

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING September 12, 2005

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: William L. Hammer, Chairman
W. Darrell Robertson, Vice-Chairman
Wesley E. Bolick
W. Norris Keever
Larry Yoder

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

MEDIA: Gary Herman, The Taylorsville Times

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, September 12, 2005 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Robertson gave the invocation and Zane Harrington, student at Stony Point Elementary School, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

*****SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS*****

The following recognitions were acknowledged:

Sherry Williams

Commissioner Robertson presented the Citizen of the Month Award to Sherry Williams, Director of School Food Services, for her recent induction as the President of the N.C. School Nutrition Association. Commissioner Robertson, on behalf of the entire Board, congratulated Ms. Williams and thanked her for her service to the children of Alexander County.

Renee Edwards

Commissioner Keever presented the Citizen of the Month Award to J. Renee Edwards, Director of Public Affairs for the Alexander County School System, for her recent induction as President of the N.C. Association for Community Education. The Board members conveyed their appreciation to Ms. Edwards for her contribution to education.

Jack Hoke, Superintendent, stated that he was proud that two school system employees were serving in positions on a state level. He also noted that these individuals were exemplary employees that made a difference everyday for the children of the county.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Keever seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There was no one present to speak during the Public Comment Period.

ALEXANDER COUNTY EDUCATION BLUE RIBBON STUDY COMMITTEE

Jack Hoke, Superintendent, gave a Power Point Slide Show Presentation concerning the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Study Committee and accomplishments during the last 10 years, which was as follows:

History – The “Alexander County Education Blue Ribbon Study Committee” was formed jointly in 1995 by the Alexander County Commissioners and the Alexander County Board of Education. An orientation meeting was held on June 8, 1995 at East Junior High School with Dr. Gene Causby serving as the keynote speaker. The 32 member committee was composed of county administrators, school system administrators, teachers, students, professional people, business people, industry leaders, and community leaders.

Mission Statement – The mission of this committee is to guide local funding in providing appropriate programs, quality personnel, and adequate facilities that will ensure our children are able to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Committee Leaders

- Darrell Robertson, Chairman
- Nancy Smith, Vice-Chairperson
- Barbara Sprinkle, Publicity
- Shirley Bell, Recording Secretary

Weighing of Capital/Fiscal Items Results – Twelve suggestions for improvement were ranked by the committee with one being the highest priority:

1. Construction of Wittenburg School. This project will relieve the congestion of Wittenburg Elementary School and may help with some of the crowding of Bethlehem Elementary School. *Completed 1999.*
2. Organize the schools with elementary schools being K-5, middle schools being 6-8, and the high school being 9-12. This will involve relocating the 9th grade to the high school and will provide relief at the elementary school sites. *Transitioned fall 2001.*
3. Provide teacher supplements and local funded teaching positions similar to policies being used in neighboring counties to enable Alexander County to be competitive in hiring personnel and providing flexibility in the placement of teaching personnel. *Current local supplement is now 6%.*
4. Replacement of Ellendale Elementary School. *Completed 2002.*
5. Provide additional funding for further development of programs based on computer technology. Continue to evaluate all programs for technical value. Link Alexander County to other systems for benefits of the “information highway.” *Funds allocated to technology have provided every classroom with high speed internet connectivity plus other appropriate support. Leadership has enabled the Technology Department to eliminate contracted services. The system web site gives access to information and events with over 330,000 visits to the site in 2004-2005.*
6. Provide a system for evaluation and improvement of teaching personnel. Teachers should be encouraged to develop their skills and abilities. Cases of substandard performance should be documented and personnel should be terminated if improvement is not noted. *The Alexander County School System evaluates teacher performance using the TPAI Revised system as recommended by the State of North Carolina. Substandard personnel have been terminated.*
7. Provide an “alternative school” to remove problem students from the regular classroom allowing the schools to function without disruption and placing the problem student in a position of not being able to complete their education. *An after-school program was initiated in 1996-1997 and was housed at ACHS for grades 7-12. In 2003, the program relocated to the old Wittenburg Elementary School and currently serves grades 6-12.*
8. Provide a preschool program to address needs of the academically “at risk” children to help reduce the failure rate of the system. *Added “More at Four” classrooms to Head Start in 2003.*

9. Provide an auditorium facility for the school system. *The 954 seat auditorium will be completed in September 2005. A public/private partnership between the Board of Education and the Hiddenite Center, Inc. will provide for school and community use of the facility. Dwaine Coley will serve as coordinator of the facility.*
10. Each school administrator should develop the potential of PTO and volunteer organizations. The central office should provide a method of coordination and cooperation between the PTO and volunteer organizations of each school. *Administrators encourage volunteer organizations within their schools. Fundraising activities are monitored by the Board of Education.*
11. Provide a field house for the high school. *Completion of the 7,775 square foot field house took place in August 2005. The facility includes 2 classrooms for NJROTC, locker rooms for athletic teams, restrooms, and a concession stand for stadium events.*
12. Provide a softball field for the high school. *A softball field, soccer field, locker rooms, and a concession stand were completed in 2000 on the campus of Taylorsville Elementary School and was named Central Park. Six tennis courts were also constructed next to the Central Office.*

Recommendations from the Curriculum Committee

1. Rearrange the configuration of our schools to elementary (Grades K-5), middle school (Grades 6-8), and high school (Grades 9-12).
2. Require that character education be offered in every classroom. These learning objectives should be defined in concrete terms and taught consistently. A starting point can be the synopsis Character Education Program, an abbreviated course outline published by the Classical/Traditional Academy.
3. Every teacher should stress good communication skills, both oral and written, in all subjects.
4. Provide opportunities for parents and responsible adults to become more knowledgeable about the curricula.
5. Realistic looks at vocational needs and opportunities.
6. Promote health and wellness throughout the curricula.
7. Include a greater emphasis on the arts.

Curriculum Update

- Character Education was implemented system-wide in 1998-1999 prior to state mandate in 2001.
- Reorganization of K-5, 6-8, 9-12 completed in 2001.
- School and teacher web pages have afforded more adults the opportunity to be knowledgeable of the curricula.
- Vocational opportunities such as exploratory classes have been made available to middle school students.
- Language Arts scores on the ABCs have increased each year.
- Four school nurses and additional physical education teachers have been hired.
- Middle school chorus program has been added and additional staff at the high school hired to put a greater emphasis on the arts.

Construction 1998-2005

- 1999 – Wittenburg Elementary 78,370 square feet / Cost \$7.4 million – State Bond Money
- 2001 – Alexander Central High School 88,700 square feet / Cost \$8.8 million – COPS \$1.6 million
- 2002 – Ellendale Elementary School 62,606 square feet / Cost \$6.4 million – COPS \$5.8 million
- Classroom Additions / Cost \$4 million – COPS \$3.84 million
 - 2003 – East Alexander Middle School 16,071 square feet
 - 2003 – West Alexander Middle School 15,160 square feet
 - 2004 – Stony Point Elementary School 9,400 square feet
 - 2004 – Sugar Loaf Elementary School 9,304 square feet
- 2004 – Central Office Addition 7,000 square feet / Cost \$644,007
- 2005 – ACHS Auditorium 25,000 square feet / Cost \$5 million – County Commissioner 50% and COPS 50%
- 2005 ACHS Field House & JNROTC classrooms 7,775 square feet / Cost \$880,000
- Renovated Old Ellendale Elementary School for Head Start
- Share Old Wittenburg Elementary School with County Government

Construction Totals

- Total square footage of all projects since 1998 – 318,871 square feet and 102 classrooms added
- Total cost of all projects since 1998 - \$33.1 million
- COPS loan for all projects since 1998 - \$14.2 million

Chairman Hammer stated that he was very proud of the accomplishments that have occurred during the last 10 years. Commissioner Keever congratulated Mr. Hoke and his staff and he noted that these things had been accomplished by working together.

Commissioner Robertson also congratulated Mr. Hoke and his staff and noted that the good working relationship between the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education had helped provide more opportunities for children.

Commissioner Bolick also mentioned that the new CVCC / Alexander Center had been constructed thanks to efforts from both the county government and the school system. He also challenged the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners to reactivate a new study commission to develop a guide for needs in the future.

Commissioner Yoder conveyed his appreciation for the cooperation between the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education. He also mentioned that the auditorium would be very valuable to the school system and the public.

Rick French, County Manager, stated that it was unusual for Boards of Education and Boards of Commissioners to have a good working relationship. He stated that he was very thankful for that relationship because more could be accomplished.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF "PROJECT TRANSLOAD" TO LOCATE A DISTRIBUTION FACILITY IN ALEXANDER COUNTY

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, explained that a company, whose name had to remain confidential for the time being, was considering locating a distribution facility in the Alexander Industrial Park. He also noted that the company proposed to invest approximately \$750,000 and to employ approximately 10 people when fully operational.

Mr. Icenhour explained that because the company would require rail service, he was requesting the Board approve a resolution endorsing the application to request financial support from the N.C. Department of Transportation to assist in the funding of a rail industrial access track to serve the company. Mr. Icenhour stated that the application had already been sent to NCDOT for their October agenda.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the Resolution in Support of "Project Transload" to locate a Distribution Facility in Alexander County. Commissioner Keever seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF "PROJECT AUSTRALIA" TO LOCATE A MANUFACTURING FACILITY IN ALEXANDER COUNTY

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, explained that a company, whose name also had to remain confidential for the time being, was considering locating a manufacturing facility in the Alexander Industrial Park. He noted that the company proposed to invest \$24 million in land, building, and equipment and to employ 180 people when fully operational.

Mr. Icenhour explained that this company would also require rail service; therefore, he requested approval of another resolution endorsing the application to request financial support from the N.C. Department of Transportation to assist in the funding of a rail industrial access track to

serve the company. Mr. Icenhour again noted that the application had already been sent to NCDOT for their October agenda.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Resolution in Support of "Project Australia" to locate a Manufacturing Facility in Alexander County. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Chairman Hammer requested the Board appoint Garrett (Bud) Yost to the Jury Commission for a 2-year term.

Chairman Hammer made a motion to approve the appointment of Garrett (Bud) Yost to the Jury Commission. Commissioner Keever seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #14 - #17

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #14 - #17, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #14 – To increase the budget due to an error in the original budget request (\$1,100 was requested instead of \$11,000). To budget for the Hazard Mitigation Grant for generators at 2 EMS bases and the Emergency Operations Center at CVCC. To budget for a state grant to establish a dental clinic. To budget for the replacement of an ambulance destroyed in an accident on 8/25/2005. To budget for the purchase of a scoreboard from prior years' net proceeds (Ernie Matheson Funds). To increase the budget for a transfer to the Dusty Ridge Phase II Grant Project to complete the project.

Budget Amendment #15 – To increase the budget for the completion of the Dusty Ridge Phase II Grant Project.

Budget Amendment #16 – To budget for the local matching portion of the N.C. Highway 127 CDBG Project.

Budget Amendment #17 – To appropriate \$653,207 for the N.C. Highway 127 CDBG Project.

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #14 - #17. Commissioner Keever seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the following issues during Other Business:

- A. The DSS Open House has been rescheduled from September 29, 2005 to Thursday, October 20, 2005 from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM.
- B. Another Clean Alexander Day will be held on Saturday, October 22, 2005. The last clean-up day was a big success.
- C. The Auditorium Grand Opening will be held on Sunday, October 23, 2005 at 3:00 PM.
- D. Mr. French distributed a draft Alexander County Travel Policy to be considered at the next Commissioners' Meeting.
- E. Mr. French proposed holding a work session sometime during the next month. After discussion, the Board agreed to hold a work session on October 17, 2005 at 7:00 PM in the CVCC / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the August 22, 2005 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for August \$1,296.98 and Tax Refund Requests for August \$940.90.
- C. Alexander County N.C. Highway 127 Water & Housing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Project, Policies, Procedures, and Plans.
- D. Agreement between the Western Piedmont Council of Governments & Alexander County for the Provision of Grant Management Assistance for the N.C. Highway 127 CDBG Concentrated Needs Project September 12, 2005 – August 31, 2007.
- E. Approval for Closed Session Minutes to be Unsealed: February 12, 2002; March 5, 2002; March 19, 2002; April 22, 2002; May 7, 2002; June 11, 2002; June 27, 2002; July 16, 2002; August 6, 2002; August 13, 2002; August 20, 2002; August 28, 2002; September 10, 2002; October 1, 2002; October 29, 2002; December 16, 2002; January 20, 2003; February 3, 2003; February 17, 2003; March 6, 2003; March 17, 2003; March 24, 2003; April 21, 2003; May 5, 2003; May 19, 2003; May 27, 2003; June 2, 2003; July 14, 2003; August 4, 2003; August 25, 2003; September 8, 2003; September 22, 2003; November 3, 2003; and November 17, 2003.

Commissioner Keever made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 4, 5, & 6) TO PREVENT DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Commissioner Keever made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:50 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). Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 8:22 PM. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

William L. Hammer, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board