

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING June 20, 2022

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Ronnie Reese, Chairman
 Kent Herman
 Josh Lail
 Larry Yoder

ABSENT: Marty Pennell, Vice-Chairman

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, June 20, 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

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

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Yoder discussed a recent trip taken by members of the Alexander County Historic Preservation Committee to tour Statesville's downtown commercial district and meet with LMY, Inc. preservation developers.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC HEARING: STONY POINT FIRE DEPARTMENT TRUCK LOAN

Scotty Abernathy, Stony Point Volunteer Fire Department Chief, explained that the department planned to borrow \$300,000 from First Community Bank to aid in the purchase of a 2024 Pierce Saber fire truck, which requires approval by the Board of Commissioners in both Alexander and Iredell Counties. He pointed out that SPVD had not purchased a truck since 2008 and would hopefully take delivery of the new truck in April 2023.

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

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve a \$300,000 tax-exempt loan from First Community Bank to Stony Point Volunteer Fire Department to purchase a fire truck. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: APPROVAL OF ROAD NAMES

Rick French, County Manager, submitted the following road name, which has met all required regulations and was checked for duplication and sound indexing, for approval:

<u>Road No.</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
3860KT	Apple Mountain Way	Off Linney’s Mountain Road

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

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the road name as presented. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VAYA HEALTH PRESENTATION

Zack Shepherd, Vaya Health Regional Community Relations Director, gave a slide show presentation that included the following information:

- A map of new LME/MCO county alignments since the merger with Cardinal Innovations that added 9 counties to Vaya’s catchment area for a total of 31 counties served.
- Regional assignments, population, and board structures along with membership of the Region 3 Board that includes Alexander County.

- NCDHHS’s initial design for a specialty Medicaid waiver (currently named Child & Family Specialty Plan) was only for children/youth in foster care, receiving adoption assistance, or served by the child welfare system. However, a recent proposal would include Medicaid and NC Health Choice enrolled parents, guardians, and custodians of children/youth in foster care as well as their siblings and other family members receiving CPS in-home services. Legislative approval is needed before this change can be implemented.
- LME/MCOs are opposed to a statewide waiver with a single vendor managing services for DSS-involved children for the following reasons:
 - It creates undo administrative burden for providers who will have extra demands to work with another waiver vendor.
 - Expanding the waiver to include non-foster care children and adult caregivers will negatively impact the Tailored Plan Medicaid membership.
 - The timing for roll out is too soon and puts LME/MCOs preparing for Tailored Plans at a disadvantage.
 - LME/MCOs are already deeply engaged with DSS agencies to ensure the continuum of community, crisis, and residential services and support to meet the needs of the children and families they serve; therefore, they propose a regional waiver to reflect LME/MCO catchment areas.

Mr. Shepherd stated that Vaya was seeking support from its catchment counties and urged the Board to contact NCDHHS and legislators to oppose a statewide waiver.

StRAP FUNDS STREAM DEBRIS REMOVAL SPONSORSHIP

Pamela Bowman, SWCD Education Coordinator / Administration Specialist, announced that the Alexander County Soil & Water Conservation District had been awarded \$384,805 from the NC Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program for stream debris removal. She explained that \$2.4 million was requested in March 2022 based on the number of applications received from Alexander County landowners. Because projects did not have to be associated with a particular storm, any landowner could apply and even more interest has since been received. Ms. Bowman requested the County sponsor these funds, which requires paying up-front construction and administration costs with 100% reimbursement from the State.

Chairman Reese asked how many streams would be addressed with this funding. Ms. Bowman replied that debris would be removed from 3 (possibly 4) sites, also noting that the NC Division of Soil & Water hopes counties will spend this allotment quickly so that more funds can be requested.

Commissioner Herman asked for a copy of the ranking sheet used to determine which streams would be selected for cleanup.

Commissioner Lail made a motion for Alexander County to serve as sponsor for the StRAP funding with 100% reimbursement from the State. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

HYPER-REACH SERVICES AGREEMENT

Mark Earle, Fire Marshal / Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator, presented a proposed agreement with Hyper-Reach Services to provide emergency notifications and public alerts similar to the OnSolve CodeRED system currently utilized by the County. He explained that Hyper-Reach could provide the same service at a lower cost (\$1,000 less per year) but with a more user-friendly platform, one-click roll out to all social media sites, and smart speaker notifications. In addition, Hyper-Reach offers unlimited minutes for all emergency and non-emergency notifications while CodeRED charges extra for non-emergency calls. Mr. Earle advised that Iredell, Cleveland, Bertie, and Duplin Counties contracted with Hyper-Reach as well as the City of Shelby.

Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the agreement with Hyper-Reach Services as requested. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADOPTION OF 2022-2023 ALEXANDER COUNTY BUDGET ORDINANCE

Rick French, County Manager, presented the 2022-2023 Alexander County Budget Ordinance that totaled \$53,653,167 and included no local tax or fee increases with the exception of a 3% water rate increase by the City of Hickory. He pointed out that the 4-cent tax decrease originally proposed had been removed based on discussions at the June 13, 2022 budget work session. The proposed budget for 2022-2023 includes a 5% COLA for all County employees, an increased allocation to the School System, 9 new employees as well as part-time and seasonal staff for Wittenburg Access and Courthouse Park, and several capital items (IT networking needs, vehicles replacements, 911 equipment, courthouse boiler replacement, ambulance remount, EMS power lift, and evidence storage facility roof replacement).

Commissioner Lail highlighted a few County departments with larger budgets as well as a contingency line item for estimated fuel costs. He stated that a budget was a target that normally changed throughout the year and pointed out that to be fiscally responsible with taxpayer money, the Board could not fund every request. He thanked County staff for their work on the budget.

Chairman Reese agreed that the Board must provide services to the citizens for the best price possible, noting that the County's expenses had increased the same as the general public. He asked department heads to operate within their budget to decrease the number of needed budget amendments and stated that the 4-cent tax decrease had not been forgotten, only delayed until the 2023-2024 budget.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #104 - #109

Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #104 - #109 as follows:

Budget Amendment #104 – To 1) increase the Tax Office budget for NCDOT fees charged to the County for collecting motor vehicle taxes, 2) increase the budget for fees required to be remitted to the State based on revenues collected by the Register of Deeds, 3) increase the Public Buildings / Maintenance budget to allow for unexpected repairs at the end of the budget year, 4) increase the Court Facility budget for office furniture expenses, and 5) to adjust the General Fund budget revenues based on year-to-date actual experience.

Budget Amendment #105 – To increase the Detention Center budget for estimated expenses for the remainder of FY 2022 as well as General Fund revenues based on year-to-date actual experience.

Budget Amendment #106 – To 1) increase the DSS budget for additional HCCBG funding as well as the local match requirement for the Housing / Home Improvement Project and 2) budget for client expenses in the DSS Representative Payee Fund, a Social Security Program that requires the County to receive and manage money for minor children and certain adults.

Budget Amendment #107 – To increase FY 2022 budget estimates for fines and forfeitures received by the County that are required to be remitted to the local Board of Education.

Budget Amendment #108 – To adjust the Solid Waste Fund and Landfill Closure Fund to 1) reclassify the expenses for the transfer station floor-topping project from Landfill Repairs & Maintenance Expenses to Landfill Capital Outlay Expenses and 2) reverse the \$10,000 interfund transfer between these two funds because certain engineering invoices charged to one fund were meant for the other.

Budget Amendment #109 – To increase the General Fund and the Solid Waste Fund budgets for the implementation of Government Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 87 that changes the accounting treatment of leases.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #104 - #109. Commissioner Lail the motion, which passed unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the following appointments and reappointments:

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council – appoint Roger Hayley and Corina Fletcher and reappoint Alisha Cloer, Douglas Bowman, Carrie Nitzu, David Moose, Jon Presnell, Kim Cowart, Dan Wanta, and Mike Millsaps, all for two years.

Alexander County / Town of Taylorsville Planning & Zoning Commission – reappoint Coy Reese for 3 years.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the appointments and reappointments. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. The NC Department of Commerce awarded Alexander County \$650,000 from the Rural Transportation Grant Fund for a downtown revitalization project entitled Alexander – Housing our Teachers. This grant will be used to renovate the former Chamber of Commerce building into an apartment (upper floor) and business space (lower floor).
- B. An Independence Day concert and fireworks display is scheduled for Saturday, July 16, 2022. On the Border, an Eagles Tribute Band, will perform at Courthouse Park from 6:30-9:00 PM and food trucks, inflatables, and the splash pad will be available. Fireworks will begin at approx. 9:45 PM at ACHS.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$689.93) and Tax Refunds (\$263.43) for May 27 – June 6, 2022.
- B. Mobile CAD Terminal Data Network Agreement with the Town of Taylorsville.
- C. Renewal of lease with Catawba Valley Community College for the CVCC / Alexander Center property.
- D. Agreement with the WPCOG for the Provision of Technical Planning Assistance for July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023 for the Alexander County Comprehensive Plan.
- E. Home and Community Care Block Grant SFY 2022-2023.

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

CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD ACTIVITIES

At 6:51 PM, the Board transitioned into the Consolidated Human Services Board Meeting and proceeded as follows:

- Public Comment – there was no one signed up to speak.

- Public Health Report – Dorian Maltba, Director of Nursing, and Kimberly Edmisten, Health Educator, reviewed the following:

- Organizational Changes – since the retirement of Leeanne Whisnant, Consolidated Human Services Director, Billie Walker has been promoted to Interim Health Director effective May 1st and Dorian Maltba was promoted to Director of Nursing on June 13, 2022.
- Policy and Procedure Changes – all program manuals are being updated and, due to the intensity of the accreditation process, staff is incorporating benchmarks into policy/procedure headings, causing a change in template formatting. Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the manual updates and changes to headings. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Staff is also revamping the board training process to improve orientation for both the BOCC/CHSB and the CHS Advisory Committee. Steps taken include creating a training policy and updating the orientation guide, checklist, and training packets, all of which was provided to the Board for review. Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the new and updated training/orientation documents. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- Fee Approval – Wake Forest University will no longer accept the NCDHHS contract to provide required genetic testing for pregnant women as part of the Maternal Health Agreement Addenda; therefore, staff has obtained a price of \$81.50 per test from Quest to provide this service. After the typical 20% markup, staff recommends a flat \$100 fee that will be billed to insurance or adjusted on a sliding scale for patients meeting income guidelines. Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the \$100 fee for MSAFP screening tests. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- Accreditation Update – normally a 4-year cycle but was delayed in 2020 due to COVID-19. An introductory meeting was held via Zoom on March 22nd and 92% of Alexander County's data was submitted on May 31, 2022. Ms. Edmisten advised that the deadline for submission of all remaining data was August 30-31st and a hybrid reaccreditation survey (mix of on-site and remote) is scheduled for September 1, 2022.
- 2021 State of the County Health Report – required annually during the 3 interim years between Community Health Assessments to track progress on CHA priorities and determine emerging issues. Demographics, target populations, and health priorities (healthy lifestyles, mental health, and substance abuse) remained unchanged from the 2018 SOTCH report and COVID-19 was the significant emerging issue and leading cause of death. Ms. Edmisten informed the Board that the Behavioral Health Program was currently paused until a licensed clinical social worker is hired.

- Senior Center Report – Kristy Hunt, Senior Center Director, reported that participation was up at all 3 branches, with bingo and birthday lunches having resumed in March and monthly movie days at the Taylorsville and Bethlehem branches. A Senior Celebration was held on May 27th with a fun walk, games, music, and door prizes and to date, staff has assisted seniors in saving approx. \$80,000 on their Medicaid plan costs. Ms. Hunt stated that a scam seminar was scheduled for July 28th and Vaya Health presents monthly on a variety of topics.
- DSS Report – Thomas Mitchell, DSS Director, reviewed the following:
 - Vacancies – there are only 6 current vacancies at DSS, equal to 7-8% compared to a vacancy rate of 23% in March.
 - Foster Care Update – the majority of children being placed into foster care reside in Taylorsville where there are no foster licensed families. In order to keep children as close to their community and school as possible, staff is focusing on foster home recruitment and training in the Taylorsville area. In addition, because there are no therapeutic foster homes in Alexander County, 20-25% of foster children are placed in other counties.
 - Social Worker Mobile & Satellite Phones – due to 25% of the county being a cell service dead zone, the upcoming budget includes funding to 1) purchase several satellite phones so social workers can call for help in emergency situations and 2) contract with Verizon for cell phones/service instead of staff receiving a stipend to use their personal phone to conduct County business. Mr. Mitchell explained that social workers using the same mobile carrier would remove the guesswork surrounding who had coverage where and determine when use of the satellite phones was needed. He also reported that the State would reimburse DSS for part (possibly all) of the monthly cell service charges once approved (expected in September); therefore, he estimated the County's expense for the months of July, August, and September at \$3,500.
 - Finance – Mr. Mitchell has asked the Finance Office to keep track of monthly DSS expenditure vs. reimbursement data so that the Board can be given the most up-to-date information at all future CHSB Meetings.

Other items mentioned included working closely with Vaya Health to arrange for a Vaya staff person at DSS two days per week, plans to provide statistical reports at each CHSB Meeting (applications received, clients served, money paid out, etc.), and the need to hire additional staff if the State chooses to expand Medicaid (adding approx. 2,000 clients in Alexander County).

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 7:36 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 8:28 PM. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ronnie L. Reese, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board