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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     February 12, 2007

**ALEXANDER COUNTY**  
**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**PRESENT:**    W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman  
                 Wes Bolick, Vice-Chairman  
                 William L. Hammer  
                 Harold M. Odom  
                 Larry G. Yoder

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

**MEDIA:**        Stephanie Cass, The Taylorsville Times  
                 Lee Sharpe, The Taylorsville Times

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, February 12, 2007 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Robertson gave the invocation and Hannah Deal, student at Bethlehem Elementary School, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**\*\*\*SPECIAL RECOGNITION\*\*\***

A Key to the County was presented to Keith Mundy in recognition of his service to the Taylorsville community as Fire Chief for the Central Alexander Fire Department from 1982 – 2007. Chairman Robertson conveyed his appreciation to Mr. Mundy as well as all the volunteers.

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, stated that Mr. Mundy has announced his retirement at the fire department's annual Christmas dinner. He mentioned that Mr. Mundy had kept an efficient running fire department and he thanked the Board for recognizing him.

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Hammer announced that the American Red Cross Alexander Chapter would be holding a volunteer workshop soon to recruit new volunteers. He urged anyone interested in becoming a volunteer to contact the local Red Cross Office for more information.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Chairman Robertson stated that a Closed Session would need to be held following the adjournment of the work session. He also asked that discussion of the Hemphill-Randel Associates Agreement scheduled as Agenda Item #7 take place during Closed Session so that several outstanding issues could be addressed before the Board took action on the agreement.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **ALEXANDER COUNTY WEB SITE RECOGNITION**

Greg Cronk announced that the Alexander County web site had won a national award. He explained that the National Policy Research Council reviewed the web sites of all 50 states and all 39,987 counties and municipalities in 2006, ranking them and using the information to construct the E-Government 2006 database, which listed the best web sites according to categories based on population. According to the National Policy Research Council, the best web sites make their official nature clear on the home page, completely describe the government's organization, and have fully informative home pages.

Mr. Cronk stated that Alexander County rated in the top 5 of the population category 10,001 – 50,000 and was the only county, city, or town web site rated in North Carolina. He also stated that an article was featured in the January 2007 issue of *American City and County* magazine. Mr. Cronk introduced members of the Information Technology Department staff including Mike Koenig, Computer Support Technician II, Sarah Bowman, Computer Support Technician II, and George Brown, GIS Analyst, and he noted that Mr. Koenig designed and performed most of the web site work.

Mike Koenig presented a slide show of the many features of the Alexander County web site. He explained that staff was currently looking for better software for the streaming video page to allow for a live video feed of the Commissioners' Meetings. He also stated that staff was in the final stages of developing web mail that would allow County employees to access their e-mail from any computer with Internet access. Mr. Koenig briefly discussed the Animal Control adoption database, the library database for book searches, the AlexAlert page which displayed public service announcements, the Economic Development page, and the GIS service.

George Brown informed the Board that the GIS Department and the Alexander Central High School GIS class was working together to generate and publish an informative map atlas of Alexander County. He explained that the students would be creating the maps and researching the data for the information pages and he noted that the ACHS art class would help develop the cover. Mr. Brown also pointed out that the class would be generating new data layers that would be used in the County's GIS department for web site and map production. Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) has taken notice of this project and has agreed to give the GIS class 10 free one-year evaluation ArcView software licenses and all extensions for the purpose of completing this project for a value of over \$20,000. Mr. Brown mentioned that the GIS class would be present at the March 26, 2007 Commissioner's Meeting to give the Board a presentation on what has been completed so far.

The Board thanked the Information Technology staff for their professionalism and creativity and congratulated their efforts which led to the national award.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

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

### **SALES TAX RESOLUTION**

Chairman Robertson presented a Resolution in Support of a Half-Cent Local Option Sales Tax for Infrastructure and Capital Needs in Alexander County. He discussed several projects that the County would be undertaking in the near future including construction of a new jail and the installation of water lines in several areas of the county. He stated that increasing the sales tax was a fairer way to generate needed revenue than increasing the property tax rate and placing the burden on property owners. Chairman Robertson also discussed the option to increase the request from a half-cent to a one-cent local option sales tax.

After discussion, Commissioner Hammer made a motion to change the resolution to state that the Board supported a one-cent local option sales tax instead of a half-cent and that the Board of Commissioners would have the authority to enact the sales tax. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. Commissioner Odom requested a Friendly Amendment to change the amount of jail construction noted in the resolution from \$5 million to \$8 million. Commissioner Hammer agreed to accept the Friendly Amendment and include it in his original motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Resolution in Support of a One-Cent Local Option Sales Tax for Infrastructure and Capital Needs in Alexander County. Commissioner Odom seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Chairman Robertson also presented a list of legislative goals developed by the N.C. Association of County Commissioners. Rick French, County Manager, asked that the Board endorse these goals which included:

1. Medicaid Relief – Seek permanent Medicaid relief for counties.
2. School Construction – Support legislation to provide state assistance to meet school construction needs caused by increased enrollment and mandated reduction in class size through a statewide referendum on a bond issue and / or through authority for counties to raise additional revenues to meet school facility needs.
3. Revenue Options – Seek legislation to allow all counties to enact any or all of several revenue options from among those that have already been authorized for any other county including local option sales taxes, impact taxes, and real estate transfer taxes.

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to endorse the legislative goals for 2007. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **2006 COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAM ANNUAL REPORT**

Karen Hoyle, DSS Director, gave the annual report for the Child Protection Team as required by N.C.G.S. 7B-1406. She began the report by discussing the members of the team as well as the duties and guidelines of the team.

Ms. Hoyle informed the Board that the Child Protection Team reviewed 25 cases of abuse and neglect in 2006, many of which related to addiction and domestic violence. She presented a graph that showed the increase in communicable diseases, Child Protective Services investigations, Domestic Violence Resource Center clients, school suspensions, drug arrests, and assault arrests from 2003 to 2006.

### **2006 COMMUNITY CHILD FATALITY REVIEW TEAM ANNUAL REPORT**

Leeanne Whisnant, Health Director, gave the annual report Child Fatality Team whose purpose is to review all child deaths ages 18 and below and to provide the state with recommendations to prevent future child deaths based on findings.

Ms. Whisnant reported that there had been 8 child deaths within the last year including 3 due to birth defects, 2 perinatal conditions, one long-term illness, one other injury, and one homicide.

Ms. Whisnant also pointed out that there were still many Alexander County Prescription Drug cards remaining. She stated that 2,342 citizens had signed up for the program so far and that citizens had saved \$30,000 from April through December 2006.

### **LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, presented the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) annual report, which was submitted to and approved by the membership of the LEPC on February 8, 2007. The report included the following information:

The Alexander County LEPC met on January 26, 2006. A total of 12 members and 5 visitors were present. The meeting was chaired by Russell Greene and Leeanne Whisnant was elected to serve as Vice-Chair. The following items were discussed by the committee and action was taken as needed:

1. Grants update.
2. Review of full-scale exercise.
3. Communications Project update.
4. Annual report approved.
5. Sections of the Emergency Operations Plan distributed for review.
6. Review of Belle View fire response.

At the May 4, 2006 LEPC meeting, 15 members and 5 visitors were present and the following items were presented:

1. Grants update.
2. Communication Project update.
3. Emergency Operations Plan discussed.
4. Tier Two report.
5. Pandemic / Avian Influenza Plan discussion.

At the August 3, 2006 LEPC meeting, 11 members and 7 visitors were present and the following items were presented:

1. Grant funding for Continuity of Operations Plans.
2. Communications Project update.
3. Emergency Management update.
4. Rail crossing closures.
5. Central Receiving Distribution Point (CRDP) update.
6. County Bioterrorism Plan discussion.
7. Avian Influenza presentation by Mark Howell, N.C. Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Greene also reviewed the LEPC members and pointed out that there were several appointments and reappointments to be made to the LEPC later in the meeting.

Commissioner Yoder stated that there was currently only one siren used for all emergency events such as fire, tornado, etc. He mentioned the need for separate sirens for each emergency event so that citizens would be aware of exactly what event was taking place.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ALEXANDER COUNTY TO REQUEST GRANT ASSISTANCE FROM THE ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS PROGRAM**

Chairman Robertson presented a Resolution Authorizing Alexander County to Request Grant Assistance from the Economic Infrastructure Grants Program. He explained that this grant funding would be used to complete the Craftmaster Furniture / Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams / Paladin Industries Sewer Project in Hiddenite.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Resolution Authorizing Alexander County to Request Grant Assistance from the Economic Infrastructure Grants Program. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **ALEXANDER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SURVEY**

Rick French, County Manager, stated that the N.C. Department of Transportation's Planning Branch and the Unifour RPO held two public meetings last week seeking input as part of Alexander County's Comprehensive Transportation Plan. He also stated that a short survey was available to determine the county's transportation needs and issues. He pointed out that copies of the surveys were available at the County Administration and Planning & Inspections Offices.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS**

Commissioner Hammer presented the following appointments and reappointments to County board and committees:

### **A. CRIMINAL JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

Appoint Christine Holt	2 years
Reappoint Kelly Wicker	2 years
Reappoint Crystal Sain	2 years
Reappoint Hayden Bentley	2 years
Reappoint Tammy Lippard	1 year
Reappoint Ingrid Townsend	1 year
Reappoint Tony Jones	1 year
Reappoint Rick French	1 year
Reappoint Sarah Lunsford	1 year
Reappoint Kim Taylor	1 year

### **B. EQUALIZATION & REVIEW BOARD**

Reappoint Darrell Adkins	1 year
Reappoint David Odom	
Reappoint Sue Watts	
Reappoint William Hammer	

### **C. LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Appoint Bob Burns (replacing Dave Bristol whose term expires 2/2009)  
Appoint Micah Henry 3 years  
Reappoint Tony Setzer  
Reappoint Steve Icenhour  
Reappoint Keith Whitener  
Reappoint Lynn Marshall  
Reappoint John McCurdy

D. WPCOG SISTER CITIES ASSOCIATION

Reappoint Dwight Shook 1 year  
Reappoint David Icenhour (as alternate)

E. WESTERN NC CAUCUS

Appoint Commissioner Odom

F. WPCOG POLICY BOARD

Appoint Commissioner Yoder (as alternate)

G. WPCOG FUTURE FORWARD ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Appoint Commissioner Odom

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve the appointments and reappointments as presented. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

**BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #31 - #34**

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #31 - #34, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #31 – To budget for the purchase of office furniture for the Information Technology Department offices. To budget for technology purchases necessary to relocate the Emergency Services Office to the old Wittenburg Fire Department. To increase the DSS budget for an additional allocation of Crisis Intervention Payment grant funds.

Budget Amendment #32 – To increase the General Health budget for the Southern Piedmont Partnership for the Public Health Incubator Project funds. To increase the Health Promotions budget for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter allocation of state funds. To increase the Animal Control budget for donations earmarked for sealing the concrete floor. To

increase the Library budget for additional allocations of state funding. To increase the Bethlehem Library budget for donations received.

Budget Amendment #33 – To adjust the General Fund Communications budget and the E911 Special Revenue Fund budget for corrections in the allocation of costs for wire line 911. To budget for a transfer from the E911 Special Revenue Fund to reimburse the General Fund for debt service payments made in FY 2006 and FY 2007 on the 911 equipment loan.

Budget Amendment #34 – To budget for engineering fees for the Northeast Water Project to be paid during the FY 2007 fiscal year.

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #31 - #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. County staff has received a positive letter from the Public Water Supply Section concerning the Northeast Water Project. Alexander County will be eligible for a \$3,449,178 loan in August 2007.
- B. The Animal Shelter will not be accepting new animals from February 14-26, 2007 to allow for repairs to the kennel floor. The office will be open for rabies vaccinations and officers will respond to complaints and cruelty cases as well as animal bites.
- C. Mr. French requested the Board's approval of the Unsafe Structure Inspection Process and Forms so that staff could begin this program on February 19, 2007.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Unsafe Structure Inspection Process and Forms. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

- D. Emergency Services staff has been monitoring the EMS call volume daily and has provided the following comparison of 7 full days since the hospital closed its doors compared to the same time frame last year as follows:

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Total Calls</b>	<b>Time on Calls</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
2/1/06-2/7/06	127	148 hours	29.25%
2/1/07-2/7/07	86	112 hours	22.25%

## **CONSENT AGENDA**



- A. Minutes from the January 22, 2007 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for January \$4,601.99 and Tax Refund Requests for January \$1,685.88.
- C. Additional Home & Community Care Block Grant Funding Adult Day Care Rate Increase (FY 7/1/2006 – 6/30/2007).

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

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business for the regular meeting, Commissioner Bolick made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 PM to reconvene in a work session. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

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W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman

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Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board

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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**WORK SESSION** February 12, 2007

**ALEXANDER COUNTY**  
**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**PRESENT:** W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman  
Wes Bolick, Vice-Chairman  
William L. Hammer  
Harold M. Odom  
Larry G. Yoder

**STAFF:** Hayden Bentley, Sheriff / Jail Committee Member  
Robert Campbell, County Attorney / Jail Committee Member  
Seth Chapman, Clerk of Court / Jail Committee Member  
Rick French, County Manager / Jail Committee Member  
Bob Phillips, Town Commissioner / Jail Committee Member  
Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a joint work session with the Jail Committee and Jack Hemphill, Hemphill-Randel Associates, following the adjournment of the regular meeting.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Robertson called the work session to order at 7:40 PM.

**JAIL PROJECT DISCUSSION**

Jack Hemphill, Jail Project Architect, presented several items which were discussed by the group. These items included the following:

- Costs associated with the construction design of a sample 132-bed facility with detailed breakdowns for the Sheriff's Offices, booking & laundry, support spaces, the actual jail, and kitchen for both the downtown facility (\$8,425,719 plus \$707,000 for the kitchen) as well as a remote site facility (\$7,562,503 including the kitchen).
- Construction designs for a sample 144-bed facility at the downtown courthouse location with two separate cell designs and designs for the courthouse lower level and a sample 147-bed facility at the remote site with examples of future expansion. The downtown facility included a much larger sally port area because a drive-through port could not be constructed given the current courthouse design. The remote site design was 11,000 square feet less than the downtown site design.

The group discussed the costs for a kitchen facility. Hayden Bentley, Sheriff, stated that he had spoken with representatives from the Alexander Correctional Institution who assured Mr. Bentley that they had no plans to terminate the contract for meals; however, Mr. Bentley noted that the contract could change or be terminated if there was a change in staff in the future.

Pros and cons of each design were discussed. Commissioner Robertson stated that future expansion would not be possible at the downtown site and he noted that there would be additional costs associated with temporarily moving departments currently located in the old Dayton building. But, he also felt there would be more operational costs involved with a remote site due to the need to transport inmates from the jail to the courthouse. Mr. Hemphill mentioned that future expansion should be considered when choosing a site.

Seth Chapman, Clerk of Court, pointed out that there was some office space available in the upstairs portion of the YMCA across the street from the courthouse that could possibly be used to house temporary offices if the downtown site was selected.

Robert Campbell, County Attorney, felt that an additional courtroom would be needed in 10 more years. Commissioner Hammer mentioned that the old Dayton building could be demolished to allow for additional court rooms if a remote facility was chosen.

Mr. Bentley discussed moving communications to another location in the courthouse to allow more space for the Clerk of Court Office if the downtown site was chosen. He pointed out that the sally port space could be reduced and communications could be set up where Mr. Hemphill has proposed placing the magistrate's office and the laundry area. Mr. Bentley stated that he had contacted Wireless Communication who quoted a price of \$63,000 to move communications to that location.

Rick French, County Manager, felt that a breakdown of all costs involved in either site including construction, operational, temporary offices, Federal Marshal Program revenues, etc. needed to be determined so that the group could make a more informed decision about the best option available. Commissioner Robertson agreed and suggested Mr. French work with Mr. Hemphill to develop a breakdown of all costs associated with each site and that Mr. French and other necessary County staff research available properties that could be suitable for a remote facility. Commissioner Robertson also asked Mr. Bentley to identify the cost of transporting inmates from a remote facility to the courthouse for the next 15 to 30 years and he asked that Mr. Bentley meet with Mr. French and Mr. Campbell to determine revenues that could be generated from the Federal Marshal Program and cost involved in housing federal inmates. The group agreed.

It was noted that it that the group would meet again once all information was obtained.

**CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) CONTRACTUAL**

Commissioner Odom made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 8:45 PM to discuss contractual matters pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5). Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Hammer made a motion to adjourn at 9:25 PM. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

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W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman

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Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board