

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     April 7, 2008

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

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

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

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, April 7, 2008 in the Catawba Valley Community College / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Chairman Yoder requested a moment of silence to honor several individuals who had recently passed away including Kay Foxx (mother of Terry Foxx), Town Commissioner Bob Phillips, and Jeremy Sigmon (son of Debbie and David Icenhour).

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Odom gave the invocation and Symaira Bolden, student at Bethlehem Elementary School, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**\*\*\*SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS\*\*\***

The following were recognized:

### **County Map**

Denise Elder, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, informed the Board that a new county map was being developed, noting that the map was normally reprinted every 3 years. The new map will be printed in full color and will feature links to websites for online advertising. She felt that the new map, which will be ready for final print by the end of the year, would be a great tool for relocation and economic development purposes.

### **Crime Stoppers' Day**

Several members of Crime Stoppers were present to promote Crime Stoppers' Day scheduled for April 26, 2008. Chris Bowman, Chief Deputy for the Sheriff's Department, gave some background information on the volunteer organization, formed in July 1988, that allows citizens to give anonymous tips and information by calling (828) 632-8555. He stated that all proceeds came from donations and fundraising events and were used to assist law enforcement and he noted that \$1,750 in reward money was paid in 2007 resulting in 13 arrests. Since 1988, Crime Stoppers had received 491 calls, 36 of which were made in 2007. Mr. Bowman announced that the annual Crime Stoppers' Day would be held at Wal-Mart on Saturday, April 26, 2008 and he encouraged the public to attend.

Taylorsville Police Captain Dennis James discussed the 24-Hour Ride Against Crime scheduled for Friday, April 25, 2008 at the ACHS track. He stated that he would begin riding his bike at 12:00 Noon on Friday and would finish at the Crime Stoppers' Day event at Wal-Mart on Saturday at Noon. Donation pledges are being accepted.

Taylorsville Police Lieutenant Doug Bowman, who also works as an ACHS School Resource Officer, discussed arrests made at ACHS due to student tips and information. He also reported that he applied for a \$1,500 grant from the NC State Crime Stoppers Association in 2007 which was recently awarded. The funds will be used to increase awareness of Crime Stoppers in Alexander County schools.

McGruff the Crime Dog also made an appearance at the meeting.

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Hammer reported that the state was possibly considering passing the responsibility of secondary road paving onto counties. This issue was discussed at the NCACC District Meeting held in Catawba County on April 3, 2008. He stated that there was currently over 58 miles of unpaved road in Alexander County and he noted that a 20-cent property tax increase would be needed to pay for the paving, maintenance, and upkeep of these roads if the responsibility was passed onto counties.

Commissioner Robertson encouraged all citizens to contact state officials in the form of emails, phone calls, and letters as well as attend meetings to show their opposition to this proposal.

Commissioner Bolick felt it was important that citizens ask House and Senate candidates their view on this issue before voting.

Commissioner Odom stated that he was opposed to this proposal because of the burden it would place on the taxpayers.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

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

### **ALEXANDER COUNTY COMMUNITY GRANTS**

Rick French, County Manager, announced that volunteer organizations could now apply for up to \$1,000 in funding through the Alexander County Community Grants Program. He stated that volunteer organizations in all communities were eligible to apply and he noted that the grant would match 50 percent of the cost of materials for a project, up to a maximum of \$1,000.

Commissioner Robertson asked if organizations could apply for funding for a project already completed. Mr. French replied that completed projects were eligible as well.

Mr. French reported that applications would be available at several County departments including Administration, the Tax Office, Register of Deeds, and the Library / Bethlehem Branch Library. Citizens can also obtain an application on the County website and by mail request. He stated that applications would be accepted until 5:00 PM on May 9, 2008. Grants will be announced at the May 19, 2008 Commissioners' Meeting.

### **PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH**

Holly Yongue, DSS Child Welfare Supervisor, reported that during FY 2006-2007, DSS received 828 reports of child maltreatment. Of those reports, 613 investigations occurred that involved 1,063 children. She discussed efforts to promote April as Child Abuse Awareness Month including the distribution of education materials, ribbons, wrist bracelets, and buttons at schools and businesses. She stated that two articles would be placed in the local newspaper and that two radio spots were scheduled. Staff also plans to provide handouts to customers at Wal-Mart on April 10<sup>th</sup> and April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Yongue informed the Board that DSS would be hosting a memorial service on Monday, April 14, 2008 at 12:00 Noon on the courthouse lawn to recognize the 34 children in NC that lost their life last year due to abuse. She invited each member to attend. Ms. Yongue also requested the Board's support of the Child Abuse Awareness Month Proclamation.

Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve the Proclamation declaring April 2008 as Child Abuse Awareness Month in Alexander County. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Members of the Board conveyed their appreciation to Ms. Yongue and the Child Welfare staff and commended them for a job well done.

### **INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE GRANT PROGRAM**

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, requested an amendment to the Industrial Development Incentive (IDI) Grant Program for New and Existing Industries. He explained that the Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors met in February 2008 to review the policy to include the following amendment:

*To further promote economic development activities in Alexander County, five percent of grant payments each year will be retained by the Alexander County Economic Development Corporation and shall be used for purposes related to retention and expansion of existing industries or for recruitment of new industry.*

Commissioner Odom made a motion to approve the proposed amendment to the IDI Grant Program. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **RESOLUTION TO ADOPT POLICIES & APPLY STAFF DIRECTION RELATING TO ILLEGAL RESIDENTS IN ALEXANDER COUNTY**

Chairman Yoder presented the Resolution to Adopt Policies and Apply Staff Direction Relating to Illegal Residents in Alexander County. He discussed the increasing illegal immigrant population and its affect on the nation including overcrowding of schools, public parks, and recreational facilities, depletion of affordable housing, havoc and death on our highways, and an increased crime rate due to inability to read and follow laws. He explained that approval of the resolution would establish the policies relating to illegal residents by directing County staff to:

1. Cease and desist local funding for any local programs provided to non-qualified illegal residents.
2. Discontinue all federally funded non-mandated programs servicing illegal residents.
3. Discontinue all state funded non-mandated programs servicing illegal residents.
4. Discontinue contracting with any local or out-of-county businesses employing or using identifiable illegal residents where county tax dollars are being expended.

5. Update the minimum housing requirements to address the number of individuals and families that can be accommodated in rental dwellings.
6. County funded law enforcement agencies and the County Sheriff are instructed to diligently battle the ever increasing criminal element which is growing daily with the influx of the illegal population and to consistently check the immigration status of each undocumented resident upon his/her arrest by means consisting of, but not limited to, accessible data, finger prints, and/or federally verified social security numbers rather than tax identification numbers.
7. Without the ability to legally discern citizenship and based only on estimates of County services, any and all County departments or agencies are instructed to begin expenditure reductions for discretionary services provided to illegal aliens.

Commissioner Bolick expressed concerns with approving the resolution. He stated that he would like to see better guidelines from the federal government or the state instead of the County establishing them. He also felt that the County was not equipped to take on such a responsibility.

Commissioner Robertson pointed out that the federal and state governments weren't doing their job regarding illegal immigration and that approving the resolution would be the first step in addressing the issue in Alexander County.

Chairman Yoder emphasized that the proposed policies outlined in the resolution were only for illegal immigrants and not those that had followed laws and policies to enter this country and this county legally.

Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve the Resolution to Adopt Policies and Apply Staff Direction Relating to Illegal Residents in Alexander County. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted four in favor of the motion (Commissioners Hammer, Odom, Robertson, and Yoder) and one against the motion (Commissioner Bolick). The motion passed.

## **SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER / FOOTHILLS MERGER RESOLUTION**

Rick French, County Manager, presented a resolution approving the merger between the Foothills LME consisting of Alexander, Caldwell, and McDowell Counties with the Smoky Mountain Center, which was approved by the Board on January 7, 2008 and signed by Foothills Area Mental Health officials in March. He requested the Board endorse the merger between the two entities.

Commissioner Robertson provided a brief overview of actions taken over the past several months that resulted in the merger with Smoky Mountain. He discussed the population criteria for an LME and stated that Foothills no longer met that criteria once Burke County left, which created the need to affiliate with another organization. He stated that Foothills officials met with several LME's and was confident that Smoky Mountain was the best fit.

Commissioner Bolick thanked Mr. French and Commissioner Robertson for serving on the Foothills Board of Directors and for their work given during this transition.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to endorse the merger between Foothills and the Smoky Mountain Center. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

#### **NORTHEAST WATER PROJECT UPDATE**

Rick French, County Manager, reported that the project was scheduled to begin the first week of April but was postponed due to rain. He stated that the crew hoped to begin very soon.

He also mentioned that water tap fees were currently \$675 but noted that EnergyUnited would increase the tap fees to \$1,000 on July 1, 2008.

#### **HIDDENITE SEWER PROJECT UPDATE**

Rick French, County Manager, informed the Board that this project was approximately 30 days away from the start of construction. County staff is still working on obtaining funding for the sewer line to Hiddenite Elementary School.

#### **JAIL PROJECT UPDATE**

Rick French, County Manager, stated that a work session had been scheduled with the Jail Committee on Monday, April 14, 2008 at 6:00 PM in the Administration Building Conference Room. He pointed out that Jack Hemphill, Jail Project Architect, would be present to discuss potential jail sites.

#### **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #44**

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendment #44, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #44 – To increase the IT budget for a two-year spam filter contract for the County email system.

Commissioner Hammer made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #44. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

#### **BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS**

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

A. COUNCIL ON AGING – 3 years

Reappoint Scott Ross, Tim Lackey, Kathleen Rowe, Gaye Moone, Pat Fox, Nan Campbell, and Margo Mosley

B. TOWN PLANNING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS – 2 years

Reappoint Kathleen Gwaltney

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

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

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

- A. Bids for grass mowing will be opened on Thursday, April 10, 2008. This is the third year the County has contracted this portion of the mowing.
- B. A joint surplus property sale between the County and the school system will be held on Thursday, April 24, 2008 at 6:00 PM in the parking lot of the old Dayton property.
- C. The Household Hazardous Waste Day is scheduled for Saturday, April 26, 2008 from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM in the County Administration Building parking lot.
- D. Mr. French requested the scheduling of a work session on May 27, 2008 at 6:00 PM to review the Alexander County Strategic Plan and the 2009-2009 budget.
- E. The County will be required to provide expenses for transportation and meals of jurors selected from Davie County for an Alexander County murder trial that will begin next week.
- F. Chairman Yoder requested that Josh Mitchell, Solid Waste Director, provide an update to the Board upon his return from the NC Sustainable Energy Conference this week.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the County Manager's Report to include the scheduling of a work session on May 27, 2008. Commissioner Hammer seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Tax Release Requests for January \$2,269.87 and Tax Refund Requests for January \$1,074.20.
- B. Request from Fireman's Association for ownership of air truck.
- C. Resolution in Support of Continuation of Criminal Justice Partnership Program Funding.

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 THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL**

Chairman Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:34 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 Hammer made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 PM. Commissioner Odom seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

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Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

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Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board