

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING February 4, 2013

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: James “Burkie” Jennings, Chairman
Larry Yoder, Vice-Chairman
Ryan Mayberry
Judy M. Moose
Larry Yoder

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, February 4, 2013 at the CVCC / Alexander Center in Room 103, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Yoder called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, noting that he would be presiding over tonight’s meeting for Chairman Jennings.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Vice-Chairman Yoder announced that February was Black History Month and that Governor Pat McCrory has passed a proclamation in honor of such. He also noted his attendance at a special event yesterday at Macedonia Baptist Church in recognition of Black History Month.

Vice-Chairman Yoder also presented the following factual points as it relates to a possible contract with NuCare Carolina Ambulance, Inc. for convalescent transportation service and on-call emergency medical services.

- There are no plans for eliminating any EMS positions. The County values the hard work and dedication of our EMS and Rescue Squad.
- The County currently averages between 450 to 500 calls per month.

- EMS has 29 full-time employees and 21 part-time employees, along with two employees at the Alexander County Rescue Squad.
- Employees make up (3) 24-hour paramedic crews – 2 at the Taylorsville base and one at the Bethlehem base.
- NuCare’s fee schedule closely compares to the County’s fee schedule.
- NuCare’s services are provided at no cost to the County – each patient is billed directly.
- It would cost approximately \$750,000 for salaries and an ambulance for another full-time EMS crew.
- The primary focus for NuCare would be convalescent transport to area doctors and hospitals.
- Backup EMS service through NuCare would be an asset in the case of high call volume.
- The safety, health, and welfare of the citizens are the #1 priority.

Commissioner Robertson reiterated that the County was only considering a contract with NuCare for the transport of the elderly and or handicapped to doctor appointments, scheduled hospital visits, etc. that could be pre-arranged as well as backup assistance to EMS if needed for emergencies. He felt this would free up EMS units for emergencies.

Commissioner Mayberry felt that the headline on this issue in last week’s *Taylorsville Times* was very irresponsible, noting that information had been taken out of context.

Chairman Jennings stated that EMS had taken his 99-year old mother to Valdese Hospital once a month for wound care prior to her passing, adding that this was an all day event. He pointed out that if the contract was approved, NuCare would be handling these types of calls, which would keep all EMS units in the county. Chairman Jennings also agreed that the *The Taylorsville Times*’ headline was totally false.

Commissioner Moose stated that she was very thankful for our EMS and would not want to do away with them.

In response to Justin Deal’s concerns voiced during Public Comment at the January 7th Meeting related to school safety, Commissioner Mayberry stated that the Board had not received any recommendations from the school system at this time. Plans are for the Board of Education and/or Superintendent to discuss these issues with the Sheriff.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Justin Deal addressed concerns that EMS employees had with the possible contract with NuCare because it affected their livelihood, noting that some felt that dealings had been done under the table. He stated that they all wanted to be assured they would still have a job.

Commissioner Robertson apologized to all EMS employees, stating that the information should have been presented more accurately and clearly than it had been.

Commissioner Mayberry explained that the item had been tabled at the January 28th work session because he had been sick and had not been able to review the contract, Commissioner Robertson was unable to attending the meeting, and there were several items within the actual contract that needed to be addressed before consideration; however, he agreed that the Board should have given some explanation at that time. He gave his word that no EMS jobs would be eliminated and noted that the Board was only trying to keep crews from being tied up with convalescent calls.

Chairman Jennings agreed that there had been no discussions to eliminate any positions within EMS and felt the confusion was due to the incorrect newspaper article. He also stated that the reason discussions had not yet taken place in Open Session was because negotiations were still ongoing with NuCare.

Mr. Deal informed the Board that the County made its money on convalescent calls and he was concerned that a year from now jobs could be cut due to the loss of that revenue. He mentioned that he and other EMS employees would be glad to talk with any board member to make sure they got the correct information before making a decision.

Chairman Jennings asked that anyone with questions contact him or County Manager Rick French. Commissioner Robertson suggested that Bradley Earp, EMS Director, be contacted first. He also added that copies of this meeting could be obtained for proof that 5 commissioners supported EMS and the Rescue Squad.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE GOALS ADOPTED BY THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NC ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Vice-Chairman Yoder presented the following top 5 legislative goals for 2013-2014 determined at the NCACC Legislative Goals Conference January 24-25, 2013:

1. Oppose the shift of state transportation responsibilities to counties.

2. Reinstate ADM and lottery funds for school construction.
3. Oppose unfunded mandates and shifts of state responsibility to counties.
4. Ensure adequate mental health funding.
5. Preserve the existing local revenue base.

Commissioner Robertson agreed with the goals but felt a backup letter should be drafted addressing several issues such as combining the 4 agencies dealing with water issues into one point of contact, changing Article 42 sales tax back to per capita instead of point of sale, and restoring local control of school calendars.

Commissioner Mayberry agreed with the goals with the exception of Tax and Finance Legislative Goal #TF-3 (Authorize local revenue options). He explained that the NC Homebuilders Association was opposed to land transfer taxes and that he had voted against such taxes as a former Board of Directors member. Therefore, he would be voting against the resolution for that reason only.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve the resolution in support of the Legislative Goals. Commissioner Moose seconded the motion. The Board voted 4 in favor of the motion (Commissioners Jennings, Moose, Robertson, and Yoder) and one against (Commissioner Mayberry). The motion carried.

BOARD REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the reappointment of Dwight Shook and David Icenhour (alternate) on the WPCOG Sister Cities Association for one year.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the reappointments. Chairman Jennings seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #35 - #39

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #35 - #39, as follows:

Budget Amendment #35 – To increase the Information Technology budget for the purchase of Apple iPads for Governing Body for paperless agendas and technology equipment for the new detention center. Funds to be transferred from the Governing Body and Rocky Face Park budgets to the Information Technology budget. To increase the Human Resources budget for increased pre-employment screenings. To increase the Health Department budget for additional Healthy Mothers Healthy Children state funds.

Budget Amendment #36 – To increase the Sheriff's Department budget for \$914 in unspent funds from FY 2012 budget and a \$2,000 Wal-Mart grant for the Project Lifesaver Program. To increase the jail budget for estimated cost of contracted detention.

Budget Amendment #37 – To budget for a 2.5% pay increase for full-time employees making less than \$50,000 per year as of 2/1/13 and employees classified at part-time with benefits making less than \$50,000 per year. Effective with the 3/8/13 pay date.

Budget Amendment #38 – To budget for a 2.5% pay increase for full-time employees making less than \$50,000 per year as of 2/1/13 and employees classified at part-time with benefits making less than \$50,000 per year. Effective with the 3/8/13 pay date.

Budget Amendment #39 – To budget for a 2.5% pay increase for full-time employees making less than \$50,000 per year as of 2/1/13 and employees classified at part-time with benefits making less than \$50,000 per year. Effective with the 3/8/13 pay date.

Chairman Jennings made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #35 - #39. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted 4 in favor of the motion (Commissioners Jennings, Mayberry, Robertson, and Yoder) and one against (Commissioner Moose). The motion carried.

Commissioner Robertson requested an update on the Project Lifesaver Program at a future meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. The County was approved for a zero interest loan in the amount of \$3,210,000 for improvements to the Bethlehem Water System through the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund.
- B. Staff requests approval to move forward with refinancing of the following projects:
 - Ellendale School debt totaling \$3,012,261 with Wells Fargo Bank at 2.59% with an interest savings of \$332,976.
 - School Classroom debt (East and West Middle, Sugar Loaf and Stony Point Elementary) totaling \$1,155,000 with Wells Fargo Bank at 1.73% with an interest savings of \$66,990.
 - Bethlehem Water Refunding Bonds totaling \$863,459 with BB&T at 1.91% with an interest savings of \$51,000.

Commissioner Robertson made a motion to approve the refinancing as requested. Chairman Jennings seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

- C. A work session will be held on February 25, 2013 to discuss the Bethlehem Water Agreement and the Cooperative Extension Report.
- D. The next Golden Leaf Meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2013 at CVCC. Project applications for grant funds are due on February 19, 2013.
- E. Legislation changing the Smoky Mountain Center Mental Health Board from 30 members to 21 members will take effect in October 2013. Smoky Mountain Center represents 15 counties and current representation includes one commissioner and one at-large member from each county.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$4,168.42) and Tax Refunds (\$1,764.25) for November 2012.
- B. Annual report from the Alexander County Local Emergency Planning Committee.
- C. Personnel Policy revisions.
- D. Report of surplus property sold through GovDeals July 1 – December 31, 2012.

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

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1, 2, 4, 5, & 6) TO PREVENT THE DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, DEGREES / PRIZES / AWARDS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:01 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, 2, 4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Robertson made a motion to adjourn at 7:24 PM. Commissioner Moose seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

James H. Jennings, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board