

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING April 20, 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 20, 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

Commissioner Reese gave the invocation and Commissioner Pennell led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Pennell stated that Alexander County citizens were most likely feeling the financial effects of COVID-19 by now. He thanked them for abiding by Governor Cooper's executive orders and assured them there was light at the end of the tunnel.

Commissioner Reese hoped the stay-at-home order had allowed citizens the opportunity to spend more time with their families. He urged everyone to be safe as efforts to reopen began soon.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

PUBLIC HEARING: APPROVAL OF ROAD NAMES

Rick French, County Manager, submitted the following road names, which have met all required regulations and been checked for duplication and sound indexing, for approval:

<u>Road No.</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
3729DS	Nest Lane	Off NC Highway 127
3715JA	Olivers Cove Drive	Off Players Ridge Road
3715GK2	Riverside Drive	Off NC Highway 127
3715GK1	Water Drive	Off NC Highway 127

There being no comments made during the public hearing (continued from April 6, 2020), Commissioner Peal made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve the road names as presented. Commissioner Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Leeanne Whisnant, Consolidated Human Services Director, reported that Alexander County had a 4th confirmed positive case of COVID-19, a symptom-free healthcare worker that was tested as a precaution due to numerous cases within the long-term facility where employed (out-of-county). More than 125 Alexander County citizens have been tested and the previous 3 positive cases have now fully recovered. She stated that current testing supplies were adequate for the acutely ill; however, more will be needed to implement the Governor's new testing initiative that will require tracking of individuals who have been in contact with someone testing positive.

Doug Gillispie, Public Services Director, thanked Shurtape Technologies who donated close to 2,000 N95 masks, many of which will be provided to fire departments and other volunteer organizations. Several shipments of supplies have been received from NC Emergency Management and PPE orders have been placed. He added that local food pantries were running low and were accepting donations.

Rick French, County Manager, advised that all maintenance staff would return to work this week to begin catching up on projects and address any issues at Rocky Face Park, which he hopes to reopen soon with restrictions (restrooms/playground/picnic shelters closed, no rock climbing, trails open with social distancing requirement). In response to a question asked by Chairman Mayberry

related to opening Rocky Face Park for Alexander County residents only, Mr. French stated that, because State grant funding was used to construct the park, he doubted admittance could be restricted.

Chairman Mayberry discussed following suit with other counties and sending a letter to Governor Cooper requesting he allow county commission boards the authority to decide when to reopen and what restrictions to enforce instead of a statewide approach. The Board was in agreement.

Vice-Chairman Yoder had no opposition to sending the letter or to counties reopening individually but felt public health departments and other appropriate staff members should be consulted and guidelines developed before doing so. He also thanked local industries for donations.

Commissioner Pennell felt a nationwide reopening of businesses was necessary, pointing out that many would not be able to operate if needed supplies and services could not be obtained due to other businesses, counties, or states remaining closed.

WATER SYSTEM EXTENSION PROJECT ADDITIONS

R.J. Mozeley and Doug Chapman with McGill Associates, P.A. discussed proposed additions to the Water System Extension Project that included the following 6 areas:

Area #1 – Sanchez Road

Area #2 – RZ Bowman Drive and William Reece Lane

Area #3 – Clouse Lane

Area #4 – Friday Cockrell Lane and Rabbit Hollow Lane

Area #5 – Al Fox Road and Crowson Road

Area #6 – Outrigger Drive and Drum & Hammer Drive

Mr. Mozeley explained that Buckeye Bridge could begin work on these areas once completed with the current project, estimated by early September. If approved, an additional 12,250 linear feet of water lines will be installed and 54 initial connections made for \$1,402,738 (updated total since April 6th Meeting). Because all are private roads, right-of-way easements will be needed.

Commissioner Peal had concerns with spending \$1.4 million for only 54 customers. Mr. French explained that those 54 were immediate connections and that there was always potential for more over time. He pointed out that the Water System Extension Project totaled almost \$4.7 million for 270 initial connections and felt water/sewer infrastructure was always a good investment.

Commissioner Pennell felt the possibility for considerable growth was lacking on most of the areas proposed and asked how the locations were selected. Mr. French replied that roads were chosen based on functionality within the current/future water system as well as requests from citizens because of failing wells or water quality issues. He added that Sanchez Road was the oldest request with staff receiving numerous calls for many years.

Chairman Mayberry stated that providing a quality water source to citizens was as important as development and infrastructure, noting that he was aware of several cases of arsenic in wells.

Vice-Chairman Yoder agreed, also pointing out that ground water was slowing drying up causing current wells to fail and creating the inability to dig new ones.

Commissioner Reese mentioned speaking to many citizens over the years about the need for water and felt the County should help if in a good position to do so.

Mr. French advised that a budget amendment for approval of this addition would be presented later in the meeting. No property tax revenue will be used; all funds will be taken from water user fees.

STONY POINT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CDBG-I SEWER PROJECT CONTRACT AWARD & RESOLUTION

Rick French, County Manager, advised that a bid opening for the Stony Point Elementary School CDBG-I Sewer Project was held on April 7, 2020 where 7 bids were received. Locke-Lane Construction was the lowest responsive, responsible bidder with a total bid of \$644,710.57 (includes two alternates for wastewater screening).

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to accept the bid of \$644,710.57 and award the contract for the Stony Point Elementary School CDBG-I Sewer Project to Lock-Lane Construction. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Yoder also made a motion to approve the Resolution of Tentative Award to Lock-Lane Construction. Commissioner Peal seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #44 - #53 & PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE #P-2

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #44 - #53 and Project Budget Ordinance #P-2 as follows:

Budget Amendment #44 – To increase the Health Department budget for Federal grant funds to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

Budget Amendment #45 – To increase the budget for fees required to be remitted to the State based on revenues collected by the Register of Deeds.

Budget Amendment #46 – To decrease the estimated revenue from interest earned on investments during the 2019-2020 budget year.

Budget Amendment #47 – To increase the DSS budget for additional Crisis Intervention Payment and Low Income Energy Assistance Program funding.

Budget Amendment #48 – To increase the DSS budget for donations received in excess of original budget estimates for Karen’s Kids and to assist families with adoption costs.

Budget Amendment #49 – To budget for vacation/holiday/comp payouts through March 2020 for employees leaving during the 2019-2020 budget year.

Budget Amendment #50 – To increase the Detention budget for estimated supplies and inmate medical bills for the remainder of 2019-2020 budget year due to serious conditions that require treatment beyond in-house medical visits.

Budget Amendment #51 – To adjust the School Capital Improvements Fund for a revised estimate of school capital expenditures for the 2019-2020 budget year and for expected investment earnings to be lower than original estimates.

Budget Amendment #52 – To budget for a General Fund transfer to the Park Improvements Fund (Wittenburg Access and Dusty Ridge Park).

Budget Amendment #53 – To budget for a portion of the engineering services (design phase and easement mapping) for the 6 smaller water line extensions to be constructed at the completion of the NCDEQ loan-funded Water System Extension Project.

Project Budget Ordinance #P-2 – To budget for the Wittenburg Access and Dusty Ridge Park Improvements Project.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #44 - #53 and Project Budget Ordinance #P-2. Vice-Chairman Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. Due to the IRS filing period extension and many accountants not meeting with clients in person, the Tax Office is requesting the Board to consider waiving late fees for business personal property. This item will be placed on the May 4th agenda for consideration.
- B. A total of \$3,459,035.47 has been collected in sales tax revenue as of January 2020 (\$1,086,038.48 is new sales tax for economic development, public education, and community colleges). This amount is 67.10% of the \$5,155,000 budgeted with 66.67% of the budget year expired and an increase over last year of 9.28%.
- C. Document Destruction Day scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2020 has been cancelled.
- D. Mr. French provided the following revised budget calendar:

- Proposed budget given to the Board of Commissioners on May 4th
- Budget public hearing on May 18th
- Budget adoption on June 1st

He advised that, due to revenue stream uncertainties surrounding COVID-19, the proposed budget would be very conservative and not include new employees or unplanned capital items/equipment.

Commissioner Peal discussed a request from the Rocky Face Rangers to place the Confederate Flag on the Alexander County Confederate Monument located on the courthouse lawn on two occasions each year – General Robert E. Lee’s birthday in January and Confederate Memorial Day in May. He felt this was a good solution to settle the misunderstanding with the Rangers regarding use of County-owned flagpoles.

Vice-Chairman Yoder, who did not take issues with the request, felt it should have been placed on the agenda as an official item of business so that the public would have been made aware. Chairman Mayberry felt the Confederate Flag was sometimes controversial but believed that the Rangers sole intent was to honor their fallen ancestors, not to create division. Commissioner Peal pointed out that the inscription on the front face of the Alexander County Confederate Monument reads that the Civil War was motivated by states’ rights, not slavery.

There being no further discussion, Commissioner Peal made a motion to allow the Rocky Face Rangers to place the Confederate Flag at a designated site on the Alexander County Confederate Monument two days each year as requested. Commissioner Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

Chairman Mayberry made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:30 PM to discuss contractual matters and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(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 7:57 PM. Commissioner Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ryan N. Mayberry, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board