parking lots, and renovation to existing lobby, offices, and classrooms.

Dr. Hinshaw felt that given the fact that only \$900,000 was received from the Golden Leaf Foundation and that CVCC did not have capital reserves, additional grant funding would be needed to complete Phase I. He stated that EDA grants were a possibility; however, the process will delay the opening of the program.

Commissioner Robertson felt the estimates were extremely high and that it may be beneficial to get estimates elsewhere. It was noted that ADW tended to project high to eliminate any unforeseen costs that may arise.

The possibility of starting Phase I in the smaller lower building until the larger one was renovated was discussed as well as using the ACHS welding facilities at first.

It was agreed that Dr. Hinshaw would meet with Rick French, County Manager, and other necessary staff to develop a plan of action.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Dr. Hinshaw informed the Board that the college transfer program was well underway and that 22 ACHS students were enrolled in the tuition-free cohort program.

He also advised that staff was pursuing a \$125,000 NC Rural Center grant to address training needs for local industries, specifically Craftmaster and Mitchell Gold, and would be meeting with Rural Center representatives next Monday. If grant funding is received, training could begin in October or November.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 2, 4, 5, & 6) TO PREVENT THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, DEGREES/PRIZES/AWARDS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Chairman Jennings made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:40 PM to prevent the disclosure of confidential information and to discuss degrees/prizes/awards, economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 2, 4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Moose 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 7:57 PM. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

James H. Jennings, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board