

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING April 6, 2020

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, April 6, 2020 via Zoom in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Peal conveyed his appreciation to Alexander County employees for their assistance in navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic. He also thanked the citizens who must report to work each day to provide health care and emergency services, stock shelves, etc.

Chairman Mayberry echoed Commissioner Peal's comments, also thanking the public for taking precautions and complying with Governor Roy Cooper's executive orders.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC HEARING: APPROVAL OF ROAD NAMES

Commissioner Peal made a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to continue the public hearing until the next Commissioners' Meeting scheduled for April 20, 2020. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Leeanne Whisnant, Consolidated Human Services Director, reported that Alexander County only had two positive cases of COVID-19 with no deaths or hospitalizations compared to 2,870 cases statewide with 33 deaths and 270 hospitalized (in 90 of 100 counties). Several tests are still pending due to results taking approximately a week to receive. She explained that new guidelines require testing for only frontline medical/emergency workers and high-risk individuals. The rest of the population is asked to self-isolate at home for 7 days past onset of symptoms AND after 3 days fever-free without medication. Staff is currently tracking several individuals in the county who have symptoms but have not been tested. Ms. Whisnant thanked the community for taking social distancing and the stay-at-home order seriously, which she contributed to the low number of cases.

Doug Gillispie, Public Services Director, advised that pre-shift screenings (temperature/symptom check) were now required for all EMS employees, who have also been asked to arrive in street clothes and change into their uniform at the base. Paramedics respond to every call wearing a surgical mask and, if COVID-19 symptoms are present with the patient, change into PPE. He stated that 100% of full-time paramedics have been N95 fit tested along with 30% of part-time. Testing has also been completed for Sheriff's Office, Animal Services and will continue for remaining paramedics and Detention officers. Communications is also utilizing a pre-screen for 911 calls to determine if COVID-19 exposure is a possibility for emergency responders.

Chairman Mayberry felt that due to the new testing protocol, the possibility of many unknown positive cases was very likely. Ms. Whisnant agreed. He also expressed concerns with lack of N95 masks for frontline employees. Mr. Gillispie replied that the County currently had an adequate N95 supply but, due to uncertainties surrounding virus peak, noted that staff used the minimum supplies needed to remain safe in an effort to conserve.

Rick French, County Manager, provided an overview of which County departments were closed and partially staffed as well as employees who were alternating schedules or working from home.

Commissioner Peal has received several calls from citizens asking why parks cannot remain open if social distancing is practiced. Mr. French replied that the decision to close Alexander County parks was made because visitors would have to be limited to 10, playground/bathroom facilities would be closed, and an injury at a park would pull already strained emergency personnel away from dealing with current COVID-19 issues. Commissioner Peal suggested those reasons be

explained to the public. Mr. French felt this information could be passed along during the next Code Red message.

Chairman Mayberry also mentioned that opening Alexander County parks would draw out-of-town visitors, possibly creating a large crowd.

Board members thanked County staff for their efforts as well as the citizens for abiding by Governor Cooper's executive orders and NCDHHS, CDC, Public Health, etc. guidelines and suggestions.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE NC SCFAC

Rick French, County Manager, requested approval of a resolution supporting the NC State Consumer & Family Advisory Committee tasked with addressing the needs of individuals with mental health, intellectual and development disabilities, substance abuse disorders, and traumatic brain injuries. The NC SCFAC also advises the NCDHHS and NC Legislature on service gaps, underserved populations, budget appropriations, etc.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve the resolution in support of the NC SCFAC. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

DAILY DEPOSIT REQUIREMENT – EXCEPTION FOR UP TO \$500

Rick French, County Manager, submitted a request from the Alexander County Finance Department to only require daily deposits when monies on-hand amount to \$500 or more pursuant to N.C.G.S. 159-32. He explained that increasing the requirement for daily deposit amounts will allow for flexibility needed due to reduced staffing.

Commissioner Peal made a motion to approve the \$500 daily deposit requirement exception. Vice-Chairman Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the following reappointments:

Historic Preservation Committee – reappoint Betty Long for 3 years.

Planning & Zoning Commission – reappoint Bud Caywood and Steve Icenhour for two years.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve the reappointments. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. Buckeye Bridge, LLC has completed the Wittenburg Springs portion of the Water System Extension Project (with the exception of landscaping and driveway repair) and will move on to Teague Town Road. Mr. French provided a list of possible additions that totaled \$1,380,738 and included Sanchez Road, RZ Bowman Drive and William Reece Lane, Clouse Lane, Friday Cockrell Lane and Rabbit Hollow Lane, Al Fox Road and Crowson Road, Outrigger Drive and Drum & Hammer Drive.

In response to concerns by several commissioners related to cost and necessity, it was agreed that representatives from McGill Associates would attend the next meeting to discuss specifics. A budget amendment will also be prepared.

- B. The Bethlehem Sewer Extension Project is scheduled to begin on May 4, 2020.
- C. Bids for the Stony Point Elementary School CDBG-I Sewer Project will be opened tomorrow, April 7th.
- D. Refunds for Recreation sports and RockyFest vendor fees will be issued soon.
- E. The deadline for PARTF grant applications has been moved from May 1st to June 1st.
- F. Staff hopes to have project estimates for the Dusty Ridge Park and Wittenburg Access Projects in early May.
- G. Mr. French polled the Board about postponing the April 20th meeting until April 27th or later. After discussion, it was agreed that the April 20th Commissioners' Meeting would be held as scheduled.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes from the March 9, 2020 Regular Meeting and March 17, 2020 Emergency Meeting.
- B. Tax Release Requests (\$1,709.58) and Tax Refunds (\$1,059.03) for March 1-27, 2020.

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

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

Chairman Mayberry made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:54 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 Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 7:18 PM. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ryan N. Mayberry, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board