

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING** June 6, 2016

**ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

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

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, June 6, 2016 at the CVCC / Alexander Center in Room 103, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Lail gave the invocation and Chairman Mayberry led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Commissioner Yoder presented a Key to the County to Angela Johnson in recognition of 20 years of service to Alexander County Government Offices. Ms. Johnson came to work for Alexander County on July 1, 1996 and since that time has held positions at the Senior Center, Soil & Water, Transportation, Recreation, and Planning / Inspections. Her official retirement date is set for July 1, 2016.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following comments were heard:

Brent Warren reminded the Board that the citizens had elected them to serve Alexander County as a whole, not one specific township, with the belief that they were men of high moral character who would make the right decisions. He asked if they had become deaf to the citizens' wishes since they had spoken loudly against the sale of alcohol twice in the past, noting that the Board should expect the public to show up at meetings when they felt their voices were not being heard instead of brow beating them for not attending in the past. He warned the Commissioners that they could sabotage past efforts in an attempt to hold an alcohol referendum in the Wittenburg Township but they could not sabotage the general election in November.

Rev. Jeff Chapman, Little River Baptist Church and President of Alexander Citizens for Faith & Family Values, also questioned whether the citizens of Alexander County had been heard by the County Commissioners as well as our State Representative and Senator, noting that Representative Lee Zachary refused to respond to phone calls and emails. He hoped that if the Board would not listen to the citizens they would listen to the Word of God and he quoted Ezekiel 22:27. Rev. Chapman stated that if the Board refused to hear the citizens now, they would hear them clearly in November and advised that they would also stand before God to give an account of their actions.

Bud Caywood stated that he was a concerned citizen that moved to North Carolina in 1971 and had attended almost every County Commissioners' Meeting for many years. He listed several economic problems faced by Alexander County including a \$140 million bleed to neighboring counties, constant loss of massive retail sales, loss of sales tax revenue, lack of skilled manufacturing laborers, declining student enrollment due to loss of population to locations with more vibrant opportunities, and increase in drug use and teenage pregnancy and pointed out that legal alcohol sales was a tool to help build the local economy. He reported that the Wittenburg Township, who also supplies 43% of the County's property tax revenue, had voted in favor during the last countywide ABC Referendum by more than 60% and was simply asking for an opportunity to develop their community and have an economic impact for the county.

Keith Meadows, who advised that 27 people per day die as a result of drunk driving, gave statistics related to alcohol-impaired driving deaths for Alexander, Iredell, Caldwell, Catawba, and Wilkes Counties that ranged from 24% - 42% (information obtained from www.countyhealthrankings.org). He reiterated that the county had spoken against the sale of alcohol and he asked the Board which was more important – a few bucks or a few lives?

Bill Rocap agreed that the voters had settled the issue of alcohol sales in Alexander County by voting in opposition on March 19, 2013 and felt forcing taxpayers to fund another referendum was not a prudent use of tax revenue nor was funding a lengthy

investigation into the matter to subvert the will of the body of people that the Board serves. It was his opinion that the Board's inability to manage the needs of the entire county should not be used as a means to introduce destructive substances and that a successful education should not be dependent upon the encouragement of detrimental, addictive behaviors. Mr. Rocap suggested the Board use its time and efforts to enforce its duties of leadership towards the safety, health, and well-being of the citizens of Alexander County.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2016-2017 ALEXANDER COUNTY PROPOSED BUDGET

Rick French, County Manager, began with a slide show presentation relating to the 2016-2017 Alexander County proposed budget that included the following information:

- General Fund revenues and expenditures (including human services, debt service, education, and public safety).
- Comparison of proposed tax rates and revenue generated by one cent to counties similar in size and surrounding counties.
- Alexander County revenue and revenue growth potential from sales taxes vs. property taxes.
- Fund balance comparisons for population group average and counties similar in size.
- Tax rate allocations to various county services.

He advised that the proposed budget for the Alexander County General Fund totaled \$38,284,170 with no increase in property taxes or fees. Major items budgeted include:

- \$400,000 increase for the Board of Education.
- \$235,000 for 4 Sheriff's Department vehicles.
- \$131,404 for 4 EMT/Paramedic positions to work a 12-hour rotation schedule.
- \$145,000 for a new Type III ambulance to replace a 2008 ambulance with over 200,000 miles.
- 3 additional positions (building inspector, EMS administrative position transitioning from part-time to full time, and a staff person at Rocky Face Park).

In response to a question from Vice-Chairman Campbell regarding sales taxes, Mr. French explained that Alexander County was scheduled to receive an increase of approximately \$1.3 million from the sales tax expansion approved by the General Assembly last year; however, a bill filed a few weeks ago would reduce that revenue to \$1.1 million; therefore, an even \$1 million was estimated in the 2016-2017 proposed budget.

Commissioner Yoder asked how the new overtime laws would affect Alexander County beginning in December. Mr. French responded that staff expected more comp time to be accrued by County employees but he did not foresee a drastic increase in overtime pay.

Chairman Mayberry called the public hearing to order and requested any comments. There being none, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2016-2017 ALEXANDER COUNTY EDC PROPOSED BUDGET

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, explained that State laws regarding how counties spend funds for economic development had recently changed, requiring a separate public hearing be held. Proposed appropriations for the 2016-2017 Alexander County Economic Development Corporation include:

- \$23,100 for specific marketing and/or advertising intended to promote Alexander County as an expansion or relocation option for retail businesses and industry.
- \$5,000 for the Website Grant Program to assist local businesses in developing an Internet presence.
- \$10,000 for the Building Renovation Grant Program to assist local businesses with building renovation costs related to expansion or job creation.
- \$11,250 for annual dues paid to the Charlotte Regional Partnership for economic development marketing services.
- \$33,500 for retail development consulting fees to assist in retail site marketing and to identify retail-based businesses that are likely to locate in Alexander County.
- \$25,000 for the annual payment of the zero interest loan from EnergyUnited for site grading in the Alexander Industrial Park.
- \$50,000 to support the ongoing costs related to the 50,000 square foot shell building in the Industrial Park such as wastewater upgrades, electrical service, insurance, property taxes, advertising, and other costs directly related to encouraging private investment and job creation.

Chairman Mayberry called the public hearing to order and requested any comments. There being none, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to close the public hearing. Vice-Chairman Campbell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADOPTION OF 2016-2017 BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR ALEXANDER COUNTY

Vice-Chairman Campbell made a motion to approve the 2016-2017 Budget Ordinance for Alexander County. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION TO REMOVE FUND BALANCE COMMITMENT FOR VOTING EQUIPMENT

Rick French, County Manager, requested approval of a resolution removing the commitment of \$140,000 of the Fund Balance for the purpose of purchasing new voting equipment. He added that only \$82,000 of the \$140,000 committed in May 2014 had been spent due to the merger of voting districts in 2015.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve removing the commitment of Fund Balance for voting equipment. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the

SALES TAX & FINANCIAL REPORT

Rick French, County Manager, reported that a total of \$3,010,882.82 had been collected in sales tax revenue through May 2016. This amount is 77.38% of the \$3,891,000 budgeted with 75% of the budget year expired and an increase over last year of 4.98%.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the following appointments and reappointments:

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council – Appoint Dan Wanta and Erica Lowe for two years.

Health Board – Reappoint Dr. Cody Wingler for 3 years.

DSS Board – Appoint Rev. Durant Barr for 3 years.

WPCOG Council on Aging – Appoint Christine Gates to replace Jill Woodie whose term expires 4/2017.

WPCOG Region E Aging – Appoint Shirley Mays and reappoint Shirley Flowers, both for two years.

Planning & Zoning Commission – Appoint Dawn Shealy for 3 years.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the appointments and reappointments as presented. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #40 - #43

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #40 - #43 as follows:

Budget Amendment #40 – To increase the Library budget for State grant funding in excess of original estimates. To increase the Tax Office budget for estimated April-June NCDOT fees for collection of motor vehicle taxes through the Tag+Tax Together System. To decrease the JCPC budget due to revised State appropriations for an approved program.

Budget Amendment #41 – To adjust the County Water & Sewer Fund budget based on data from year-to-date revenue reports from the City of Hickory.

Budget Amendment #42 – To adjust the Bethlehem Water Fund based on data from year-to-date revenue reports from the City of Hickory.

Budget Amendment #43 – To increase the Solid Waste Fund budget to cover the tipping fees expense for the remainder of FY 2016.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #40 - #43. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rick French, County Manager, announced that the bid opening for Rocky Face Park Phase 2 is scheduled for June 28, 2016 at 2:00 PM at the Alexander County Administration Office.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$2,726.84) and Tax Refunds (\$2,307.75) for April 23 – May 27, 2016.
- B. Home and Community Care Block Grant SFY 2016-2017.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice-Chairman Campbell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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 Mayberry made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:07 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). Vice-Chairman Campbell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 PM. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ryan N. Mayberry, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board