

Draft

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING December 8, 2025

ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

STAFF: Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney
 Gary Herman, PIO
 Justin Mundy, County Manager
 Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on Monday, December 8, 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

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

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

After positive comments related to the Alexander County Christmas Parade held on December 6th and thanks given to County staff involved, all 5 Board members voiced firm opposition to the proposed incorporation of the Bethlehem community.

Vice-Chairman Yoder said the Board and staff worked hard to provide comprehensive services such as water, sewer, EMS, law enforcement, etc. to all Alexander County citizens, including Bethlehem, with limited funds. He felt we were a county united and did not want to see that change.

Commissioner Lail, who is a lifelong resident of Bethlehem, added that the majority of Bethlehem did not wish to incorporate. He felt incorporation offered no benefit to the community or to Alexander County since services were already provided by the County.

Commissioner Reese mentioned financial concerns, noting that incorporation would likely create the need to raise county taxes to make up the difference in lost revenue.

Commissioner Herman agreed that incorporation of Bethlehem would place a burden on all taxpayers. In addition, he discussed the extensive number of certifications and manhours needed to be a firefighter and paramedic, which he felt contributed to the lack of volunteerism. He expressed his appreciation to Fire Marshal Chris Hicks, Alexander Rescue Squad Terry Foxx who helps with training, our fire chiefs, and all the volunteers in Alexander County who work hard to keep our ISO rating down, which affects homeowners' insurance rates.

Chairman Pennell echoed comments against the proposed incorporation and asked citizens to check on their neighbors during the cold weather.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

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

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Vice-Chairman Yoder presented a Key to the County to Bud and Judy Caywood for their dedicated service to Alexander County during their 21 years of residency.

Mr. Caywood's has served on the Planning Board for 14 years and was a member of the Bethlehem Community Plan Committee and Comprehensive Plan Committee. He also assisted with poetry readings, art exhibits, and other events at the Bethlehem Library. Mrs. Caywood served on the ABC Feasibility Committee, ABC Board (the last 5 years as Chair), Buy Local Committee, and Save the Star Committee. They have both served on the Bethlehem Business Association, Bethlehem Community Development Association, and the Citizens for the Future of Alexander County.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one spoke during the Public Comment Period.

PUBLIC HEARING: REZONING CASE RZ-25-04 - ALVARADO

Amy Bucknum, County Planner, presented Rezoning Case RZ-25-04 submitted by Celestino Reyes Alvarado who requested rezoning of .8 acre located at 640 Prichard Lane in Hiddenite from Residential District Two (R2) to Residential District Two Rural (R2R) to allow placement of a singlewide manufactured home.

After reviewing property maps and criteria to be considered when conducting rezoning cases, Ms. Bucknum reported that the property was located in a Rural / Urban Transition Area according to the Future Land Use Plan. Approval of the request would allow the applicant to provide an affordable housing option and the proposed use is consistent with the character of the surrounding community. In addition, the applicant removed a dilapidated home that was located on the property.

The Planning Board held a public hearing on November 13, 2025 to consider this petition and voted unanimously to recommend approval based on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

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

Public Comment

William Prichard asked whether the applicant intended to place multiple mobile homes on the property. He explained there were mobile home parks on both sides of his residence, noting that he did not wish to see any more.

Sherry Wingler Hamby stated there were many mobile homes in the area that were unsightly and desperately needed to be clean up. She believed these structures reduced the value of her property and wanted to ensure the applicant would not contribute to the problem.

Ms. Bucknum advised that the rezoning request was for only one mobile home and that the applicant's lot size would make it very difficult to add another mobile home.

Chairman Pennell replied that he would arrange for a code enforcement officer to visit the area very soon.

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

Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve Rezoning Case RZ-25-04 based on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

RENEW NC SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING PROGRAM

Stephanie McGarrah, NC Commerce Deputy Secretary for Community Revitalization, presented information about the Renew NC Single-Family Housing Program, a long-term recovery effort to address remaining unmet owner-occupied, single-family disaster recovery needs in areas impacted

by Hurricane Helene. There is \$807 million in the current program, with additional phases to be implemented in the coming months, for a total of \$1.4 billion allocated to NC from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Assistance provided includes housing and mobile home rehabilitation, reconstruction, replacement, and reimbursement.

She reviewed the eligibility criteria and documents needed to apply, noting that 41 applications had been submitted from Alexander County homeowners. Additional applications will be accepted through December 31, 2025 and citizens may apply in person at any intake center (locations in Boone, Lenoir, and North Wilkesboro), online (www.RenewNC.org), through the mobile app (Renew NC Housing Program), or by phone (888-791-0207).

THREE FORKS CHURCH ROAD WATER PROJECT BID AWARD

Josh Mitchell, Public Works / Facilities Director, reported that a bid opening for the Three Forks Church Road Water Project was held on November 18, 2025 where 3 sealed bids were received. The lowest qualified bidder was Iron Mountain Construction Company, Inc. who submitted a bid of \$1,645,883 to install 10,000 linear feet of 8-inch water line along Three Forks Church Road. McGill Associates also recommends that the County establish a 5% contingency (\$80,000), bringing the total project cost to \$1,725,883.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to accept the low bid of \$1,645,883 for the Three Forks Church Road Water Project plus an \$80,000 contingency and award the contract to Iron Mountain Construction Company, Inc. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

BETHLEHEM BOOSTER STATION PROJECT BID AWARD

Josh Mitchell, Public Works / Facilities Director, reported that a bid opening for the Bethlehem Booster Station Project was held on November 13, 2025 where 4 sealed bids were received. The lowest qualified bidder was Brushy Mountain Builders, Inc. who submitted a bid of \$2,274,980 to construct a booster station to fill the Bethlehem water tank. West Consultants also recommends that the County establish a 5% contingency (\$140,000), bringing the total project cost to \$2,414,980. Mr. Mitchell noted that this project would be funded with the County's water and sewer revenues, with no property tax dollars required.

Vice-Chairman Reese made a motion to accept the low bid of \$2,274,980 for the Bethlehem Booster Station Project plus and \$140,000 contingency and award the contract to Brushy Mountain Builders, Inc. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

C-PACE PROGRAM RESOLUTION OF INTENT

Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney, provided an overview of the Commercial Property Assessed Capital Expenditure Program (C-PACE), a financing mechanism for eligible property owners

administered by the Economic Development Partnership of NC. He explained that C-PACE gives qualifying commercial, industrial, multi-family (5 or more units), and agricultural property owners access to private long-term financing for building improvements that focus on energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, and resiliency. Property owners can finance up to 35% of property value and repayment terms are 20-30 years depending on the useful life of improvements. All financing is through private capital providers; the County will not lend money or oversee lending agreements.

Mr. Faulkenberry advised that the County's only role in the process would be to record an assessment, similar to a tax lien, on the property that will be repaid by the property owner over time. The County will be reimbursed \$500 per assessment for administrative costs. To join the program, 3 steps must be taken – approval of a resolution of intent, holding a public hearing, and adoption of a final resolution to join the program.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve the C-PACE resolution of intent setting a public hearing for January 8, 2026 at 6:00 PM. Chairman Pennell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CHRISTMAS IN BETHLEHEM PROCLAMATION

After a reading by Commissioner Lail, Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve a proclamation declaring December 1-31, 2025 as Christmas in Bethlehem. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR 2026

Commissioner Herman made a motion to approve the election of Larry Yoder as Chairman for 2026. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed 4/1 (abstention by Vice-Chairman Yoder).

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR 2026

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve the election of Josh Lail as Vice-Chairman for 2026. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed 4/1 (abstention by Commissioner Lail).

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS #13 - #15

Justin Mundy, County Manager, reviewed the purpose of Budget Amendments #13 - #15 as follows:

Budget Amendment #13 – To:

- increase the Sheriff's Office budget for donations received.
- increase the Cooperative Extension budget for a Blue Cross Blue Shield NC grant to be used for youth healthy eating demonstrations.
- decrease the Health Department budgeted revenue for private grant funds that were received and recognized as revenue in prior years and are already included in Fund Balance.

Budget Amendment #14 – To:

- decrease the DSS budget for the State's reallocation of a portion of APS and CPS Essential funding to other counties.
- Increase the DSS expense budget for additional parenting capacity evaluations to be paid from Vaya Child Welfare expense funds.

Budget Amendment #15 – To budget for the FY 2025 interfund transfer from the County Water & Sewer Fund annual budget to the Bethlehem Water Tank Fund multi-year project budget for the estimated cost of the Bethlehem Booster Station Project based on the results of the 11/13/25 bid opening.

Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to approve Budget Amendments #13 - #15. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Tax Abatements & Adjustments (\$5,421.18) and Tax Refunds (\$44,345.83) for October 27 – November 30, 2025.
- B. Minutes from the October 6, 2025 and November 3, 2025 Regular Meetings, October 9, 2025 and December 1, 2025 Special Called Meetings, and October 20, 2025 Work Session.
- C. Board / Committee Appointments – LEPC and ABC Board.
- D. Line-Item Transfer Report for October 31, 2025.
- E. Revised FY 2025 Audit Contract with Martin Starnes & Associates.
- F. Resolution authorizing the acceptance of property donated to Alexander County.
- G. Resolution approving the official bond for the Alexander County Register of Deeds pursuant to N.C.G.S. 161-4.
- H. Fee schedule correction for Alexander County Parks.
- I. Employee of the Quarter & Year Policy.
- J. Request to surplus a 2000 GMC truck, VIN #1GTEC14W1YZ311574 with 149,899 miles, a 2012 Bobcat zero turn mower, VIN #94225900258 with 1,253.4 miles, and an Ammco brake lathe.

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

CLOSING COMMENTS

Commissioner Herman thanked NC Senator Eddie Settle for his role in securing funds for Mercy and Truth Ministries who is partnering with Country Grace Church and local fire departments to provide Christmas assistance to about 40 families in Alexander County.

Commissioner Reese welcomed Mr. Mundy to his first meeting as County Manager.

Commissioner Lail thanked Chairman Pennell for his leadership as Chairman this year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 7:09 PM. Commissioner Reese seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Marty A. Pennell, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board

Draft

**CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD
REGULAR MEETING** December 8, 2025

**ALEXANDER COUNTY
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA**

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

STAFF: Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney
Gary Herman, PIO
Justin Mundy, County Manager
Jamie Starnes, Clerk to the Board

The Alexander County Consolidated Human Services Board held a regular meeting on Monday, December 8, 2025 in Room 103 of the CVCC / Alexander Center in Taylorsville, North Carolina.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Pennell called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ben Faulkenberry, County Attorney, informed the Board that, due to the potential for inclement weather, the decision was made to limit staff attendance tonight. Therefore, he presented the Public Health, DSS, and Senior Center Reports.

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

Mr. Faulkenberry discussed the following information provided by the Health Director:

- Organizational update (Accreditation 37.6) – there is still a need for an ophthalmologist on the CHS Advisory Committee. Staff vacancies include an unpaid Public Health Intern and a School-Based Dental Coordinator.
- Fee approvals (Accreditation 33.6) – Mr. Faulkenberry requested approval of two fees for RSV monoclonal antibody vaccines - \$575 for the 0.5ml dose and \$575 for the 1 ml dose.

Commissioner Reese made a motion to approve the fees for the RSV monoclonal antibody vaccines as requested. Commissioner Herman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

- Health Director performance evaluation and job description review (Accreditation 37.4 and 37.5) – NC Public Health Accreditation standards require approval of the local health director’s job description as well as an annual performance evaluation by the CHS Board and CHS Director, which occurred in Closed Session and was approved by a unanimous vote.

DSS REPORT

The DSS vacancy rate for the past quarter was 14% and there has been one new hire in CPS and another in APS. Current stats included 46 children in foster care, 7 in the Links Program, 3 in the 18-21 Program, 10 foster homes, 4 adoptions completed and two in progress, 12 awaiting adoption, 6 placed with guardianship, 5 reunited with parents, and 13 adult wards.

SENIOR CENTER REPORT

Mr. Faulkenberry reviewed the list of ongoing classes and activities at the Senior Center as well as the Medicare Open Enrollment Hoedown and Health Fair held this quarter. Several day trips are and a 9-day trip to Ireland are planned. Upcoming events include Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment is January 1st through March 31st, AARP tax assistance, and the Catawba Valley Medical Center mammogram truck in April and June. To date, 944 contacts related to Medicare drug plans have been made since January with a savings of \$496,277.

CLOSED SESSION – N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3, 4, & 6) ATTORNEY/CLIENT PRIVILEGE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, & PERSONNEL

Chairman Pennell made a motion to enter into Closed Session at 7:15 PM to allow for attorney/client privilege and to discuss economic development pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3, 4, & 6). Vice-Chairman Yoder seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Yoder made a motion to adjourn at 7:47 PM. Commissioner Lail seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Marty A. Pennell, Chairman

Jamie M. Starnes, Clerk to the Board