

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING June 5, 2017

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Milton H. Campbell, Chairman
 Ronnie Reese, Vice-Chairman
 Josh Lail
 Ryan Mayberry
 Dr. Jeffrey P. Peal

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, June 5, 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 Peal led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

*****SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS*****

The following retirees were recognized and given Keys to the County:

- Linda Graham for 9 years of service as the CVCC / Alexander Center Executive Director.
- Capt. Michael D. Harrison for 20 years of service with the Alexander County Sheriff's Office and Detention Center.
- Lt. Allen Vanstory for 30 years of service with the Alexander County Sheriff's Office and Detention Center.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Peal reported that the Memorial Day Service held on Sunday, May 28th was a success. Seven fallen heroes were honored as well as Annie Daniels, the oldest living Gold Star Mother in Alexander County. He thanked all military and law enforcement officers for their service and protection.

Vice-Chairman Reese thanked the committee involved in renaming the Alexander County Law Enforcement Center after Sheriff Thomas E. Bebber, noting that the dedication ceremony was held this past Friday, June 2nd. He also attended Stony Point Volunteer Fire Department's 60th Anniversary Celebration on Saturday, June 3rd and stated that our fire departments worked hard to lower and/or maintain their ISO ratings that affect homeowners' insurance premiums. In addition, Vice-Chairman Reese thanked the many branches of emergency personnel including the Sheriff's Office, EMS, and First Responders, etc.

Chairman Campbell was proud to have been involved in the plans and process to have the Law Enforcement Center renamed after Sheriff Bebber, which he stated should've been done long before now. He felt it was most fitting for Sheriff Bebber to be honored locally where his sacrifice was made, having previously been recognized at a national level.

Commissioner Mayberry mentioned that law enforcement officers placed themselves in danger every day for the public's safety and felt they, as well as their families, should be remembered and thanked for their sacrifice.

Commissioner Lail agreed, noting that he had great respect for anyone who wore a bulletproof vest to work each day. He also advised that the unemployment rate for 4-county region of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba was now below 4% for the first time since 2000.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no one present to speak during the Public Comment Period.

PUBLIC HEARING: REZONING CASE 17-1 – FOX

Jon Pilkenton, Director of Planning & Development, presented Rezoning Case 17-1 submitted by Peggy Fox who requested rezoning of property located on NC Highway 127 North, owned by Cecil Sigmon, from RA-20 (Residential-Agricultural) to H-C (Highway Commercial). The size of the property tract is approximately two acres. Zoning within 100 feet of the property includes RA-20 on all sides and H-C to the south and west. Land uses within 100 feet include residential to the north and west along with vacant property to the south and east.

He reviewed staff comments related to size of the tract, compatibility of the disputed zoning action with an existing comprehensive plan, benefits and detriments resulting from the zoning action for the petitioning property owner / neighbors / and surrounding community, and the relationship between the uses envisioned under the new zoning and the current uses of adjacent land and advised that the rezoning was consistent with the 2008 Comprehensive Plan which identified this area as being designated for commercial use. He noted that changing the zoning of this property would be consistent with growth patterns in the area and adjoining parcels.

Letters were sent by first class mail to the property owners within 100 feet of the parcel boundary, a sign was posted on the property, and a notice was placed in *The Taylorsville Times*.

Mr. Pilkenton informed the Board that, in addition to staff's recommendation of approval, the Planning & Zoning Commission held a public hearing on May 4, 2017 to review the request and voted unanimously to recommend approval based on the following:

1. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the future land use patterns in the County's 2008 Comprehensive Plan.
2. The proposed rezoning is consistent with the growth patterns along NC Highway 127.

He advised that based on the information provided, the Board must determine whether the rezoning request meets the guidelines set forth and is reasonable in regards to the public interest considering all uses within the requested zoning district, not merely the use of which the applicant proposes.

After a motion by Vice-Chairman Reese, second by Commissioner Mayberry, and unanimous vote, Chairman Campbell called the public hearing to order and requested any comments. There being none, Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to approve Rezoning Case 17-1 based on recommendations from staff and the Planning & Zoning Commission that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the future land use patterns in the County's 2008 Comprehensive Plan and is consistent with the growth patterns in the area. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioners Lail and Mayberry felt zoning classifications needed to be revisited and possibly altered due to many changes in infrastructure since countywide zoning occurred in 2001. Mr. Pilkenton pointed out that once the Zoning Ordinance was updated to add the boundaries of the Town of Taylorsville (scheduled for June 19th), staff could begin the process of revisiting zoning classifications.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2017-2018 ALEXANDER COUNTY EDC PROPOSED BUDGET

David Icenhour, Economic Development Director, explained that N.C.G.S. 158-7.1 required a public hearing for certain appropriations or expenditures of funding for local economic development purposes. In consultation with the County Attorney, staff has identified the following appropriations included in the 2017-2018 proposed budget that meet the criteria specified in the statute:

- \$10,000 for specific marketing and/or advertising intended to promote Alexander County as an expansion or relocation option for retail businesses and industry.
- \$5,000 for the Website Grant Program to assist local businesses in developing an Internet presence.
- \$10,000 for the Building Renovation Grant Program to assist local businesses with building renovation costs related to expansion or job creation.
- \$11,250 for annual dues paid to the Charlotte Regional Partnership for economic development marketing services.
- \$25,000 for the annual payment of the zero interest loan from EnergyUnited for site grading in the Alexander Industrial Park.
- \$150,000 to support the costs related to developing a new shell building in the Alexander Industrial Park for the purpose of encouraging private investment and job creation in Alexander County.

Rick French, County Manager, informed the Board that the \$150,000 for the shell building was not currently budgeted for FY 2017-2018 and would need to be added if the Board chose to support this endeavor. Mr. Icenhour advised that the funding would be used to secure a rail spur to the site as well as minor site work if needed. He also pointed out that an available shell building was the primary factor in Borealis Compounds' decision to locate in Alexander County.

After a motion by Commissioner Lail, second by Commissioner Mayberry, and unanimous vote, Chairman Campbell called the public hearing to order and requested any comments. There being none, Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to close the public hearing. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CVCC UPDATE

Linda Graham, CVCC / Alexander Center Executive Director, thanked the Board for the earlier recognition as well as their and the previous Board's leadership and vision related to the creation of the CVCC / Alexander Applied Technologies Center. In addition, she conveyed her appreciation to all partners including 12 local industries, Alexander County Schools Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Hefner and the Board of Education, Alexander County EDC staff David Icenhour and Gary Herman, ACHS Principal Doug Rhoney, counselors, and CTE

Coordinator Susan Gant, County Engineer Darrell Robertson, the CVCC Advisory Board and staff, and the Town of Taylorsville.

Dr. Keith Mackie reported that the CVCC / Alexander Applied Technologies Center was now complete with the exception of a few minor items and currently housed the Alexander Furniture Academy, welding classes, and the Early College Program. He provided the following information related to those programs:

Furniture Academy – this industry-driven training program led and sponsored by local furniture manufacturers began in the summer of 2016 to prepare students in the skilled positions of sewing and upholstery. Employment has been obtained by all 49 graduates and the third academy will begin on June 20, 2017. Founding industries are Craftmaster, Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams, and Kincaid / La-Z-Boy and other supporters include American Home Furnishings Alliance, Hancock & Moore, Huntington House, Paladin Industries, and Taylor King.

Welding Program – classes began in the fall of 2016 and a total of 7 classes are scheduled for the summer semester with an average of 11 students per class. The Skills USA State Welding Fabrication Competition was held at the Applied Technologies Center in April, resulting in 20 State champions and 15 2nd place holders from CVCC.

Early College – this program also began in the fall of 2016 and provides tuition free college classes to ACHS students saving parents thousands of dollars in higher education tuition fees (total cost savings to parents of all current students equals \$64,000 for CVCC, \$154,000 for ASU, and \$220,000 for UNC Chapel Hill).

Dr. Mackie also thanked everyone involved in the planning, development, and creation of the Applied Technologies Center including Linda Graham who took the opportunity to promote the Alexander Furniture Academy furniture sale currently being held.

PUBLIC HEARING: 2017-2018 ALEXANDER COUNTY PROPOSED BUDGET

Rick French, County Manager, stated that the proposed General Fund budget for Alexander County for FY 2017-2018 totals \$38,900,000 and includes no tax increase. The original 2016-2017 budget totaled \$38,284,170 and the revised 2016-2017 budget (after budget amendments) to date totals \$39,522,836. The 2015-2016 budget for the General Fund totaled \$38,867,686. He reported that the Building Services Advisory Board was recommending an increase of inspection fees as follows to become effective July 1, 2017 – trade permits from \$65 to \$70, minimum fee for any inspection from \$65 to \$70, and fees for building plans from 21 cents to 25 cents per square foot. The City of Hickory has proposed a 1.7% increase in water rates; however, the Hickory City Council has not yet voted on the matter. Water tap fees will continue at the inside rate until June 30, 2018.

Slides and graphs were viewed which contained the following information:

- 2017-2018 proposed General Fund revenues and expenditures.
- Comparison of proposed tax rates and revenue generated by one cent to counties similar in size and surrounding counties.
- Fund balance comparisons for population group average and counties similar in size.
- Tax rate allocations to various county services.

After a motion by Commissioner Lail, second by Commissioner Mayberry, and unanimous vote, Chairman Campbell called the public hearing to order and requested any comments.

Public Comment

Michelle Zirkle asked if there were any vacant buildings in the county that could be sold to generate additional funding. Both Chairman Campbell and Commissioner Mayberry responded that there were no vacant County-owned buildings available and that empty school facilities were owned by the School System who would be the contact for questions related to those specific properties.

Larry Riddle mentioned the increasing number of abandoned mobile homes located in the county and felt they should either be removed after a period of time or the owner charged a yearly fee, which could generate a small amount of income towards the County budget.

Trish Baker, DSS Director, was present to answer any questions pertaining to the 2017-2018 DSS budget request. She stated that the bulk of the substantial increase requested was in the area of foster care services due to the continual rise of substance abuse and neglect by parents; however, she was happy to report that staff had recently cut approximately \$35,000 from the original request submitted in April. She also provided clarification regarding loss of State reimbursements for foster cases that extended beyond the allotted time frame for completion.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to close the public hearing. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the following reappointments:

WPCOG Region E Aging Committee – Reappoint Margo Mosley and Paulette Huffman for two years.

DSS Board – Reappoint Commissioner Jeff Peal for 3 years.

CVCC Board of Trustees – Reappoint John Watts for 4 years.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the reappointments as requested. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #42 - #44

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #42 - #44 as follows:

Budget Amendment #42 – To increase the Library budget for State grant funding in excess of original estimates and to increase the Tax Office budget for estimated May – June NCDOT fees to be charged to the County for collection of motor vehicle taxes through the Tax+Tag Together System.

Budget Amendment #43 – To budget for payouts of vacation / holiday / comp time for Sheriff's Office employees retiring during the 2016-2017 year.

Budget Amendment #44 – To budget for State-shared revenue distributions received that were greater than original budget estimates.

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #42 - #44. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. Our next scheduled Commissioners' Meeting will be on June 19, 2017 where the 2017-2018 Alexander County proposed budget will be presented for consideration.
- B. A free concert is being offered on Sunday, July 2nd at 2:00 PM at the ACHS Auditorium with entertainment provided by the 440th NC Army National Guard Band.
- C. The Independence Day Celebration is set for Saturday, July 8th at ACHS. Activities begin at 6:00 PM with fireworks at approximately 10:00 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$6,640.17) and Tax Refunds (\$1,787.46) for April 22 – May 25, 2017.
- B. Proclamation honoring Annie T. Daniels – the oldest living Gold Star Mother in Alexander County.

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

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

Commissioner Lail made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:41 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Lail made a motion to adjourn at 8:53 PM. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Milton H. Campbell, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board