

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING October 2, 2017

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

ABSENT: Ryan Mayberry

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, October 2, 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 Vice-Chairman Reese led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

*****SPECIAL RECOGNITION*****

Vice-Chairman Reese presented a Key to the County to Judy Lail, Elections Director, in recognition of 10 years of dedicated service with the Alexander County Board of Elections Office and wished her well during her retirement.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Lail mentioned an upcoming presentation by Anthony Starr, WPCOG Executive Director, noting that the WPCOG worked hard to move Alexander County and the 4-county region forward for which he conveyed his appreciation. He also announced that a joint work session would be held between the Alexander County Board of Commissioners, Board of

Education, and CVCC on Monday, October 9, 2017 at 6:00 PM at the Central Office in an effort to brainstorm and develop short and long-term goals.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

PUBLIC HEARING: FY 2018 CALL FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS, 5310 PROGRAM

Patricia Baker, DSS Director, discussed the FY 2018 Call for Capital Projects 5310 Program (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) that would provide transportation for Alexander County seniors and disabled citizens to nutritional sites, doctor appointments, and other life sustaining activities. The grant project budget totals \$194,592 that requires a 10% local and to date no public comment has been received in response to the notice placed in *The Taylorsville Times*. Ms. Baker stated that this grant would be a continuation of the one recently approved this past July and, if approved tonight and awarded, would be included in the 2018-2019 budget request.

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

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to move forward with applying for the FY 2018 Call for Capital Projects 5310 Program Grant and approving the coinciding resolution. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ABC STORE FEASIBILITY STUDY REQUEST

Zac Bryant, ABC Feasibility Study Committee Vice-Chairman, advised that, after several committee meetings including one attended by Laurie Lee with the NC ABC Commission who reviewed options and procedures related to ABC stores, members of the ABC Feasibility Study Committee proposed hiring an economic advisory agency to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of a second ABC store location in Alexander County. On behalf of the committee, Mr. Bryant recommended Creative Economic Development Consulting from Elkin, NC be selected to conduct the feasibility study for \$11,600.

Research will include consideration of start-up costs, potential profitability, and expected expenses based county population and demographics as well as data from surrounding and similar counties and communities, leakage of alcohol sales to other counties, challenges, etc. Results will be provided within 12 weeks from the start date. Mr. Bryant stated that a separate study would be needed to determine location if the feasibility study results were favorable for a second store (estimated at an additional \$5,000).

Rick French, County Manager, informed the Board that Budget Amendment #12 to be considered later in the meeting provided funds for the requested study and therefore suggested waiting for the vote until that time.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Anthony Starr, WPCOG Executive Director, gave a slide show presentation on the 2017 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, a tool used to encourage and equip the region's counties and communities with strategies to improve economic conditions and the quality of life for residents. Suggestions for the 6 subject areas of the CEDS included:

- Economic Development – construct more shell buildings and pad-ready sites, enhance capacity for project and grant development, maximize building reuse and site development opportunities, promote and support the Manufacturing Solutions Center, Morganton Campus of NC School of Science and Math, Center for Engineering Technologies, and other critical assets.
- Workforce – align career pathways with education and training opportunities to meet industry needs, ensure sharing of competitive wage information and its impact on job recruitment and retention, maintain consistent long-term marketing of workforce activities, update the Industry Growth Analysis and shape it as a tool for business recruitment efforts.
- Infrastructure – encourage, plan, and construct transit-oriented development, develop and expand the bicycle and pedestrian network, expand fixed-route transportation to municipalities in all 4 counties, develop transportation projects that rank well in NCDOT's prioritization system to promote and maximize economic development, improve broadband access to rural areas and improve broadband speeds, encourage and assist local government to develop and maintain asset management and capital improvement plans, explore opportunities for coordination and consolidation of utility services.
- Housing – reduce the number of vacant and substandard homes, increase the amount of new-market rate housing especially within and near downtowns, increase the availability of affordable homes.
- Marketing – convene a regional marketing task force, develop a regional approach to marketing, identify and promote regional attractions, events, and natural resources.

- Community Life – cultivate the next generation of community leaders, create robust downtowns throughout the region, promote regional healthy living initiatives.

Mr. Starr added that the updated CEDS was being presented to all local governments in the region along with key partners, stakeholder groups, civic clubs, and the public.

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PRESENTATIONS

Staff from the NC Cooperative Extension / Alexander County Center gave an update and overview of current and ongoing activities as follows:

Allison Brown, Extension Agent – Livestock and Row Crops

- Alexander County ranks 13th in NC for beef cattle production and 5th for dairy cattle. In 2015, over \$188 million in cash receipts for livestock, dairy, and poultry placed us at 9th for agriculture income.
- The 2017 Alexander County 4-H Livestock Skillathon and Quizbowl older junior team placed 3rd in both competitions and Clate Childers placed 5th for overall individual.
- In conjunction with the Soil & Water Office, staff submitted a grant to purchase a weed wiper, a cost effective and environmentally friendly tool to control weeds with less chemical use. The Alexander County Cattlemen's Association supplied funding for costs not covered by the grant.
- The first Foothills Forage Tour was held last year showcasing forage ideas and methods used by progressive farmers to feed livestock.

Der Holcomb, Extension Agent – Family and Consumer Sciences

- The Taylorsville Learning Center teaches children how to garden, harvest, and prepare crops as well as components of the My Plate Food Guide.
- The Catawba River Farm School is a 7-month program providing instruction for developing a business plan, financial management, and marketing strategies along with field day visits.
- The Health Living Series informs participants on inflammation, pre/probiotics, micro/macro nutrients, and synergistic eats.
- Other activities include pressure canning lid testing, school garden train the trainer programs, Farm 2 Child Care Program, Preserving the Harvest workshop, Try Healthy curriculum for the Taylorsville Learning Center, Safe Plates training, and Speedway to Healthy for 3rd graders.

Christy Crouse, Extension Agent – 4-H Youth Development

- Summer camp activities included Cloverbud Camp trips, Farm to Fork and Kids in the Kitchen Programs, STEM Day, 4H20 Camp, and Discovery Days.
- Sarah Perry and Anna Beth Harris participated in the 4-H Congress in Raleigh. Ms. Perry was also inducted into the 4-H Honor Club.

- Other activities include after school programs, Reading Partners through Communities in Schools, and the Leader in Me Program at Ellendale and Hiddenite Elementary.

Lenny Rogers, County Extension Director

- The Master Gardener’s Program is a 12-week program with 40 hours of instruction on a variety of gardening skills. To become certified, participants must also pass an exam and complete a 40-hour internship.
- A pesticide collection effort was held in conjunction with the Household Hazardous Waste Day where approximately 700 lbs. of product was collected.
- Community raised bed gardens constructed by Master Gardeners are available to rent for \$15.
- Sunflowers were planted at local apple farms to attract stink bugs reducing damage to crops and a rhubarb field demonstration took place at the Farmers’ Daughter.
- The annual Farmer’s Market runs from mid-June to September, located most recently in the old hospital parking lot. Staff would like to move the market to a more family-friendly site in town.

Additional comments included the recent hiring of a poultry agent for the region funded 100% by the State, a request from local growers for an area tree fruit agent, and concerns with lack of storage space in the former Community One Bank building (future home of Cooperative Extension and other County offices).

SCHEDULING OF A PUBLIC HEARING

Rick French, County Manager, explained that, in order to apply for a CDBG sewer grant for the Stony Point area, a public hearing needed to be held at Stony Point Elementary School who will directly benefit from the grant. Therefore, he suggested either October 23rd or October 24th at 6:00 PM.

After discussion of schedules, Commissioner Peal made a motion to hold the public hearing on Monday, October 23, 2017 at 6:00 PM at Stony Point Elementary School. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #12 - #18 & PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE #P-1

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #12 - #18 and Project Budget Ordinance #P-1 as follows:

Budget Amendment #12 – To budget for the estimated cost of a feasibility study related to a potential new ABC store in Alexander County.

Budget Amendment #13 – To budget for a temporary part-time position at the Soil & Water Office during the department head’s maternity leave.

Budget Amendment #14 – To increase the Health Department budget for additional WIC and STD Prevention funds as well as for a BlueCross BlueShield of NC Foundation Grant for health telemedicine funds.

Budget Amendment #15 – To decrease the Health Department budget due to a reduction to the Healthy Mother – Healthy Child Program from the State resulting in a significant portion of the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant funds being utilized.

Budget Amendment #16 – To amend the County Water & Sewer Fund annual budget for estimated costs of an engineering contract to prepare and submit preliminary engineering reports to the NC Division of Water Infrastructure for the Alexander County Water System Extension Project.

Budget Amendment #17 – To increase the Bethlehem Sewer Fund annual budget for estimated costs of an engineering contract to prepare and submit preliminary engineering reports to the NC Division of Water Infrastructure for the Alexander County Sewer Collection Line Extension and Pump Station Upgrade Project.

Budget Amendment #18 – To budget for the General Fund local match for the Borealis Compounds Industrial Rail Project using the new sales tax for economic development, public education, and community colleges.

Project Budget Ordinance #P-1 – To budget for the Borealis Compounds Industrial Rail Project.

During discussions related to Budget Amendment #12, it was clarified that the County had received almost \$64,000 in excise tax revenue for alcohol sales based on population since approval of the referendum; however, the funding for the ABC store feasibility study will be appropriated directly from the professional / technical services line item within the Governing Body budget.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #12 - #18 as well as Project Budget Ordinance #P-1. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. A total of \$398,573.08 has been collected in sales tax revenue through September 2017 (\$120,923.68 is new sales tax for economic development, public education, and

community colleges). This amount is 8.75% of the \$4,556,000 budgeted with 8.33% of the budget year expired and an increase over last year of 4.29%.

- B. Staff has received an estimated debt schedule for the Alexander County Water System Extension and the Sewer Collection Line Extension and Pump Station Upgrade loans. The first \$3 million of each loan will be interest free and the remaining balance (\$1,971,335 water / \$2,181,300 sewer) will be at 1.91%. Payments will be made with revenues from the new sales tax for economic development, public education, and community colleges.

Commissioner Lail pointed out that property tax revenue had never been used for water or sewer debt service payments, meaning that only county residents who utilize those services contributed to the financing of the projects.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the September 11, 2017 Regular Meeting and September 12, 2017 Called Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests (\$1,676.57) and Tax Refunds (\$1,307.56) for September 1-21, 2017.
- C. Records Retention and Disposition Schedule for the Register of Deeds.
- D. Proposal for Engineering Services from McGill Associates, P.A. for the Alexander County Water System Extension Project, NCDWI Project #H-SRP-D-17-0098.
- E. Proposal for Engineering Report from Shabeldeen Engineering, P.A. and McKim & Creed, Inc. for the Alexander County Sewer Collection Line Extension and Pump Station Upgrade NCDWI Project #E-SRP-W-17-0067.

Commissioner Peal 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

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:38 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Lail made a motion to adjourn at 8:28 PM. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Milton H. Campbell, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board