

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING July 18, 2022

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Ronnie Reese, Chairman
 Marty Pennell, Vice-Chairman
 Kent Herman
 Josh Lail

ABSENT: Larry Yoder

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

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, July 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 Herman gave the invocation and Vice-Chairman Pennell led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

*****SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS*****

Vice-Chairman Pennell presented a Key to the County to Tim Kever for his service to the citizens of Alexander County, including 43 years with Taylorsville Savings Bank, 49 years with the Hiddenite Volunteer Fire Department, and involvement with various clubs and committees.

Commissioner Lail presented a Key to the County to Doug Gillispie who recently retired after 25 years' employment with Alexander County EMS and Public Services.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Herman reported that the Farmland Preservation VAD Board met on June 21, 2022 and accepted 5 more properties into the program, bringing the total enrolled acreage in Alexander County to 11,239.

Chairman Reese mentioned a good turnout at the Independence Day concert and fireworks display. He also thanked the public for being good stewards of Courthouse Park and the splash pad.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one spoke during the Public Comment Period.

PUBLIC HEARING: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS CONTAINMENT PLAN UPDATE

Rick French, County Manager, presented the updated Alexander County Hazardous Materials Containment Plan Ordinance, originally adopted in 1992, that included:

- Changes to referenced laws and regulations with addition of hyperlinks throughout the document.
- Updates to staff job titles.
- Updates to the list of facilities in Alexander County that contain or utilize hazardous materials as well as the form used by those businesses to report hazardous materials.
- Addition of a glossary.

He advised that County staff had received several positive comments from fire departments and therefore recommended approval.

Chairman Reese requested comments from the audience, noting that this public hearing had been continued from the June 6, 2022 Commissioners' Meeting. There being none, he made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pennell made a motion to approve the updated Hazardous Materials Containment Plan Ordinance. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

FIRE DEPARTMENT ISO RATING ANNOUNCEMENT

Mark Earle, Fire Marshal / Deputy EM Coordinator, announced that, following an inspection conducted by the NC Office of the State Fire Marshal, two volunteer fire departments had lowered their ISO ratings. Effective October 1, 2022, the ISO rating for Ellendale Fire Department will drop from a Class 6/9E to 5/9E. Hiddenite Fire Department will drop from a Class 6/9E to a 4/9E, the lowest in Alexander County. Staff hopes to have the results for Stony Point Fire Department later this month.

After a question by Commissioner Lail related to the split classifications, Mr. Earle explained that Ellendale's Class 5 and Hiddenite's Class 4 would apply to properties within 5 miles and 3,500 gpm or less from the fire department. The 9E applies to all other properties within the fire district outside of the 5 miles, but no more than 6 miles.

The Board congratulated these departments and thanked the volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

ALEXANDER COUNTY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS UPDATE

David Moose, Compliance & Procurement Specialist, gave a report on the following:

Wireless Broadband Expansion Project – overall project is 80% complete. Phase 1 – equipment will be placed on the completed Ellendale tower site to establish a point-to-point connection at Brushy Mountain Motorsports Park to provide Wi-Fi to the campground and expand service in the Lambert Fork area. The existing tower on Moore Mountain was found inadequate to sustain equipment load; therefore, Open Broadband, LLC is finalizing an agreement with the property owner to install a 40-foot pole. Phase 2 – Open Broadband is waiting on Duke Energy to supply power to the nearly complete Stony Point tower site. Two locations for LTE hubs have been identified for service in the northeast and southeast portions of the county. Negotiations with property owners are underway.

Zirrus GREAT Grant – the NC Department of Information Technology has tentatively approved a \$1,049,286 GREAT grant for Yadkin Valley Telephone Membership Corporation (dba Zirrus) to construct fiber-to-the-home broadband services to 305 homes in Alexander County. In April, the Board voted to allocate a financial match from the County's ARPA funding not to exceed \$163,815.

ARPA Water Extension Project – this \$7 million investment (funded with the County's ARPA allocation) will result in construction of approx. 42,500 linear feet of water lines in 12 project areas: Stan-De-La Drive, Bowman Court / Twins Cove Road / Greene Street, Caldwell Pond and John Cline Roads, Jenkins Moose Road, McAlpin Lane, Advent Church Road, Shepherd Court, Hefner Lane, Kirby Lackey and Glass Roads, Shook and Jimmy Shook Lanes, Hickory Hollow Lane, and Laurel Ridge Lane. Three alternates are also being investigated to further extend service along Caldwell Pond Road to and along Highway 64-90 to Willie McLeod Road; however, it is unlikely there will be enough funding to complete this loop. McGill Associates has completed initial layout of lines and survey teams are completing fieldwork to verify ground features and set control points.

The next phase will include pipeline profile developments, technical specifications, and preparation of bid documents with anticipated construction contract execution during the 1st quarter of 2023.

Josh Mitchell, Director of Public Works, gave a report on the following:

Bethlehem Water Tank Project – a 2021 hydraulic study of the Bethlehem area water system determined that a new tank would help with water pressure and fire flows. The estimated project cost totals \$5,430,700 and will include construction of a one million gallon tank, pump station, and water main lines. The County received \$2,065,000 in State ARPA grant funds to assist with this project and West Consultants anticipates construction contract execution during the 4th quarter of 2023.

Bowman Court Sewer Project – the estimated project cost totals \$2,109,600 and will include construction of a pump station and 6,500 feet of force main along Bowman Court to Rink Dam that will tie into the gravity sewer at Chigger Ridge Road. The County received \$1,554,000 in State ARPA grant funds to assist with this project. McGill Associates is working on plan sheets, technical specifications, and bid documents and anticipates construction contract execution during the 4th quarter of 2023.

Bethlehem Park Upgrades – planned improvements include new signage, repaving and striping of the existing parking lot, removal of the old picnic shelter, construction of a new concession building and bathrooms with an attached picnic shelter, a paved drive and an ADA accessible parking area next to the lower ball field, replacement of all lights and light poles, resurfacing the paved path at the concession stand, converting two tennis courts into 4 or 6 pickleball courts, and upgrades to the retaining wall next to Hancock & Moore (wall repairs, painting, and storm drainage). The estimated project cost totals \$1.3 million.

RESOLUTION FOR BETHLEHEM WATER TANK PROJECT

David Moose, Compliance & Procurement Specialist, advised that approval of this resolution was required to accept the NCDEQ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant totaling \$2,065,000 that will be used to build the elevated water tank in the Bethlehem community along with a tank fill booster pump station and approx. 2,000 linear feet of 16-inch water main lines.

Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the resolution accepting the State ARPA grant funds for the Bethlehem Water Tank Project. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION FOR BOWMAN COURT SEWER PROJECT

David Moose, Compliance & Procurement Specialist, advised that approval of this resolution was required to accept the NCDEQ American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant totaling \$1,554,000 that

will be used for construction of the sewer pump station and 6,500 linear feet of force main lines on Bowman Court in the Bethlehem community.

Due to a conflict of interest, Vice-Chairman Pennell recused himself from consideration of this resolution.

Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the resolution accepting the State ARPA grant funds for the Bowman Court Sewer Project. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed 4/1 (one abstention).

LEASE WITH TAYLORSVILLE LIONS CLUB FOR FAIRGROUNDS PROPERTY

Rick French, County Manager, presented a 5-year lease with the Taylorsville Lions Club for the fairgrounds property to be used by Alexander County as an emergency services training site. The lease includes use of two buildings and 3+ acres for \$6,000 annually, paid by the County to the Lions Club each August. He recommended approval, noting that the lease had been reviewed by the County Attorney.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the lease agreement with the Taylorsville Lions Club for the fairgrounds property. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

DESIGNATION OF VOTING DELEGATE FOR NCACC CONFERENCES

Commissioner Lail made a motion to designate Commissioner Yoder to serve as Voting Delegate at the NCACC Annual Conference scheduled for August 11-13, 2022 in Cabarrus County as well as the NCACC Legislative Goals Conference scheduled for November 16-17, 2022 in Wake County. Vice-Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #1 - #3 & PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE #P-1

Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #1 - #3 as well as Project Budget Ordinance #P-1 as follows:

Budget Amendment #1 – To increase the 1) Register of Deeds budget for receipt of a State grant for the preservation of historic records and files plus the 100% required local match, 2) the Sheriff's Office budget for receipt of a State grant for expenses incurred in enforcing NC laws and carrying out other duties set by law, 3) the Detention Center budget for receipt of a federal grant for COVID mitigation at the Detention Center, and 4) the Fire / Emergency Services budget for FEMA Public Assistance grant reimbursement funds for costs incurred by the County during Tropical Storm Eta in November 2020.

Budget Amendment #2 – To increase the EMS budget for 1) the purchase of two used LifePak 15 cardiac monitors from the Upper Cleveland Rescue Squad to replace monitors that can no longer be serviced and 2) the estimated quarterly payments to NCDHHS for the Medicaid Managed Care Directed Payment Fee Schedule.

Budget Amendment #3 – To increase the Sheriff’s Office budget for ammunition that has been backordered since summer and fall 2021 that will be received in the FY 2023 budget.

Project Budget Ordinance #P-1 – To budget for the \$384,805 received for the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program Project.

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #1 - #3 and Project Budget Ordinance #P-1. Vice-Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the following appointments:

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council – appoint Kimberly Edmisten as a designee for Billie Walker for two years.

Region E Aging Advisory Committee – appoint Paulette Huffman and Crystal Adams for two years.

Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the appointments. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. The NC General Assembly’s budget includes additional grant money for school resource officers. Both the Sheriff and the Alexander County System are interested in placing an SRO at all schools; however, these State grants usually do not cover vehicle and equipment costs. Mr. French estimated that 5 additional SRO’s would cost the County more than \$400,000.
- B. A letter was received from NC Senator Dean Proctor announcing that Alexander County will receive \$750,000 from the State budget.
- C. County staff has contacted the NCACC concerning the process to change the use of the current ¼-cent sales tax from public transit to benefit fire departments.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$2,452.31) and Tax Refunds (\$1,066.15) for June 10 – July 10, 2022.
- B. Minutes from the June 6, 2022 Regular Meeting, June 13, 2022 Budget Work Session, and June 20, 2022 Regular Meeting.
- C. Agreement with the WPCOG for the Provision of Technical Planning Assistance for July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022.
- D. Vaya Health Maintenance of Effort Allocation Acknowledgement.

Vice-Chairman Pennell made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Herman 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 6:55 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Pennell made a motion to adjourn at 7:47 PM. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ronnie L. Reese, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board