

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING June 15, 2015

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Larry Yoder, Chairman
 Ryan Mayberry, Vice-Chairman
 Milton H. Campbell
 Josh Lail
 Ronnie Reese

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, June 15, 2015 at the CVCC / Alexander Center in Room 103, 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 Commissioner Campbell led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Vice-Chairman Mayberry made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Campbell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

*****RECOGNITION OF ROCKY FACE PARK AWARD*****

Alisha Stamey, Rocky Face Park Ranger, announced that Alexander County had received a National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award for its role in the development of Rocky Face Park. The park received one of 35 awards across North Carolina and one of only 5 in the state in the Parks and Recreation category.

A brief video featuring Rocky Face Park that will be aired on both County and NACo social media channels was shown.

2015-2016 ALEXANDER COUNTY BUDGET DISCUSSION

Rick French, County Manager, provided a revised 2015-2016 General Fund budget of \$37,619,658 that included a 12.5-cent property tax increase as well as a small change in the proposed fee increases for Solid Waste (eliminating the \$1 savings at convenience centers for recycling instead of increasing the landfill tipping fee by \$5). He also advised that, after discussions with several commissioners late last week, staff had prepared a Budget Ordinance reflecting a 10-cent tax increase instead of 12.5.

Chairman Yoder expressed concerns that a 10-cent increase would not cover all needed expenses and asked Mr. French what items would be eliminated if approved. Several items mentioned by Mr. French were two of the Sheriff's Department vehicles, some EMS equipment, a vehicle for Animal Services, and financing of the EMS ambulance and QRV instead of paying outright. Chairman Yoder also asked if approval of a 12.5-cent increase would provide a budget that could be utilized for two years to which Mr. French replied that it quite possibly could. He added that approving 12.5 cents could also put the County in a position to add to the Fund Balance at the end of the year.

Commissioner Campbell hoped to reduce spending by at least \$700,000 to possibly \$1 million for the 2016-2017 budget and felt every vendor contract and partnership should be reviewed and rebid if it would result in a financial savings.

Commissioner Lail felt significant savings could have occurred if the Board had been made aware of the severity of the County's financial situation sooner, noting that some items came up too late in the process to take advantage of; however, he felt with major tightening, this could possibly be a 4-year budget.

Vice-Chairman Mayberry discussed tax rate allocations to County services (23 cents to schools, 21 cents to Sheriff / Jail / Communications, 10 cents to DSS, 4 cents to EMS, 4 cents to debt service including the Detention Center, 2 cents to Health, and 15 cents to all other departments such as Tax Office, Administration, Recreation, Public Buildings, Inspections, Library, etc.), noting that very little could be eliminated without closing departments.

When asked by Vice-Chairman Mayberry, Mr. French gave an example of eliminating the Recreation Department which would only save a little over a penny on the tax rate and also that laying off employees would result in the County paying $\frac{3}{4}$ of their salary in State-mandated unemployment benefits until they were reemployed elsewhere.

Vice-Chairman Mayberry also mentioned that he and Chairman Yoder had been warning fellow commissioners for two years of the need for a major tax increase and had actually voted against the 2013-2014 budget because an increase was not included. He agreed that beginning the budget process early would identify efficiencies that could be addressed and felt the County

should not appropriate any additional taxpayer money to the School System until an efficiency plan was implemented. In addition, he hoped, with the Sheriff's help, to be able to provide two more vehicles to the Sheriff's Department by the end of the year.

Commissioner Reese suggested the process for the 2016-2017 budget begin as early as next week. He also felt excessive comp time needed to be addressed to eliminate the major payouts to employees when they leave County employment. Commissioner Lail agreed, noting that the County's policy on comp time may need to be evaluated.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Yoder made a motion to adopt the 2015-2016 Alexander County budget to include a 12.5-cent property tax increase. Commissioner Campbell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #54 - #57

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #54 - #57 as follows:

Budget Amendment #54 – To budget for required year-end accruals for the first payroll to be paid in July 2015.

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Budget Amendment #56 – To increase the budget for self-insured group medical due to actual claims paid that exceed estimated insurance premiums charged to County departments.

Budget Amendment #57 – To budget for a transfer of funds from the Jail Project Fund to the FY 2016 General Fund budget (using money from the January 2011 Jail Project loan proceeds for the FY 2016 interest payments on the debt).

Vice-Chairman Mayberry made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #54 - #57. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADOPTION OF 2015-2016 BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR ALEXANDER COUNTY

No further action was taken as the 2015-2016 budget was approved under Item #1 (2015-2016 Alexander County Budget Discussion).

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the reappointment of Jeremy Fortner to the CVCC Board of Trustees for a 4-year term.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion to approve the reappointment of Jeremy Fortner to the CVCC Board of Trustees as requested. Vice-Chairman Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CANCELLATION OF JUNE 22, 2015 MEETING

Following approval of the 2015-2016 budget, Chairman Yoder stated there was no need for any further meetings in June and requested the June 22, 2015 meeting be cancelled.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion to cancel the June 22, 2015 Commissioners' Meeting. Vice-Chairman Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rick French, County Manager, reported that the next Commissioners' Meeting would be held on July 13, 2015.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Lail announced that Lulu's Child Enrichment Center at Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams had been recognized as a Shape NC Demonstration Site by the NC Partnership for Children. A celebration will be held on June 16th from 4:00-5:30 PM and the Board is invited to attend. He added that Lulu's Child Enrichment Center was now one of only 6 Shape NC Demonstration sites throughout the state.

Commissioner Reese provided first quarter attendance for the Senior Center and its two branches in Bethlehem and Stony Point and mentioned various services provided to seniors such as the Medicare Part D drug plan open enrollment that assisted 457 seniors and saved them \$373,000. He also reported that this year's Memorial Day program was the largest turnout in many years.

Vice-Chairman Mayberry commended the Board on making the right decision tonight regarding the 2015-2016 budget.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 3, 4, 5, & 6) TO PREVENT THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, ATTORNEY/CLIENT PRIVILEGE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Chairman Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:09 PM to prevent the disclosure of confidential information, for the purpose of attorney/client privilege, and to discuss

economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 3, 4, 5, & 6). Vice-Chairman Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Campbell made a motion to adjourn at 7:46 PM. Vice-Chairman Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board