

Draft

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**     August 4, 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  
                  Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney  
                  Gary Herman, PIO  
                  Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, August 4, 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**

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

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Herman reported that Garey Fox, Dean of NCSU College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, visited Alexander County on July 24<sup>th</sup> as part of his 100-county tour. He thanked Allison Brown, Cooperative Extension Director, and her staff for an excellent presentation and relayed that Mr. Fox was pleased to learn that the Alexander County Cattlemen's Association had raised enough funds to provide 5 scholarships this year, including 4 to NCSU.

Commissioner Reese stated that NC had been recognized as the 2025 top state for business in America by CNBC as well as 6<sup>th</sup> in education. He also mentioned the two new ambulances on display prior to tonight's meeting, emphasizing that the Board was dedicated to ensuring the safety and welfare of Alexander County residents.

Commissioner Lail discussed recent data provided in the quarterly WPCOG Economic Indicators Newsletter including per capita personal income for Unifour counties as follows - \$49,694 for Alexander, \$47,560 for Burke, \$47,398 for Caldwell, and \$57,000 for Catawba. The Unifour also ranked 4<sup>th</sup> statewide for an unemployment rate of 3.6%

Chairman Pennell attended the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Hiddenite Volunteer Fire Department over the weekend. In addition, he announced that the Alexander County Manager position had posted earlier today.

## **ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

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

## **\*\*\*SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS\*\*\***

Commissioner Lail presented a Key to the County to Lt. Buddy McKinney who retired from the Alexander County Sheriff's Office after 20 years of service. Lt. McKinney was hired in July 2005 and served in numerous roles including detention officer, deputy, sergeant, and lieutenant.

Vice-Chairman Yoder presented a Key to the County to Nancy K. Sharpe who retired from the Alexander County Board of Elections after 20 years of service. Ms. Sharpe was involved in 9 general elections, 8 primary elections, 6 primary runoffs, 6 municipal elections, and 3 special elections and served as chairperson from 2013 to 2018. She also holds the distinction of being the longest serving member of any county board of elections statewide, regardless of party affiliation.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one spoke during the Public Comment Period.

## **PUBLIC HEARING: 5310 TRANSPORTATION GRANT 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 2027 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 and requires a 10% (\$19,460) local match.

After a motion by Commissioner Reese, second by Vice-Chairman Yoder, and unanimous vote, the public hearing was called to order and comments requested. There being none, Vice-Chairman

Yoder made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve the Federal Section 5310 Program grant application for FY 2027 as well as the required resolution. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **STAFF RECOGNITIONS**

Debra Bechtel, Interim County Manager, recognized the following individuals:

- Chris Hicks who has assumed the role of Alexander County Fire Marshal.
- Jennifer Herman, Finance Director, who was selected for NCACC Heroic Hands award for her dedication and professionalism.

## **BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #3 - #6**

Debra Bechtel, Interim County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #3 - #6 as follows:

Budget Amendment #3 – To increase the Health Department budget for additional federal grant funds from the Public Health Infrastructure Local Workforce Development Program and the Special Nutrition Program for WIC.

Budget Amendment #4 – To:

- increase the Emergency Management budget for a private grant from the Duke Energy Foundation to purchase water rescue kits.
- increase the Recreation Department for a private grant from NC Amateur Sports: Youth Sports Grant Fund to purchase youth sports equipment and for facility upgrades that benefit youth sports.
- increase the County Parks Department budget to fund a 4<sup>th</sup> seasonal position at the Wittenburg Access swim beach and a seasonal position at Rocky Face Park.
- decrease the General Fund Contingency due to a reduction in revenue budgeted for the Senior Center Operations grant.

Budget Amendment #5 – To adjust the General Fund budget for updated allocations of FY 2026 workers compensation and property / liability insurance premiums across various departments.

Budget Amendment #6 – To budget for reclassification of the part-time Peer Support Specialist position to full-time and the addition of two part-time (no benefits) Peer Support Specialist positions. This budget amendment appropriates additional funds expected from

FY 2026 Opioid Settlement Fund distributions. The PORT/CP strategy was approved by Board resolution on June 2, 2025 and by an amended Board resolution on July 14, 2025.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #3 - #6. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments (\$177.61) and Tax Refunds (\$1,751.66) for July 7-23, 2025.
- B. Minutes from the July 14, 2025 Regular Meeting.
- C. Board / Committee Appointments – ABC Board and I-CARE Board of Directors.
- D. Line-Item Transfer Report for July 2025.
- E. Proposed revisions to Personnel Policy – Unlawful Harassment.
- F. Request from Sheriff Chad Pennell to surplus the following weapons awarded to the Alexander County Sheriff's Office by disposition through the Alexander County Court System – Taurus Spectrum .380 (Serial #1F109189), Smith & Wesson SD9 (Serial #FBY8620), Intratec Scorpion .22LR long-rifle (Serial #00938), Springfield Hellcat 9mm (Serial #BY384751), .38 revolver model 63 black/bone grip (No Serial #), Taurus TX22 .22 (Serial #IPT538478), FN Five-seveN pistol (Serial #386369975), EIG Derringer .22LR (Serial #51113), FIE Mod Tex .22 (Serial #TP26812), Hi-Point CP 9mm (Serial #P1722517), Rock Island 45 RIA (Serial #1422595), Ruger P90 .45 (Serial #661-51450), Ruger .22 MKII Target (Serial #214-52841), Kimel Western Six .22LR (Serial #K46642), Taurus TCP .380 (Serial #30004F), Taurus 709 Slim 9mm (Serial #TJ039968), New England 410 shotgun (Serial #362746), Bushmaster XM15-E26 (Serial #BK5034816), SKS (Serial #10337385), Mossberg 500 12-gauge (Serial #K344484), Rossi RS22 (Serial #7CAD398641), Hi-Point Mod 995 9mm (Serial #F253667), Brazilian rifle (Serial #M30M954 1988), Savage 775A 12-gauge (Serial #254159), Norinco SKS 7.62x38 (Serial #DB014918), Cricket .22 (Serial #591696), Savage Axis .308 rifle (Serial #P020067), and Ruger 10/22 rifle (Serial #121-12019).

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

## **CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3 & 6) ATTORNEY / CLIENT PRIVILEGE & PERSONNEL**

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 6:32 PM to allow for attorney/client privilege and to discuss personnel issues pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3 & 6). Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Pennell made a motion to adjourn at 7:23 PM. Commissioner Lail 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