

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     October 16, 2023

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

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

**STAFF:**      Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney  
                  Shane Fox, County Manager  
                  Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, October 16, 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 Reese gave the invocation and Boy Scouts Troop #275 from Bethlehem led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Yoder mentioned that 14 individuals from Altenburger Land, Germany visited the Unifour last week to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Western Piedmont Sister Cities Association.

Chairman Pennell stated that of the 533 Alexander County citizens who lost their jobs as a result of the Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams closure in August, approx. 80-90 remained unemployed. He urged them to reach out to various County departments for guidance and assistance.

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one spoke during the Public Comment Period.

## **PUBLIC HEARING: APPROVAL OF ROAD NAMES**

Shane Fox, County Manager, submitted the following road names, which met all required regulations and were checked for duplication and sound indexing, for approval:

<u>Road No.</u>	<u>Road Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
1166YS	Daisy Lane	Off Willie McLeod Road
3718VC	Eastfield Lane	Off O.E. Teague Road

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

Vice-Chairman Lail made a motion to approve the road names as presented. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FUNDING POLICY**

Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney, advised that, in an effort to promote partnerships with non-profit organizations and ensure transparency of the use of public funds, a Non-Profit Organization Funding Policy had been drafted to provide a consistent and fair process for the submission, review, and approval of funding applications. He reviewed specifics within the policy such as funding criteria and requirements, which included:

- The mission and goals of the non-profit organization must align with those of the County to improve the overall wellbeing of the public.
- The proposed use of funds must provide a vital service and benefit to the public at large or fill a critical gap between government services and community needs.
- Funding requests must be submitted annually during the County's budget process; prior approval does not guarantee continued funding.
- Non-profit organizations must provide financial records if requested or appear before the Board of Commissioners to discuss progress and updates.

- An annual performance report documenting use of funds and accomplishments is required at the end of the fiscal year.
- Failure to comply with rules and regulations could result in a suspension of continued funding or reimbursement to the County of funding already received.

Mr. Faulkenberry added that with approval, this process would be implemented in the spring with non-profit funding applications due to the Administration Office by February 28, 2024.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the Non-Profit Organization Funding Policy as presented. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **WIRELESS BROADBAND EXPANSION PROJECT REPORT**

Alan Fitzpatrick, CEO of Open Broadband, gave a final update on the Wireless Broadband Expansion Project that included the following information:

- To date, 417 installations have been completed, 5 tower sites and 24 hub locations established, and free public Wi-Fi provided in several areas throughout the county.
- All activated accounts exceed the 25 Mbps goal with many reaching 100-200 Mbps.
- Basic monthly service is \$49; customers qualifying for the Affordable Connectivity Program receive a \$30/mo. discount.
- Project funding totaled \$582,000 (\$388k grant funds combined with \$194k investment by Open Broadband) = \$1,396 actual cost per connected home compared to \$7,211 per home with the upcoming Spectrum CAB grant.

Although the grant project is complete, Open Broadband plans to continue their investment and expand service options in Alexander County. Stony Point has been chosen as the first location for Tarana equipment (fastest fixed wireless technology with up to 500 Mbps speeds) that, when coupled with the new 6 GHz wireless technology, can reach gigabit speeds.

Chairman Pennell asked Open Broadband to follow up with several citizens in the Roundtop tower area who have experienced a reduction in speeds since the recent equipment upgrade.

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #7 - #9**

Shane Fox, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #7 - #9 as follows:

Budget Amendment #7 – To 1) increase the Sheriff’s Office budget for equipment that was backordered as of 6/30/23 and received in September, 2) to budget for a refund to the NC Department of Juvenile Justice for FY 2023 funds that service providers were unable to

spend due to caseload/referral numbers that differed from original estimates, 3) increase the DSS budget for State allocation funding for Adult Protective Services to develop, implement, and evaluate successful interventions to prevent elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and 4) increase the DSS budget to spend a portion of State funding received in June 2023 for adoption enhancement purposes.

Budget Amendment #8 – To reimburse the Emergency Telephone System Fund for FY 2023 expenditures that were reclassified to the General Fund as required by the NC 911 Board based on their review of our 911 Revenue / Expenditure Report for FY 2023.

Budget Amendment #9 – To increase the Convenience Centers budget for additional funds to complete the Sugar Loaf Convenience Site Project (additional funds are expected from the sale of a 615-C Caterpillar pan heavy equipment and the transfer of funds in the Landfill budget for capital outlay).

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #7 - #9. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS & REAPPOINTMENTS**

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the appointment of Susan Fontyn to the Library Board for 3 years. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments (\$3,455.00) and Tax Refunds (\$1,702.35) for September 5 – October 5, 2023.
- B. Minutes from the September 11, 2023 Regular Meeting.
- C. Line Item Transfer Report for September 15 – October 5, 2023.
- D. Statewide 5310 Locally Coordinated Transit Plan.
- E. Health Department fee approvals – Prevnar 20 and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines.

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

## **COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT**

Shane Fox, County Manager, reviewed the following:

- The Veteran Services Office has moved from the Administration Building to a larger, more accommodating space at the Services Center. He thanked County Maintenance staff for their assistance with the move.

- Special thanks to NC Senator Eddie Settle and Representative Jeffrey Elmore for obtaining \$11.6 million to benefit Alexander County as follows:
  - County waterline extensions - \$2.5 million
  - EMS garage - \$750,000
  - Bethlehem water tank - \$2,622,586
  - ACHS fieldhouse - \$100,000
  - ACHS stadium improvements and turf grass - \$2.5 million
  - Non-profit grants - \$300,000
  - One additional magistrate and public defender office - \$1,345,388
  - Town of Taylorsville sidewalk and street projects - \$1.5 million
  
- Grading work has been completed for the fire training facility and containers should be delivered next week.
  
- The second bid opening for the Rural Transformation Housing our Teachers Project will take place this Wednesday.
  
- The Bethlehem Park Improvements Projects should be bid out before Christmas and the Bowman Court Sewer, ARPA Water Line Extension, and Bethlehem Water Tank Projects are expected to be bid by the end of 2023/first of 2024.
  
- More than 130 people attended the Senior Center Spooktacular to kick off Medicare enrollment.
  
- To date, our PORT Program has 8 clients, two of which are working towards active recovery.

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

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:38 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Vice-Chairman Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Commissioner Reese made a motion to adjourn at 8:31 PM. Commissioner Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

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Marty A. Pennell, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board