

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION** April 20, 2015

**ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

PRESENT: Larry Yoder, Chairman (arrived at 6:35 PM)
Ryan Mayberry, Vice-Chairman
Milton H. Campbell
Josh Lail
Ronnie Reese

STAFF: Doug Fox, Tax Assessor
Rick French, County Manager
Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director
Guy Kerley, Tax Administrator / Collector
Darrell Robertson, County Engineer
Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a work session on Monday, April 20, 2015 at the Administration Building downstairs conference room, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Mayberry presided until Chairman Yoder's arrival, calling the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Reese gave the invocation and Vice-Chairman Mayberry led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Commissioner Campbell made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

REPORT ON 2015 PROPERTY REVALUATION

Guy Kerley, Tax Administrator / Collector, reported that the 2015 property revaluation was better than expected at slightly less than a 3% decrease in value. Notices were mailed to property owners in mid-January and the informal appeal process was completed by the end of January (with values on slightly more than 600 parcels out of 24,000 appealing). The annual Board of Equalization & Review hearings will conclude tomorrow.

In regard to budget preparation for 2015-2016, he stated that revenue submitted in the Tax Office budget proposal (\$2,542,198,475) was based on a projected total assessed value (real and personal property, motor vehicles, and public utilities) and was decreased by \$63,651,525 from the 2014-2015 year. He added that there had been an increased interest in Elderly & Disabled and Agriculture & Forestry Use exemptions which could have some bearing on total taxable assessed value as will new construction added to assessed value prior to billing. Mr. Kerley advised that he would provide a revenue neutral tax rate to the County Manager this week.

Doug Fox, Tax Assessor, gave visual examples of several properties located within Alexander County using the Pictometry software, an ortho digital imagery mapping tool that provides 3D views of structures as opposed to the current rooftop views. He felt this software would be greatly beneficial to the next revaluation, noting that the process could possibly be done completely in-house by eliminating the need to physically visit parcels. The current contract allows for 100 users; however, it is for staff use only and not available to the public.

EMERGENCY SERVICES REPORT

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, provided a fact sheet for each volunteer fire department as well as Alexander Rescue & EMS Inc. and Fire Marshall / Emergency Management that included year current facility was constructed and square footage, number of and type of apparatus, and number of calls broken down by fire and medical. He also presented 2015-2016 budget requests for each fire department, staff recommendations regarding those requests, a fire tax comparison for surrounding counties, and total debt for each department.

Also discussed was Emergency Management Phases (preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation) and plans to update the Local Emergency Ordinance. Alexander County has received \$307,912 in Emergency Management grant funding since 2011.

BETHLEHEM WATER RATE RESTRUCTURING

Darrell Robertson, County Engineer, reviewed water rates and monthly usage for the Highway 16 South / Sugar Loaf and Bethlehem Water Districts as well as a financial summary for the Bethlehem / Ellendale Water System Improvements Project. A letter from the City of Hickory regarding a proposed 1% rate increase for 2015-2016 was also presented.

The Board discussed the restructuring of the Bethlehem Water District rates, specifically the current \$13.65 debt service, due to the need for growth and future water needs. No decisions were made as this information was for review only.

CVCC / APPLIED TECHNOLOGIES PROJECT REPORT

Darrell Robertson, County Engineer, discussed the 4 grants involved in the CVCC / Applied Technologies Project (EDA, Golden Leaf, ARC, and Duke Energy) including amount and purpose while the group viewed drawings and floor plans of the building interior. He advised that the plans will be sent to EDA for approval in May and staff hopes to put the project out to bid in late June with construction starting in July. If this schedule is followed, classes should begin in January 2016.

Rick French, County Manager, felt the smaller building located on the property could be the future location for the Economic Development Office as well as the WPCOG Work First Program.

OTHER BUSINESS

Rick French, County Manger, reviewed several budgetary items during Other Business including:

- The proposed bills regarding the redistribution of county levied sales taxes and how it could affect Alexander County.
- Transactions and revenue totals for the License Plate Agency.
- Revenue for the Detention Center for housing of inmates.
- Reduction of State funding for the Adult Basic Education / Compensatory Education Program at the CVCC / Alexander Center. Several concerned parents may attend the May 4th Commissioners' Meeting.

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

Vice-Chairman Mayberry made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:56 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). Chairman Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Chairman Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 8:50 PM. Vice-Chairman Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Larry G. Yoder, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board