

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

**February 3, 2025, 9:30 AM  
Commissioners' Meeting Room  
124 West Elm Street  
Graham, NC 27253**

Board Members Present: Chairman John Paisley Jr  
Vice-Chair Steve Carter  
Commissioner Pamela Thompson  
Commissioner Ed Priola  
Commissioner Kelly Allen

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**CALL TO ORDER - CHAIRMAN PAISLEY**

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - COMMISSIONER THOMPSON**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Vice-Chair Carter, seconded by Commissioner Allen, moved to pull item #6b. Hard to Fill Positions Request - Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Thompson asked if there was a particular reason for pulling it off. Vice-Chair Carter explained if they approved any request, it might put the Sheriff over his budget for this fiscal year.

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Allen

Approval of the agenda as amended removing item 6b.Hard to Fill Positions Request-Sheriff's Office to a date to be determined.

**APPROVED AS AMENDED**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Tammy Cobb, Executive Director of Alamance Arts, spoke that arts culture and the community's history increased the residents' quality of life. She asked the Board to accept a piece of community artwork called "The Connection Between," framed by Aja Malach. Ms. Cobb mentioned that Alamance Arts wanted to create a strong art tourism economy in the county. She

explained that many cultural and historical experiences needed to be packaged as a place for people to come.

Daniel Ayers, a resident, expressed his displeasure at the Board for not taking any action on the FJC Grant at the previous meeting. He spoke that the funding would not have required a penny from local taxpayers. He said that by getting a simple approval, the community could have had the opportunity to receive a quarter of a million dollars to support a good cause. Mr. Ayers indicated that funding would have protected the community's most vulnerable members at no cost to local taxpayers. He suggested the decision was more about politics than helping humans.

Quinn Ray, community member & Elon Councilman, commented that denying the FJC the ability to apply for a grant turned their backs on the most vulnerable population. He said he had to make tough decisions as a council member and understood tight budgets. Mr. Ray stated that approving the grant should have been a "no-brainer." He said the county had previously allowed the FJC to apply for grants. He said that just rejecting the proposal turned their backs on women and children in the community who were trying to escape abuse and needed a safe space to go.

Emily Sutton, Executive Director of Haw River Assembly, said she had emailed the Board about a community in Swepsonville. She explained that the Haw River Assembly was a small non-profit dedicated to protecting and restoring the Haw River Watershed and Jordan Lake. She indicated that the community in Swepsonville had contaminated groundwater with per-and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS). Eight families had lived there all their lives, and she was concerned for their health. Ms. Sutton suggested there was a grant the county could apply for to help; the deadline was March 3rd.

Butch McKenzie, Burlington resident and neighbor of Rad Gun Range, said he appreciated the ordinance that the county had been working on. He noted that that ordinance needed to be passed to protect the lives and environment of his community. He mentioned the gun range was in a critical watershed area. Mr. McKenzie shared that he spoke with Jim Young at Durham Pistol & Gun Club, and he told him that tracers started fires. He suspected the fires at Mr. Dunn's property were likely from the tracers. Mr. McKenzie recommended that the ordinance ban tracers on gun ranges, because of the potential fire hazard when they go into leaves. He asked the Board to work on an ordinance because their safety depended on it.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Priola shared his concerns about some items on the Consent Agenda. He noted that one of the grant applications for Parks and Recreation required \$25,000 after the budget process. He suggested that if the county was going to encumber or consider encumbering funds, he thought those should be on the agenda as a presentation item. Commissioner Priola said that he was not objecting to the content. Commissioner Priola asked for the record whether he should be approving minutes from November when he was not a member of the Board at that time.

Chairman Paisley explained that as Commissioners, it was their duty to read the minutes and ask questions before or during the meeting. He said Commissioners were obligated to vote unless there was a conflict. Chairman Paisley said he shared the same concerns about the grant application for Parks and Recreation and had requested that the item be removed from the Consent Agenda to a Presentation Item during the agenda review meeting. He asked Commissioner Priola if he was motioning to remove the other grant application item from the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Priola said he understood there was no obligation from the county and was fine with it remaining on the Consent Agenda.

County Manager York advised that item 5b. Land and Water Fund Grant Application - Parks and Recreation was a request to apply for the grant. She said the county did not know if they would be awarded and was not asking to allocate any money at that time. If they are awarded the grant, it would come back to the Board to accept those funds. If the Board accepted those funds, they would need to decide whether to put up the match. She referred to Jamie Merchel, Alamance Parks Director, to clarify the match. Ms. Merchel said that item 5b. required no money from the general fund.

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Allen

**APPROVED UNANIMOUS**

**Approval of Construction Contract for Parks Cane Creek Mountain Natural Area (CMNA) Phase 3 Parking Lot**

**Parks Grant Application – Land and Water Fund (LWF)**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Regular Minutes of November 18, 2024

**PRESENTATIONS/OTHER BUSINESS**

**Parks Grant Application – Accessibility for Parks (AFP) - Jamie Merchel, Director of Alamance Parks**

Jamie Merchel, Director of Alamance Parks and Recreation, presented a grant application for accessibility improvements funded by the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation. She mentioned the grant application had a March 1st deadline, so they asked for permission to apply. She explained the project scope would be centralized at Cedarrock Park to improve accessibility and connectivity. Ms. Merchel mentioned that a 2.88 mile walking trail with a compacted surface would be added, making it accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACT). She described another project that would provide accessibility between the historic farm and the restrooms. She noted there were no paved paths or direct access currently. Ms. Merchel

said the paved path would connect the park office to the new playground. She said the largest portion of the project would be the replacement of the fishing pier to make it more accessible. The project would also upgrade accessibility to the restrooms.

Ms. Merchel advised her department was seeking \$310,000 in grant funding from the state, and the grant required a 20% match. She indicated there had been discussions with Impact Alamance to obtain as much of that match as possible. She said that, regardless of the amount unobtained, they would put in a capital improvement projects request for fiscal year 2025-26. Ms. Merchel acknowledged that any future maintenance costs were minimal and no additional staffing or equipment costs were necessary.

Commissioner Thompson said anything they could do to support the parks was a plus.

Commissioner Allen commented that she was all for the parks and suggested that Ms. Merchel contact the New Leaf Society, especially for any landscaping improvements. She said she would mention it at the next meeting.

Chairman Paisley noted that the total requirement was \$372,377.50, adding the potential of a \$30,000 local grant. He asked Ms. Merchel to state the source of the local grant. She responded it was a local grant from Impact Alamance. Ms. Merchel said they would ask the county for \$32,046 for the fiscal year 2025-26, but that amount could decrease depending on the amount received from Impact Alamance. She reiterated that the grant application was due March 1st.

Commissioner Thompson clarified that Ms. Merchel was asking to apply for the grant and would not know until later if they had been awarded. Ms. Merchel answered yes.

**Moved by:** Vice-Chair Carter

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Allen

**APPROVED UNANIMOUS**

### **Hard To Fill Positions Request - Sheriff Terry Johnson**

\*Removed from the agenda to a future meeting\*

### **COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

County Attorney Stevens reported he had a meeting with several members of the Durham Pistol & Rifle Club the previous Friday. He mentioned that he received feedback, and it was a helpful meeting. County Attorney Stevens reminded the public that the county was in the revaluation process and revaluation personnel would be on properties doing measurements as part of the process during the day. He noted that revaluation personnel would have reflective vests and identification issued by Alamance County.

### **COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT**

County Manager York reported that Life Star has started working in the county, and they will partner with the hospital to start convalescent transports on March 1st.

### **COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Thompson added to what the public speakers said about the Family Justice Center (FJC). She reported some stats on decreased funding from the Governor's Crime Commission. She mentioned that the concession stand for B. Everette Jordan was expected to arrive for the ball field in a couple of weeks. Commissioner Thompson expected to see the kids out there playing ball. She shared appreciation for the speaker who spoke about the water in Swepsonville. She said the county needed to support the arts. Commissioner Thompson pointed to her shirt from a fundraiser held for a Greensboro fallen officer.

Commissioner Allen addressed the FJC grant and how some wording may have implied that some populations would be excluded from services funded by that grant.

Vice-Chair Carter mentioned that he and Commissioner Thompson attended E.M. Yoder's ribbon cutting for their new playground equipment. He informed everyone that their PTO was trying to raise another \$15,000 to finish another project if anyone was interested in donating money. He shared that he received several phone calls regarding the FJC grant. He tried to explain to those callers that if the county created a new position and the grant lost funding, then the county would be responsible for funding that position or someone would lose that grant-funded job. Vice-Chair Carter said public safety was a primary responsibility of the local government. He commented there were several aspects of what the county does and that the Board must look at every piece of it judiciously and efficiently.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:28 AM.

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John Paisley, Jr., Chairman

Alamance County Board of Commissioners

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Tory M. Frink, Clerk to the Board