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**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     April 18, 2022

**ALEXANDER COUNTY**  
**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**PRESENT:**    Ronnie Reese, Chairman  
                 Marty Pennell, Vice-Chairman  
                 Josh Lail  
                 Larry Yoder

**ABSENT:**     Kent Herman

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, April 18, 2022 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 Yoder gave the invocation and Commissioner Lail led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Yoder discussed attending the ribbon cutting for CyberBuzz Entertainment on April 9, 2022. The new business features an Omni Arena with virtual reality games, escape rooms, and laser tag as well as ax throwing.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **PUBLIC HEARING: PARKS ORDINANCE / COURTHOUSE PARK, SPLASH PAD, & ROTARY STAGE RULES, FEES, & HOURS OF OPERATION**

Alisha Stamey, Park Ranger, presented the Alexander County Parks Ordinance and recommended approval on behalf of the Parks Operations Committee. The proposed ordinance will establish and consolidate rules and regulations for all Alexander County Government owned and operated park facilities, allowing staff to maintain a clean and safe environment for all citizens and visitors. Current parks include Bethlehem Park, Dusty Ridge Park, East Park, Jaycee Park, Rocky Face Park, Wittenburg Access, and Courthouse Park.

She also reviewed proposed rules and hours of operation for Courthouse Park and the splash pad, which will be printed on the back of the park sign. In addition, the public may scan QR codes provided on the sign to access the Parks Ordinance and Special Events Ordinance. Hours of operation will be as follows unless otherwise posted or event permitted:

### Splash Pad – Open 7 days/week

April 1 thru September 30 – 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM

October 1 thru March 31 – closed for the season

### Courthouse Park and Restroom – Open 7 days/week

April 1 thru September 30 – 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM

October 1 thru October 31 – 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM

November 1 thru February 28 – 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM

March 1 thru March 31 – 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM

The Parks Operations Committee recommends a fee of \$100 per day for out-of-county non-profits, \$200 for out-of-county for-profit groups, and that daily rental fees for all local organizations be waived. Everyone will be charged a \$150 per day fee for post-event cleaning and maintenance as well as a \$300 security (refundable at end of event if no damage occurs). Events with estimated attendance exceeding 1,000 will require County personnel (Sheriff's deputies, EMS, etc.) at \$30 per hour/per person.

Commissioner Lail asked if the \$30 per hour/per person fee was adequate to cover the County's expenses. Rick French, County Manager, replied that \$30 was a good place to start but that the fee could be adjusted if necessary.

In response to a question by Commissioner Pennell related to rental fees for the splash pad, Ms. Stamey explained that, although many surrounding splash pads required a usage fee, the committee chose not to charge for use of ours at this time. She also mentioned that our splash pad would be open a little later in the season than most, but only to coincide with Rocky Face Park hours and available staff.

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

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Alexander County Parks Ordinance. Commissioner Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Courthouse Park and splash pad rules and hours of operation as well as the Courthouse Park and Rotary Performance Stage rental fees. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **DUKE ENERGY GRID IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

Robin Nicholson, Duke Energy District Manager, explained that, due to aging equipment, heavy winter loading, and concern with lineman safety, Duke Energy was conducting a grid improvement project in Alexander County. Upgrades include new power lines and equipment that will provide a more efficient, reliable system with fewer outages, quicker response time, and alternate energy pathways. She thanked the Board and community for being patient while these changes are underway.

Avery Dolinger, Duke Energy Senior Public Engagement Manager, advised that upgrades to Highway 16 and Pop Davis Road were complete. The Taylorsville tie circuit addition will cause a few outages and affect traffic along West Main Avenue because of a necessary one-lane shut down. In addition, sidewalks will be cut around new pole locations, impacting pedestrian traffic. The outage on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue Drive SE will last 8 hours and affect 30 customers, the outage on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue SW and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SW will last 1-2 hours and affect 30 customers, and the outage to convert all customers on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street SW to 12kV will last 6-8 hours. Mr. Dolinger assured the Board that crews would be visiting homes to inform citizens of the planned outages, noting that all upgrades would hopefully be completed by October.

## **SPECTRUM GREAT GRANT APPLICATION MOU**

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the MOU with Spectrum Southeast, LLC who plans to submit an application through the 2022 Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology Program to construct fiber-to-the-premise broadband infrastructure in eligible unserved areas of Alexander County (primarily the eastern and northeastern sections). Estimated construction costs total \$2,220,313 and by signing the MOU, the County agrees to a financial match of \$250,000 of ARPA funds contingent upon the grant being awarded to Spectrum. The completed project would provide service to 390 homes.

He also mentioned the partnership with Yadtel/Zirrus, approved at the April 4, 2022 Commissioners' Meeting, who has also submitted a GREAT grant application to expand broadband internet to 203 customers in Alexander County. If both grants are awarded, Alexander County's total investment would be a maximum of \$413,815 and 593 homes will be served.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the MOU with Spectrum. Vice-Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #85 - #88 & PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCES #P-5 & #P-6**

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #85 - #88 as well as Project Budget Ordinances #P-5 and #P-6 as follows:

Budget Amendment #85 – To decrease the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council administrative budget based on estimated FY 2022 expenses per third quarter accounting reports submitted by the State.

Budget Amendment #86 – To 1) increase the Fire / Emergency Services budget for receipt of FEMA Public Assistance grant funds to reimburse the Town of Taylorsville for damage to the Town-owned building occupied by Mountain View Urgent Care caused by Tropical Storm Eta in November 2020 (\$5,411.86) and 2) to restore FY 2021 County funds with FEMA Public Assistance grant funds received in FY 2022 that were used to reimburse Sawmills Fire and Rescue for damage to their boat (\$2,747.23) and Mooresville Fire and Rescue for damage to their boat and drone (\$9,976.53) during Tropical Storm Eta.

Budget Amendment #87 – To remove amounts budgeted in the General Fund for stream debris removal at locations per the Emergency Watershed Protection Project #37-05-20-5041 and budget them in a multi-year Special Revenue Funds.

Budget Amendment #88 – To increase the Planning Department budget for a contract with the WPCOG for technical planning assistance to develop a new Comprehensive Plan. The total fee for the 18-month contract is \$56,220 but only \$9,375 is needed to cover the estimated expenses for FY 2022.

Project Budget Ordinance #P-5 – To budget for the Soil and Water Emergency Watershed Protection Project #37-05-20-5041.

Project Budget Ordinance #P-6 – To budget for the Soil & Water State Emergency Disaster Funds Stream Debris Removal Project.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #85 - #88 and Project Budget Ordinances #P-5 and #P-6. Vice-Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

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

- A. In order to make necessary repairs to the transfer station floor, the landfill will close at noon on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, remain closed on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, and reopen at 8:00 AM on Monday, May 2, 2022. All convenience sites will remain on a regular schedule.

- B. RockyFest will be held this Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the dedication for Courthouse Park is scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup>, and May 25<sup>th</sup> will be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rocky Face Park.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Minutes from the April 4, 2022 Regular Meeting.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

Chairman Reese made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:36 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Reese made a motion to adjourn at 7:20 PM. Vice-Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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Ronnie L. Reese, Chairman

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Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board