

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING April 9, 2018

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Ronnie L. Reese, Chairman
 Josh Lail, Vice-Chairman
 Milton H. Campbell
 Ryan Mayberry (arrived at 6:07 PM)
 Dr. Jeff Peal

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, April 9, 2018 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Campbell gave the invocation and Commissioner Peal led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Vice-Chairman Lail thanked the Parks & Recreation Department for a great job with the Ernie Matheson Tournament.

NC Commissioner of Insurance Mike Causey toured several Alexander County fire departments and points of interest last week. Commissioner Peal and Chairman Reese reported that Mr. Causey discussed the lack of volunteerism throughout the state in the areas of fire, rescue, etc. and provided some suggestions to remedy the problem.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Reese requested the addition of Budget Amendments #43 - #45 to the agenda.

Vice-Chairman Lail made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Judy Caywood, representing the Bethlehem Community Development and Bethlehem Business Associations, asked the Board and EDC to contact First Citizens Bank representatives and urge them to reconsider their decision to close the Bethlehem branch in light of the considerable amount of growth expected in the area (due to widening of Highway 127 to 4 lanes, a 115-unit housing development, the County sewer project, and a 200-unit senior community). A petition is available at the Bethlehem Post Office for citizens to sign.

PUBLIC HEARING: EDC PROPERTY TAX INCENTIVE GRANT – PARAGON FILMS

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, requested approval of a Property Tax Incentive Grant for Paragon Films related to the expansion of their facility in the Alexander Industrial Park, resulting in an investment of over \$10 million and the creation of 14 new jobs. The proposed grant will consist of a payment to the company equal to 95% of taxes paid on the new investment over a period of 5 years.

In response to a question asked by Vice-Chairman Lail, Mr. Icenhour stated that the County would return approximately \$50,000 per year to Paragon Films for the incentive grant depending on any fluctuation in the investment amount and/or property tax rate; however, he pointed out that Paragon had paid in excess of \$1 million in property taxes since locating to Alexander County in 2005 and their annual average payroll totals approximately \$3 million.

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

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to approve the Property Tax Incentive Grant for Paragon Films. Vice-Chairman Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

2018-2019 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

The following budget presentations were given:

Health Department

Leeanne Whisnant, Health Director, reviewed the 2018-2019 Health Department proposed budget that included the following requests:

- Addition of a half-time lab technician - \$12,480
- Capital outlay items including a new telephone system, expansion to the Cooperative Extension building, medical equipment for 3 more exam rooms due to expansion, computer upgrades, equipment to possibly extend the Telehealth Program to include all schools, and replacement of a vehicle for Environmental Health - \$108,000

She added that the 18-19 budget request was 3.41% less than this year's approved budget and that the County's funding percentage would equal 23.98%, down from 28.29% currently. Other savings to the County budget through services provided by the Health Department include drug screenings for County pre-employment and DSS as well as wellness visits, NCDOT physicals, and immunizations for County employees.

Department of Social Services

Patricia Baker, DSS Director, reviewed the 2018-2019 DSS proposed budget that included the following requests:

- Addition of 4 quality assurance positions due to S.L. 2017-41 that addresses quality and accountability of DSS programs and S.L. 2017-57 Medicaid / NC Health Choice Overpayment Recoupment - \$98,200 County cost
- Reclassification of an existing processing assistant position to a paralegal to support the DSS Attorney in paperwork preparation for child support, child welfare, and adult services as well as assistance in court proceedings - \$38,565 County cost
- Replacement of two vehicles - \$29,554 County cost
- Technology improvements including laptops, dual monitors, scanners and scan stations, and a new network switch - \$60,651 County cost
- Contingency funds for the Medicaid / NCHC overpayments - \$50,000
- Establishment of a merit program to retain employees - \$36,052 County cost

She pointed out that the County share of the 18-19 DSS budget request was only \$58,742 more than the current year.

Emergency Medical Service

Doug Gillispie, EMS Director, reviewed the 2018-2019 EMS proposed budget that included the following requests:

- Remounts of two older ambulances (box fitted onto new chassis) instead of purchasing new units - \$180,000
- Construction of a two bay garage for Station #1 to house units for medication temperature control - \$50,000
- Replacement of aging radios and ambulance equipment - \$2,000
- Increase in supplies line item due to price inflation and natural disasters - \$10,000
- Salary increase of 2.5% for field training officers and COLA for all other EMS employees - \$60,000
- Participation in UNC School of Government Leadership Training Course - \$3,000

He also provided the Board with an Alexander County EMS 5-year plan.

Emergency Services & Volunteer Agencies

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, reviewed the 2018-2019 Emergency Services proposed budget as well as budgets for the Volunteer Fire Departments and Alexander Rescue Squad that included the following requests:

- Increased appropriation to the Rescue Squad to offset fundraising - \$25,000
- Paid staffing of 4 firefighters throughout the county dedicated to responding to calls throughout the workday/week due to lack of volunteers - \$120,000 per year
- Property lease to develop a training facility to be used by all paid and volunteer agencies - \$6,000/lease and \$4,000/driveway grading and surfacing
- Capital outlay items including a hand-held radio, electronic burn pan for fire extinguisher training, lock box system, T-card resource tracking system, and Canon plotter - \$11,980

He also discussed several suggestions made by fire department presidents to boost and/or retain volunteers such as an incentive program, public education articles in newspapers and social media, and a firefighter training program at ACHS.

Sheriff's Office / Detention / 911 Communications

Sheriff Chris Bowman and staff reviewed the 2018-2019 proposed budgets for the Sheriff's Office, Detention, and 911 Communications that included the following requests:

Sheriff's Office – presented by Captain Chad Pennell

- Purchase of 4 vehicles and necessary equipment (cameras, lights, sirens, etc.) - \$114,000/vehicles and \$81,000/equipment
- Purchase of 12 Bulletproof vests - \$8,000
- Pistol replacement and trade-in - \$5,700
- Addition of 4 full-time deputies for road patrol (one per shift) - \$193,289 including retirement, uniforms, and benefits
- Salary adjustment (5% increase and 2.5% COLA) for employees - \$102,553

Captain Pennell estimated that \$475,000 had been spent to train the 54 officers who left employment with Alexander County over the last 5 years (mostly to surrounding counties for higher pay), noting that the cost of the requested salary adjustment was similar to the amount spent in training (\$95,000 per year) and would help with recruitment and retaining of officers. In addition, he stated that hiring the 4 full-time deputies would decrease the part-time budget.

Detention – presented by Captain Phillip Starnes

- Addition of 4 full-time detention officers (one per shift) - \$193,500 including retirement, uniforms, and benefits
- Salary adjustment (5% increase and 2.5% COLA) for employees - \$75,335
- On-call compensation of \$100 per week and \$20 for holidays - \$5,380

- Replacement of transport vehicle and necessary equipment - \$55,000
- Use of Lexipol Policy Services for customized policy regulations, training, and legal assistance - \$9,105
- Increase in uniforms line item due to proposed additional staffing - \$5,000
- NCDPS Safekeeping beds contracted detention for inmates with mental health issues and high profile crimes - \$25,000

Captain Starnes estimated that \$398,735 had been spent to train the 30 full-time and 27 part-time detention officers who left employment with Alexander County over the last 5 years.

911 Communications – presented by Greg Foster, Director

- Addition of two full-time positions to complete the NFPA 1221 standard of three 24/7 on-duty telecommunicators - \$113,310
- Salary adjustments (5% increase and 2.5% COLA) for employees - \$55,762
- Replacement of an aging radio transmitter - \$25,000
- Replacement of 4 aging voting radio receivers - \$50,000

Mr. Foster estimated that \$198,000 had been spent to train the 18 staff members who left employment with Alexander County over the last 5 years.

School System

Dr. Jennifer Hefner, Superintendent, reviewed the 2018-2019 Alexander County Schools budget request that included the following information:

- Minimum request of \$7,009,801 (increase of \$977,901) due to projected use of Fund Balance as a result of retirement, health insurance, and teacher salary increases.
- Local appropriation is used for supplements, utilities for all buildings, maintenance personnel and materials, classroom teachers, central office administrators, clerical support, technology supplies and salaries, nutrition program supplements, charter schools, Challenger Program, security monitoring, band and chorus supplements, transportation support, athletic supplements and supplies, professional development, resource officers, virtual courses, property and vehicle insurance, instructional funds and support, digital resources, solid waste removal, and custodial supplies.
- Information currently unavailable includes state and federal allotments that do not include raises for non-certified staff, number of CTE funded positions, and unforeseen security costs and school safety mandates.
- Positions needed but not included in the 18-19 budget request are social workers, nurses, and counselors.
- Long range plans to slow the use of Fund Balance are school consolidation, reduction in force, and obtaining more funding.

Ms. Hefner informed the Board that, due to recent legislation related to K-3 class size that would result in less available classroom space as well as utilization of shared

positions at smaller elementary schools, the cost savings associated with school consolidation would be much less than originally anticipated. In addition, she stated that the School System had worked hard to avoid a RIF through attrition, noting the negative impact a RIF would have on the students, their education, and the economy.

Chairman Reese reported that the Board would review all requests and schedule any needed meetings accordingly.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION DAY

Rick French, County Manager, announced that the Alexander County Public Works & Facilities Department was sponsoring a Document Destruction Day on Saturday, April 21st from 8:00 AM until 1:00 PM in the Administration Building parking lot. This free event is for Alexander County residents only and there is a limit of 5 boxes per person.

SALES TAX & FINANCIAL REPORT

Rick French, County Manager, reported that a total of \$2,714,999.30 has been collected in sales tax revenue through March 2018 (\$844,718.88 is new sales tax for economic development, public education, and community colleges). This amount is 59.59% of the \$4,556,000 budgeted with 58.33% of the budget year expired and an increase over last year of 5.58%.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the following reappointments:

Council on Aging – Reappoint Angell Barnes, Angela Johnson, Janette Johnson, and Sally Goodnight for 3 years.

Planning & Zoning Commission – Reappoint Dana Benfield, Steve Icenhour, and Bud Caywood for two years.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion to approve the appointments as requested. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #43 - #45

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #43 - #45 as follows:

Budget Amendment #43 – To budget for the payback required for the FY 2013 Revised Medicaid Cost Report due to formulas being changed after reports were filed. To budget

for computer needs for the remainder of the current budget year. To increase the budget for additional Food & Lodging State Funds.

Budget Amendment #44 – To increase the budget for Medicaid Hold Harmless distributions greater than original budget estimates.

Budget Amendment #45 – To budget for the transfer of funds from the Jail Project Fund to the FY 2019 General Fund for interest payments on the debt.

Vice-Chairman Lail made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #43 - #45. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

The following issues were discussed during Other Business:

- A. Rick French, County Manager, recommended a work session be scheduled before the end of April to discuss the 2018-2019 budget, noting that the public hearing was tentatively planned for May 7th and adoption of the budget on May 14th.
- B. Commissioner Campbell conveyed his appreciation to the departments who presented budget information at tonight's meeting and thanked them for the time and effort spent in preparation.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the March 5, 2018 Regular Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests (\$5,261.40) and Tax Refunds (\$4,078.80) for February 24 – March 31, 2018.
- C. Surplus a 1988 Shorlander Jet Ski Trailer from the Sheriff's Office, VIN #1MDAK6L17WA947497.
- D. Alexander County JCPC County Funding Plan and Certification for FY 2019.
- E. Surplus a 2003 Chevy S10, VIN #1GCDDT19X438289985 with 178,170 miles; a 1998 Chevy Blazer, VIN #1GNDDT13W2W2261441 with 182,550 miles, and a Husqvarna YTH24V48LS riding mower, VIN #960430089 with 261.2 hours.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Vice-Chairman Lail made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 8:50 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to adjourn at 10:26 PM. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ronnie L. Reese, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board