

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING March 6, 2017

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Milton H. Campbell, Chairman
Ronnie Reese, Vice-Chairman
Josh Lail (arrived at 6:12 PM)
Ryan Mayberry
Dr. Jeffrey P. Peal

STAFF: Rick French, County Manager

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, March 6, 2017 at the CVCC / Alexander Center in Room 103, Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Campbell gave the invocation and Commissioner Mayberry led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Vice-Chairman Reese discussed the recent NACo Legislative Conference held in Washington D.C. that he attended along with Commissioner Mayberry and County Manager Rick French where infrastructure funding was discussed. The group also participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

In addition, Vice-Chairman Reese reported that the Senior Center now had a Stony Point location in the former EnergyUnited Water Corp. building and that he, Chairman Campbell, and Commissioner Peal attended the Wittenburg Fire Department banquet. He thanked all emergency personnel and volunteer firefighters for their service as did Commissioner Peal and Chairman Campbell.

Commissioner Peal announced that the Veterans Committee was planning a Memorial Day service on Sunday, May 28, 2017 at the Alexander County Courthouse and he thanked the many veterans who are working hard to make this event happen.

Commissioner Mayberry also commented on meetings attended at the NACo Legislative Conference and acquaintances made, noting that the group also caught a glimpse of the Presidential motorcade.

Chairman Campbell stated that an official ceremony to rename the Alexander County Law Enforcement and Detention after former Sheriff Thomas "Elisha" Bebber Sr. would be held on Friday, June 2, 2017 at 6:00 PM.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bud Caywood with the Bethlehem Community Development Association promoted a 3-day road side clean-up campaign for April 6-7, 2017, noting that information regarding dates and locations for pick-up of vests and bags would be released once determined. Civic and community groups, churches, and local businesses are urged to organize groups in their area and citizens are asked to clean up their roadside frontage if not participating in group efforts.

UPDATE ON ALEXANDER EARLY COLLEGE

After an introduction from Dr. Jennifer Hefner, Alexander County Schools Superintendent, Jason Evans, Alexander Early College Principal, gave a slide show presentation that included the following information about AEC:

- Staffing – Jason Evan, Principal; Crystal Sherill, Bookkeeper / Data Manager; Michael Ratchford, Counselor; Mary Beth Bumgarner, English Teacher; Melissa Sharpe; Math Teacher, DeAnne Robbins, Social Studies Teacher; Christy Hall, Science Teacher.
- Early College programs allow high school students to graduate with a high school diploma as well as an Associate's Degree with the opportunity to transfer to a university as a junior.
- AEC currently has 56 freshmen and will accept 100 more for the 2017-2018 school year. Enrollment is open to students from both East and West Middle, private, and home schools. The plan is to accept 100 freshmen each year until the capacity level of 400 is

reached. A total of 133 applications have been received from East and West Middle students along with 10 from private / home schools for the 2017-2018 year.

- Major differences in early college vs. traditional high school includes required parent involvement, each student is assigned a PAA (personal adult advocate), and only honors level high school courses are taught.
- AEC allowed students that would've gone to Challenger in Catawba County to remain in Alexander County (maximum of 45 enrolled in Challenger for grades 9-12 would equal approx. \$265,500 that would remain in the school system budget). The Challenger program will come to an end after the current school year and those students will be transferred to AEC.
- Fall 2015 College English Placement results for AEC were 4.3% higher than Challenger results.
- Positive school culture such as Motivational Mondays and High Five Fridays. Students are also allowed to participate in ACHS sports and band activities. Staff is in negotiations regarding chorus.
- Community outreach efforts include United Way, Toys for Tots, and a canned food drive for the Christian Crisis Center.
- At least two college / university campuses are visited each semester to aid students in making an informed decision by their junior year on where they want to attend after graduation from AEC.
- Savings for families - \$42,405 per year for private school, \$19,410 per year for public in-state school, \$33,893 per year for public out-of-state school. The first two years of college are earned at AEC for free and there is a better chance of academic scholarships for the last two years due to the rigor of the program.

Mr. Evans thanked Alexander County, CVCC, and all involved partners and businesses for the allowing AEC to utilize the classroom space at the new Alexander / CVCC Applied Technologies Center as well as Linda Graham, CVCC / Alexander Center Executive Director, and her staff for a great partnership.

Commissioner Lail mentioned that his daughter was a freshman at AEC and several questions were asked by Board members regarding State funding per student and capacity at ACHS.

NC GUARDIAN AD LITEM PROGRAM PRESENTATION

Kathy Wilkes, Guardian Ad Litem Recruiter, informed the Board that the Guardian Ad Litem Program was created in Seattle, WA in the 1970's after it became apparent that children involved in DSS court cases were not being represented and their needs and wants weren't being heard.

The program came to NC in 1983 and there are currently 69 offices across the state, one of those being in Alexander County which also serves Iredell. Ms. Wilkes explained that the program utilized volunteers who investigate their assigned child's situation by speaking with DSS, teachers, caregivers, etc. and then spending time with the child to determine their needs and wants. The volunteers will then attend court hearings and serve as the child's advocate to relay those requests to the judge.

Tennille Hileman, Guardian Ad Litem Supervisor, discussed the severe shortage of volunteers in Alexander County, noting that in January 2017 there were 73 children in foster care, of which only 33 were assigned a GAL volunteer. The remaining 40 are being handled by the GAL office who cannot give the cases the attention they need and deserve due to limited staff. To date, there are currently only 10 volunteers for Alexander County.

More information can be obtained by calling (704) 832-6621 and citizens interested in becoming a GAL volunteer can fill out an online application at www.volunteerforal.org. Volunteers are required to take training and be sworn in by a judge before being assigned a case.

ROCKYFEST 2017 UPDATE

Gary Herman, Small Business Development Coordinator, promoted RockyFest 2017 set for Saturday, April 22, 2017 at Rocky Face Park. At 8:00 AM the 5K, 10K, & 20K trail races will start and free rock climbing and rappelling classes will begin at 10:00 AM (all slots are full). Also, a corn hole tournament sponsored by the DAV Chapter 84 Auxiliary will be held at 12:00 Noon. All other activities will be available from 10:00 AM until 6:00 PM and will include inflatables, face painting, and train rides for children, food/craft/non-profit/business vendors, a picking tent, telescopes for sun viewing provided by the Piedmont Amateur Astronomers, and live music. Artists include the Alexander Junior Appalachian Musicians, the Slate Mountain Ramblers, Strictly Strings, ShadowGrass, Carolina Express Bluegrass, Danny Wicker, Madison Elmore, the Trailblazers, and flat foot dancer Rodney Sutton.

Parking for the event will be located at Rocky Face Baptist Church (old and current locations) as well as the Rocky Springs Community Building and a shuttle will be provided by Greenway. Vendor applications are being accepted until April 10th.

Mr. Herman expressed thanks to the many sponsors of RockyFest 2017 including Duke Energy, Craftmaster Furniture, Alexander Railroad Company, EnergyUnited Electric, Huntington House, Schneider Mills, Paragon Films, West Consultants, Taylor King Furniture, and McGill Associates.

Other Updates

Mr. Herman also mentioned that Phase 2 of Rocky Face Park was now underway thanks to a NC PARTF grant matched by Alexander County. MBI Builders from North Wilkesboro are busy grading and will pour footings for the 1,500 square foot building soon for use as a multipurpose meeting room, park office, and restrooms. Other

improvements include a picnic area, natural playground, outdoor classroom, and additional parking (50 slots). Completion is expected in the summer.

The O'Reilly Auto Parts currently under construction on Highway 16 South will hopefully be completed in June. To date, the Alexander County EDC has filmed 51 Business Spotlight videos.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE SIDEWALK DEED OF EASEMENT

Rick French, County Manager, presented a Public Infrastructure Sidewalk Deed from Alexander County to the Town of Taylorsville which will provide a permanent 10-foot easement to the Town for the purpose of a sidewalk, street lamps, and needed utilities on Industrial Boulevard near the Alexander County Detention Center.

Commissioner Peal made a motion to approve the Public Infrastructure Sidewalk Deed with the Town of Taylorsville. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

MOBILE CAD TERMINAL DATA NETWORK ACCESS AGREEMENT

Rick French, County Manager, explained that the Intergovernmental Agreement between Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville for Access to the Mobile CAD Terminal Data Network was drafted after a request from the Taylorsville Police Department to use the network for emergency dispatches. The 5-year agreement requires the Town to purchase and maintain software licenses for each terminal used and be responsible to installing/maintaining software and/or equipment. A fee of \$100 per hour will be billed to the Town if any County IT assistance is needed.

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement with the Town of Taylorsville for Access to the Mobile CAD Terminal Data Network. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

EMERGENCY WATER AGREEMENT WITH ENERGYUNITED WATER CORP

Rick French, County Manager, reported that the agreement with EnergyUnited Water Corporation to provide emergency water had not been finalized; therefore, no action is needed. The agreement will be presented at the April meeting for consideration.

APPROVAL TO WITHDRAW FROM STATE HEALTH PLAN WAITING LIST

Rick French, County Manager, recommended withdrawal from the State Health Plan waiting list due to the tremendous financial impact the plan would have on County employees, especially

those who carry dependents. The recommendation was approved by the Finance Committee who will also review new Medcost and other provider rates for 2017-2018 once made available.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to withdraw Alexander County from the State Health Plan waiting list. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

SALES TAX & FINANCIAL REPORT

Rick French, County Manager, reported that a total of \$2,161,813 had been collected in sales tax revenue through February 2017 (\$676,075.54 is new sales tax for economic development, public education, and community colleges). This amount is 48.89% of the \$4,422,000 budgeted with 50% of the budget year expired and an increase over last year of 8.52%.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the following reappointments:

Farmland Preservation VAD Board – Reappoint Coy Reese, Scott Sink, and Dustin Queen for 4 years.

WPCOG Adult Care & Nursing Home CAC – Reappoint Carol Biggs for 3 years.

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to approve the reappointments as presented. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #27 - #32

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #27 - #32 as follows:

Budget Amendment #27 – To increase the Health Department budget for additional State funds for the WIC Program as well as “Meaningful Use Funds” used for painting, new cabinets, and lab equipment repairs at the Health Dept. and t-shirts for Rocky Face Park.

Budget Amendment #28 – To increase the DSS budget for an additional allocation of Crisis Intervention Payment and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program funds from the State as well as for the contract with WPRTA to provide transportation service for rural clients through the demand response service.

Budget Amendment #29 – To increase the Rocky Face Park budget for a NC Community Conservation Program grant through NC Soil & Water to purchase and install pet waste receptacles at the park.

Budget Amendment #30 – To increase the Emergency 911 Fund budget for the purchase of a replacement uninterrupted power supply and battery pack for the 911 switch and two computers.

Budget Amendment #31 – To budget for a transfer of funds from the Jail Project Fund to the General Fund budget to use the January 2011 Jail Loan proceeds for the FY 2018 interest payments on the debt.

Budget Amendment #32 – To budget for the close-out of the Bethlehem / Ellendale Water System Improvements Project and transfer the remaining cash balance back to the Bethlehem Water Fund.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #27 - #32. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. Staff has been working with the NC Broadband Infrastructure Office on developing an Internet Assessment Survey that will soon be distributed to the public and schools.
- B. A total of 7 proposals were received for architectural / engineering services and preliminary renovation plans for the Community One Bank building recently purchased by the County. Commissioner Lail, County Engineer Darrell Robertson, and Mr. French will meet with firms next week.
- C. The NC Department of Environmental Quality announced a spring 2017 funding round for water and sewer infrastructure projects and the application deadline is April 28th. A large number of the water projects identified in 2008 have been completed but some remain and there is interest in sewer in several areas of the county, which could have a big impact on economic development.
- D. The Commissioner's Choice Awards Banquet is scheduled for Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 6:30 PM at ACHS.
- E. The WPCOG Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 27, 2017.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$5,928.94) and Tax Refunds (\$2,193.04) for January 28 – February 24, 2017.
- B. Minutes from the February 6, 2017 Regular Meeting.
- C. Contract to Audit Accounts of Alexander County.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:36 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Peal made a motion to adjourn at 8:33 PM. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Milton H. Campbell, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board