

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     September 7, 2010

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

**PRESENT:**    Larry Yoder, Chairman  
                  Ryan Mayberry, Vice-Chairman  
                  Wes Bolick  
                  Harold M. Odom  
                  W. Darrell Robertson

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 7, 2010 in the CVCC / Alexander Center Multipurpose Room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Yoder called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Yoder gave the invocation and also led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Bolick encouraged the public to remember the events of September 11, 2001.

Chairman Yoder announced that Alexander County had been awarded a \$389,105 CDBG Community Revitalization grant for Hoyle Keller Loop.

Chairman Yoder also stated that at a special called meeting held on September 1, 2010 the Board voted to allow Leeanne Whisnant, Health Director, to move forward with completing a Federal Qualified Health Center grant application for a health clinic. He asked that the Board again vote on this action tonight.

Therefore, Commissioner Robertson made a motion to allow the Health Director to complete the grant application for the health clinic and submit it to the appropriate organization.

Commissioner Odom seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Chairman Yoder requested the addition of Budget Amendment #11 to Agenda Item #10, removal of the September 1, 2010 minutes from the Consent Agenda because they have not been completed, and addition of the vote regarding the health clinic grant.

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

## **PUBLIC HEARING: CDBG PROGRAM**

Nancy Coley, WPCOG Community Development Administrator, informed the Board that North Carolina received CDBG funds each year from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Small Cities Program which local governments can apply for various activities that benefited low to moderate income persons. She stated that two public hearings must be held to receive public comment on any project and noted that this was the first public hearing. The following categories are available:

**NC Economic Recovery Program** is a new program limited to unfunded CDBG Recovery Program applicants from June 2009. Funding priorities will be based on addressing communities with high levels of unemployment. Alexander County was awarded \$100,000 in 2009.

**Scattered Site Rehabilitation** grants are made on a non-competitive basis to each county every three years to improve the housing conditions of very low income households with incomes at or below 50% of area median income. Alexander County received \$400,000 in 2008.

**Regular Housing Development** category is to support ownership and rental housing projects that create additional units of affordable housing for low and moderate income people. Eligible activities of this program are installment of public infrastructure, removal of hazardous material, rent to own, and land acquisition of vacant land. Regular Housing Development will be opened if and when funds become available.

**Small Business & Entrepreneurial Assistance** programs provide funding to local governments to develop a coordinated effort to stimulate growth within the existing small business/entrepreneurial sector in communities and aid them in the development of an entrepreneurial environment. A total of \$25,000 is available for each job created. Alexander County received a SBEA grant in March 2009 to assist Piedmont Wood Products.

**Contingency** is available for eligible CDBG activities such as urgent needs, infrastructure rehabilitation, economic development, special projects, or an immediate need in between program cycles. These projects are reviewed by the Secretary of Commerce or the Governor for approval. No funds are budgeted in 2010.

**Economic Development** funds provide grants to local governments for creating and retaining jobs. These applications are received on a continuing basis. CDBG funds are granted for various types of infrastructure improvements to assist for-profit businesses create or retain jobs. Under certain conditions, financial assistance to private companies is available as loans to be negotiated by the local government applicant and a participating North Carolina commercial bank at a level not to exceed 50% of the total loan need. The maximum amount of funds available per project is \$1 million.

CDBG Building Reuse Grants are available to local government applicants that propose a project in conjunction with a private for-profit business that wishes to place a vacant building into economic use in the creation or retention of permanent full-time jobs by the project company. The company must commit to creating or retaining 60% of the jobs for low to moderate income persons. The maximum amount available is \$750,000 per program year.

Ms. Coley stated that local governments could not receive more than a total of \$1,250,000 in combined awards in one year; however, she noted that Scattered Site Housing funds received by counties were not included in the annual maximum.

Chairman Yoder asked if community colleges were eligible for the Economic Development grants. Ms. Coley replied that she would look into it.

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

## **HIDDENITE FESTIVAL REPORT**

Karen Walker, Hiddenite Center Assistant Director, discussed the highlights, events, and opportunities planned for the 29<sup>th</sup> Hiddenite Celebration of the Arts scheduled for Saturday, September 25, 2010. The celebration will be held from 9:00 AM until 4:00 pm and over 50 arts and crafts vendors will be there, along with 33 group or individual performances and 27 demonstrators under the Folklife tent. The Hiddenite Festival Road Races will also begin at 8:30 AM.

She also mentioned that Celebration Week began on September 18<sup>th</sup> with a kick-off dance with the Emerald Squares. A Meet the Artist Reception with Marie Lawrence, collector of deviled egg dishes, is planned for September 19<sup>th</sup> as well as a Gospel Singing. The Senior Adult Luncheon will be held on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Bolick suggested Ms. Walker speak with Bud Caywood to get the Hiddenite Celebration posted on the community sign located on Highway 127.

Ms. Walker also thanked the Board for their support through funding throughout the year.

## **ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS**

Mark Sharpe, Animal Control Director, presented the newest version of the Public Nuisance section of the Animal Control Ordinance reviewed at the August 23<sup>rd</sup> work session. He explained that suggestions and revisions made at the work session had been incorporated and that the updated version was reviewed by the County Attorney who also made a few revisions. Those changes included consolidating sections for cats and dogs to shorten the ordinance as well as changing the ordinance placement numbers from 91.57 to 91.08.

He explained that the purpose of the amendment was to make owners more responsible for their animals and to also educate the community. A news release regarding the revisions will be provided to the local newspaper and radio stations, information will be posted on the blog site, and handouts will be given at the upcoming fair.

Commissioner Robertson conveyed his appreciation to Mr. Sharpe and staff for the work done to get the amendment incorporated.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the amendments to the Animal Control Ordinance as presented. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

## **NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, was present to promote September as National Preparedness Month and encourage residents to devote time to prepare for a disaster. He stated that families needed to prepare an emergency kit and emergency plan and then practice to keep the plan updated. He discussed items to include in emergency kits such as radios, flashlights, water and food for 3 days, first aid supplies, toiletries, family medications, important documents, pet and baby supplies, etc.

Mr. Greene also mentioned that Emergency Management and Public Health had contracted with Emergency Communications Network to license its CodeRED high-speed notification solution which enables officials to quickly deliver messages to targeted areas or the entire county. He

stressed, however, that the system used the telephone number database in the local phone book which would not include unlisted or cell numbers. He urged citizens to enroll these numbers by visiting the County's web page or calling the Emergency Services Department.

### **BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY PARK TENNIS COURT RENOVATION PROJECT**

Rick French, County Manager, reported that bids were opened on September 3, 2010 for the Bethlehem Park Tennis Court Renovation Project, which would consist of removal of existing asphalt from tennis courts, reconditioning of existing stone base, adding 2 inches of asphalt, replacing existing net poles, applying sports coatings with striping, and repairing the perimeter fencing.

He recommended the Board's approval of the bid submitted by Mid-State Contractors in the amount of \$61,375.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the \$61,375 bid from Mid-State Contractors for the Bethlehem Park Tennis Court Renovation Project. Commissioner Bolick seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **SALES TAX REPORT**

Rick French, County Manager, provided the sales tax revenues for March, April, and May 2010 which showed an improvement in collections from 2009. Article 39 is up 11.41% and Article 40 is up 9.27%. He also stated that Article 46 had increased by 16.39% since this time last year. Overall, there is an 11.12% increase in total sales tax collections for the past 3 months.

Mr. French also mentioned the COLA increase for County employees that was discussed during the budget process. At that time, the Board agreed to place the COLA on hold until January 2011 to determine if sales tax revenues would improve.

### **NOVEMBER MEETING SCHEDULE CHANGE**

Chairman Yoder requested the November 15, 2010 Commissioners' Meeting be canceled and rescheduled for November 20, 2010 to allow for the auditor's report.

Chairman Yoder made a motion to change the November meeting. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **PROJECT UPDATES**

Rick French, County Manager, advised the Board of several projects including:

- A. The PARTF grant for Rocky Face Park starts October 1, 2010 and must be completed by September 30, 2013. The project scope is land acquisition and development of hiking trails, landscaping, signs, parking lots, a kiosk, fencing, picnic shelter, restroom, architect/engineering fees, and contingency.
- B. Jack Hemphill is finishing up plans for the law enforcement center, jail, and renovations to the courthouse. A meeting with the NC Local Government Commission is scheduled for September 28, 2010 to discuss the financing for the project – estimated at \$10 million.
- C. Water line construction should begin on Church Road near the end of 2010. Engineering for the “south end” of Church Road is currently underway; however, the construction remains unfunded. Staff is investigating state revolving loan funds.
- D. The small water project off of Teague Town Road has begun. The City of Hickory is constructing the water line and the County paid for the materials.
- E. The tag office is now open. Over 1,000 transactions took place in the first 5 days and \$1,843.50 was deposited.

### **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #11 - #13**

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #11 - #13, which included the following information:

Budget Amendment #11 – To increase the Special Appropriations budget for additional funds to help the Domestic Violence Resource Center.

Budget Amendment #12 – To increase the Health Department budget for additional state funds for WIC, Family Planning, and DWI grants. To increase the Animal Control budget for Beth Arndt Memorial donations received in the 2009-2010 budget year but not spent by June 30, 2010. To increase the Fire/Emergency Services budget for grant funds to help upgrade communications equipment on the mobile communications unit.

Budget Amendment #13 – To increase the EMS budget to purchase 4 cardiac monitors.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #11 - #13. Commissioner Odom seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

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

- A. County staff continues to receive calls regarding water throughout the county including Church Road, Corner Store Road, Fox Court, and Advent Church Road.
- B. The Hiddenite Festival Road Race will be held in conjunction with the Hiddenite Celebration of the Arts. Several staff members and other volunteers are involved.
- C. Commissioner Robertson mentioned that the cardiac monitors being purchased are the Life Pack brand which are more consistent and respond quicker than many other brands.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Minutes from the August 2, 2010 Regular Commissioners' Meeting, the August 16, 2010 Regular Commissioners' Meeting, and the August 23, 2010 Work Session.
- B. Tax Release Requests for August \$8,283.13 and Tax Refunds for August \$1,857.12.

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

Rick French, County Manager, stated there was no need to hold a Closed Session.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Robertson made a motion to adjourn at 7:14 PM. Commissioner Bolick 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