

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     April 16, 2007

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

**PRESENT:**    W. Darrell Robertson, Chairman  
                  Wes Bolick, Vice-Chairman  
                  William L. Hammer

**ABSENT:**     Harold M. Odom  
                  Larry G. Yoder

**MEDIA:**      Micah Henry, The Taylorsville Times

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, April 16, 2007 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina. A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Robertson pointed out that Commissioner Yoder was at home recovering from surgery and that Commissioner Odom was on vacation.

Chairman Robertson mentioned that Commissioner Hammer had been involved in what could have been a tragic accident today. He explained that a large oak tree fell on the bed of Commissioner Hammer's pick-up truck this morning while he was waiting at a traffic light. Chairman Robertson discussed the tornado warnings and heavy winds that had taken place in Alexander County for the past two days and noted that he was thankful that no one, including Commissioner Hammer, had been injured.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Chairman Robertson requested a moment of silence to remember the victims of the shooting that occurred today at Virginia Tech and to thank God for His protection during the severe weather conditions.

## **INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Rev. Charles Ferguson, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, gave the invocation and Brett Chapman, student at Sugar Loaf Elementary School, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Chairman Robertson recognized Jeff Isenhour for being named North Carolina's Best Golf Pro by the North Carolina Magazine, a subsidiary of the N.C. Chamber. He stated that Mr. Isenhour had been the Director of Golf for Rock Barn Golf and Spa for 12 years and had played with many legendary golfers during the 2003 and 2004 Greater Hickory Classic at Rock Barn. Chairman Robertson presented Mr. Isenhour with a plaque from the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Isenhour stated that he played golf at Taylorsville High School as well as played and worked at Brushy Mountain Golf Course and that he attended First Baptist Church. He pointed out that each of these and his family had contributed to his success. He thanked the Board for the recognition.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Chairman Robertson requested the addition of Budget Amendment #40 during Agenda Item #8 (Budget Ordinance Amendments).

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

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER / EMS CALL VOLUME UPDATE**

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, began with an update of the damage that occurred today as a result of high winds. He presented photos of a large tree that fell onto the library, causing some damage to the roof, as well as photos from the oak tree next to Campbell's Law Office that damaged Commissioner Hammer's and another citizen's truck. He pointed out that staff and volunteers were still working to remove the trees from buildings and roadways and he noted that several streets would be closed for the night. Mr. Greene stated that Rick French, County Manager, evacuated the Register of Deeds / Tax Office and the library earlier today as well as the Health Department due to a leaning power pole and transformer.

Mr. Greene also discussed the tornado watches and warnings that were given yesterday as well as the reports of funnel cloud sightings. He stated that there was no confirmation that any tornado touched down in Alexander County. He informed the Board that the National Weather Service had forecasted gusts up to 60 miles per hour for tonight and he noted that a shelter could

be opened for citizens if they did not feel safe. Mr. Greene thanked all the County and Town staff and volunteers involved in these efforts.

Mr. Greene provided an EMS Call Report which summarized the impact of the hospital closing to EMS call volume and response. The report compared total number of calls, call time, percentage time, and rescue unit standby from February 1, 2007 to April 12, 2007. The report also compared those numbers with the same information from one year ago (February 1 – April 12, 2006). Mr. Greene reported that call volume had increased and that call time was taking longer, mainly because patients were being transported out of county to other hospitals.

Mr. Greene stated that average call time was 1 ½ hours from the time the unit left the base to the time the unit returned back into the county (not including returning to the base and completing necessary paperwork). He informed the Board that Iredell County's call time averaged at 1 hour and 2 minutes including returning to the base and completing paperwork. He also stated that there had been as many as 8 times that all 3 units were tied up with calls simultaneously; however, he noted that the QRV (Quick Response Vehicle) was in service at all times and could provide a back-up if needed. Mr. Greene also mentioned that the Rescue Squad could provide back-up service as well.

Mr. Greene also provided a comparison of several counties that compared to Alexander County in population or tax rate in regard to annual calls, number of crews, and salary. He discussed the different shift schedules and mentioned the benefit of adding an additional crew to the Alexander County EMS team. He also stated that the majority of our paramedics had shown an interest in trying different shifts.

The Board thanked Mr. Greene for his report and noted that several of these issues along with the need for an emergency room would be discussed during the budget process.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Kevin Ripley discussed an incident that occurred on March 30, 2007 where he was hit in the face with a baseball at an Alexander Central High School game, which resulted in dental and optic nerve damage. He thanked all those individuals that assisted him including school personnel, EMS staff, and volunteers and he especially thanked Tom Harper, ACHS Athletic Director, who stayed with him at Catawba Memorial Hospital and also visited him the next day at his home. Mr. Ripley presented Coach Harper with a framed letter and article he wrote to *The Taylorsville Times* about the incident in appreciation of Coach Harper's kindness.

## **HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY**

Josh Mitchell, Solid Waste Supervisor, announced that a Household Hazardous Waste Day would be held on Saturday, April 28, 2007 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Alexander County Administration Building parking lot. He discussed items that citizens could dispose of including:

- Household cleaners such as drain openers, toilet bowl cleaners, oven cleaners, disinfectants, etc.
- Paint products such as latex and oil based paints, solvents, thinners, shellacs, varnishes, wood preservatives, and sealers.
- Automotive products including lead-acid batteries, used motor oil, antifreeze, brake fluid, and starter fluid.
- Miscellaneous materials such as acids, bases, kerosene, household batteries, photographic chemicals, aerosol cans, pool chemicals, propane gas cylinders, and metallic mercury.
- Pesticides and insecticides including poisons, aerosols, and weed killers.
- Electronics.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the following items would not be accepted:

- Compressed gas cylinders (except propane).
- Explosive or shock sensitive materials and ammunition.
- Radioactive materials including residential smoke detectors.
- Infectious or biologically active materials.

Mr. Mitchell stated that disposal of accepted items would be free to Alexander County citizens on April 28, 2007; however, he noted that these items would only be accepted at the Alexander County Administration Building parking lot – no items will be accepted at any convenience site or the landfill.

### **ALEXANDER COUNTY GOVERNMENT / SCHOOL SYSTEM AUCTION**

Rick French, County Manager, stated that the County would be holding a joint surplus auction with the school system on Thursday, April 26, 2007 at the old Dayton Chevrolet property. He pointed out that the auction would begin at 6:00 PM and that there would be lots of computer equipment, furniture, and other items available.

### **NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT WEEK PROCLAMATION**

Chairman Robertson presented a proclamation declaring the week of April 22-28, 2007 as National County Government Week in Alexander County. He explained that National Association of Counties first celebrated National County Government Week in 1991 to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of the nation's counties to meet the needs of the community.

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve the proclamation declaring the week of April 22-28, 2007 as National County Government Week in Alexander County. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **MENTAL HEALTH MERGER DISCUSSION**

Rick French, County Manager, stated that as of late March 2007, Burke County had voted to withdraw from Foothills Local Management Entity (LME) and partner with Catawba County, leaving the Foothills partnership with the remaining counties (Alexander, Caldwell, and McDowell) below the state mandated population criteria.

Mr. French discussed 2 letters received by County staff regarding the merger including a letter from the Burke County Manager inviting Alexander County to join the new LME with them and a letter from the Crossroads Behavioral Health Care CEO inviting Alexander County to consider developing a partnership with Crossroads.

Mr. French recommended that Alexander County remain with Foothills LME and work with them to meet the state mandated population criteria by June 30, 2008. He also suggested the Board allow staff to draft letters to Burke County and Crossroads Behavioral Health Care to inform them of the County's decision.

Chairman Robertson made a motion to continue participation with Foothills LME and to allow staff to draft letters to Burke County and Crossroads Behavioral Health Care to inform them of the decision. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS**

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

### **A. PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

Appoint Jim Herman (to replace L.E. Herman whose term expires 5/2008)  
Reappoint Ray Combs                      3 years

### **B. HEALTH BOARD**

Reappoint Amy Inman                      3 years

### **C. FUTURE FORWARD ECONOMIC ALLIANCE**

Appoint a commissioner to replace Harold Odom

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve the appointments to the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Health Board as presented and to table the appointment to the Future Forward Economic Alliance until the next meeting. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #39 & #40**

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #39 and #40, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #39 – To budget for the purchase of digital cameras for the ranking patrol officers (from donations received by the Sheriff's Department). To increase the budget for contracted detention costs in excess of original estimates. To increase the Health Department budget for the quarterly allocation of Health Promotion State Funds. To increase the Transportation Department budget for the cost of adding the Transportation Department to the DSS phone system (90% state grant reimbursement). To increase the Senior Center budget to match grant funding information provided by the WPCOG.

Budget Amendment #40 – To budget for additional spay/neuter fees due to an increase in the number of animals adopted from the animal shelter. To budget for the purchase of rifles and handguns for Animal Control officers.

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #39 and #40. Commissioner Bolick 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. Curtis Childers was the low bidder for the grass mowing contract. There were 8 bids received. Mr. Childers began mowing this week.
- B. Representative Ray Warren has informed County staff that there is large amount of support for HB1424 to cap Medicaid at the 2005-2006 rate and to provide an additional discount to counties with 20% of their budgets allocated to Medicaid costs.
- C. Representative Ray Warren has also recommended that a referendum be held in regard to the enactment of the additional sales tax requested for the County.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Minutes from the March 26, 2007 Regular Commissioners' Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests for March \$3,029.27 and Tax Refund Requests for March \$973.08.

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Bolick 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 Bolick made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:33 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 Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Hammer made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 PM. Commissioner Bolick 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