

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING September 9, 2019

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Dr. Jeff Peal, Chairman
 Ronnie Reese, Vice-Chairman
 Larry Yoder
 Ryan Mayberry
 Marty Pennell

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, September 9, 2019 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice-Chairman Reese gave the invocation and Commissioner Mayberry led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

Chairman Peal presented a Key to the County to Russell Greene in recognition of 20 years of dedicated service as the Alexander County Fire Marshal / Emergency Services Director. The Board congratulated Mr. Greene on his retirement.

After thanking the Board for the recognition, Mr. Greene stated that Alexander County had great staff and volunteers, noting the importance of creating working relationships prior to a disaster in order to be successful . He thanked his family for their support as well as County Manager French who entrusted him with many projects over the years.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Vice-Chairman Reese attended a Farmland VAD Board Meeting last week where discussion was held regarding a new consent form for anyone buying property within a ½ mile from an agricultural district. In addition, he mentioned a listening tour held at the CVCC / Alexander Center where the county's strengths, weaknesses, and other issues shared by counties were discussed.

Commissioner Yoder attended the NCACC Annual Conference held last week in Greensboro. He advised that Kevin Austin from Yadkin County was elected as the new President, Ronnie Smith as President-Elect, Frank Williams as Vice-President, and Tracy Johnson as 2nd Vice-President.

Chairman Peal announced that a Friends of the Library Book Sale was scheduled for October 2-5, 2019. He also mentioned a recent opportunity he had to share the plans and community vision for the Bethlehem area with his sister who is moving to the area.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Peal requested that the Board of Commissioners' Closed Session be held after the Consolidated Human Services Board Meeting instead of before as scheduled.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

BETHLEHEM COMMUNITY PLAN

Jon Pilkenton, Director of Planning & Development, explained that, in anticipation of the expected growth in the Bethlehem area over the next 5-10 years, Alexander County signed a contract with the WPCOG in July 2018 to provide technical assistance in the development of an area plan. The Board of Commissioners also appointed an 11-member committee made up of Bethlehem residents and business owners to provide input into the plan's specifics. In addition to monthly committee meetings, two community meetings were held to gather input during the planning stage as well as to review the final draft.

He advised that the purpose of the Bethlehem Community Plan was to be a tool used when making zoning or land use decisions in Bethlehem, noting that any recommendation found in the document would have to be adopted into the Alexander County Zoning Ordinance and require approval by the county commissioners after a public hearing. The proposed plan included the following:

- Demographics – presented by Jon Pilkenton

- Transportation, Resources & Services, and Natural & Cultural Resources – presented by Bud Caywood, Bethlehem Community Plan Committee Chairman
- Economic Development & Tourism and Land Use & Growth Management – presented by Andi Jack, Committee Vice-Chair

The Board thanked the members of the committee as well as County and WPCOG staff for their time and efforts in the creation of the plan.

Rick French, County Manager, stated that several items within the plan were misleading and he felt clarification was needed before final print.

After discussion, Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to approve the Bethlehem Community Plan, allowing Mr. French and Mr. Pilkenton to work out any technical corrections to be brought back to the Board for review at the October Commissioners' Meeting. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

HOMETOWN STRONG REPORT

Gary Herman, Public Information Officer, gave an overview of the Governor's Hometown Strong Program that begins with a visit from a team of State government official to small communities to discuss problems, needs, and priorities. The Alexander County team meeting was held on August 26th and consisted of representatives from NC Departments of Administration, Commerce, Environmental Quality, Health and Human Services, Information Technology, Public Safety, Revenue, Transportation, Human Resources, and Budget & Management. Several County staff members presented the following topics of discussion:

- Economic Development, current industries and upcoming Industrial Park Projects, Broadband Pilot Program and need for service expansion, reduced grant eligibility due to being a Tier 2 county.
- Concerns with \$25 million in the proposed State budget for courthouse renovations and construction for only a few counties (not all) and the need for a stream restoration grant following June 2019 flooding.
- Requirement for counties to pick up medical expenses for jail inmates (Alexander County is currently owes approx. \$400,000 for a few inmates with serious medical issues).
- The need to establish consistent zip codes and concerns that sales tax revenue owed to Alexander County is appropriated to adjacent counties due to zip code numbering.
- Construction of a new mental health facility in Alexander County, need for financial assistance with upsizing utilities in conjunction with NCDOT Highway 127 widening project, and a PARTF grant application for the Courthouse Park in 2020.

Mr. Herman reported that the Hometown Strong Team would be taking these concerns back to Raleigh for review and would be in contact in the near future.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING VAYA HEALTH FUNDING

Rick French, County Manager, stated that the NC General Assembly had reduced State funding for behavioral health services by more than \$458 million over the past 4 years while expecting LME/MCO's to continue offering the same level of services. Vaya Health alone has seen a \$48 million reduction and stands to lose another \$9 million if the current proposed State budget is approved. Mr. French provided a resolution requesting the NC General Assembly to:

- Stop cutting Vaya Health's State single-stream funding so that such funds can be utilized to strengthen access to healthcare services for the mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities, and substance use disorder needs of uninsured and underinsured Alexander County citizens; and
- Allow Vaya Health to build up its Medicaid savings so that Vaya can reinvest in services and supports for our communities rather than mandating that such funds be used to replace reduced State funding.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the Vaya Health Funding resolution. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SURPLUS AND SALE OF SERVICE BADGE

Rick French, County Manager, recommended approval of a resolution declaring the service badge issued for Russell Greene, Emergency Services Director, as surplus to be sold to Mr. Greene for a sum of \$1.00 upon his retirement.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Surplus and Sale of Service Badge resolution. Commissioner Mayberry seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #10 - #12

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #10 - #12 as follows:

Budget Amendment #10 – To increase the Health Department budget for a Duke Endowment grant carried forward from prior years to establish an integrated behavioral health program.

Budget Amendment #11 – To increase the 2019-2020 special appropriation to Carolina Land & Lakes and to adjust the Detention budget revenue line items to account for Paytel telephone revenue.

Budget Amendment #12 – To increase the DSS budget for an additional Adult Medicaid part-time position.

Commissioner Mayberry made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #10 - #12. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. The first two public recreation planning meetings have been held with no attendance by the public. Future meetings are scheduled for September 10th at the Stony Point library, September 12th at Dusty Ridge Park, and October 3rd at Rocky Face Park.
- B. A pre-construction meeting for the Water System Extension Project was held last week. Contracts have been signed and the official start date is set for September 23rd.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the August 19, 2019 Regular Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests (\$31,789.23) and Tax Refunds (\$1,792.13) for August 10-31, 2019.
- C. Surplus a 1998 Ford Crown Victoria, VIN #2FAFP71W06X163605 with 222,653 miles; a 2007 Chevy Impala, VIN #2GLWS58RL79415406 with 202,436 miles; and a 2008 Ford Crown Victoria, VIN #2FAFP71V88X108717 with 228,700 miles.

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

CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD ACTIVITIES

At 7:11 PM, the Board transitioned into the Consolidated Human Services Board Meeting and proceeded as follows:

- Welcome – LeeAnne Whisnant, Consolidated Human Services Director, announced that the first meeting of the Consolidated Human Services Advisory Committee was held on August 19th where the group took part in an orientation similar to the BOCC/CHSB in July, only more detailed.
- Public Comment – there was no one signed up to speak.

- Medicaid Managed Care Update – Patricia Baker, DSS Director, stated that, due to lack of an approved State budget, the phased rollout of Medicaid Transformation (changing from fee for service to pre-paid managed care) would instead take place all at once effective February 2020, which could cause significant delays with NCFAS. DSS staff also anticipates increased call volume and foot traffic from the 5,000 Alexander County residents that will need to choose a Medicaid Managed Care Plan and primary health care provider between October 14 – December 13, 2019 either by phone, mail, or online. She advised that 5 plans were available and that residents who do not choose a plan would be auto enrolled on December 16th.

Jesse Smathers, Vaya Community Relations Regional Director, spoke regarding the 300 Alexander County residents that will need tailored plans (specialty care such as behavioral health provided by LME/MCO's), noting that Vaya will need to offer incentives like the 5 standard plans have to avoid losing citizens who should be served by a tailored plan. He expressed concerns with the State's plan to eliminate one catchment area (7 current LME/MCO's) as well as the fact that other states have only seen 20% of their Medicaid population select a plan (triggering auto-enrollment by the State).

Ms. Whisnant added that the Alexander County Health Department was also in contract negotiations with the 5 plan providers and that staff planned to offer some community forums to allow the public to speak with the Medicaid Managed Care broker.

- 2018 Community Health Assessment Report – Billie Walker, Assistant Health Director, advised that a community health assessment was mandated every 4 years to identify factors affecting the health of the population and determine the availability of resources within the community to address them. The process includes surveying the community, analyzing responses, selecting priorities, identifying resources, and finalization of focus areas. She provided the following information related to Alexander County's assessment:
 - Most important health problems identified as cancer, obesity/overweight, heart disease, Diabetes, depression/mental health, dental health, lack of physical activity, access to care, availability to healthy food, and Alzheimer's Disease.
 - Top 3 health priorities identified as mental health, substance abuse, and healthy lifestyles.
 - Ways to address health priorities include use of an existing grant to build the behavioral health program (in-lobby referral kiosk, counseling rooms for both adults and children, in-house resources for pregnant mothers with addictions), substance abuse initiatives (take-back campaigns, NARCAN grants and lock boxes, increased awareness in schools), and access to healthier options (farmer's market, farm to table events, area parks, and running community).
- Senior Center Activities Update – Christine Gates, Senior Center Director, discussed the overhaul of Medicaid Part D that now requires online My Medicare accounts for every

senior in the country. Open enrollment begins October 15th and savings for the year are on track so far. She reported that August participation was down a little for the main location but up for the Bethlehem branch. No activities were held in Stony Point due to vacation schedules. Routine activities offered include exercise and dance classes, social activities such as birthday celebrations, card games and bingo, day trips, puzzles, art and music, technology classes, and participation in the Unifour Senior Games.

- Next Meeting Date – Ms. Whisnant stated that the next scheduled CHSB Meeting would be held on November 4, 2019.

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

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 8:24 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, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 9:27 PM. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Jeffrey P. Peal, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board