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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
CALLED MEETING**      September 23, 2015

**ALEXANDER COUNTY  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

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

**STAFF:**        Chris Bowman, Sheriff  
                  Greg Foster, Communications Director  
                  Michele Foster, Administrative Assistant to Sheriff  
                  Rick French, County Manager  
                  Cpt. Mike Harrison, Jail Administrator  
                  Tod Jones, Chief Deputy  
                  Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a called meeting on Wednesday, September 23, 2015 at the Administration Building downstairs conference room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION**

Chairman Yoder gave the invocation.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Chairman Yoder discussed information presented at a recent WPCOG Policy Board Meeting which showed that the population in Alexander and Catawba Counties had risen and had fallen in Caldwell and Burke.

Commissioner Lail reported that he was still receiving calls from citizens regarding the increase in water rates in Bethlehem. Chairman Yoder mentioned that this issue would be evaluated and discussed further.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

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

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #9 & #10**

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #9 & #10, as follows:

Budget Amendment #9 – To increase the Detention budget to restore positions that were frozen during the 2015-2016 budget process – 3 full-time and 3 part-time positions.

Budget Amendment #10 – To increase the DSS budget for estimated cost of the contract with ExecLink, LLC to provide interim DSS Director services for October and November 2015.

Commissioner Lail explained that the DSS Board was on its third round of advertising the DSS Director position which had resulted in the need to extend the contract for the interim twice. A candidate was selected after the first set of interviews but she ultimately refused the job and no qualified candidates applied during the second round. He felt the size of the department and the salary limited prospects.

Captain Mike Harrison, Jail Administrator, discussed current staffing at the Detention Center and the need to restore frozen positions, which will bring the total full-time employees to 33 and part-time to 19. Current positions include two (one male, one female) in processing/booking, one person in the control room (which is designed for 3), one supervisor, and 3 jailers. One of these officers leaves to pick up meals 3 times per day and also accompanies the medical technician twice per day leaving only two jailers on the floor to monitor up to 152 inmates. An officer is also required to transport inmates to and from court.

Vice-Chairman Mayberry questioned the need for so many part-time positions in both Detention and the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Bowman explained that only 2 or 3 out of the entire list were normally available to work when called. Greg Foster, Communications Director, added that most part-time employees worked full-time jobs elsewhere which made it difficult to find someone to fill in last minute.

Vice-Chairman Mayberry felt it may be beneficial over time to hire more full-time positions and eliminate the number of part-time to which Sheriff Bowman agreed but added that part-time positions would always be needed to cover vacations, sick leave, emergencies, etc. for full-time employees as well as the numerous special events that take place in the county and mental commitments which can take days to complete.

Vice-Chairman Mayberry also asked if part-time positions could be shared between Detention and the Sheriff's Department. Captain Harrison responded that many of his part-time employees did not have their BLET which was required to serve as a road deputy.

Sheriff Bowman reiterated that he was not requesting new positions, only that the ones which were frozen and budgeted for be restored. Several Board members questioned the need for a budget amendment if the positions had been budgeted. Chairman Yoder and Rick French, County Manager, advised that funding for the frozen positions had not been included in the 2015-2016 budget, which prompted the need for the budget amendment. Sheriff Bowman was not aware that the funding had not been budgeted.

Discussion was also held regarding efforts to reduce comp time. Sheriff Bowman reported that most comp time was accrued by detectives and drug officers, which would be impossible to reduce without forcing the officers to leave in the middle of an investigation.

After further discussion regarding duties of each shift team at the Detention Center, housing of out-of-county inmates, video initial arraignment, etc., Commissioner Campbell made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #9 & #10 in good faith that the number of part-time positions within the Sheriff's Department and Detention would continue to drop over time as more full-time positions were approved. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Chairman Yoder asked the Board to prepare for similar requests from other departments.

Commissioner Campbell stated that public safety was #1 priority. Mr. French added that all positions that had been filled since the beginning of the budget year had been partially State-funded.

Sheriff Bowman questioned the restoration of frozen positions in the Sheriff's Department (one full-time, one part-time) and Communications (3 part-time). Mr. French replied that budget amendments had not been prepared for this meeting, but could be for October 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Mayberry made a motion to adjourn at 7:21 PM. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

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Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board