

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING September 9, 2024

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

ABSENT: Larry Yoder

STAFF: Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney
 Todd Herms, County Manager
 Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, September 9, 2024 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

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

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Lail and Vice-Chairman Reese joined several Alexander County Board of Education members, district and school administrators, and NC Senator Eddie Settle on August 30th to cut the ribbon for the new turf field at ACHS. Vice-Chairman Reese thanked Senator Settle for the generous appropriation in last year's state budget that made the new field, as well as several other projects, possible.

Commissioner Pennell gave a reminder about upcoming concerts and events at Courthouse Park along with fall festivals in the Hiddenite and Taylorsville areas.

Vice-Chairman Reese was also happy to see a large crowd tonight, noting that most meetings were rarely attended.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Lail requested the addition of a 2024-2025 Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund grant application for HVAC replacement at West Alexander Middle School.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Due to the number of citizens attending the meeting in opposition to a planned housing project in the Bethlehem community, Chairman Lail clarified that the public hearing specific to the Bowman Court development was scheduled for the October 7, 2024 Board of Commissioners' Meeting. In addition, he addressed several rumors and false information that had spread across social media platforms, such as incorrect dates on when the public hearing would be held, but also personal attacks against County Commissioners and baseless claims of concealment and corruption. He stated that actions taken and decisions made in relation to this project or any other matter of open County business was public record and that neither the Board nor County staff member had anything to hide.

Doug Peeler, a long-time member of the Bethlehem community and 22-year resident of Bowman Court, mentioned difficulty locating factual information about this project and felt more public outreach would be helpful, especially to those without Facebook or a newspaper subscription. He also requested that the Board seek spiritual guidance when making a decision on the rezoning next month.

Don Taylor, resident of Twins Cove Road, stated that Bethlehem residents wanted to maintain the character of the community and were opposed to high-density housing. He discussed impacts that several developments currently being considered could have on the area such as a significant increase in traffic and many years of ongoing lot clearing and construction, especially when paired with other projects (water tank and widening of Highway 127). He also expressed concerns with setbacks and development standards allowed in the new Land Development Code which he reviewed with a slide show presentation.

PUBLIC HEARING: 5310 GRANT ENHANCEMENT FOR SENIORS & THE DISABLED

David Moose, Consolidated Human Services Director, discussed the annual Federal Section 5310 Program Grant (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) for FY 2026 that will provide Alexander County seniors age 65 and older as well as disabled citizens with transportation services to medical appointments and other life sustaining activities, mainly through

Greenway Public Transportation. The project budget totals \$194,592 (\$155,674 in federal dollars) and requires a 10% local match.

After a motion by Vice-Chairman Reese, second by Commissioner Herman, and unanimous vote, the public hearing was called to order and comments requested.

Public Comment

Several individuals in the audience asked for clarification on the transportation provider, location of services, and ridership rules (use of service); however, no one approached the podium to provide a name.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Pennell made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Herman made a motion to approve the Federal Section 5310 Program grant application for FY 2026 as well as the required resolution. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: REZONING CASE 24-05 – H&E ESTATES, LLC

Amy Bucknum, County Planner, presented Rezoning Case 24-05 submitted by Brittanie and Dylan Sweet / H&E Estates, LLC who requested rezoning of a 1.79-acre tract located at 2280 Old Landfill Road from Residential District Two (R2) to Residential District Two Rural (R2R) to allow for the placement of additional mobile homes.

After reviewing aerial maps and criteria to be considered when conducting rezoning cases, Ms. Bucknum reported that this property was located in a Rural Transition Area according to the Future Land Use Plan with surrounding tracts being residential in nature. With adoption of the Land Development Code earlier this year, this property, which contained one singlewide mobile home, was assigned as R2; however, in order to allow placement of additional mobile homes, the property must be rezoned. Ms. Bucknum added that any new structures must meet zoning standards, design elements, and density requirements (maximum of 3 for this parcel).

The Planning Board held a public hearing on August 8, 2024 to consider this petition and voted unanimously to recommend approval based on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

After a motion by Vice-Chairman Reese, second by Commissioner Pennell, and unanimous vote, the public hearing was called to order and comments requested.

Public Comment

Bethlehem resident Marie Taylor requested confirmation that the proposed use would remain residential in nature and that the maximum number of homes allowed would be no more than 3. Ms. Bucknum replied that Ms. Taylor was correct.

There being no further comments, Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Chairman Lail made a motion to approve Rezoning Case 24-05 based on its consistency with the Alexander County Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING MULTI-CAMPUS FUNDING FOR CVCC / ALEXANDER CENTER

Commissioner Pennell presented a resolution supporting Catawba Valley Community College's application to the State Board of Community Colleges for multi-campus designation that would result in an annual allocation of approx. \$600,000 to support the expansion of programming, staffing, and facilities at the CVCC / Alexander Center.

Board members spoke in appreciation of CVCC's continued support and program/trade offerings in Alexander County as well as the ongoing partnership that has been developed over many years.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to approve the resolution supporting multi-campus funding for the CVCC / Alexander Center. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

DOWNTOWN TAYLORSVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENT

Connie Kincaid, Business Development Manager, announced that the Downtown Taylorsville Historic District had been officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 6, 2024. The formation of this district was made possible by an intergovernmental agreement between Alexander County and the Town of Taylorsville to administer historic preservation efforts.

The National Register Historic District encompasses 10 acres or approx. 7 blocks to the north and east of the Alexander County Courthouse and includes 33 properties, 65 postal addresses, and 171,250 square feet of commercial and residential space with a total assessed tax value of \$7.2 million. Ms. Kincaid provided photos of several historical buildings within the new district, the oldest built in 1906.

Ms. Kincaid thanked the Alexander County Historic Preservation Commission who worked with ACME Preservation Services to conduct the research required for the Downtown Taylorsville Historic District to be nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT #12

Todd Herms, County Manager, advised that Budget Amendment #12 would increase the Public Buildings Department budget to maintain operational security for public works functions.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #12. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments (\$28,082.48) and Tax Refunds (\$1,836.05) for July 29 – September 2, 2024.
- B. Minutes from August 5, 2024 Regular Meeting.
- C. Line-Item Transfer Report for August 2024.
- D. Board / Committee Appointments – Animal Control Advisory Board, Council on Aging, Courthouse Committee, Unifour Home Consortium, Vaya Health Region 3 Board, and WPRTA Board.
- E. WPRTA Board Member Appointment Resolution.
- F. Charlotte Interbasin Transfer Request Update.
- G. Construction contract with HALCO Contractors for 16 West Main Avenue Downtown Revitalization Project.
- H. Renewal of lease and sub-lease agreements for County-provided space for NC Probation & Parole.
- I. Renewal of lease agreement for County-provided space for NC Juvenile Justice.
- J. MOU with Town of Mooresville for backup console positions at Iredell County Emergency Communications.
- K. MOU with Catawba County for backup routing of 911 calls.
- L. Forest Service District 2 Funding Agreement with NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- M. Request to surplus a 1999 Chevy SRT – VIN #1GBKP32Y7X3303718 with 140,255 miles; a Baseline 300 by Coats tire changer; and a Hennessy Industries (Ammco/Coats) 1100 Direct Drive Wheel Balancer 40MM 220V 1PH, Serial #1506305294.
- N. Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund 2024-2025 grant application for HVAC replacement at West Alexander Middle School.

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

CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD ACTIVITIES

At 7:00 PM, the Board transitioned into the Consolidated Human Services Meeting and proceeded as follows:

- Public Comment – there was no one signed up to speak.
- Public Health Report – Billie Walker, Health Director, reviewed the following:

- Current vacancies and staffing updates – current staff vacancies include a School-Based Dental Coordinator (temporary grant position).
- Accreditation updates – a 90-day notification letter is expected by March 1, 2026 and on-site and remote reaccreditation surveys are expected in September or October 2026.
- Communicable Disease Annual Report (Accreditation 2.4) – Emily Vick, RN-CPHN, presented the 2024 Communicable Disease Annual Report and shared details about Communicable Disease and why it is important. She gave an explanation of Communicable Disease / STD / Tuberculosis in 2023 in Alexander County and then described how this differed from cases in 2022. The number of Chlamydia cases totaled 67, Gonorrhea cases totaled 17, and there were 7 cases of E. coli (only linkage was a set of siblings). A 5-year prevalence was also discussed where Chlamydia and Gonorrhea were the most prevalent STDs in NC and Alexander County. Salmonella was the most reported food-borne Communicable Disease. Trends ongoing/upcoming were discussed as well. MPox continues to be reported in NC but Alexander County has had no cases to date. H5N1 Bird Flu has been identified in the U.S. in dairy cattle since March of this year and one herd in NC; none in Alexander County. Surveillance and preparation for management by the NC Department of Agriculture and NC Department of Public Health are ongoing. Ms. Vick also mentioned the upcoming flu vaccine and drive-through flu clinics during the month of October.
- Community outreach events – Ms. Walker discussed educational events that Health Department staff participated in during the month of August as well as planned events for September and October.
- Senior Center Report – David Moose, Consolidated Human Services Director, reviewed recent activities and classes that included an ice cream social, volunteer brunch, and a new cardio drumming class. A blood drive is planned for September 13th at the Lee Masonic Lodge, the Mobile Free Pharmacy Program on September 14th at First United Methodist Church, and the Myrtle Beach Holiday Show Trip in December. Staff assisted 226 seniors with saving \$153,603 on their Medicare drug plan since January, with Medicare Open Enrollment beginning October 15.

Chairman Lail thanked the Alexander County Board of Elections for their willingness to obtain State approval to move early voting from the Senior Center to the CVCC Applied Technologies Furniture Academy showroom to avoid any disruption to senior activities.

- DSS Report – Keri Jerrell, DSS Director, stated that the agency continues to hire qualified applicants for Child Welfare and Economic Services positions with a current vacancy rate of 13% for the past month. Steps are being taken to address staff turnover through reclassifications and realignment / redistribution / consolidation of duties. Current

CPS/APS stats included 57 children in DSS custody, 15 foster homes, and 12 adult wards; no adoptions were completed from February to July 2024.

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

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:22 PM to discuss economic development, contractual matters, and personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4, 5, & 6). Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Pennell made a motion to adjourn at 8:26 PM. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Joshua D. Lail, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board