

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING December 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, December 12, 2005 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

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

Karen Hoyle, Director of Social Services, recognized Judy Pennell and Carol Farthing, DSS Child Support Staff, as well as Tammy Hoyle, Child Support Supervisor. Ms. Hoyle explained that the Alexander County Child Support Program has been ranked 37th in the state 3 years ago in regards to collections; however, she announced that, as of October 2005, the Alexander County Child Support Program had been ranked 8th in the state. She also stated that approximately \$1 million in child support funds were collected each year but she noted that \$1.7 million had been collected during the past year. Ms. Hoyle thanked the Child Support Staff for their hard work and dedication to improvement.

Ms. Hoyle also recognized Leah Milstead, Work First Case Manager, and Phil Bowman, Work First Job Developer, and explained that the Alexander County Work First Program had been awarded the Best Practices Award in October 2005 for empowering clients to self sufficiency. Ms. Hoyle thanked the Work First staff for their hard work.

The Board members also conveyed their appreciation to those recognized.

INVOCATION & PLEGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Rev. Michael Hill, Taylorsville Presbyterian Church, gave the invocation and Jonathan Williams, student at West Alexander Middle School, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Hammer asked the Board and staff to remember several families in prayer including the family of Craig Helms, Rescue Squad member, who passed away last night, the family of Dennis Rogers who was killed in a car accident over the weekend, and the family of Charles "Tootie" Sharpe, Alexander County employee, who passed away this afternoon.

Commissioner Kever informed the Board that he had attended the NCACC Board of Directors Meeting in Raleigh, N.C. on Thursday, December 8, 2005 where the Strategic Planning & Visioning Study was discussed. He also explained that the state had not allocated its full portion for the HAVA requirements for elections, noting that the state was short approximately \$20 million.

Commissioner Bolick thanked the Sheriff's Department and Junior Explorers for their assistance with the 4th annual Christmas in Bethlehem Drive-through. Commissioner Bolick stated that approximately 1,700 citizens visited the drive-through over the past weekend. He also mentioned Bethlehem had been recognized by the New York Times as one of the 5 towns named Bethlehem that celebrated the birth of Christ.

Chairman Hammer gave the 2005 Highlights for Alexander County, which included the following information:

Projects completed – 8,800 square foot addition at DSS, Employment Security Commission relocation, and 1,000 seat auditorium.

Projects underway – Dental Office at Health Department, 911 Communications Project, and N.C. Highway 127 Water Project.

Projects planned – Courthouse and jail upgrade, Northeastern Alexander County Water Project, YMCA Pool Facility, and Bethlehem Branch Library.

County budget (05-06) – Increased by 4.5 cents due to increases for school system, Medicaid, DSS, and Health Department.

Economic Development – Paragon Films, Inc. located a stretch film industry in Alexander County. The Mitchell Gold & Bob Williams Company is renovating the former Bassett Upholstery Building. Royale Comfort Seating moved its Catawba County facilities to Alexander County.

Other – Building Services Committee appointed to improve inspections and permitting process.

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.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Chairman Hammer called for nominations for chairman. Commissioner Robertson nominated Commissioner Yoder to serve as chairman for the next year.

There being no further nominations, Commissioner Keever made a motion to close the nominations for chairman. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the election of Commissioner Yoder as Chairman. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

The Board agreed to allow Commissioner Hammer to preside as chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Acting Chairman Hammer called for nominations for vice-chairman. Commissioner Keever nominated Commissioner Robertson to continue to serve a vice-chairman for the next year.

There being no further nominations, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to close the nominations for vice-chairman. Commissioner Keever seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Keever made a motion to approve the election of Commissioner Robertson as vice-chairman. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC HEARING: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) FUND

Nancy Coley, WPCOG Community Development Administrator, reported that the State of N.C. had received approximately \$45 million in CDBG funds for the upcoming year and she

explained that local governments could apply for these funds for various activities that would benefit a majority of low and moderate income persons. Ms. Coley stated that local governments could receive funding from the following categories:

Community Revitalization Grants are designed to provide funds to strengthen neighborhoods and rehabilitate homes of low and moderate income citizens. There are 2 subcategories including Concentrated Needs for projects with severe needs of multiple elements such as water and sewer, sewer and housing, or streets and drainage and Revitalization Strategies which allows multiple needs in high poverty neighborhoods to be addressed.

Scattered Site Housing Rehabilitation Grants are given to approximately 33 county governments on a rotating basis to address the most critical housing needs of very low income families throughout the county including participating municipalities.

Infrastructure Grants improve the quality of life in a residential area by eliminating severe water and wastewater problems with health and environmental consequences. The new taps and connections program is available to assist local governments in providing taps and connections for low income individuals.

Economic Development Grants provide funds to local governments for creating and retaining jobs. Eligible activities include public facilities to serve a specific business, direct loans for private businesses for equipment purchases, or for new or expanding business construction. Funding is based on the number of jobs to be created or retained and the level of distress in the community applying for the funds. The loans are made in conjunction with bank loans.

Housing Development Grants focus on the creation of multi-unit rental developments and single-family units.

Urgent Needs Grants are to be used to help meet community development needs posing an imminent threat to the health or safety of the community that have arisen during the preceding 18-month period.

Capacity Building Grants assist local non-profits in partnership with their local governments in development projects.

Ms. Coley stated that local governments could not receive more than a total of \$1,250,000 in combined awards from the Community Revitalization, Economic Development, Housing Development, and Contingency. She also mentioned that projects were evaluated and rated based on criteria including low and moderate income benefit, severity and treatment of the area, project appropriateness and feasibility, and local commitment.

Ms. Coley also informed the Board that, before a grant application could be submitted, 2 public hearings must be held. She noted that this public hearing fulfilled the first public hearing requirement.

Acting Chairman Hammer called the public hearing to order and requested any public comment. There being no public comment, Commissioner Keever made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

PUBLIC HEARING: PROPOSED FY 2007 COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM GRANT

Patti Foster, Transportation Director, stated that the public hearing was only required for the FY 2007 Community Transportation Program Grant if requested by December 9, 2005. She informed the Board that no request for a public hearing had been received and she therefore recommended the public hearing be closed.

Commissioner Keever made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR THE FY 2007 COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM GRANT

Patti Foster, Transportation Director, presented a resolution to apply for the FY 2006 Community Transportation Program Grant due December 16, 2005. Ms. Foster explained the intent of the program was to enhance the provision of rural human service and general public transportation in N.C. She explained that the application consolidated the Administrative, Employee Development, Capital, Technology, and Facility Renovation / Repair Funding grant programs into one application package.

Ms. Foster stated that the Administrative and Employee Development funding was reimbursed at 85 % federal and/or state share with a local match of 15%. She also mentioned that the Capital, Technology, and Facility Renovation / Repair funding was reimbursed at 90% federal and/or state share with a 10% local match.

Ms. Foster stated that the amount of funding to be applied for by Alexander County for the Administrative and Employee Development was \$116,462 with a local match of \$17,469.30. The amount to be applied for the Capital, Technology, and Facility Renovation / Repair funding is \$34,541 with a local match of \$3,454.10.

Ms. Foster explained that the Alexander County Transportation Department provided an additional 4,271 trips along with 4 additional routes this year, which posed the need for another administrative position. She also mentioned that the grant funds would be used to purchase a vehicle, some office furniture, and a computer for the additional staff member.

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to approve the resolution to apply for FY 2006 Community Transportation Program Grant. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

POWER POINT PRESENTATION FOR 2004-2005 AUDIT

Jennifer Herman, Finance Director, presented a Power Point Slide Show Presentation for the 2004-2005 Audit Summary, which was as follows:

Audit Results

- Unqualified opinion
- Unreserved fund balance \$2,613,257
- Increase in total fund balance \$473,532
- Unreserved fund balance is 11.2% of general fund expenditures

Property Valuation History (in thousands)

- \$1,443,743 in 2002
- \$1,995,247 in 2003
- \$1,995,114 in 2004
- \$2,035,168 in 2005

Comparative Averages for N.C. Counties with Population of 25,000 to 49,999

	<u>Alexander County</u>	<u>Average</u>
Available General Fund-fund balance	\$2,613,257	\$8,608.068*
Property tax rate	0.465	0.5882*
Appraisal adjusted rate	0.4366**	0.4885*
Collection percentage	96.18%	95.50%*
Excluding motor vehicles	97.38%	96.72%*
Motor vehicles	87.45%	84.24%*

* Reference: LGC memo #1030 (6/30/04 averages)

* 6/30/04 appraisal adjusted rate

Note: Alexander's figures are as of 6/30/05, except as noted above

Net Cost of Services Provided – Governmental

- Education – 45%
- Public Safety – 18%
- Human Services – 18%
- General Government – 11%
- Cultural & Recreation – 3%
- Environmental Protection, Economic Development, & Physical Development – 2%
- Interest & Fees – 3%

General Fund Revenues 2004 & 2005

- Ad Valorem Taxes - \$9,408,256 in 2004 & \$9,620,324 in 2005
- Other Intergovernmental - \$4,010,537 in 2004 & \$4,584,152 in 2005
- Local Option Sales Tax - \$5,726,289 in 2004 & \$6,352,813 in 2005
- Sales & Services - \$2,087,792 in 2004 & \$2,248,001 in 2005
- Permits, Fees, & Other Revenue - \$583,326 in 2004 & \$544,170 in 2005
- Investment Earnings - \$32,233 in 2004 & \$98,026 in 2005
- Other Taxes & Licenses - \$100,867 in 2004 & \$201,205 in 2005

General Fund Expenditures 2004 & 2005

- Human Services - \$8,089,925 in 2004 & \$8,948,736 in 2005
- Education - \$4,534,261 in 2004 & \$4,530,950 in 2005
- Public Safety - \$4,102,973 in 2004 & \$4,321,660
- General Government - \$2,183,321 in 2004 & \$2,638,043 in 2005
- Debt Service - \$2,328,462 in 2004 & \$1,753,630 in 2005
- Environmental Protection & Economic Development - \$437,352 in 2004 & \$493,050 in 2005
- Cultural & Recreation - \$531,912 in 2004 & \$556,432 in 2005

Solid Waste Fund Overview

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>
Cash from operations	\$130,714	\$117,247
Budgetary net income	\$ (61,424)	\$ 19,546
GAAP net income	\$ (41,097)	\$ 46,472

Water Funds Overview

	<u>Hwy. 16 S</u>	<u>Bethlehem</u>	<u>Sugar Loaf</u>
Cash from operations	\$118,081	\$305,475	\$102,495
Budgetary net income	\$196,635	\$ 24,189	\$ 11,214
GAAP net income	\$137,782	\$ 72,602	\$ 50,100

Ms. Herman thanked Martin Starnes & Associates for their help with the 2004-2005 audit. Chairman Hammer thanked Ms. Herman and her staff for their hard work also.

UPDATE ON FULL-SCALE TRAINING EXERCISE

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, discussed the full-scale emergency training exercise which took place on Saturday, November 19, 2005 at Alexander Central High School. He mentioned that 134 emergency services workers as well as 21 hospital staff and 18 victims took part in the exercise. Mr. Greene mentioned that the following organizations were represented:

Alexander County Communications
Alexander County Government
Alexander County Emergency Services
Alexander County EMS
Alexander County Health Department
Alexander County School System
Alexander County Sheriff's Department
Alexander Rescue Squad
Amateur Radio Operators
American Red Cross
Bethlehem Volunteer Fire Department
Caldwell County EMS
Central Alexander Volunteer Fire Dept.
Ellendale Volunteer Fire Department

EnviroSafe Exercise Moderators
Frye Regional Medical Center / Alexander Campus
Hiddenite Volunteer Fire Department
Iredell County EMS
Sugar Loaf Volunteer Fire Department
Stony Point Volunteer Fire Department
Taylorsville Police Department
Town of Taylorsville Government
Wittenburg Volunteer Fire Department
Vashti Volunteer Fire Department
N.C. Department of Correction
N.C. Emergency Management
N.C. Forestry Service

Mr. Greene explained that the simulation began with terrorists entering ACHS and exploding a body bomb in the center of the gymnasium which caused injuries to students as well as a fire and partial collapse of the building. The bomb had a powder residue that required decontamination of all victims. Several faculty members were killed by the terrorists and a hostage was also taken.

Mr. Greene informed the Board that the EnviroSafe After-Action Report had pointed out several key strengths noticed during the exercise including the incident command process, teamwork and information sharing, involving agencies not historically involved in emergencies such as Department of Corrections and Public Health, and taking the event seriously. Mr. Greene also stated that the After-Action Report also mentioned several concerns and areas that needed improvement including some communication and hardware issues, the need for Hazmat Training for the Special Response Team, and staffing levels for Public Health and some other departments, etc.

Commissioner Robertson asked about the response time during the simulation as opposed to an actual situation. Mr. Greene replied that the response time during the exercise was great; however, he noted that it would be delayed a little during a real disaster or emergency because it would not be expected, volunteers would have to get permission to leave work, other calls would be taking place, etc.

Mr. Greene thanked all those involved in the full-scale exercise.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

DISCUSSION OF COURTHOUSE SECURITY STAFFING

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the need for metal detectors in both the upstairs and downstairs portions of the Alexander County Courthouse as well as how to best man those metal detectors with personnel. Mr. French presented some options which compared the salary and benefits projections for full-time officers versus part-time officer for the 2 metal detector stations. He also provided additional overtime costs for using current officers to staff the metal detectors.

The annual cost for 2 full-time officers totaled \$70,558.30 and the annual cost for 2 part-time officers with no benefits totaled \$26,589.55. The annual additional costs for overtime for 2 current officers totaled \$88,947.46. Mr. French mentioned that these options were for information purposes only and would be discussed further at a future meeting.

NACo PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT CARD PROGRAM

Commissioner Bolick explained that the National Association of Counties (NACo) was offering a prescription drug discount card program to all NACo member counties at no cost to counties participating in the program and no cost to the citizens using the discount card.

Commissioner Bolick explained that anyone could use the card including senior citizens and the uninsured and he noted that citizens did not have to fill out any forms to participate. He also pointed out that savings would range from 13% to 35% for drugs at a local participating pharmacy and up to 50% on mail order purchases, depending on the type of drug. Commissioner Bolick mentioned that the entire family would be covered with just one card.

Acting Chairman Hammer asked if the prescription drug discount card could be used in conjunction with a regular insurance card discount. Rick French, County Manager, replied that the prescription drug discount card could not be used in conjunction with an insurance card; however, he noted that the discount card could be used for prescriptions not covered by the insurance.

Commissioner Bolick felt this program would be very beneficial to many citizens; therefore, he made a motion to allow the County Manager to proceed with applying for the prescription drug discount card program through NACo and to designate the Health Department to be responsible for the management of the program as well as to begin contacting local pharmacies to inform them of the program. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND TO THE GENERAL FUND

Acting Chairman Hammer explained that the purpose of the State Highway Trust Fund, established in 1989, was to provide funding for intrastate and urban loop highway projects as well as to aid municipalities for local street improvements and secondary road improvements. However, Acting Chairman Hammer explained that \$3,220,093,723 had been transferred from

the State Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund between 1990 and 2005 to balance the state's budget.

Acting Chairman Hammer pointed out that the State Highway Trust Fund was funded by excise taxes on highway motor fuels and highway user fees. He felt it was completely unfair that the state took these funds that were set aside for road construction to balance their budget, while leaving N.C. highways and roads in terrible shape. Acting Chairman Hammer presented a Resolution Opposing the Transfer of Funds from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund for consideration by the Board. He noted that the resolution had already been adopted by the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Unifour Rural Planning Organization.

Acting Chairman Hammer made a motion to approve the Resolution Opposing the Transfer of Funds from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund. Commissioner Keever seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CONSIDERATION OF THE 2006 COMMISSIONERS' MEETING SCHEDULE (JANUARY 2006 – JUNE 2006)

Rick French, County Manager, presented the first 6 months of the 2006 Commissioners' Meeting Schedule. He stated that staff had developed the schedule by working around specific conferences and conflicts; therefore, he noted that the meetings would not necessarily be held on the first and third Mondays. The schedule was as follows:

January 9, 2006	April 10, 2006
January 23, 2006	April 24, 2006
February 6, 2006	May 15, 2006
February 20, 2006	(only one meeting in May)
March 13, 2006	June 5, 2006
March 27, 2006	June 19, 2006

Commissioner Keever made a motion to approve the first 6 months of the 2006 Commissioners' Meeting Schedule as presented. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

CONSIDERATION OF THE 2006 ALEXANDER COUNTY HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Rick French, County Manager, presented the 2006 Alexander County Holiday Schedule as follows:

New Year's Day Monday, January 2, 2006
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Monday, January 16, 2006

Good Friday Friday, April 14, 2006
 Memorial Day Monday, May 29, 2006
 Independence Day Tuesday, July 4, 2006
 Labor Day Monday, September 4, 2006
 Veteran's Day Friday, November 10, 2006
 Thanksgiving Thursday & Friday, November 23 & 24, 2006
 Christmas Monday & Tuesday, December 25 & 26, 2006

Commissioner Keever made a motion to approve the 2006 Alexander County Holiday Schedule as presented. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Acting Chairman Hammer presented the following appointments and reappointments to County boards and committees:

A. FUTURE FORWARD ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Appoint Chip Swinnie to replace Dr. Librado Gonzales

B. INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES & POLLUTION CONTROL FINANCING AUTHORITY

Reappoint Andrew Jackson 2-year terms
 Reappoint Randy Street
 Reappoint Wesley Fox
 Reappoint Robert Feimster
 Reappoint Paul Barkley
 Appoint Mark Odom
 Appoint Gene Frye

C. JAIL ARCHITECT STUDY COMMITTEE

Commissioner Robertson
 Commissioner Keever

Acting Chairman Hammer made a motion to approve the appointments and reappointments as presented and instructed the County Manager to develop a list of members for the Jail Architect Study Committee. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #30 - #34

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #30 - #34, which included the following information,

Budget Amendment #30 – To increase the budget to pay unemployment insurance benefits billed by ESC. To increase the budget for the Register of Deeds' Automation Enhancement and Preservation funds received in prior years. To budget for the purchase of 2 metal detectors for the courthouse. To decrease the budget for a reduction in state funds for the JCPC programs. To increase the budget for additional state funding – TANF funds, Women's Health Service, and Communicable Disease. To budget for an EMS Wal-Mart grant to purchase rehab supplies for the trailer and a video camera for training. To decrease the current year budget because a community grant was charged to the 2005 fiscal year.

Budget Amendment #31 – To budget for Christmas bonuses paid on 12/2/05.

Budget Amendment #32 – To budget for Christmas bonuses paid on 12/2/05.

Budget Amendment #33 – To increase the budget for the N.C. Highway 127 CDBG Water Project due to bids being higher than anticipated.

Budget Amendment #34 – To budget for additional local matching funds for the N.C. Highway 127 CDBG Water Project due to bids being higher than anticipated.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #30 - #34. Commissioner Yoder 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. Mr. French recommended the Board of Elections Renovation Project at the former Employment Security Commission be re-bid since the scope of the project had been changed so much due to receiving much higher bids than expected.

Commissioner Keever made a motion to re-bid the Board of Elections Project as recommended. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

- B. The Alexander County Building Services Advisory Board Meeting will hold its first meeting on Wednesday, December 14, 2005 at the Inspections Department. The meeting will begin at 6:00 PM.

- C. The new and improved Alexander County web site is now up and running. Mr. French urged everyone to take a look at the new user friendly site.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from November 21, 2005 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for November \$2,158.12 and Tax Refund Requests for November \$10,563.73.
- C. Energy Conservation Policy for Public Facilities.
- D. Frye Regional Medical Center – MOA.
- E. EMS Releases.

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

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Commissioner Bolick made a motion to wish all citizens a Merry Christmas from the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Acting Chairman Hammer stated he had enjoyed serving as chairman for the past year. He conveyed his appreciation to his fellow Board members for their support.

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 Robertson made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 8:00 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 Keever 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 8:30 PM. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

William L. Hammer, Acting Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board