

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, September 15, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville NC. Commissioners present were: Keith Eller, Billy Holder, Lynn Cody and Connie Orr. Commissioner Williams was absent due to illness.

1. Chairman Eller called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Holder to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Holder made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the Workshop and Regular Minutes August 18th and the Special Meeting August 22nd. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Eller asks Alicia Parham to speak. Clerk Crisp stated that Ms. Parham was running late and asks to move on with the agenda. Chairman Eller stated that would be fine and asks Rebecca Garland to present the finance report.
7. Ms. Garland stated that the county ended the month of August with a cash balance of \$5.9 million which is one million more than last year and she was very pleased that the county has maintained the goal of fund balance. Ms. Garland stated that the taxes were coming in with the DMV running slightly ahead mostly due to the renewals of the big trucks that are paid at our local tax office. Ms. Garland stated that the back taxes are still being collected and we are slowly moving forward. Ms. Garland stated that our revenues were \$2 million and our expenditures were \$1.037 million leaving us a surplus of \$963,000.00. Ms. Garland stated that year to date surplus is \$1.3 million which is a little behind last year at this time. Ms. Garland stated that the sales tax was \$141,000.00 which is a positive but felt that this number would dip in the winter months. Commissioner Cody asks if the state changed the law on the large trucks payment to every five years instead of every two years. Ms. Garland stated that payment whether two or five years would still be hard for budgeting because the amount of the tax would stay the same and the overall tax revenue would be lower if spread out to five years instead of the two years. Ms. Erma Phillips, Tax Assessor stated that two systems are being run for DMV because of this issue. Ms. Garland stated that overall the county was still running ahead in DMV.
8. Ms. Garland stated that most departments were okay with their percentage of remaining funds but the Sheriff's Department was seeing a lot of overtime; the Communications Department had a DCI Computer that had to be replaced; Soil & Water and Recreation was running ahead but this should even out by year end. Ms. Garland stated that the optimal goal is 86% and most departments are staying within the budget.
9. Ms. Garland stated that the audit is being wrapped up and we were just notified that our Transit funds had been cut by 1/3 but later notified that the cut would not be as drastic. Ms. Garland stated that significant cuts were made to the elderly and disabled as well as significant cuts to Medicaid but the government received a lot of backlash so they chose to cut transportation funds which still directly affect the elderly and disabled. Ms. Garland stated that Transit Director Juanita Colvard will be coming before the board with recommendations on how to proceed.
10. Chairman Eller asks Alicia Parham to speak. Ms. Parham stated that there have been changes to the fees at the state level and we needed to adjust our fees to reflect this change. Ms. Parham stated that the water testing fees went from \$3.15 to \$74.00 which is an example of the pricing by the state. Ms. Parham stated that the Board of Health's recommendations were to charge the actual cost that the lab charges plus a \$20.00 processing fee. Ms. Parham stated that her office did not try to make money but did need to break even to help with the extra costs. Commissioner Orr stated that this was cut and dry if the state sets the fees. Ms. Parham stated that her main concern would be the amount of people who would no longer test their well due to the increase in price. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve the fees as recommended by the Board of Health. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
11. Chairman Eller asks Juanita Colvard, Transit Director to speak on the ROAP Grant funding. Ms. Colvard stated that she was fine on her money at this time and would use her part time drivers instead of replacing a full time position that she needed to fill. Ms. Colvard stated that the TAB Board had recommended that all ROAP funding go directly to Transit; to use only necessary funding and to implement fares for the Rural General Public. Examples of these fares are: one-way trips to the airport and out of town shopping. Ms. Colvard stated that we received \$3100.00 in donations and had collected \$200.00 in No Show Fees. Ms. Colvard stated that she has called other counties to check their fare pricing. Commissioner Orr stated that the taxpayers should not be responsible for general fares for pleasure shopping or rides to airports and some of those are not taxpayers of our county. Commissioner Orr suggested that we come up with applicable fares to charge. The board gave a directive to Juanita Colvard to figure out applicable fares to charge and present them to the board.

12. Chairman Eller asks about the Soil and Water Conservation. Manager Cable stated that he would be attending their meeting Tuesday night and would let the board know of their decision of the Operational Agreement.
13. Chairman Eller asks for public comment. Manager Cable stated that he had five people signed in for public comment. Chairman Eller asks Lynn Cody to speak. Mr. Cody stated that he was speaking as a concerned citizen for the people who had lost their jobs at Stanley Furniture. Mr. Cody stated that many people were having trouble with their unemployment whether by not qualifying or not receiving enough money to survive or by having their weeks shortened for eligibility. Mr. Cody stated that the county needed to check into this and find out why this is happening to those employees and further stated that the state needed to explain why the act that was passed by NC Commerce applied to some and not to all. Mr. Cody also wanted to know why the state is refusing to allow some employees to take the schooling or training for the occupation that they want to pursue. Mr. Cody stated that some people have been treated as if they had received severance pay while using their annual leave time. Mr. Cody stated that the stress this is causing on families is unnecessary and we need to do something to help.
14. Chairman Eller asks Hubert Merchant to speak. Mr. Merchant stated that he would pass on any comment at this time.
15. Chairman Eller asks Debbie Shook to speak. Ms. Shook stated that she had read in the Cherokee Scout about the Transportation projects and they plainly stated there would be fees for toll roads. Commissioner Orr stated that she is not for toll roads and would never be and this issue has not been discussed with this board. Commissioner Holder stated that our county needed good roads and he was 100% for Corridor K. Ms. Shook asks why the county has not received the transportation plan and feels that the county is purposely delaying until after the election. Manager Cable stated that it was rumor only on the toll road and Corridor K has not been considered at Jutts Creek by this board. Ms. Shook stated that no one should lose their homes whether it is Jutts Creek or Tallulah or anywhere else and we sure do not want or need a trucking road.
16. Chairman Eller asks Lisa Russo to speak. Ms. Russo stated that she was very disappointed in the OPT-IN process on getting the plans to the commissioners in a timely manner. Ms. Russo stated that she had called TSW – Woody Giles and he stated that the NCDOT had received so many comments that it was taking them longer to finish the plan. Ms. Russo stated that this will take us past the November elections and it seems downright suspicious and she hopes that the county will read and reread and reread again the plan when it is finally received to make sure that the OPT-IN Group reflects what the county citizens want and not what they want.
17. Chairman Eller asks Erma Phillips to speak. Ms. Phillips stated that she noticed the tax office hours was on the agenda and she was representing both the tax assessor and tax collector when she says that she has not heard one complaint about the office being closed from 1 to 2 the same hours that the DMV Office is closed. Ms. Phillips stated that they want to be treated fairly and they would like to stay at the 40 hours they are receiving now. Chairman Eller stated that he had received some complaints about the office being closed and would like for the office to be open for the whole day. Commissioner Cody stated that they could stagger the lunch hour to make sure that the office remained open. Clerk Crisp stated that she would need to run the new hours in the paper to let the taxpayers know. The board all agreed that the tax office needed to be open and not closed for lunch.
18. Chairman Eller asks Manager Cable to present the discussion items. Manager Cable stated that he needed the two polls approved:
 - a. Extension of leave for an employee who is very sick.
 - b. Backhoe Repair at SanitationCommissioner Orr made the motion to approve the polls. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
19. Manager Cable stated that the CDBG Status Report for 12-C-2417 was on track to getting closed out. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the status report. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Manager Cable stated that it was time to submit our NCACC goals and asks permission to submit Broadband flexibility as one of the goals. Commissioner Orr made the motion to allow Broadband as a goal. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
21. Manager Cable stated that the board needed to appoint a commissioner to the JCPC board to replace Mike Edwards. Commissioner Cody made the motion to appoint Connie Orr. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
22. Manager Cable asks for approval of the Releases and Discoveries. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
23. Manager Cable stated that the board had been requested to meet with the Health Board on October 21, 2014 @ 6:00 p.m. to discuss staffing and budget. The board was in agreement to this meeting and would continue the October regular meeting.
24. Manager Cable stated that he had a request to appoint Dirk Cody to the Health Board. Chairman Eller asks if this appointment is due. Clerk Crisp stated that the appointment is up in December. The board wanted to wait until the appointment was due.
25. Manager Cable stated that he wanted to know the board's decision on the Tax Office Hours. Chairman Eller stated that he did not want the office closed and the lunch hour could be

staggered. Manager Cable stated that the change to the hours was due to not having enough staff to cover the office. The board wanted the public notified.

26. Manager Cable asks the board's decision on the Conley Shope tax appeal. Clerk Crisp stated that in her minutes from the last appeal the house was stated 50% completion by Bryan Farley and in another portion of the meeting it was stated 75% completion but at no time was 90% completion mentioned or noted on the recording or in the minutes. Mr. Zeyland McKinney had stated that the agreement was on the house being 90% completed in the first appeal. In the second appeal, Mr. McKinney stated that the house is 90% complete. Commissioner Cody made the motion take the tax assessor's recommendation and deny the appeal. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Ms. Phillips stated that on the Wehr tax appeal the lower level is finished as a complete living area and is not a basement and she felt the board should have that information.
28. Manager Cable stated that he has a request from Steve Odom to name two bridges in the county after previous long time business owners Pearlle and Ethel Odom and Faset and Oneal Jenkins. Commissioner Holder stated that it is ultimately left up to the state to decide on the bridge names but he didn't have a problem submitting this request. Commissioner Orr asks the board to name the first bridge on Hwy 129N as a Veteran's Memorial Bridge to honor our Veteran's in the county. Commissioner Cody made the motion to submit a resolution to the state with these three bridge name requests. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Manager Cable stated that he had some new business items. The first item is appointing Rena Williams as a Review Officer for Plats so that she can approve plats in the event Erma Phillips or JR Rodgers is not available. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Manager Cable stated that the General Purpose Grant for \$3893.00 had come in for the Senior Center and the county match is \$1298.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the match. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Manager Cable stated that Kristi Odom needed to be appointed as a privilege tax collector in order for her to collect the privilege tax. Commissioner Holder made the motion to appoint Kristi Odom as a privilege tax collector. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Commissioner Eller stated that he received a request from Henderson County to pass a resolution requesting the release of SGT. Andrew Tahmooressi who is being held in Mexico. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the resolution. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Commissioner Cody made the motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (1) (6) for privileged or confidential information and personnel. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Commissioner Cody made the motion to go into open session. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Commissioner Holder made the motion to implement training for all employees on Ethics and develop a policy that all employees will go by. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Commissioner Holder made the motion to reallocate staff and allow Kristi Odom to assist in the Finance Office. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Chairman Eller continued the meeting until Monday, September 22, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. to allow for a public hearing on the Transportation ROAP Grant. All board was in favor.

Keith Eller, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Billy Holder, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Lynn Cody, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board