

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING November 4, 2024

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

PRESENT: Josh Lail, Chairman
 Ronnie Reese, Vice-Chairman
 Kent Herman
 Marty Pennell
 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, November 4, 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

Commissioner Yoder first requested a moment of silence for our elections process, then gave the invocation. Chairman Lail led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Yoder and WPCOG officials attended the National Association of Development Organizations Conference last month in New Orleans. Topics included economic development and growth in communities. While there, he spoke with officials from Asheville about the city's efforts to evacuate the homeless population prior to the catastrophic flooding that occurred as a result of Hurricane Helene. He mentioned that the WPCOG was working to identify homeless citizens in the Unifour.

Commissioner Pennell stated that Alexander County would once again participate in Operation Green Light. Starting today, the Administration Building, Services Center, and Courthouse Park will be illuminated in green to show support to our veterans. The public is also encouraged to change out one light in their home with a green bulb.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chairman Lail requested a slight title correction to Item I under Consent Agenda which should read “Industrial Park Shell Building Sewer Extension Project Bid Award pending release of grant funds.”

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

Don Taylor provided an update on the initiative to incorporate the Bethlehem community, noting that signatures were still being collected on the petition, which he hopes to submit to the Board of Elections in a week or so for verification. The team is moving into Phase 2 by providing community education and a website has been created.

PUBLIC HEARING: REZONING CASE 24-06 – TAYLORSVILLE LIONS CLUB

Amy Bucknum, County Planner, presented Rezoning Case 24-06 submitted by the Taylorsville Lions Club who requested rezoning of 43 acres located at 170 Fairgrounds Road from Office Institutional (OI) to Community Commercial (CC) to allow more uses that are consistent with activities held at the fairgrounds.

After reviewing an aerial map 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 a variety of residential and other mixed uses nearby; therefore, Community Commercial zoning would be appropriate. Because the property is located within a protected watershed area, specific standards and regulations would apply to any future development.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on October 10, 2024 to consider this petition and voted unanimously to recommend approval based on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

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

Commissioner Pennell made a motion to approve Rezoning Case 24-06 based on its consistency with the Alexander County Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

REQUEST TO SPONSOR STRAP FUNDS FOR STREAM DEBRIS REMOVAL

Pamela Bowman, Soil & Water Director, announced that the Alexander County Soil & Water District had been awarded \$85,714 from the Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program to remove debris from local streams currently on the priority list. In February 2024, the district requested \$1.1 million to address 28 sites in Alexander County. Because of the many remaining streams that still need work, staff will continue to seek additional grant funding. Ms. Bowman requested the Board to once again sponsor these funds, requiring the County to pay for the work up front and later be reimbursed by the state; however, she stated that grant administration would be handled in-house for this project instead of contracting out those services.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve and sponsor the StRAP grant award totaling \$85,714. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT

Pamela Bowman, Soil & Water Director, presented a shared personnel mutual aid agreement between Alexander County Soil & Water Conservation District, NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation, and other districts/counties to provide and receive assistance with disaster recovery efforts, training, etc. if and when needed.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve the mutual aid agreement. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BETHLEHEM WATER TANK PROJECT BID AWARD RECOMMENDATION

Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney, reported that a bid opening for the Bethlehem Water Tank Project was held on October 10th where two sealed bids were received. This was the second bid opening held; the required 3 bids were not received at the first scheduled bid opening. The lowest qualified bidder was Locke-Lane Construction, Inc. from Stony Point, NC who submitted a bid of \$4,758,200 to install a 750,000-gallon elevated water tank and 1,110 linear feet of water lines. Project costs including construction, engineering and design, and a future pump station will total approx. \$6.8 million and the majority of the project will be paid by state grant funds (\$4,648,248).

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to accept the low bid of \$4,758,200 and award the contract to Locke-Lane Construction. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

OLD ELLENDALE SCHOOL PROPERTY RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL RESOLUTION

Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney, informed the Board that on October 4th, the Alexander County Board of Education voted to surplus the old Ellendale Elementary School property, totaling 6.889 acres, allowing the property to be sold through an upset bid process. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 115C-518, school property that has been surplused can be disposed of after first being offered the

County. He explained that the School System currently had an offer of \$625,000 from the current lessee with credit for \$285,000 in improvements made to the property over the last 4 years.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to approve a resolution formally declining the purchase of the old Ellendale School by Alexander County. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #15 - #18

Todd Herms, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #15 - #18 as follows:

Budget Amendment #15 – To increase:

- the Public Buildings budget to implement security upgrades at the Administration Building.
- the 911 Communications budget to use NCDPS Capacity Building Competitive Grant funds to purchase sheltering equipment.
- the Soil & Water budget for a grant from the NC Foundation for Soil & Water Conservation non-profit agency plus a 30% local match to purchase a drone.
- the Health Department budget for additional federal grant funds received for the CDC Enhancing Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Efforts for Farmworkers Program.

Budget Amendment #16 – To budget for the FY 2025 interfund transfer from the Bowman Court Sewer Project Fund to reimburse the County Water & Sewer Fund for preliminary engineering expenses paid in prior years before the project budget ordinance was adopted.

Budget Amendment #17 – To budget for the FY 2025 interfund transfer from the Three Forks Church Road Water Project Fund to reimburse the County Water & Sewer Fund for preliminary engineering expenses paid in a prior year before the project budget ordinance was adopted.

Budget Amendment #18 – To budget for the FY 2025 interfund transfer from the Bethlehem Water Tank Project to reimburse the County Water & Sewer Fund for preliminary engineering expenses paid in prior years before the project budget ordinance was adopted.

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #15 - #18. Vice-Chairman Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments (\$2,202.92) and Tax Refunds (\$3,387.43) for September 30 – October 27, 2024.

- B. Minutes from October 7, 2024 Regular Meeting.
- C. Line-Item Transfer Report for October 2024.
- D. Board / Committee Appointments – Library Board of Trustees.
- E. Designation of Commissioner Larry Yoder as Voting Delegate for the NCACC Legislative Goals Conference.
- F. 2025 Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule.
- G. 2025 Holiday Schedule.
- H. Resolution Prohibiting Viewing of Pornography on Alexander County Networks and Devices.
- I. Industrial Park Shell Building Sewer System Extension Project Bid Award pending release of grant funds.
- J. NC Community College System FY 2024-2025 budget request sign-off form for CVCC.
- K. Resolution Naming the Alexander County District Courtroom in Honor of Judge L. Dale Graham.
- L. Senior Management Team Policy.
- M. Agreement with WPCOG for grant management assistance with the Paragon Films Rail Infrastructure Project CDBG-ED Project.

Vice-Chairman Reese 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)(4, 5, & 6) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CONTRACTUAL, & PERSONNEL

Commissioner Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:39 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 Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 7:49 PM. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Joshua D. Lail, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board