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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING June 2, 2025

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

STAFF: Debra Bechtel, Interim County Manager
 Gary Herman, PIO
 Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, June 2, 2025 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

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

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman Pennell said he was pleased to see many families and citizens taking advantage of Courthouse Park and the splash pad.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Vice-Chairman 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.

ADOPTION OF FY 2025-2026 ALEXANDER COUNTY BUDGET ORDINANCE

Jennifer Herman, Finance Director presented the FY 2025-2026 Alexander County Budget Ordinance that totaled \$60,586,611 and included a 2.5% COLA and holiday bonuses for employees, a continued focus on public safety, several capital projects, and additional funding for Alexander County Schools. The property tax rate will remain at 65 cents per \$100 valuation with an estimated collection rate of 97.09% on a total countywide valuation of \$4,167,961,106. Ms. Herman provided the following information related to the FY 2025-2026 budget, noting that several items had been revised since the May 19th meeting:

- General Fund revenues are comprised of property taxes at 44%, sales taxes at 23%, sales and services at 9%, fund balance appropriated at 8%, state grants at 7%, other revenues at 4%, intergovernmental revenue at 3%, and federal grants at 2%.
- General Fund expenditures are comprised of public safety at 34%, human services at 22%, general government at 15%, education at 14%, interfund transfers at 6%, cultural and recreational at 3%, environmental protection at 2%, other expenditures at 2%, debt service at 1%, and economic / physical development at 1%.
- Public Safety expenditures total \$20,633,860 and are comprised of EMS at 34%, Sheriff's Office at 27%, Detention at 20%, 911 Communications at 9%, Inspections at 3%, Emergency Management at 2%, Fire Marshal at 2%, RRS / Pre-Trial Release at 2%, and Forestry / Medical Examiner at 1%.
- Human Services expenditures total \$13,601,793 and are comprised of DSS at 63%, Health Department at 30%, special appropriations at 3%, Senior Center at 2%, Veterans at 1%, and JCPC at 1%.
- Education expenditures total \$8,386,840 and are comprised of Alexander County Schools at 98% and the CVCC / Alexander Center at 2%.
- Debt Service expenditures total \$1,604,000 and are comprised of Detention Center at 41%, water at 41%, and sewer at 18%. The last payment on the Law Enforcement & Detention Center will be made in January 2026.
- Major capital expenses include \$324,000 for a new ambulance with a power load stretcher, \$339,000 for 4 Sheriff's Office vehicles, \$358,000 for buildings and grounds improvements, \$142,325 for 911 communications equipment, \$120,000 for 3 DSS vehicles, \$250,000 for a rubber tire loader at the landfill, and \$680,000 to replace two water lines.
- Specific funds include the Opioid Settlement Fund at \$364,582, Revaluation Fund at \$334,706, Solid Waste Fund at \$2,903,854, Landfill Closure Fund at \$95,000, County

Water & Sewer Fund at \$4,901,000, School Capital Fund at \$11,307,369, and the Emergency Telephone System Fund at \$169,347.

- Fee increases are included for EMS (additional \$50 for all services, a 2-cent mileage increase, and a new \$50 public assist fee) as well as the Solid Waste Fund (additional \$1 per bag at convenience sites and a \$5 increase for C&D debris and household, commercial, and industrial waste).
- Projects include the ARPA Waterline Extension, Bowman Court Sewer, Bethlehem Water Tank, Industrial Park Sewer Extension, Three Forks Church Water Extension, Sterling Road CDBG, 16 West Main Avenue Downtown Revitalization, and EMS Station #1. Planning and design work for improvements to East Park renovations to EMS Station #2 are also budgeted.
- Alexander County Schools will receive an appropriation of \$8,078,040, a 7.8% increase compared to current year.
- Fire tax rates will be increased as requested by the board chair of each fire department as follows – 6 cents for Bethlehem, 7.5 cents for Wittenburg, 7.7 cents for Hiddenite, 8 cents for Stony Point, 7.8 cents for Ellendale, 11.4 cents for Sugar Loaf, 8 cents for Taylorsville, and 12.2 cents for Vashti.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve the FY 2025-2026 Alexander County Budget Ordinance as presented. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #38 - #41

Debra Bechtel, Interim County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #38 - #41 as follows:

Budget Amendment #38 – To adjust the General Fund budget for FY 2025 personnel costs that differed from original budget estimates due to vacation payouts for employees leaving service and approved salary adjustments.

Budget Amendment #39 – To adjust the Solid Waste Fund budget for FY 2025 personnel costs that differed from original budget estimates.

Budget Amendment #40 – To:

- increase the Detention Center budget for estimated medical supplies and inmate medical care for the remainder of FY 2025.
- increase the budget for Social Services Representative Payee client expenses and revenues which offset each other.
- reduce the Special Appropriations budget for the portion of WPCOG annual dues related to water resources. This expense was charged to the County Water & Sewer Fund.

- decrease estimates for sales tax revenue based on year-to-date collections that are lower than expected and to increase estimates for interest revenue based on year-to-date earnings that are higher than expected.

Budget Amendment #41 – To adjust the County Water & Sewer Fund budget based on year-to-date reports from the City of Hickory and to use separate expense line items for water and sewer operations.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #38 - #41. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments (\$23,132.76) and Tax Refunds (\$541.45) for May 12-26, 2025.
- B. Minutes from the May 12, 2025 Budget Work Session.
- C. Board / Committee Appointments – Historic Preservation Committee, JCPC, Region E Aging Advisory Committee, and Multimodal Steering Committee.
- D. Renewal of agreement with the Town of Taylorsville for planning and zoning services.
- E. Extension of lease agreement for License Plate Agency space on East Main Avenue.
- F. FY 2025-2026 Alexander County Fee Schedule.
- G. Resolution to direct the expenditure of Opioid Settlement Funds.
- H. Resolution to commit \$500,000 in fund balance dollars for future capital projects.
- I. Request from Sheriff Chad Pennell to surplus the following 25 seized weapons: Ruger Mini-14 (Serial #583-81122), Long Branch rifle (Serial #4626540), Harrington & Richardson 10-gauge Pardner (Serial #389483), Savage Model 64 .22 long rifle (Serial #2368077), Palmetto State .556 with Sightmark scope (Serial #PA027760), Marlin Model T795 .22 long rifle (Serial #MM94393G), Harrington & Richardson 20-gauge single shotgun (Serial #AZ481504), Ruger 10/22 .22 long rifle with 2 magazines (Serial #244-50850), Marlin Model 983T .22 with scope (Serial #95609705), New England 20-gauge single shotgun (Serial #NG284782), Marlin Model 1895G 45-70 lever action rifle with Bushnell scope (Serial #MR30212D), Remington Model 700 30-06 with Leupold scope (Serial #E6663161), Henry Golden Boy .22 long rifle (Serial #GB246863), black powder pistol (no serial #), Knight Wolverine .50 muzzleloader with Tasco scope (Serial #215432), Crescent 20-gauge single shotgun (Serial #249637), Hi-Point Model CF380 380 Auto (Serial #P8083154), SKS rifle (Serial #03378), Harrington & Richardson 16-gauge single shot (Serial #77180), Glock 19 9mm pistol (Serial #55Z742), Ruger Mark II .22 (Serial #212-60904), CN Romarm 7.62x39mm (Serial #BX386586), Davey Crickett .22 with Simmons scope (Serial #616113), Remington Model 700 270 rifle with Nikon scope (Serial #E6295953), and Mossberg International 702 .22 long rifle (Serial #EFH 243724).
- J. Request from Sheriff Chad Pennell to surplus the following 4 County-owned weapons: Remington Model 870 12-gauge pump shotgun (Serial #W528050M), Remington Model 870 12-gauge pump shotgun (Serial #W591417M), Remington Model 870 12-gauge pump shotgun (Serial #B658735M), and Remington Model 58 .22 rifle (Serial #18737).

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 6:23 PM. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Marty A. Pennell, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board

Draft

**CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING** June 2, 2025

**ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

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

STAFF: Debra Bechtel, Interim County Manager
 Gary Herman, PIO
 Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Consolidated Human Services Board held a regular meeting on Monday, June 2, 2025 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pennell called the meeting to order at 6:23 PM.

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

Billie Walker, Health Director, reviewed the following:

- Organizational Update (Accreditation 37.6) – Ms. Walker described current vacancies within the Health Department. There is still a need for an engineer and ophthalmologist on the CHS Advisory Committee. Staff vacancies include a Behavioral Health Licensed Clinical Social Worker and an offer was recently made for the School-Based Dental Coordinator.
- Financial Updates (Accreditation 33.2 / 33.6 / 39.2 / 41.3) – Ms. Walker reviewed the budget process which was completed with tonight's approval of the FY 2025-2026 Budget Ordinance and she discussed local impacts related to the expiration of COVID funding and loss of state programs, initiatives, and consultants.
- Annual Review / Approval of Public Health Fees (Accreditation 33.6) – The Board of Commissioners was presented with a copy of the proposed fees via email on May 27, 2025 to review prior to the meeting. Changes were also submitted with the agenda packet prior to the meeting for review. Ms. Walker explained that staff conducts an annual review of

all fees where Medicaid reimbursement rates, staffing and supply costs, comparisons with other counties, etc. are reviewed. Several fee increases were proposed for FY 2025-2026 and approved under Consent Agenda earlier in the meeting with an effective date of July 1, 2025.

- Annual Public Health Policy Review & Updates (Accreditation 15.3 / 24.1 / 24.2 / 37.2 / 37.6) – Ms. Walker gave a Public Health Policy update, noting that the Board was provided copies of all policies by email to review prior to tonight’s meeting and changes were submitted with the agenda packet. Revisions were made to only one policy, Policy Number 3.05 – CHS Policy on Policies, to refine the language following significant modifications made to the policy in the previous year.

Ms. Walker also reviewed all Agreement Addendas for 2025-2026 along with funding amounts attached to each, which require goals and objectives to be met prior to being able to pull down funding from the state.

- 2024 Annual Child Fatality Presentation (Accreditation 38.1) – the entire report, which has been sent to the state, was provided to the Board via email on 5/27/2025 for review prior to the meeting. Dori Maltba, Director of Nursing for the Health Department, presented the 2024 Child Fatality Report to the Board. This presentation began with Ms. Maltba stating there had been no deaths in the 2023 year to review. She also advised there had not been a report from DSS with the CCPT; therefore, she could not comment on that topic. Ms. Maltba reminded the Board about new changes coming from the state level that would transition the name of the CFPT to the “Local Team”, however, due to the state not being ready to implement these changes, she could not discuss specifics on how these changes would affect the Alexander County CPFT at this time. The state is still conducting trainings and implementing changes, which were originally to become effective January 2025 but were pushed to July 1, 2025.
- What’s Coming – Ms. Walker encouraged the public to complete the 2025 Community Health Assessment. To date, 904 valid survey responses have been received. The survey will be available until July 31, 2025.

Monthly meetings to prepare for reaccreditation will begin in July and a site visit will take place in September or October. All clinic staff will participate in a measles tabletop exercise to evaluate the agency’s readiness for any future incident.

DSS REPORT

Keri Jerrell, DSS Director, advised that DSS staff were closely monitoring two bills that could affect social services organizations including HB 612 known as the “Fostering Care in NC Act” to reform juvenile justice and child welfare systems as well as H.R. 1 known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill” that would impact block grants, SNAP, child support, and several others. On August 11th, Child Welfare staff will begin utilizing PATH NC, a document management software to aid in supporting permanency, safety, and wellbeing of children and families. She reported that

the vacancy rate was currently at 8% and she gave the latest CPS/APS statistics – 45 children in foster care, 9 in the Links Program, 3 in the 18-21 Program, two finalized adoptions, 4 adoptions in progress since March, 9 parents enrolled in the MAPP / Deciding Together foster care training classes, and 12 adult wards. There is also remaining Hurricane Helene Disaster Relief funding in economic services, adult protective services, and child welfare.

Other items discussed included participation in several community events and renovations to the front desk area to address deficiencies identified by a recent ergonomics study.

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

Kristy Hunt, Senior Center Director, recognized and thanked her staff and seniors who converted the flagpole area at the Senior Center into “Kristy’s Garden” while she was on medical leave. She also gave updates on the center’s ongoing activities and encouraged citizens to register for the Diamond Tours trip to Vermont in September or the many day trips scheduled throughout the year. The annual Senior Celebration was held in May and the center hosted a Unifour Senior Games event for the first time. Upcoming events include Operation Heat Relief on June 16th, evening Musician’s Jams on July 22nd and August 26th, annual craft fair on July 19th, and the ice cream social on August 21st at the Bethlehem site and August 22nd at the Taylorsville site. Ms. Hunt was happy to report that participation continues to increase and that 139 contacts related to Medicare drug plans have been made since January with a savings of \$125,007.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 7:01 PM. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Marty A. Pennell, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board