

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CALLED MEETING** March 24, 2014

**ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

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

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a called meeting on Monday, March 24, 2014 at the CVCC / Alexander Center in Room 103, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Jennings gave the invocation and Commissioner Ferguson led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Ferguson made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Moose seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

NCACC VIDEO

A video prepared by the NC Association of County Commissioners was shown to kickoff preparations for district meetings and the 2014 short session of the General Assembly. The NCACC will be focusing on county share of lottery proceeds by asking the General Assembly to reinstate language in the state statute to direct 40% of lottery funds for school construction as originally written.

Chairman Yoder urged members of the Board to attend the NCACC District Meeting scheduled for April 3rd in Catawba County.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bud Caywood, Chairman of Citizens for the Future of Alexander County, discussed the 4th CFAC public forum held this past Thursday where speaker Andre Nabors, NC Tourism Development Manager, was present to discuss economic benefits and tourism opportunities for counties with natural scenic beauty. He also invited all candidates running for office this year as well as the public to attend a “Meet the Candidates Night” on April 24th at 7 PM at the CVCC / Alexander Center.

2014-2015 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

The following budget presentations were heard:

DSS

Cindy Holman, DSS Director, discussed changes in projected revenues for the upcoming budget year due to Federal Financial Participation for Medicaid programs, excessive accumulation of comp hours due to NC Fast and Affordable Care Act screenings, and loss of experienced employees to higher paying counties. She requested the following for the 2014-2015 budget year:

- An additional Income Maintenance Caseworker (total cost of \$39,353.87 with estimated \$15,034 in County funding).
- Upgrade of one part-time Income Maintenance Caseworker II to full-time (total cost of \$22,357.83 with estimated \$7,105 in County funding).
- Reclassification of two Processing Assistants to Public Information Assistant (total cost of \$10,579.88/\$5,289.94 each with estimated \$6,486/\$3,243 each in County funding).
- Reclassification of Daycare Caseworker to Income Maintenance Caseworker III – NC FAST troubleshooter position (total cost of \$7,015.14 with estimated \$3,600 in County funding).
- Reclassification of Office Assistant IV to Child Support Agent II (total cost of \$7,445.16 with estimated \$2,340 in County funding).
- Reclassification of Child Support Lead Agent II to Child Support Supervisor (total cost of \$2,728.28 with estimated \$722 in County funding).
- Salary increase for Income Maintenance Supervisor II (total cost of \$2,721.06 with estimated \$949 in County funding).
- Replacement of two vehicles with high mileage and maintenance issues (total cost of \$40,000 with estimated \$27,300 in County funding).
- Replacement of 9 laptop and 5 desktop computers due to unsupported Microsoft XP operating systems (total cost of \$18,600 with \$12,858 in County funding).

Vice-Chairman Mayberry entered the meeting at 6:32 PM.

Mrs. Holman also noted that all EDTAP and HCCGB funding had been used for the Congregate Meals Program, Home-Delivered Meal Program, transportation to Adult Daycare, and transportation to Adult Day Health Programs, leaving an approximately \$70,000 shortfall for transportation funds just to meet the current demand, not including additional citizens on the waiting list.

Animal Services

Josh Mitchell, Public Works Director, provided 2014 statistics related to intake/rescue placement/adoption/euthanasia of animals and discussed a recent Department of Agriculture inspection as well as updates and programs in the works (painting walls and floors, better segregation for disease prevention, additional cages/kennels, software upgrades, more rabies clinics and adoption events). He explained that the increases in the 2014-2015 budget request were due to the following:

- Increases in salary due to having a full staff employed (2 enforcement officers, 2 full-time shelter workers, and 2 part-time staff for weekends and holidays).
- Training for new staff.
- Supplies to implement a microchip program.
- Upfitting a second truck with a camper top and sliding window to meet Department of Agriculture regulations for ambient temperature control for transported animals (one truck already upgraded).

He also stated, after questioned by Commissioner Ferguson, that DOC inmates were utilized during the week for cleaning.

Chairman Yoder asked if a discarded ambulance could be used by Animal Services. He was advised that an ambulance would be more expensive to operate than the current Ford Rangers and was also not 4WD which was necessary for staff.

Health Department

Leeanne Whisnant, Health Director, discussed the various programs offered at the Health Department, noting that the County's portion of funding for the upcoming budget year would total 14% compared to 9.17% for the current year due to changes in state funding, increase in vaccination prices, etc. She requested the following for the 2014-2015 budget year:

- A 2.5% COLA for all employees recommended by the Board of Health.
- Filling the vacant Health Educator position – job duties currently assumed by several employees after state funding for this position was lost.
- Hiring of a family nurse practitioner – the midwife on staff currently handling these duties cannot see male patients.

- Filling the vacant Medical Lab Assistant position – has not been filled since the previous employee's retirement.
- Increases for supplies, vaccines, and an electronic records software update.
- Funding for contracted lab work due to the state no longer providing certain types of blood panels (RH factor and blood type which is important for pregnant patients).

She advised that filling of the Health Educator position would allow her to focus more on grant writing, which was a huge financial benefit to the County.

Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Chris Bowman and Captain Chad Pennell advised that the request for 8 vehicles was being submitted because no replacement vehicles were purchased for the current budget year. The requested change from the Dodge Charger to the Ford Police Interceptor Utility vehicle was due to the limited number of 4WD vehicles available during inclement weather and easier access to unpaved road and treacherous terrain. The Sheriff's Office requested the following for the 2014-2015 budget year:

- One additional patrol deputy, one detective, and 2 narcotics officers.
- 8 Ford Police Interceptor Utility vehicles (2014 V-6 AWD) for replacement of patrol cars due to greater interior and cargo room as well as greater ground clearance. The vehicle cost breakdown included the vehicle, computer and camera mount, portable and mobile radios, emergency equipment, striping, and patrol rifle and accessories for a total of \$55,075 for 7 vehicles and \$59,416 for the K-9 kennel and prisoner partition for one vehicle for a total of \$444,968. A lease-purchase program was also presented.
- 35 concealable ballistic vests with an expiration date of September 2014 for \$20,125.
- Participation in a Night Vision Goggle Lease Program (12 night vision goggles and 2 night vision rifle scopes) for \$4,200.

Captain Pennell provided another option to the requested dual-band radios (low-band & 800 mhz VIPER allowing communication with all emergency departments and other counties and agencies in the state) which was a low-band radio for \$1,230.12 each allowing only communication within the county.

Sheriff Bowman pointed out that this was the first year computer equipment for cars had been included in the Sheriff's budget, as it had always been budgeted within the I.T. Department.

Commissioners Jennings and Ferguson inquired about take-home vehicles and were advised that only certain individuals (Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Lieutenants, and Captains) and those on call 24/7 such as the Communications Director were allowed take-home vehicles.

Detention

Captain Mike Harrison, Detention Administrator, requested the following for the 2014-2015 budget year:

- 2 additional DCI computer terminals.
- Additional JMS licenses – staff learned after moving to the facility that a license was required for every computer using the JMS system, which had been overlooked by the provider at the courthouse location.
- Additional Livescan fingerprint machine.
- Replacement of inmate transport van with high mileage and maintenance issues.
- Replacement of current high mileage Detention Administrator vehicle including all equipment, lights, siren, radio, computer, camera, etc.
- Purchase of mezzanine barriers originally requested in January 2014 – a female inmate recently attempted suicide by leaping from the mezzanine level and was transferred to Baptist hospital for treatment (all costs incurred by the County).
- Additional dryer for inmate clothes – a bottle-neck has developed in the laundry process from the inability of 2 laundry dryers to keep pace with the 60 lb. washing machines.
- Sound baffles in the intake area due to high ceilings and concrete structure making communication difficult.

When asked by Commissioner Jennings why this female was on the mezzanine level, Sheriff Bowman responded that females were being housed in a secure pod instead of the open bunk bed pod because they were easier to control and it prevented fights. He also pointed out that this incident occurred when staff was short-handed (one officer was in training, one was assisting the med-tech, and another had left to pick up meals).

Also discussed was the loss of projected revenue from housing out-of-county inmates. Sheriff Bowman explained that judges were taking advantage of the availability of space in the new facility when sentencing offenders and that he must keep enough beds for Alexander County inmates. He also felt the facility was still understaffed, while Captain Harrison advised that Hyde County had just finished a new 32-bed facility which was requested to be staffed at 15-20 officers.

Sheriff Bowman was not opposed to purchasing reliable, used vehicles instead of new ones as requested for the Detention Center.

911 Communications

Greg Foster, Communications Director, provided 911 call volume since 2003 and discussed the continued increase (from 7 calls per hour in 2003 to 22 calls per hour in 2013); however, he pointed out that the center was still staffed with the same number of telecommunicators as it had been when the first 911 call was made in May 1992. He requested the following for the 2014-2015 budget year:

- 2 additional telecommunicators for peak call times (Noon to Midnight) – this is the 5th year running that more staff has been requested.
- Salary increase in the Director's salary to be more comparable with a recent study done by Human Resources.
- Replacement of 2 replacement VHF transmitters.
- Replacement of 2 aging radio comparaters which find the strongest signal of the county's 5 radio towers

Mr. Foster also mentioned the push within the state for 911 centers to accept text messages which would add more workload to personnel.

EMS

Bradley Earp, EMS Director, also discussed increased call volume since 2003 as well as response time due to transport of citizens to hospitals in surrounding counties, leaving resources completely tied up 15% of the time for the past 3 years. This results in other counties either being on standby for or actually responding to EMS calls within Alexander County. He requested the following for the 2014-2015 budget year:

- Full-time Training Officer / Quality Assurance Coordinator position – duties currently being assumed by a shift supervisor in addition to working ambulance calls.
- Additional ambulance crew consisting of 8 EMT / Paramedic positions on a 24/72 hour schedule – EMS has not had an increase in the number of staffed ambulances since 2001.
- Addition of a station, ambulance, and other equipment necessary for the additional crew.
- Annual replacement ambulance for a 2007 unit with over 219,000 miles and major mechanical issues including necessary accessories.
- Replacement of aging equipment (radios, stair chair, stretchers, protective response gear, etc.)

Mr. Earp advised that this request was suggested as a best case scenario and that options could be discussed as a temporary fix to the problem. He also noted that the WPCOG was conducting a study of EMS call response that would determine the need for the additional crew and suggested location of a new base.

ALEXANDER COUNTY RUNNING EVENTS

Due to time, County Manager Rick French only announced that Robin's Run (5K) would be held on April 5, 2014.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #30 & #31

Rick French, County Manager, discussed the purpose of Budget Amendments #30 & #31, as follows:

Budget Amendment #30 – To increase the Planning budget for the WPCOG contract to develop a minimum housing code for Alexander County. To increase the EMS budget for the WPCOG contract for technical assistance in the analysis of EMS response times. To increase the DSS budget for transportation funds passed through the WPRTA.

Budget Amendment #31 – To decrease the Detention budget for revised estimates of FY 2014 inmate housing revenue due to estimated revenue being lower than original budget due to a later start date for housing out-of-county inmates.

Commissioner Jennings made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #30 & #31. Commissioner Ferguson 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. Public workshops will be held in each of the Unifour counties regarding bicycling in the region. Citizens can provide comments on routes and destinations, safety and education, and infrastructure improvements. Alexander County's date is April 1st from 5-7 PM at the CVCC / Alexander Center in drop-in format.
- B. A work session with the Planning & Zoning Commission is scheduled for March 31st at 6:00 PM at the CVCC / Alexander Center.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$2,671.27) and Tax Refunds (\$2,418.60) for January 25 – March 7, 2014.
- B. Minutes from the February 3, 2014 Regular Commissioners' Meeting and February 17, 2014 Called Meeting.
- C. Surplus of 2000 Ford F450 Ambulance VIN#1FDXE45F9YHB23728.
- D. Amendment to County Management Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.
- E. American Red Cross Month Proclamation.

Commissioner Jennings made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Moose 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

The scheduled Closed Session was not held.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 10:17 PM. Vice-Chairman Mayberry seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Larry Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board