

Special Meeting – August 13, 2015

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Thursday, August 13, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. for a special joint meeting with the Cherokee and Clay County Commissioners in the Cherokee County Courthouse Board Room located in Murphy, NC.

Board members present was:

Graham County Board of Commissioners

Keith Eller, Chairman

Lynn Cody, Member

Connie Orr, Member

Greg Cable, County Manager

Kim Crisp, Asst. Manger/Clerk

Cherokee County Board of Commissioners

C.B. McKinnon, Chairman

Cal Stiles, Vice-Chairman

Roy Dickey, Member

Dan Eichenbaum, Member

Gary Westmoreland, Member

Randy Wiggins, County Manager

Maria Hass, Asst. Manager/Clerk

Clay County Board of Commissioners

Ed Roach, Chairman

Robert Penland, Vice-Chairman

Clay Logan, Member

Randy Nichols, Member

Rob Peck, Member

Paul Leek, County Manager

Southwestern Commission

Ryan Sherby, Director / Mediator

Cherokee County Chairman C.B. McKinnon called the meeting to order and asks Ryan Sherby, Executive Director, Southwestern Commission to proceed. Mr. Sherby presented the agenda to the board and stated that he would facilitate the meeting. Please note the following agenda.

Facilitated Discussion Agenda

August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 6:30 PM

Cherokee County Courthouse Board Room

Joint Meeting of the Boards of Commissioners for Cherokee, Clay and Graham Counties

Meeting Topic: Tri-County Community College Funding

1. Welcoming remarks Cherokee County Chairman CB McKinnon
2. Introductions
3. Issue Definition – Why are we gathered, what needs to be resolved
4. Presentation of major issues/concerns by individual counties (main points)
  - a. Cherokee County (10 minutes)
  - b. Clay County (10 minutes)
  - c. Graham County (10 minutes)
5. Identify Goal(s) of meeting (i.e. Agree on an outline for a financial contribution agreement)
6. Identify crucial elements to be included in an agreement (i.e. board appointments, financial allocation methodology, etc.)
7. Identify and evaluate possible criteria identified in item 6 (i.e. financial allocation methodology - population, FTE, etc.)
8. Summarize
9. Adjournment Cherokee County Chairman CB McKinnon

Mr. Sherby kept record of the meeting discussions which are listed below. The respective boards were given the opportunity to present their ideas, concerns and possible solutions. The meeting consisted of the following discussions.

**Issue Definition:**

- A desire to come together as the tri-county area to appropriate fair and predictable funding for current and future needs of Tri-County Community College.
- Ensure that board appointments are equitable
- Ensure that the community college remains financially viable with stable funding
- Improve communications among the three counties and the community college
- There is a legal obligation (NC General Statute) to fund the community college

**Cherokee County - Issues/Concerns/Comments**

- Equitable funding formula
- Tie board appoints back to funding formula/agreement
- '74 founding document/3 county agreement
- Local bill/recent legislative changes around appointments
- Looking for a solution moving forward

**Clay County - Issues/Concerns/Comments**

- The value is there
- Communication is key and needs to improve
- With limited funds need to ensure agreement is executable
- The economic impact of TCCC is high
- Limited resources for funding beyond core services/experiencing cuts

**Graham County - Issues/Concerns/Comments**

- Desire a more collaborative approach
- Need better understanding of TCCC finances, accountability
- Uncertainty around the '74 agreement
- Board appoints all going to state and Cherokee County
- Early College is of high importance
- TCCC is a partner to manage economic disruptions

**Goals**

- Develop the components and/or outline for an agreement

**Elements**

- Board appointments
- General population
- Total student head count
- Employee residence
- Stepped funding for counties that may not be prepared to immediate implement new formula
- PROCESS for appropriation collaboration
- Baseline percentage

**Board appointments discussion**

- Representation is important
- Long term appoints support the viability of the agreement
- Option: 4 for Cherokee County, 2 for Graham County, 2 for Clay County
- Potential corrective legislation
- If one entity fails to meet financial commitment, board seats will sustain

**Percentages and Stats Discussion (adjusted by eliminating out of area students)**

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>CURRICULUM</b>	<b>CON ED</b>	<b>EARLY</b>	<b>EMPLOYEES</b>
Cherokee	58.5%	62%	68%	102	65.5%
Clay	22.6	20%	18%	34	14%
Graham	18.9	20%	15%	0	11%

*Pros: Consistent and predictable*

*Cons: Constraints of disproportionately high % public lands and limited ad valorem tax base*

**Other Potential Inputs or Metrics Discussion**

- Community College data
- Age statistics such as number of 16 to 45? year olds, issue of retirement community

**Other Issues Raised or Overarching Themes Discussion**

- Indirect impacts of location of campus
- \$14M Budget, 7% by counties
- Need relevant and quantifiable stable metrics
- Stepped funding
- Collaborative appropriation process
- Accountable to the appropriation, transparency of costs
- Referendum as part of the agreement, or other possibilities to ensure long term viability

The boards all agreed to allow the county managers to get together with Tri-County and design a formula that will work for each respective county.

The boards all agreed to have future meetings on this issue and other issues that may come up concerning our far western counties.

Clay County Commissioner Clay Logan made the motion to adjourn. Cherokee County Commissioner C.B. McKinnon seconded this motion. Vote was unanimous.

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Keith Eller, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Jacob Nelms, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Lynn Cody, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board