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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS **ALEXANDER COUNTY**
REGULAR MEETING August 3, 2026 **STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

PRESENT: Larry Yoder, Chairman
Josh Lail, Vice-Chairman (arrived at 6:15 PM)
Kent Herman
Marty Pennell
Ronnie Reese

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, August 3, 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 Pennell gave the invocation and Commissioner Reese led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Yoder reported that he, along with other commissioners and staff, attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Alexander County 16 W. Main Avenue Downtown Revitalization Project, featuring Kylie's Sugar Shoppe and two upstairs apartments.

He also thanked County staff for replacing the flags in Room 103 as requested.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one signed up to speak during the Public Comment Period.

NC RAILROAD COMPANY MICROGRANT AGREEMENT FOR INDUSTRIAL PARK SITE DEVELOPMENT

Michael Worley, Economic Development Director, requested approval of a proposed agreement with the NC Railroad Company to accept a $50,000 microgrant to fund site evaluations, assessments, and related reports to determine whether specific property in the Alexander Industrial Park is suitable for industrial development.

In April, the Board approved an option-to-purchase agreement with Alexander Railroad Company for two parcels in the Industrial Park totaling approximately 115 acres. The studies that will be funded through the grant are part of the due diligence process and do not obligate the County to purchase the property.

Mr. Worley added that the County would have up to two years to complete the necessary studies and up to 5 years to market the site to potential industrial customers. No County funds will be required to conduct the studies.

Commissioner Pennell made a motion to approve the agreement with NC Railroad Company to accept the $50,000 microgrant. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES / ARDURRA PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

Michael Worley, Economic Development Director, explained that an RFQ was released in late 2025 to locate a consultant to perform site evaluations, assessments, and related studies to determine whether property in the Industrial Park, for which the County holds an option to purchase, is suitable for industrial development.

Ardurra, who is familiar with the Industrial Park, was selected to perform these services. The scope of work will include a Phase I environmental site assessment, a preliminary threatened and endangered species review and habitat assessment, streams and wetlands determination and delineation, and jurisdictional determination and verification. A civil engineering master planning

phase will not be included, as the NC Railroad microgrant does not cover those costs under the terms of the grant agreement.

Mr. Worley reported that the cost of the services was estimated to range from $17,000 to $22,000, which will be entirely funded through the NC Railroad microgrant with no County dollars required.

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

> Public Comment
> Robert Sherrill, resident of White Plains Road, expressed concerns about noise and odors associated with the Industrial Park and was opposed to any further development. He felt the plastics used by the industries in the park contributed to emissions and caused various types of cancer.

Commissioner Pennell responded that county and state officials had conducted site visits to the industries, monitored their operations, and evaluated their activities. He stated that no violations were found during those inspections.

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

Commissioner Herman made a motion to approve the professional services agreement with Ardurra. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: REZONING CASE RZ-26-05 – GARCIA

Amy Bucknum, County Planner, presented Rezoning Case RZ-26-05 submitted by Christian Romero Garcia who requested rezoning of .89 acre located at 44 Owen Braswell Road in Taylorsville from Residential District 1 (R1) to Residential District 2 Rural (R2R) to allow for the placement of a singlewide manufactured home.

After reviewing aerial maps and the criteria used in evaluating rezoning cases, Ms. Bucknum reported that a doublewide manufactured home was already located on the property and that the proposed singlewide would be used as an accessory dwelling unit. Public water is available but sewer service is not. The property owner would therefore be required to obtain Environmental Health approval and permitting for a septic system.

Ms. Bucknum noted that the surrounding properties were residential in nature and that other manufactured homes were located in the neighborhood. As a result, the proposed rezoning would have no negative impact on the character of the surrounding area. The property is also located within an Urban Services Area, which supports a wide range of residential densities.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on July 9, 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.

Vice-Chairman Lail pointed out that the NC General Assembly passed legislation in 2025 intended to promote affordable housing by allowing accessory dwelling units.

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

Public Comment

Sandra Denny, resident of Owen Braswell Road, asked if the rezoning would affect any properties with road frontage.

Robert Sherrill questioned why the County would hire an outside firm to conduct the revaluation and increase the assessed values of homes belonging to residents who have no intention of selling. He was of the opinion that higher property valuations contributed to housing becoming less affordable.

Chairman Yoder explained to Mr. Sherrill that comments during the current public hearing needed to remain related to the matter under consideration. He advised Mr. Sherrill that his concerns could be addressed during the public hearing on the 2027 Schedule of Values, which was the next item on the agenda.

In relation to Ms. Denny's question, Ms. Bucknum replied that the rezoning would have no impact on any other properties, also noting that because the subject property does not have access to sewer or sidewalks, has a private driveway easement, and is located within a protected watershed area, further development of the parcel is limited.

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

Commissioner Herman made a motion to approve Rezoning Case RZ-26-05 based on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2027 SCHEDULE OF VALUES

Justin Mundy, County Manager, discussed the Schedule of Values presented on July 13, 2026, noting that N.C.G.S. 105-317(c) requires a public hearing be held at least 7 days before the schedule can be adopted. Staff plans to attend the September 14th Commissioners' Meeting to request approval.

Doug Fox, Tax Administrator, explained that each time the County conducts a reappraisal, a Schedule of Values must be developed as the basis for determining property values. Values are established using comparable sales, cost of construction, and income models and are intended to reflect 100% of market value. He explained that if assessed values fall below a certain percentage of market value, an equalization process is applied to public utility values.

Commissioner Pennell stated that the County's last revaluation, which was on an 8-year cycle, occurred at a time when the economy and cost-of-living had increased significantly, resulting in substantial increases in property values. After hearing concerns from citizens about the potential impact of another large adjustment, the Board voted to move to a 4-year cycle. However, now the Board is being accused of being "money hungry" for doing so. He clarified that the revaluation process does not determine what a property is worth; rather, property values are driven by market activity, including the number of homes and land sold and the prices at which they are sold. He noted that, for example, if a property owner lists a property for $200,000 but ultimately sells it for $220,000, that sale can contribute to increased property values throughout the county.

Commissioner Reese agreed, noting that County Commissioners did not receive a free pass on property taxes and paid them just like other property owner.

Vice-Chairman Lail emphasized that the County needed a certain level of funds to provide services and stated that he believed the County was in a strong position compared to other jurisdictions when considering the taxes paid in relation to the services provided. He added that, although citizens often request additional services, they don't want to pay the additional taxes necessary to fund them.

Commissioner Herman said he ran for County Commissioner to better understand what services were provided in return for the taxes he paid. He felt the Board had done a good job of being fiscally responsible with taxpayers' money, mentioning the 5-cent property tax rate decrease approved as part of the FY 2027 budget. He stated that, because of the tax cut, he believed any potential increases in values may not necessarily result in an increase in the amount of property taxes paid. He added that he certainly wanted a deputy, paramedic, or fire truck to respond to his home if needed and recognized that property taxes help fund those services.

After a motion by Commissioner Reese, second by Commissioner Herman, and unanimous vote, the public hearing was called to order and comments requested. There being none, Commissioner Reese made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #2 - #3

Justin Mundy, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #2 - #3 as follows:

Budget Amendment #2 – To increase:

- the Sheriff's Office budget for use of Federal Equitable Share funds for equipment purchases.
- the DSS budget to reflect the FY 2027 state and federal grant funding allocation for nutrition expenses and the required local match.

Budget Amendment #3 – To adjust the General Fund budget for updated allocations of the FY 2027 workers compensation and property & liability insurance premiums across various departments.

Commissioner Herman made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #2 - #3. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments ($1,809.92) and Tax Refunds ($119.00) for July 6-26, 2026.
B. Minutes from the July 13, 2026 Regular Meeting.
C. Line-Item Transfer Report for July 2026.
D. Board / Committee Appointments – Council on Aging and Historic Preservation Commission.
E. Request from Public Works to surplus a 2006 Ford Taurus, VIN #1FAFP53U06A252700 with 112,177 miles.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

Commissioner Reese made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:06 PM to discuss economic development and contractual matters pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4 & 5). Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Pennell made a motion to adjourn at 9:19 PM. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board