

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE ALAMANCE COUNTY BOARD  
OF COMMISSIONERS FOR ALAMANCE COUNTY**

**July 15, 2024, 6:30 PM  
Commissioners' Meeting Room  
124 West Elm Street  
Graham, NC 27253**

Board Members Present: Chairman John Paisley Jr  
Vice-Chair Steve Carter  
Commissioner William "Bill" T. Lashley  
Commissioner Pamela Thompson  
Commissioner Craig Turner

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**CALL TO ORDER - CHAIRMAN PAISLEY**

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE -CHAIRMAN PAISLEY**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

County Manager York explained there was an agenda adjustment for item 7.1 Budget Amendment to remove the second component of that budget amendment titled "Health Department," which was a budget amendment between the Sheriff's Detention Center and the Health Department's Pre-Trial Release Program. She said they will bring that portion back at a later date, but asked the Board to approve items 1. and 3. of that budget amendment.

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Lashley

**APPROVED AS AMENDED**

**2024 NCACC 4-H Youth Voice Delegate – Meriwether Lewis**

Meriwether Lewis was selected to represent Alamance County as the 4-H Youth Voice Delegate at the 2024 North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) Annual Conference. Ms. Lewis spoke before the Board as part of the requirement to attend the NCACC Annual Conference.

**PROCLAMATIONS**

### **Proclamation: Park and Recreation Month**

Chairman Paisley and the Board of County Commissioners presented Jamie Merchel, Director of Alamance Parks and Recreation, and her staff with a proclamation recognizing July as "Recreation and Parks Month."

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Lashley

**APPROVED UNANIMOUS**

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Henry Chandler, a county resident, spoke about the new franchise agreement for Meridian Waste as part of the sale of Coble's Sandrock that the Board approved in August of 2023. He thanked the two County Commissioners who had voted against the franchise. He said Meridian had laid out strong financial care to gain the needed votes. He expressed concerns about whether Meridian was honoring their financial portion of the agreement.

Jackie Fortner, Chief Deputy, spoke on behalf of Sheriff Johnson, who could not attend the meeting that evening. He explained that the Sheriff had been receiving numerous phone calls about the possibility of selling alcohol at county parks or events at county parks. He said Sheriff Johnson had relayed that he was against the sale of alcohol at county parks or county-sponsored functions.

Leonard Harrison, a Mebane resident, expressed his frustrations with the school system asking for more money.

Jose Molina, a Burlington resident, said he was there to advocate for 21,000 students who had been forgotten the last 3-4 previous administrations. He commented that it was sad and shameful to see pictures of the collapsed school roofs. He wanted answers as to why the school buildings were awful, unsafe, unhealthy and the reason why the school system had to spend millions of dollars on mold remediation.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Chairman Paisley

**APPROVED AS AMENDED**

### **BUDGET AMENDMENTS**

#### **Budget Amendment 1**

## **Approval of the Alamance County America 250 NC Committee - Parks Rec.-2024-009**

### **Resolution for Kroger Opioid Settlement**

Approval of a resolution approving the supplement agreement for additional funds in the Kroger Opioid Settlement. A copy of the resolution is set forth hereafter.

### **Secondary Road Addition Resolution – Logan Ridge Subdivision**

Approval adding the following secondary road to Logan Ridge Subdivision; Shiloh Stone Court.

### **Courtroom Supervision & Security Contract – Dept. of Social Services**

## **TAX REFUNDS**

### **Tax Refunds, Releases, and Exemptions June 2024**

Approval of tax refunds and releases; a copy of the tax refunds are set forth hereafter.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the Special Meeting: Budget Work Session of May 30, 2024

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **Guthrie Dam Mill Historic Landmark Designation - Matthew Hoagland, Planning Director**

Matthew Hoagland, Planning Director, explained that both sites had gone through the proper process to qualify them for consideration as historic landmarks. He briefly explained the process and mentioned that state law required public hearings before taking action.

Mr. Hoagland continued that Guthrie Dam was located at 7855 Mac Lane in Snow Camp, NC. He said it was believed to have been constructed in the late 1800s, approximately 1873. Mr. Hoagland emphasized that the historical designation would only apply to the immediate 50-foot area surrounding the dam, not the entire property.

Vice-Chair Carter, seconded Commissioner Lashley, moved to open the public hearing.

No public hearing speakers wished to be heard.

Commissioner Lashley, seconded by Vice-Chair Carter, moved to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Thompson asked about a sign designating that site as a historical landmark. She inquired if there was a sign and if it would be courtesy of the county or the state. Mr. Hoagland responded that the Planning Department did not have a specific line item in their budget to cover that. She offered that it needed to be acknowledged if it was designated as a historical place.

**Moved by:** Chairman Paisley

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Thompson

Approval of an ordinance designating Guthrie Dam Mill as a historic landmark.

**APPROVED UNANIMOUS**

**Oak Grove Slave Cemetery Historic Landmark Resolution - Matthew Hoagland, Planning Director**

Mr. Hoagland reported that the Village of Alamance had requested the subsequent historic landmark designation. He reviewed that it was the final resting place of about 14-40 enslaved African-Americans.

Chairman Paisley, seconded by Commissioner Lashley, moved to open the public hearing.

No public hearing speakers wished to be heard.

Commissioner Lashley, seconded by Vice-Chair Carter, moved to close the public hearing.

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Chairman Paisley

Approval of an ordinance designating Oak Grove Slave Cemetery as a historic landmark.

**APPROVED UNANIMOUS**

**PRESENTATIONS/OTHER BUSINESS**

**Budget Amendment-Schools Capital Project Fund - Susan Evans, Finance Officer**

Susan Evans, Finance Officer, presented a budget amendment to amend the capital project fund by \$19,515,388.83 due to the 2024 general obligation bond sale that took place back in May. Ms. Evans explained that those funds had been received and would be allocated to various HVAC and roofing projects. She mentioned that some funds from the 2021 bond sale will be reallocated to Smith Elementary for HVAC needs.

Commissioner Thompson said she could not support the motion because she swore she would not pay back over \$150 million. She spoke that she was a big supporter of the school system but would stick by what she said.

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Chairman Paisley

The motion carried 4-1 with Chairman Paisley, Vice-Chair Carter, Commissioners Lashley and Turner voting in favor. Commissioner Thompson voted in opposition.

**APPROVED**

### **Opioid Settlement Update and Resolution - Ashley Barber, Coordinator of Health Services**

Ashley Barber, Coordinator of Health Services, provided recommendations on the opioid settlement funds. She explained that a request for applications process began in March 2024 for evidence-based treatment, recovery support services, recovery housing support, early intervention, and reentry programs. She advised that approval of a resolution was needed authorizing expenditures to:

- Strategy 2 (Evidence-based Addiction Treatment) - Residential Treatment Services of Alamance County (RTSA) for \$599,999.00
- Strategy 3 (Recovery Support Services) - RTSA for \$360,295.80
- Strategy 6 (Early Intervention) - Crossroads Sexual Assault Response and Resource Center for \$119,899
- Strategy 12 (Reentry Programs) - Benevolence Farm for \$117,654.50

The total amount of those expenditures was \$1,197,848.50.

Ms. Barber made additional recommendations of \$45,013.77 for personnel-salary and fringe benefits in Strategy 1 (Collaborative Strategic Planning), \$40,000 for Strategy 3 (Recovery Support Services) for the Family Justice Center, and \$20,000 for Strategy 12 (Reentry Programs) for transportation from the detention center to care facilities. She recommended soliciting applications for recovery housing support beginning August 1st with a funding amount of \$224,000 over two years or \$112,000 annually.

The total amount of the resolution that Ms. Barber requested approval of was \$1,302,862.27. Ms. Barber reported that the balance of unexpended Opioid Settlement Funds of \$1,142,476.33.

**Moved by:** Commissioner Thompson

**Seconded by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**APPROVED UNANIMOUS**

### **Amendment to Parks and Recreation Enabling Ordinance - Jamie Merchel, Alamance Parks Director & County Attorney Stevens**

County Attorney Stevens explained that a request had been received to allow the service and consumption of alcohol in county parks during special events where an alcohol permit was obtained in advance. He spoke that after reviewing the current Parks and Recreation Enabling Ordinance, there was no authority for the Parks and Recreation Commission to consider that request. He suggested amending the ordinance to allow the Recreation and Parks Commission to consider those requests and create fees and rules. He said there had been a request, and if the Board chose to adopt the amendment to the ordinance, it would allow for that to happen.

Jamie Merchel, Alamance Parks and Recreation Director, shared that Cedarrock Park had held two large events over the past year. She explained that the US Disc Golf Championship had inquired about setting up alcohol areas for a beer garden and a VIP ticket area that would have offered beer and wine as part of their event. She continued that the request was turned down because the ordinance did not allow alcohol in county parks. Ms. Merchel asked for a change in the ordinance as it applied to special events that would allow them to close facilities to the public and allow for a one-time special event permit through the Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) to serve alcohol if the Board agreed that would be a good use of space.

Commissioner Thompson said this was a no for her and there was a bar on every corner.

Ms. Merchel clarified that staff was not making a recommendation or in favor of having it on a regular basis. It would just be for the special events when the park was shut down to the public. She said she had been informed earlier that day AlcoVets was no longer interested in serving alcohol at the Balloon Festival.

Commissioner Lashley said it was important for people to hear that people who are having the private functions have the opportunity to say yes or no to having alcohol at a private function like a wedding or corporate event. He said it would not hurt his feelings either way.

Vice-Chair Carter said he agreed with Commissioner Thompson, and his first reaction was no.

Ms. Merchel reiterated that staff was not advocating to serve alcohol in the parks when it is open to the public.

Chairman Paisley shared that he had spoken with Ms. Merchel earlier that day and she confirmed there would be no additional revenues for serving alcohol at that point, but the Recreation and Parks Commission could change that if the amendment was approved. He said he had spoken with AlcoVets and Sheriff Johnson. He said Sheriff Johnson and Chief Deputy Fortner opposed the serving of alcohol in county parks and facilities.

Vice-Chair Carter said the county already had three departments that were short-staffed and those would be the most impacted departments impacted by the use of alcohol in the parks: EMS, Sheriff's Office and DSS. He did not see trying to do something that would create more work for county departments.

No action was taken.

#### **Adoption of Alamance County Ambulance Ordinance - County Attorney Stevens & Ray Vipperman, EMS Director**

County Attorney Stevens explained the need to revise the Ambulance Ordinance to reflect current practices and allow for the potential franchising of some transports. He continued that if the county decided to franchise any services, rules, and terms would already be established.

County Attorney Stevens mentioned that criminal penalties were associated with violating the ordinance, so it would require two readings and two votes from the Board.

Mr. Vipperman added that EMS currently operated 8.5 paramedic ambulances on the road, 8 of which were 24 hours per day and one of which was 12 hours. He said 2 convalescence ambulances were doing about 200 convalescent transports per month and 100 by the paramedic ambulance. Mr. Vipperman indicated that if they could contract that out, it would give them about 100 hours worth of paramedic-level coverage.

County Attorney Stevens advised the Board that adopting the revised Ambulance Ordinance would not bind the county to franchising out. Still, this ordinance needed to be adopted in order to do that. He said that any contracts for transport services would have to come to the Board for approval.

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Chairman Paisley

**APPROVED UNANIMOUS**

**Renewal of Contract with Vincent Valuations LLC - Jeremy Akins, Tax Administrator**

Jeremy Akins, Tax Administrator, discussed the Vincent Valuations, LLC contract renewal, which expires on August 16th. He said that he was happy with the services of Vincent Valuations, LLC, and recommended expanding their services to outsource the 2027 revaluation fully. Mr. Akins offered that he believed this was the best option for the citizens to ensure the highest level of quality. He said this was a service agreement, and there was no requirement for this service to be bid out. Mr. Akins recommended renewing the contract with Vincent Valuations, LLC.

Commissioner Thompson asked how much Vincent Valuations, LLC charged for the 2023 revaluation. Mr. Akins said he did not have that number and guessed around the \$500,000. County Manager York added that the number shared with her was \$1,334,719. Mr. Akins countered that amount was the total cost of the revaluation.

Commissioner Thompson asked how much Vincent Valuations, LLC estimated the cost to be this time. Again, Mr. Akins did not have an exact figure but estimated \$2.6 million.

Commissioner Turner asked why would the county spend that much. Mr. Akins said it had to be done and the county spend that much to do it themselves or pay someone else. Mr. Akins said they used a hybrid the last time using county staff and Vincent Valuations, LLC staff. He said with the reduction in his staff that Vincent Valuations, LLC would handle the entire revaluation.

Commissioner Thompson asked what the duties of his current staff were. Mr. Akins indicated that he did not have the staffing level to handle the scale of the revaluation project.

Commissioner Turner expressed that his concern was not with Vincent Valuations, LLC. He was not clear on the scope of what was outsourced versus the scope of what was not outsourced. He said that he could not offer further insight because he did not fully understand.

County Manager York said the staff was gauging the Board's level of whether they wanted to outsource the revaluation fully.

Commissioner Turner said, for the record, he was not comfortable with full outsourcing, and Commissioner Thompson said she was not either.

Commissioner Lashley asked why county staff could not take care of the residential and outsource the commercial and industrial. Mr. Akins said he did not have enough staff, so they would have to hire and train additional staff. He said this was a big project.

Chairman Paisley asked Mr. Akins to return with actual numbers and a recommendation at either of the two upcoming meetings.

### **Sheriff's Office Signing Bonus Program**

Chief Deputy Jackie Fortner presented the signing bonus program for the Sheriff's Office. He said the Sheriff's Office was short 19 sworn officers and 51 detention officers. He requested a \$10,000 signing bonus for all 12-hour shift positions, including detention and patrol officers.

Commissioner Lashley said he was trying not to spend money he did not need to. He wanted the Sheriff's Office to recruit at least ten new hires and allocate funding for those ten positions rather than allocating \$500,000 all at once. Chairman Paisley agreed with Commissioner Lashley's starting slow with the ten positions.

Commissioner Thompson said she had seen how ineffective bonuses were because some of the county departments still lacked staffing.

Vice-Chair Carter said the Sheriff's Office could not recruit if it was unsure whether it would get the funding for the next ten positions. He said they would avoid the overtime costs if they could staff the Sheriff's Office up.

**Moved by:** Chairman Paisley

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Lashley

Approval of a \$10,000 signing bonus program for ten initial positions (sworn officers and detention officers) starting this fiscal year consistent with the contract prepared by County Attorney Stevens. All funds to be repaid to the county by the employee if the contract is not fulfilled for the 24 months pursuant to the contract. The funding would come from lapse salaries and that a contract be a firm requirement along with the repayment of the funds if the contract terms are not fulfilled. The Board would have the availability to look at this again at a later time. The motion carried 4-1 with Chairman Paisley, Vice-Chair Carter, Commissioners Lashley and Turner voting in favor. Commissioner Thompson voted in opposition.



**COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

County Attorney Stevens followed up on the question about paying for the historic landmark sign. He said the state's Historic Landmark has funding on an annual basis they give to NC DOT for the ones that the state provides. He said that Section 4. in the ordinance "reads that a suitable sign or plaque may be posted indicating that said property has been designated." He did not see where there was a requirement that a sign be posted, and there was no requirement that the county paid for the sign.

**COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT**

County Manager York said she followed up with the public comment speaker during the recess. She informed the Board that the City of Burlington was pulling out of the co-located 911 Center. She said that staff would be assessing what that looked like going forward.

**COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Thompson said that she appreciated not taking any action on including alcohol in county parks. She commented that she wanted law enforcement to be solid. She expressed concerns about her conversation with Mr. Akins and wanted to have a solid tax department that could handle what needed to be handled. Commissioner Thompson said they had to consider every department because all departments were important. She said they had to stand up for what was right.

Vice-Chair Carter read 2 Chronicles 7:14. He said they needed prayer in this country and in Alamance County. He continued that they could disagree and still work together to solve problems.

Chairman Paisley spoke that he had never voted for a bonus in his County Commissioner history and explained why he voted in favor that night. He said that County Attorney Stevens had drafted a solid contract that required repayment of the bonus if the contract was not fulfilled.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Vice-Chair Carter, seconded by Commissioner Turner, moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

John Paisley, Jr., Chairman

Alamance County Board of Commissioners

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Tory M. Frink, Clerk to the Board