Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS **ALEXANDER COUNTY**
REGULAR MEETING June 1 2026 **STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

PRESENT: Larry Yoder, Chairman
Josh Lail, Vice-Chairman
Kent Herman
Marty Pennell
Ronnie Reese

STAFF: Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney
Gary Herman, PIO
Justin Mundy, County Manager
Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, June 1, 2026 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Herman gave the invocation and Chairman Yoder led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Yoder announced that the next event in the America 250 series would be Lecture #3, *"Sharecropper's Wisdom,"* presented by General J.R. Gorham. The lecture is scheduled for Saturday, June 13, 2026, at 3:00 PM and will be held at First Baptist Church in Davis Hall.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Pennell made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

Gary Herman, Public Information Officer, was presented the annual NC City & County Communicators (NC3C) Chris Coulson Lifetime Achievement Award, named in memory of Chris Coulson who helped establish the organization in 2007. Recipients must have at least 10 years of government communications experience and be current NC3C members. The award recognizes the lasting impact an individual has made through years of service, knowledge, leadership, and contributions to the profession.

The award was presented by NC3C President Adam Gaub along with Past Presidents Annette Privette Keller and Dana Kaminske.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dennis Cain, resident of Greenlea Circle, expressed concerns about noise coming from the Esplanade construction site off Rink Dam Road. He reported noise as early as 6:20 AM as well as on weekends and therefore requested the Board to consider amending the current Prohibited Noises Ordinance to address these concerns.

Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board, read comments submitted by former Alexander County resident and former Elections Director Patrick Wike on ways to enhance the budget process. Suggestions included publishing the proposed budget on the County website prior to the public hearing, setting a goal of achieving the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, and holding work sessions in the Commissioners' Meeting Room.

PUBLIC HEARING: REZONING RZ-26-03 - SIMPSON

Amy Bucknum, County Planner, presented Rezoning Case RZ-26-03 submitted by Jeremy Simpson with Southern Rentals, LLC who requested rezoning of 3.65 acres located at 2000 NC Highway 16 North in Taylorsville from Residential District 2 Rural (R2R) to Mixed Use (MU) to allow for the addition of a small retail store.

After reviewing aerial maps and criteria to be considered when conducting rezoning cases, Ms. Bucknum reported that the property was formerly used as the Sugar Loaf solid waste convenience site; therefore, development is appropriate. The property is located in a Rural Transition Area which supports mixed-used development.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on March 14, 2026 to consider this petition and voted unanimously to recommend approval based on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Additionally, there were no concerns reported by the TRC or the public.

After a motion by Vice-Chairman Lail, second by Commissioner Herman, and unanimous vote, the public hearing was called to order and comments requested.

Public Comment

Jeremy Simpson felt the property was well-suited for a small, family-owned business and emphasized that he had no intention of overdeveloping or overcrowding the site.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Reese made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pennell made a motion to approve Rezoning Case RZ-26-03 based on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: FY 2026-2027 ALEXANDER COUNTY PROPOSED BUDGET

Justin Mundy, County Manager, advised that the proposed General Fund budget totaled $62,798,329 and included a two-cent property tax decrease as well as a Fund Balance appropriation of $6,136,231, which is historically not used. He reviewed included capital outlay items and personnel costs and also presented graphs illustrating General Fund revenues and expenditures, including breakdowns by public safety, human services, and education. Mr. Mundy noted that there would be no change in fire tax rates for fire departments.

After a motion by Vice-Chairman Lail, second by Commissioner Herman, and unanimous vote, the public hearing was called to order and comments requested.

Public Comment

Dr. Bill Griffin, Alexander County Schools Superintendent, conveyed his appreciation for the feedback provided on May 18th regarding the School System's budget, noting that he and the Board of Education takes community input seriously and remains committed to supporting every family and student. He also thanked the County for the continued support.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Reese made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Lail commented that some members of the public did not believe the County was transparent about its finances, but pointed out that the budget was available on the County website and had been shared on Facebook. He was also disappointed that attendance at tonight's public hearing was very small, consisting of mostly staff.

Chairman Yoder mentioned that providing essential services was costly, which was why the Board was unable to fund every request. He felt the County's lack of debt reflected the Board's responsible financial management and he commended Dr. Griffin and the Board of Education for their efforts. Additionally, he pointed out that printed copies of the budget were also available in the Clerk to the Board's office.

Commissioner Pennell stated that when he first joined the Board, he heard a consistent concern from residents about the need for more family-oriented activities and improved quality of life. He

felt the current commissioners had made progress in addressing those needs through development of Courthouse Park and upgrades to Bethlehem Park and Wittenburg Access. He referenced several accomplishments including expanding internet access to underserved areas of the county, increasing funding support for fire departments, increased salaries for emergency services personnel, holiday bonuses, cost-of-living adjustments, and reductions in employee health insurance deductibles. Commissioner Pennell was in favor of a 5-cent tax adjustment, noting that anticipated housing developments were expected to increase long-term County revenue and bring additional students into the school system. He added that continued growth was necessary to support expanded services and that residential development was the primary source of future revenue in Alexander County.

Commissioner Reese supported a 5-cent tax reduction and indicated that residential fee increases should remain at current levels.

Commissioner Herman also expressed support for a 5-cent tax reduction.

Vice-Chairman Lail stated that he was not opposed to a tax reduction but questioned where the resulting revenue shortfall would be offset. He was also in favor of additional discussion related to proposed fee adjustments.

Chairman Yoder believed the County would need to rely on Fund Balance if the tax reduction exceeded two cents.

For clarification purposes, Chairman Yoder called for a vote on how to proceed with the property tax rate.

Commissioner Pennell made a motion to adopt a 5-cent property tax reduction. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed 3 in favor (Commissioners Herman, Pennell, and Reese) and two against (Commissioners Lail and Yoder). The motion carried.

After discussion, The Board agreed to hold a final budget work session on Monday, June 8, 2026 at 5:30 PM in the Administration Building.

PUBLIC HEARING: WALK & BIKE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Patrick Creech, Planning Director, along with Kenny Armstrong with McAdams, presented the Alexander County Walk & Bike Multimodal Transportation Plan, a long-range guide for improving transportation options for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout the county. Development of the plan was made possible through a NCDOT grant and included over one year of research, public input, and coordination with community partners.

The plan identified 6 priority projects including NC Highway 16 South sidewalks, Liledoun Road sidewalks, a connector from Bethlehem Park to Bethlehem Elementary School, a connector from Stony Point Elementary School to the community, NC Highway 90 sidewalks from the golf course to downtown Taylorsville, and 7th Street SW sidewalks.

Implementation of the plan will be a long-term effort involving Alexander County, the Town of Taylorsville, NCDOT, and other partners as funding becomes available.

PORT PRESENTATION / RESOLUTION DIRECTING THE EXPENDITURE OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

Shannon Childers, PORT Community Paramedic, gave an update on the PORT Program which was established in 2023 utilizing Opioid Settlement funds. The current team consists of two community paramedics, two peer support specialists (one full-time and one part-time), and 3 volunteers.

Since the program began, overdoses in Alexander County have decreased by 48%, while overdose-related deaths have decreased by 71%. In addition, fentanyl use has decreased by 70%, with alcohol and prescription medications as the most commonly abused substances. Mr. Childers reported that the PORT Team had established a new coalition called SUPPORT (Substance Use Prevention Post-Overdose Response Team), bringing together area mental health providers and non-profit organizations to identify gaps in service, strengthen partnerships, and develop programs that support recovery. Future plans include a drug treatment court, local re-entry council, and additional early intervention/wellness initiatives designed to assist citizens struggling with substance use disorders and mental health challenges.

Following the presentation, David Moose, Consolidated Human Services Director, requested approval of a resolution authorizing an expenditure of Opioid Settlement funds in the amount of $431,090 to continue funding the PORT Program for FY 2026-2027 as well as $15,000 for harm reduction vending machines.

Commissioner Pennell made a motion to approve the resolution authorizing directing the expenditure of Opioid Settlement funds as requested. Vice-Chairman Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #29 - #31

Justin Mundy, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #29 - #31 as follows:

Budget Amendment #29 – To increase:

- the Health Department budget for grant funds from the Child Fatality Case Reporting and Prevention state funds.
- the Library budget for receipt of a Library Services & Technology Act Scholarship grant for a staff member who attended the Rural & Small Libraries conference as well as received donations.

Budget Amendment #30 – To budget for the closeout of the Bethlehem Park Improvements Project and transfer the remaining General Fund cash contribution back to the Article 44*524 sales tax cash account.

Budget Amendment #31 – To budget for the closeout of the project fund for the 2023 State Appropriations Act – Directed Grants to Local Governments and transfer the remaining cash balance of local funds back to the General Fund.

Vice-Chairman Lail made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #29 - #31. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments ($11,851.39) and Tax Refunds ($1,443.86) for May 4-25, 2026.
B. Minutes from the May 12, 2026 Regular Meeting.
C. Board / Committee Appointments – Planning Board.
D. Line-Item Transfer Report for May 2026.
E. Resolution to approve the Contract Signature & Delegation Authority Policy.
F. Home & Community Care Block Grant SFY 2026-2027.

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Lail made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 PM. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board

Draft

CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD **ALEXANDER COUNTY**
REGULAR MEETING June 1, 2026 **STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

PRESENT: Larry Yoder, Chairman
Josh Lail, Vice-Chairman
Kent Herman
Marty Pennell
Ronnie Reese

STAFF: Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney
Gary Herman, PIO
Justin Mundy, County Manager
Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Consolidated Human Services Board held a regular meeting on Monday, June 1, 2026 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Yoder called the meeting to order at 7:46 PM.

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

Billie Walker, Health Director, reviewed the following:

- Current Vacancies (Accreditation G.5.2) – Ms. Walker said there was still a need for an optometrist on the CHS Advisory Committee as well as a nurse and a dentist. Staff vacancies include a Behavioral Health Licensed Clinical Social Worker, an Administrative Assistant II, and a Dental Processing Assistant III. A part-time Public Health Nurse was hired in April.

- FY 2027 Budget – since the March 6, 2026 submittal of the Health Department's FY 2027 budget request, staff has worked in-house and directly with the County Manager to make needed adjustments.

- Fee Approvals (Accreditation I.2.1) – Ms. Walker reminded the Board about fees that were considered and approved at the March 2, 2026 CHSB Meeting that will go into effect July 1, 2026.

- Public Health Policy Review & Updates (Accreditation G.3.2) – due to extensive revisions of the Accreditation Standards, significant updates will be needed to the Administrative Policy and Procedure Manual. These updates will be presented to the Board for review in July.

- Review of Agreement Addendas (Accreditation G.1.1) – Ms. Walker explained that funding provided through these agreements supported the foundational capabilities and workplace capacity necessary for local health departments to effectively deliver services across program areas. The agreements define the required deliverables, performance expectations, and procedural guidelines associated with the funding. Most agreements are established for one year, but some may extend further depending on program requirements and funding provisions. The anticipated agreement addendas for FY 2026-2027 are as follows:

    - Care Management for At-Risk Children - $1,364
    - Child Health - $6,087
    - WIC - $178,329
    - WIC Breast Feeding Peer Counselor - $22,000
    - School Nurse Funding Initiative - $150,000
    - Maternal Health - $25,079
    - General Aid to Counties - $85,275
    - Family Planning - $77,211
    - Communicable Disease - $10,112
    - PHEP (Preparedness) - $30,407
    - TB Control - $9,071
    - HIV/STI Prevention, Services, & Treatment - $2,943
    - Child Fatality Case Reporting & Prevention - $773
    - Immunization Action Plan - $12,006
    - Healthy Communities - $34,526

- 2025 Annual Child Fatality Presentation (Accreditation B.2.2) – as of July 2025, local teams are required to use the National Fatality Review Case Reporting System. Ms. Walker advised that the local team met 4 times in 2025 as required by the Agreement Addendum and reviewed 5 child deaths that occurred in 2024. No system improvements or needed resources were identified during these reviews. Other team activities and accomplishments included working with the Sheriff's Office and Safe Kids Coalition to provide 10 ATV helmets and safety information at a community event in October 2026, participating in online training related to the new reporting system and requirements, and submittal of the end-of-year performance report via Smartsheet as required per Agreement Addendum 701.

- Renovations – Ms. Walker informed the Board that windows were installed in the Health Department annex building last week. This will hopefully improve energy costs and help with noise reduction.

- Upcoming Events – included Camp Med on June 2, Hygiene Education with Pre-Trial Release RRS on June 4, ACHS Open House Social Media Presentation on August 18, Senior Center Health Fair on September 18, County Wellness Fair on September 29, and Accreditation Site Visit on October 29.

DSS REPORT

Trena Riddle, Economic Services Program Administrator, began with updates related to H.R.1. She advised that beginning in October 2026, Medicaid coverage for non-citizens will be limited to Emergency Medicaid and Presumptive Eligibility coverage for pregnant women, which covers labor and delivery services. In January 2027, NC will be required to implement new work and community engagement requirements for individuals ages 19-64 who receive MXP (Expanded Medicaid). Currently, more than 700,000 individuals statewide receive MXP benefits, including 2,446 recipients in Alexander County. Ms. Riddle mentioned that specific requirements have not yet been finalized and additional training is expected in June or July.

Recertification requirements for Medicaid recipients will also change. Reviews for affected individuals will move from an annual schedule to every 6 months, increasing the workload for staff. Children ages 6 and under will receive continuous eligibility for 6 years, while children over age 6 will be recertified every two years.

Ms. Riddle noted that another change taking effect in January will limit retroactive Medicaid coverage. Currently, eligible applicants may receive coverage for up to 3 months prior to the month of application. This will be reduced to two months for most applicants. Individuals receiving MXP coverage will be limited to one month of retroactive coverage.

Most changes related to Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) have already been implemented, with two exceptions. Beginning in October, the federal reimbursement rate for FNS administrative costs will decrease from 50% to 25%. Counties will be required to provide matching funds if the statewide error rate exceeds 6%. The current statewide error rate is 7.01% as of May, with the next rate release scheduled for June 30. A webinar is scheduled for tomorrow to review coming changes related to HB 696.

Ms. Riddle also reported the vacancy rate for the past month at 7% along with 4 new hires in Economic Services and 5 new hires in CPS. Current stats included 50 children in foster care, 7 in the Links Program, 5 in the 18-21 Program, one foster home in the licensing process, and 14 adult wards. Foster care specifics included two reunifications, one closed case, 3 adoptions, and one closing in custody at the next court date. Community engagement events included “Real Money. Real World” at West Alexander Middle School, a community baby shower, and a food drive that resulted in the collection of 2,000 food items weighing over 500 lbs. to benefit the Christian Crisis Center. Karen’s Kids donations were used to replace toys and playground equipment and thanks to a donation of potting soil, staff is building 8 raised garden beds to grow fruits and vegetables for the community.

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

Kristy Hunt, Senior Center Director, announced that Brianna Fox had been promoted to Assistant Director following the retirement of Vicki Martin. A total of 109 individuals participated in the "Which Element Are You?" survey that explored personality traits associated with water, wind, fire, and earth. The SMP grant allocation increased to $16,800 this year, allowing the center to host 3 community shred events and an Operation Medication Drop. The annual Senior Celebration was held on May 15th with a 1970s theme and a Red Cross blood drive was held on June 5. Upcoming programs and events include an Elder Abuse Awareness Seminar scheduled for June 17, Senior Summer Sale on July 18, Musician's Jam sessions on June 30 and July 28, NC Works Job Fair on July 31, and Ice Cream Social / Grandparents Day events on August 6 in Bethlehem and August 7 in Taylorsville. Several day trips are planned and a 9-day trip to Ireland is available. Ms. Hunt reported that to date, 195 contacts related to Medicare drug plans had been made since January with a savings of $220,721.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3 & 6) ATTORNEY/CLIENT PRIVILEGE & PERSONNEL

Commissioner Reese made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 8:08 PM to allow for attorney/client privilege and to discuss personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3 & 6). Vice-Chairman Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 8:47 PM. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board