

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     February 1, 2016

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

**PRESENT:**    Ryan Mayberry, Chairman (left at 8:38 PM)  
                  Milton H. Campbell, Vice-Chairman  
                  Josh Lail  
                  Ronnie Reese  
                  Larry G. 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 6, 2016 at the CVCC / Alexander Center in Room 103, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Lail gave the invocation and Vice-Chairman Campbell led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Reese announced that his granddaughter, Makensley Austin, was born on Thursday, January 28, 2016. She has a brother and sister, McCray and Makenna, as well as a cousin, Victoria Reese.

Vice-Chairman Campbell felt, with the budget process beginning soon, current spending levels should not increase with the upcoming budget. He asked that department heads keep that in mind when preparing their 2016-2017 budget requests.

Chairman Mayberry mentioned that the Board of Elections staff was currently testing the new voting equipment to prepare for the upcoming Primary Election on March 15<sup>th</sup>. One Stop Voting will be held March 3-12 at the Elections Office and March 7-12 at the Bethlehem Community

Fire & Rescue Department and Stony Point Fire Department Station 1. Absentee ballots will be accepted through March 8<sup>th</sup>.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Vice-Chairman Campbell made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jim Belcher spoke against the promotion of homosexuality in Alexander County and its schools and asked the Board to do the same, noting that constituents were looking for candidates and leaders that would not leave their biblical convictions behind while serving. He also felt the Board should stand up for the First Amendment rights of pastors who preach against homosexuality.

## **WINTER STORM REPORT**

Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, gave an update on the winter storm that occurred January 22-23, 2016, noting that a State of Emergency was declared on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> for both Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville as a precautionary measure but necessary to receive federal reimbursement if needed. Only one weather related call was received by 911 Communications.

He thanked several individuals and organizations including all first responders, fire fighters, EMS, and Rescue Squad personnel for being prepared, County Manager Rick French and Superintendent Jennifer Hefner for making the call on Thursday to close County offices and schools on Friday, Alexander County citizens for heeding the warnings given to stay home during the storm, County Maintenance staff who cleared parking lots on Saturday to prepare for Monday morning, and the NCDOT staff for keeping the roadways clear and safe.

## **CVCC / ALEXANDER APPLIED TECHNOLOGY CENTER PROJECT UPDATE**

Darrell Robertson, County Engineer, after briefly reviewing grants received that had made the CVCC / Alexander Applied Technology Center possible, presented a slide show that included architectural drawings for the building's floor plan as well as photos of ongoing construction and renovation. Completion is planned for late April / early May 2016.

He thanked those involved with the project including Alexander County Economic Development and Finance staff, Sherry Long with the WPCOG, and all industries that contributed funding.

## **RESOLUTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE WESTERN PIEDMONT BIKE PLAN**

Jon Pilkenton, County Planner, reviewed the Western Piedmont Bike Plan with the Board, pointing out that it was simply a planning tool for the future to improve bicycle transportation in the Unifour and did not require any commitment of funds from local governments. A slide show presentation was viewed that included plan development phases, goals and objectives, selection methodology, priority route segments, and implementation strategies including potential funding and partnership opportunities.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan resolution. Vice-Chairman Campbell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CONNECT NC BOND ACT**

Rick French, County Manager, provided a resolution in support of the Connect NC Bond Act, noting that the NCACC was recommending approval from each county due to the bond being placed on the ballot for the March Primary Election. Funding from the bond will directly impact 79 counties, not including Alexander County, in the form of water or sewer grants and loans, community college construction or renovation, as well as parks and public facilities.

Chairman Mayberry stated that CVCC would receive in excess of \$6.1 million for renovation, repairs, or construction within its service area, which could benefit facilities in Alexander County. New construction would require a 2:1 local match.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the resolution supporting the Connect NC Bond Act. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **BOARD OF EDUCATION FACILITY NEEDS SURVEY 2015-2016**

Rick French, County Manager, explained that local boards of education were required to submit their facility needs assessment to the State Board of Education every 5 years, which requires acknowledgement by local boards of county commissioners. He presented the Alexander County Board of Education Facility Needs Survey for 2015-2016 which included improvements to each of the 9 schools located within the county which totaled almost \$11 million; however, he assured the Board that approval did not endorse or commit funds to any project.

Vice-Chairman Campbell made a motion to accept the 2015-2016 Facility Needs Survey. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **ALEXANDER COUNTY FINANCIAL REPORT**

Rick French, County Manager, requested the Board skip over this item to be discussed in Open Session following adjournment of Closed Session.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS**

Rick French, County Manager, requested the following appointments and reappointments:

Equalization & Review Board – Appoint Donovan Douglas and reappoint Doug Ramsey, David Odom, Linda Barnette, and Bobby Norton for one year.

Health Board – Appoint Betty Long for 3 years.

WPCOG Sister Cities Association – Reappoint Dwight Shook and David Icenhour (alternate) for one year.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council – Appoint Darren Connor, Bill Hefner, and Darrell Davison and reappoint Chris Bowman, Carrie Nitzu, Krista Hiatt, Holly Yongue, Milton Campbell, Rick French, Jason Williams, Kim Cowart, Jerry Ratchford, Jan Barriger, and Nikki Kahill for two years.

Region E Adult Care & Nursing Home CAC – Appoint Glenn Deal Jr. for one year.

Finance Committee – Appoint Larry Yoder (replacing Ryan Mayberry who was appointed on 1/11/2016).

Vice-Chairman Campbell made a motion to appoint the appointments and reappointments as presented. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #26 - #28**

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #26 - #28 as follows:

Budget Amendment #26 – To increase the Sheriff’s budget for the purchase of 1) a camper shell for a Ford F-150 truck, 2) a K-9 kennel, 3) lights, and 4) in-car walkie chargers with Federal Equitable Share Funds received from Homeland Security in prior years – a portion of the K-9 kennel cost will be paid by a donation given to the Sheriff’s Department for K-9 equipment.

Budget Amendment #27 – To increase the Health Department Dental Clinic budget for an Oral Health Partnership Grant and to increase the Health Department budget for Public Health Quality Improvement funds to be spent on items related to the State Accreditation process.

Budget Amendment #28 – To increase the EMS budget for the Medicaid Program Reimbursement payment required by the NCDHHS.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #26 - #28. Vice-Chairman Campbell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

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

- A. The Sheriff's Department had applied for a 2016 Governor's Crime Commission grant in the amount of \$24,500 for the purchase of equipment (forensic recovery computer, voice stress analysis system, light source kit, laser trajectory kit, number tape, digital camera equipment, crime scene measurement tool, personal protective suit, headlamp, and trail camera). This a 100% grant which requires no local match.
- B. A total of 3,622 visitors came through the reception desk at the Hiddenite Arts & Heritage Center for 2015, not including during the Hiddenite Celebration of the Arts. There were also 18,529 visitors that signed in at Rocky Face Park for the year, not including RockyFest or other special events, and 1,928 runners participated in 10 running events countywide.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Minutes from the January 11, 2016 Regular Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests (\$681.83) and Tax Refunds (\$1,604.98) for January 1-22, 2016.
- C. Agreement with WPCOG for the Provision of Grant Management Assistance and Project Budget Ordinance P-1 for the Shurtape Wastewater Economic Development Project.
- D. Surplus a 1988 Ford dump truck – VIN#1FDXK74A5JVA57606.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice-Chairman Campbell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **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 Mayberry made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:18 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 Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **ALEXANDER COUNTY FINANCIAL REPORT**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Yoder and second by Commissioner Reese, the Board voted unanimously to return to Open Session at 8:45 PM to discuss the Alexander County Financial Report.

Rick French, County Manager, presented the following information:

- Sales tax revenues are slowly decreasing but are still 4.1% ahead of last year.
- County debt includes \$7.3 remaining on the Law Enforcement & Detention Center (payoff 2026), \$2.3 million remaining for Ellendale Elementary School (payoff 2021), \$1.4 million remaining on the DSS building addition (payoff 2019), \$6.4 million remaining in water debt (payoff 2028 on the Vashti Project, 2035 on Bethlehem / Ellendale Project, and 2018 on Bethlehem Water Fund). Debt on the CVCC / Alexander Center was paid off in December 2015.
- Current and future projects include the CVCC / Alexander Applied Technology Center, the Bethlehem / Ellendale Water System Improvements Project, the Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams Natural Gas Project, the Shurtape Wastewater Project, Rocky Face Park Phase II, the Sheriff's Department evidence storage building, and the speculative building in the Industrial Park. Mr. French also expressed interest in converting the smaller Taylor Togs building into a space for Economic Development and WPCOG Workforce Development staff and asked the Board for direction regarding future water projects. The majority felt additional water projects should be postponed for at least a year.
- Staff met with Dustin Deal with Benefit Solutions regarding health insurance. An initial quote featuring a \$2,500 deductible and higher dependent and family premiums was proposed, saving the County approximately \$400,000. Mr. French voiced concerns regarding how higher out-of-pocket costs would affect employees, noting that Alexander County had the lowest salaries in the region and had eliminated benefits such as longevity, retiree insurance, Christmas bonuses, etc. He felt changing the insurance could result in additional problems with recruiting and retaining good employees. Vice-Chairman Campbell suggested quotes from other providers should be obtained before a decision was made.
- Expenditures and revenues for several County departments were reviewed.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 9:47 PM. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

---

Ryan N. Mayberry, Chairman

---

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board