

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**      February 6, 2023

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

**PRESENT:**    Marty Pennell, Chairman  
                  Kent Herman (participated via conference call)  
                  Ronnie Reese  
                  Larry Yoder

**ABSENT:**     Josh Lail, Vice-Chairman

**STAFF:**      Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, February 6, 2023 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Pennell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

No reports were given.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one spoke during the Public Comment Period.

## **PUBLIC HEARING: STERLING ROAD CDBG PROJECT**

Sherry Long, WPCOG Assistant Executive Director, stated that the purpose of this public hearing was to disclose information about a Community Development Block Grant application submitted to the NC Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Division to benefit Sterling Road in Alexander County. The \$645,044 application proposes to rehabilitate 7 households and pave 390 linear feet of roadway on Sterling Road. Based on a door-to-door survey of the residents, 91% of the beneficiaries of this project are low and moderate income.

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

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the authorizing resolution allowing Chairman Pennell to sign all documents necessary for implementation of the Sterling Road CDBG Project. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE 2022 ANNUAL REPORT**

Lee Sharpe, HPC Vice-Chairman, provided the 2022 Historic Preservation Committee Annual Report that included the following activities:

- Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville provided funds to hire ACME Preservation Services to prepare the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Downtown Taylorsville Historic District. The district will include 44 properties, 75 postal addresses, and 181,000 square feet of commercial and residential space. Work is underway and should take approx. one year to complete.
- Alexander County obtained Certified Local Government status through the National Parks Service.
- A Rural Transformation Grant in the amount of \$650,000 was accepted for the rehabilitation and reuse of County-owned property located at 16 West Main Avenue.
- A lunch & learn series was held every Wednesday in September. Four videos were shared with the audience addressing various aspects of historic preservation and the National Register.
- The HPC visited a historic tax credit project in Statesville and discussed the preservation process with developers. Historic sites in Wilkesboro were also toured and members viewed a presentation from the City of Wilkesboro related to the economic impact that historic preservation has on the city and county.

- All members attended the UNC School of Government “Quasi-Judicial Decisions for Preservation Commissions” training workshop in December.

Mr. Sharpe added that the long-term goal of the HPC was to preserve the history, architecture, and culture of Alexander County.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the HPC 2022 Annual Report. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **BROADBAND EXPANSION PROJECT REPORT**

Kent Winrich, Co-Founder & Chief Technology Officer of Open Broadband, LLC, gave a slide show presentation that included the following information:

- Stony Point Tower – now operational and can provide service to 158 homes. The tower features new Nokia equipment and provides a backhaul feed to LTE hubs in the southeast and northeast portions of the county. A link has been established to a mobile home park in the area and installs began last week.
- Moore Mountain Tower – original location is no longer available due to the property owner changing their mind and other possible sites do not have reliable power sources. Crews are investigating a location in Wilkes County next to the original Moore Mountain site with much higher elevation as well as solar power options. Approx. 103 homes could be reached.
- Hubs – the first NE hub was established off Hill Farm Road and several installs are complete. A location on Drumstand Road is being considered as one potential spot for a SE hub.
- Asberry Mountain – negotiations with owners of the existing tower have been unsuccessful; therefore, Open Broadband is speaking with several Asberry Mountain landowners and working toward a solution with solar power.

Leslie McCracken with Open Broadband briefly discussed recent installs and Mr. Winrich noted there were currently 350 active customers and 25 established hubs. Commissioner Yoder requested a weekly progress report from Open Broadband.

## **ALEXANDER COUNTY TRAINING FACILITY**

Mark Earle, Fire Marshal, discussed the need for a multi-use training facility for emergency agencies to include fire, rescue, EMS, and law enforcement as well ACHS Fire Academy students, noting that it was not currently possible for Alexander County fire departments to obtain maximum training credits (9 points) toward ISO ratings due to lack of a training facility within the county. He provided details on how points were calculated by the NC Office of State Fire Marshal and

stated that a 3-story tower burn building located on two acres of land was necessary to qualify for maximum training points. Mr. Earle stated that \$101,458.48 was available for this project (\$20,000 County budget appropriation and \$81,458.48 FEMA Public Assistance funds) and he gave a slide show presentation that included cost projections for various types of towers/burn buildings as follows:

<b>Mobile Training Tower (Does not include a burn building and annual maintenance/upkeep of trailer has not been factored into cost projection)</b>	
Mobile tower	\$249,430.00
15'x20' pad	\$3,880.00
20'x50' pad	\$10,260.00
Conex container	\$5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$268,570.00</b>
Minus budget appropriation	-20,000.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$248,570.00</b>

<b>Manufactured Fixed Facility (CVCC has offered to build this structure as part of their programming)</b>	
3-story tower	\$196,896.16
20'x50' pad	\$10,260.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$207,156.16</b>
Minus budget appropriation	-20,000.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$187,156.16</b>

<b>Conex Container Fixed Facility (Recommended Option)</b>	
40' Conex containers (6 needed)	\$30,000.00
20' Conex container (1 needed)	\$4,000.00
Crane use	\$10,000.00
Welding	\$8,000.00
Footings	\$5,000.00
Gravel/grading	\$3,550.00
Staircases/railing (3 needed)	\$15,000.00
5'x8' burn pan	\$1,500.00
Engineer stamp	\$5,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$82,050.00</b>
Minus budget appropriation	-20,000.00
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$62,050.00</b>

Commissioner Herman, who was in favor of a training facility, mentioned receiving several calls from fire chiefs and citizens with concerns related to CVCC involvement and a suitable location. He felt several questions needed to be answered before taking action and suggested the Board hold a meeting with fire chiefs and representation from each fire department boards of directors. Commissioner Yoder agreed.

Commissioner Reese also stated that he supported a training facility, noting that the Board had approved a lease with the Lion's Club for the fairgrounds property with the intention of housing the training/burn building there. He was aware that CVCC preferred the structure be located at the current Alexander Center site; however, the Board has concerns about smoke and water run-off so close to homes and businesses.

After discussion, it was agreed that the requested meeting would be held on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 7:00 PM in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to table consideration of the training facility. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #36 - #43 & PROJECT BUDGET ORDINANCE #P-5**

Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #36 - #43 and Project Budget Ordinance #P-5 as follows:

Budget Amendment #36 – To transfer funds to 1) move code enforcement personnel from the Inspections Department to the Planning Department and 2) hire an additional Planning Department position. The cost of these personnel actions will be covered by funds that were originally budgeted to pay the WPCOG for a contract to develop a comprehensive plan, which was terminated due to County staff performing those services in-house.

Budget Amendment #37 – To increase the Sheriff's Office budget for the use of State funds from the Unauthorized Substance Tax distributions to purchase guns, ammunition, and uniforms. These special funds were received in a prior budget year and are in Fund Balance.

Budget Amendment #38 – To reduce the Public Buildings/Maintenance Department budget because maintenance and repair costs were budgeted in various County departmental budgets for FY 2023 but were not deducted from the Public Buildings/Maintenance Department before the budget was adopted.

Budget Amendment #39 – To increase the EMS budget to cover salaries expense for the remainder of the budget year for 1) \$116,985 due to more overtime for full-time employees than original budget estimates and 2) \$68,708 due to pay increases as approved by the Board of Commissioners. This will also require increases in the FICA and retirement

expense budgets. Part of these increases will be offset by the use of EMS Department contingency while the remainder will be from increased investment earnings revenue.

Budget Amendment #40 – To increase the EMS budget to purchase new ventilators. The current ventilators are outdated, unable to be serviced, and parts are unavailable due to the company going out of business.

Budget Amendment #41 – To increase the Library budget for donations received that have not yet been budgeted.

Budget Amendment #42 – To increase the budget for the remainder of FY 2023 for estimated expenses and revenues from the County’s contract to sell water to EnergyUnited Water Corporation.

Budget Amendment #43 – To budget for local matching funds required by the County for the Hancock & Moore Building Reuse Grant Project.

Project Budget Ordinance #P-5 – To budget for the Hancock & Moore Building Reuse Grant Project (\$80,000 from NC Department of Commerce / \$4,000 local match).

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #36 - #43 and Project Budget Ordinance #P-5 for the Hancock & Moore Building Reuse Project. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS**

Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board, requested the following appointments and reappointments:

Equalization & Review Board – reappoint Doug Ramsey, David Odom, Linda Barnette, Donovan Douglas, Alan Grant, and Gordon Knight for one-year terms.

Library Board of Trustees – appoint Cheryl Feimster for a 3-year term.

Interim County Manager – appoint Chairman Marty Pennell.

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

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items discussed during Other Business.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments (\$3,198.74) for Tax Refunds (\$4,389.31) for January 1-29, 2003.
- B. Minutes from the December 5, 2022 and January 9, 2023 Regular Meetings as well as the December 8, 2022 and December 12, 2022 Special Called Meetings.
- C. Resolution authorizing conveyance of surplus personal property valued at less than \$5,000 for a Microsoft Surface Pro 4 and Apple iPad to the Rick French family.
- D. Resolution authorizing formal application to the NC Department of Commerce Building Reuse Grants Program for Hancock & Moore, LLC.
- E. Acceptance of NC Department of Commerce Building Reuse Grant Award in the amount of \$80,000 for Hancock & Moore, LLC.
- F. Approval of required policies pertaining to expenditure of ARPA / CSLFRF funds: Eligible Use Policy, Cost Principles Policy, Records Retention Policy, Nondiscrimination Policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, Subaward and Monitoring Policy, Property Management Policy, and Program Income Policy.
- G. January 2023 line item transfer report.
- H. Surplus the following: 2005 Ford Taurus, VIN #1FAFP53295A222092 with 95,250 miles; 2004 Chevy Cavalier, VIN #1G1JC52F847283439 with 119,100 miles; 2016 Ford Focus, VIN #1FADP3E26G1315862 with 111,385 miles and bad transmission; 52-inch Great Dane zero turn mower, VIN #TCM052C02340 with 2,032 hours; 60-inch Bobcat zero turn mower, VIN #94225400508 with unknown hours and blown engine, and a 61-inch Snapper front deck mower, VIN #99412 with 976 hours.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Vice-Chairman Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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

Chairman Pennell made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:47 PM to discuss contractual matters and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5 & 6). Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 7:54 PM. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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Marty A. Pennell, Chairman

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Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board