

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING June 4, 2018

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Ronnie L. Reese, Chairman
 Josh Lail, Vice-Chairman
 Milton H. Campbell
 Ryan Mayberry (arrived at 6:08 PM)
 Dr. Jeff 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 4, 2018 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

Commissioner Peal presented a Key to the County to Doug Rhoney for his dedication, leadership, and immeasurable impact on the students and faculty of Alexander Central High School during his tenure as principal. The Board wished him well with his new position in Catawba County.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Reese congratulated the ACHS Lady Cougars, coached by Darrell Adkins, for winning their 10th 3A State Softball Championship at UNC Greensboro.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

2017 STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT

Leeanne Whisnant, Health Director, gave the 2017 State of the County Health Report that included leading causes of death in Alexander County (cancer, heart disease, lower respiratory disease, and Alzheimer's), community priorities (Healthy Families Program, mental health, and substance abuse), and emerging issues (diabetes and Alzheimer's). Grant funding was received from the NC Office of Rural Health (\$150,000) to fund existing primary care services and Duke Endowment (\$175,000) to create a behavioral health program.

The full report can be viewed at www.alexanderhealth.org and is available at the Health Department, all library branches, and the Administration Office.

BROADBAND PROJECT UPDATE

Greg Cronk, Information Technology Director, gave an update on the Broadband Project that included a review of recommendations provided by Open Broadband, LLC who conducted the Broadband Feasibility Study presented in January as well as progress made toward goals developed by County staff as follows:

- An engineering study of the Linney's Mountain tower was completed in May 2018.
- The Linney's Mountain tower property was purchased in June 2018.
- Upgrades to the Linney's Mountain tower is planned during the 2018-2019 budget year.
- Preapproval for a \$50,000 ARC grant for a broadband pilot project was received in May 2018. A grant match of \$50,000 is included in the 2018-2019 budget proposal.
- RFP's to solicit broadband providers for the pilot project is planned for fall 2018.
- Staff will continue working with current and potential providers as well as research potential grant sources to continue broadband development.

Commissioner Mayberry felt the Board should further discuss the innovation center recommendation generated by the Broadband Feasibility Study.

ADOPTION OF 2017-2018 BUDGET ORDINANCE FOR ALEXANDER COUNTY

Rick French, County Manager, presented the 2018-2019 Alexander County Budget Ordinance for consideration, noting that the proposed budget totaled \$41,200,000 with no property tax or fee increases; however, he pointed out that the City of Hickory was proposing a 2.1% rate increase that would affect water customers. He also suggested keeping water tap fees at the inside rate.

Chairman Reese pointed out that the County was able to provide additional funding to several departments for 2018-2019 as outlined below, also noting that the DSS budget would be fully funded with only a \$58,742 increase in local dollars.

- School System - \$6,520,851 appropriation / \$488,950 additional funding (does not include a \$90,000 grant match for the Stony Point Elementary School Sewer Project paid from County funds.
- Sheriff's Office - \$3,127,397 budgeted / \$204,050 additional funding
- EMS - \$3,289,351 budgeted / \$147,938 additional funding
- Detention Center - \$2,659,233 budgeted / \$196,370 additional funding

Commissioner Campbell pointed out that audit comparisons for 2014 and 2017 showed the County increased its net spending by only \$1.37 million over a 3-year period with a \$359,000 decline in general government expenses. In addition, he advised that he would vote in opposition to the proposed budget solely due to the inclusion of a COLA for all employees rather than increases based on merit and performance.

Commissioner Mayberry stated that the County had increased the appropriation to the School System by approximately one-third since 2012-2013. Commissioner Peal added that the property tax increase in 2015 had generated additional low wealth revenue for the School System, estimated at \$800,000 per year.

Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the 2018-2019 Budget Ordinance for Alexander County. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed 3 in favor (Commissioners Mayberry, Peal, and Reese) and two against (Commissioners Campbell and Lail). The motion carried.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #56 - #60

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #56 - #60 as follows:

Budget Amendment #56 – To increase the Public Buildings budget for security upgrades at the CVCC / Alexander Center and Applied Technologies Center.

Budget Amendment #57 – To budget for grant funding from the NCDEQ / Water Resources for a stream restoration project to be recorded on the County's general ledger as outlined in revised State requirements.

Budget Amendment #58 – To increase the Bethlehem Sewer Fund annual budget for the cost of an engineering contract (design, permitting, bidding, and construction phase) for the Bethlehem Sewer Extension Project to be paid with Article 44*524 revenue.

Budget Amendment #59 – To increase the Bethlehem Sewer Fund annual budget for the cost of an engineering contract for a sewer treatment facility preliminary feasibility analysis to be paid with Article 44*524 revenue.

Budget Amendment #60 – To adjust the Bethlehem Water Fund annual budget for the cost of an engineering contract for a water treatment facility preliminary feasibility analysis.

Vice-Chairman Lail made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #56 - #60. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. Staff has received a letter of intent from the NC Division of Water Infrastructure to fund the Stony Point Elementary School Sewer Project. The CDBG-I grant is contingent on the County meeting all milestones as outlined in the letter and the expected date for execution of the construction contract is May 2020.
- B. Seven Alexander County fire departments received grant funds from the NC Office of the State Fire Marshall totaling \$90,853 that will be used to purchase needed equipment.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the May 14, 2018 Regular Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests (\$1,449.45) and Tax Refunds (\$2,309.73) for May 1-24, 2018.
- C. Authority to represent agreement with lead counsel McHugh Fuller Law Group for opioid civil suit.
- D. Home and Community Care Block Grant SFY 2018-2019.

Commissioner Peal made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Campbell 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 Lail made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:55 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Lail made a motion to adjourn at 7:42 PM. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ronnie L. Reese, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board