

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING November 7, 2022

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Ronnie Reese, Chairman
 Marty Pennell, Vice-Chairman
 Kent Herman
 Josh Lail
 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, November 7, 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

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

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Herman attended the WPCOG Mayors / Chairs / Managers Meeting at McLindon's on October 27, 2022 where guest speaker Dr. Michael McKenzie from Appalachian State University discussed plans to establish a Hickory ASU campus. He also thanked Alexander County EMS for their courtesy and professionalism during a recent medical issue and asked that County staff draft a letter of appreciation.

Chairman Reese thanked everyone for the calls, cards, and prayers during the recent passing of his mother-in-law, Jelene Fox. He also read a card received from Mary Brown, Alexander Early College Principal, thanking the Board for installation of security cameras.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Linwood Moore, resident of Piney Grove Road, discussed drug activity and accumulation of junk and garbage in the mobile home park located directly behind his property, noting that he had tried to get these problems addressed for two years. He expressed concern with lack of action by the Sheriff's Office on the drug problem as well as multiple timeframe extensions given by County code enforcement staff regarding lot cleanup.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROPOSAL

Dr. Jennifer Hefner, Alexander County Schools Superintendent, announced that the School System's grant application for 7 school resource officers, vape detectors, and window clings had been approved (\$308,000 for officer salary/benefits and \$52,730 for equipment). After discussing specifics reviewed by Sheriff Chris Bowman at the September 19, 2022 Commissioners' Meeting related to salary and first year expenses for vehicles, uniforms, etc. not covered by grant funding (estimated at \$150,000 per officer), Dr. Hefner requested \$636,000 from the County budget for 6 SROs, noting that she planned to request \$106,000 from the Town of Taylorsville for the 7th SRO at Taylorsville Elementary.

In order to allow County staff time to evaluate and prepare, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to place this item on the December 5, 2022 agenda. Vice-Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BETHLEHEM PARK IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT ENGINEERING AGREEMENT

Benjie Thomas with West Consultants discussed preliminary improvements to Bethlehem Park that included the following – 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, connecting the new concession building to sewer and abandoning the current septic system, a paved drive to the sewer pump station and 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). There are additional plans for an equipment storage shed depending on available funding.

Mr. Thomas advised that upon approval of the engineering agreement, final plans could be developed to prepare for bidding and construction.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the engineering services agreement with West Consultants for the Bethlehem Park Improvements Project. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

VETERANS OFFICE APPOINTMENT POLICY

Rick French, County Manager, presented a Veterans Service Office appointment policy proposed by Cherry Kilby, Veterans Service Officer, in an effort to stabilize demands placed on the office from new legislation, training, and referrals without sacrificing customer service. The proposed schedule was as follows:

- Appointments can be scheduled by calling the Veterans Service Office at (828) 632-5411.
- Anyone arriving more than 15 minutes late to an appointment will need to reschedule and the appointment slot will be given to a waiting walk-in.
- Walk-ins will continue to be welcome but will be seen as time/appointments allow and on a first come/first served basis.
- Walk-ins will be offered a choice of scheduling an appointment or waiting to be seen.

Mr. French expressed concerns with the policy being inconvenient for veterans and suggested the Board allow him to work with Ms. Kilby to develop a suitable alternative. The Board agreed.

DOWNTOWN TAYLORSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION CONTRACT

Rick French, County Manager, recommended approval of a contract with Acme Preservation Services to prepare the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Taylorsville Historic District for a fee of \$25,000. He reported that the Town of Taylorsville would contribute half of the contract amount (\$12,500).

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the contract with Acme Preservation Services. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CITY OF HICKORY WATER TAP CONNECTION DISCOUNT EXTENSION

Rick French, County Manager, requested the Board approve a continuation of the City of Hickory water tap connection discount through June 30, 2022. This discount allows citizens to purchase a ¾-inch residential tap for \$541 (County pays remaining \$1,999).

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to continue the water tap connection discount through June 30, 2022. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Lail urged anyone interested in taking advantage of the discount to do so soon, as City of Hickory is several months behind on connections.

ADOPTION OF 2023 COMMISSIONERS’ MEETING SCHEDULE

Rick French, County Manager, presented the 2023 Commissioners’ Meeting Schedule as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| January 9, 2023 | June 19, 2023 / CHSB Meeting |
| February 6, 2023 | July 17, 2023 |
| March 6, 2023 / CHSB Meeting | August 7, 2023 |
| April 3, 2023 | September 11, 2023 / CHSB Meeting |
| April 17, 2023 | October 2, 2023 |
| May 1, 2023 | November 6, 2023 |
| May 15, 2023 | December 4, 2023 / CHSB Meeting |
| June 5, 2023 | |

Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the 2023 Commissioners’ Meeting Schedule as presented. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADOPTION OF 2023 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Rick French, County Manager, presented the 2023 Holiday Schedule as follows:

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| New Year’s Day | Monday, January 2, 2023 |
| Martin Luther King Jr. Day | Monday, January 16, 2023 |
| Good Friday | Friday, April 7, 2023 |
| Memorial Day | Monday, May 29, 2023 |
| Independence Day | Tuesday, July 4, 2023 |
| Labor Day | Monday, September 4, 2023 |
| Veterans Day | Friday, November 10, 2023 |
| Thanksgiving | Thursday & Friday, November 23 & 24, 2023 |
| Christmas | Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday, December 25, 26, & 27, 2023 |

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the 2023 Holiday Schedule as presented. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Lail mentioned receiving several calls in the past from attorneys, lenders, and realtors who were unable to close on a home due to County offices, specifically the Register of Deeds, being closed. He suggested the County holiday calendar coincide with banking and judicial schedules to prevent any unnecessary burden to our citizens.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #16 - #23 & PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE #P-4

Rick French, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #16 - #23 as well as Project Budget Ordinance #P-4 as follows:

Budget Amendment #16 – To adjust the Health Department budget due to 1) additional WIC funds for participation numbers above caseload assignment, 2) the amount of COVID Infection Prevention Support funds differs from the amount budgeted, 3) some COVID fund originally budgeted as Infection Prevention Support should be budgeted as COVID Crisis Response, and 4) the approved Communicable Disease Pandemic Recovery funds were not included in the budget.

Budget Amendment #17 – To increase the Health Department budget for additional School Nurse Liaison funds.

Budget Amendment #18 – To increase the Health Department budget for ARPA grant funds passed through the Cabarrus Health Alliance to Alexander County for reimbursement of travel expenses for two weeks of staff training.

Budget Amendment #19 – To increase the 1) EMS budget for estimated quarterly payments to NCDHHS for the Medicaid Managed Care Directed Payment fee schedule, 2) Cooperative Extension budget for extra programming due to the addition of a fall plan sale and the Farm City Banquet, and 3) Library budget for donations received that have not yet been budgeted.

Budget Amendment #20 – To increase the budget for a transfer of sales tax funds earmarked for the School System because the school debt service was paid off at the end of FY 2021 and the earmarked funds do not need to remain in the General Fund.

Budget Amendment #21 – To 1) budget for the closeout of the Courthouse Park Project and transfer the remaining General Fund cash contribution back to the General Fund and 2) adjust the interfund transfer revenue budgets to reflect the General Fund amounts contributed to each of the separate park projects.

Budget Amendment #22 – To budget for the closeout of the Courthouse Park Project and transfer the remaining General Fund cash contribution back to the General Fund.

Budget Amendment #23 – To budget for the first half of the Bethlehem Park Improvements Project with funding from the 2022 State Appropriations Act grant as administered by the Office of State Budget and Management.

Project Budget Ordinance #P-4 – To budget for the Bethlehem Park Improvements Project (\$750,000) from the 2022 State Appropriations Act grant.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #16 - #23 and Project Budget Ordinance #P-4. Vice-Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS

Rick French, County Manager, requested the reappointment of Kathleen Harvey to the Region E Adult Care & Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee for a 3-year term.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

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

- A. Approximately 60 Army National Guard soldiers will be taking part in climbing and rappelling training at Rocky Face Park on December 3, 2022.
- B. After a motion by Commissioner Yoder and second by Commissioner Herman, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2023-2024 budget calendar.
- C. A total of \$1,251,384.35 has been collected in sales tax revenue through October 2022 (\$369,132.72 is new sales tax for economic development, public education, and community colleges). This amount is 17.19% of the \$7,278,000 budgeted with 16.67% of the budget year expired and an increase of 6.69% over last year.
- D. The Veterans Day Parade will be held on Friday, November 11th at 1:00 PM and the Christmas Parade is set for December 3rd at 3:00 PM.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Release Requests (\$9,479.74) and Tax Refunds (\$1,683.54) for September 26 – October 31, 2022.
- B. Minutes from the October 3, 2022 Regular Meeting.
- C. Approval to rescind the agreement with the WPCOG for the Provision of Technical Planning Assistance for July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023 for the Alexander County Comprehensive Plan.

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

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

Chairman Reese made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:42 PM to discuss contractual matters and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5 & 6). Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Reese made a motion to adjourn at 9:45 PM. Vice-Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Ronnie L. Reese, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board