

Regular Meeting – February 2, 2016

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville NC 28771. All board was present.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks Commissioner Williams to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Nelms asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the minutes for the Workshop and Regular Meeting of January 19th and the Continued Meeting of January 26th. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Nelms asks for the finance report. Rebecca Garland stated that she had three budget amendments for approval.
 - a. Budget Amendment #9 – Amend to recognize gift cards into employee compensation per IRC regulations that was approved in December 2016 board meeting.
 - b. Budget Amendment #10 – Amend to recognize expenditures approved out of contingency during the January 2016 board meetings.
 - c. Budget Amendment #11 – Amend to recognize board commitment during budget hearings to increase appropriation in the event that the Special Olympic games were relocated to Graham County for the 2015-2016 school year.

Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the budget amendments as stated.

Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

7. Ms. Garland also presented an analysis of repairs that the county had done for their information and to give them a listing of the expenditures.
8. Chairman Nelms asks Alicia Parham and Leann Ramsey to present the Community Health Assessment. Ms. Ramsey gave the board a slide presentation with a brief review. Ms. Ramsey stated that the Community Health Assessment investigates and describes the current health status of the community, recent changes and what needs to change to improve overall health. Ms. Ramsey stated that in Graham County the females are slightly higher in population than the males and that our median age is 44.3. Ms. Ramsey stated that our family income is the lowest in the state and we have the highest poverty rate in the region and the state. Ms. Ramsey stated that North Carolina is 35th in overall health and Graham County is ranked 63rd. Ms. Ramsey stated that we have three times more than the average in the state for smoking during pregnancy and the top leading deaths in Graham County is heart disease and cancer. Ms. Ramsey discussed types of cancer with the board. Ms. Ramsey stated that our morbid diabetes is slightly higher than in the region and obesity is the highest in this area. Ms. Ramsey stated that these two factors are largely preventable. Ms. Ramsey stated that we are the highest for levels of radon and this is the leading cause of lung cancer and number one in non-smokers and our tests that were taken this year went from .8 to 21.9. Ms. Ramsey stated that the three priorities chosen for Graham County is Access to care; Chronic Disease; Physical Activity and Nutrition. Ms. Ramsey asks for public comment. Commissioner Eller stated that we needed to find ways to keep our young people here. No further comments were given.
9. Chairman Nelms asks Alicia Parham to present the Health Department fees. Ms. Parham stated that since the health department has an open access clinic they had to establish additional fees. The added fees have been approved by the Board of Health. Commissioner Eller asks why the fees were going up. Ms. Parham stated that Medicaid will reimburse for the actual costs and the Medicaid cost settlement would take up the remaining costs and the fees was set by the statewide fee scale. Ms. Parham stated that they also have the sliding fee scale for those persons who was not able to pay. Commissioner Williams stated that the county is trying to get an Urgent Care Center and a Dialysis Center and wanted the support of the health department. Ms. Parham stated that she would give her support. Commissioner Williams made the motion to accept the fees as presented. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Chairman Nelms asks Manager Edwards about the NCACC resolutions. Manager Edwards read the first resolution to the board and asks if the board will support the Healthy Together NC campaign. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adopt the resolution as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

11. Manager Edwards stated that the second resolution is support for the Connect NC Bond Act. Commissioner Williams made the motion to support the Connect NC Bond Act by resolution. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
12. Chairman Nelms asks for public comment. Manager Edwards stated that Danny Beasley was signed in. Chairman Nelms asks Danny Beasley to speak. Mr. Beasley stated that he was here to discuss the closing of the forest service roads in our county. Mr. Beasley stated that he is a small game hunter, coon hunter and trout fisherman and when the roads are closed it affects his rights. Mr. Beasley stated that he is asking the commissioners for their help that they may take action against the Wildlife and the Forest Service. Mr. Beasley stated that January 1st the gates are closed for maintenance but you never see any type of maintenance, wildlife does zero work on habitats and the forest service says they do not have the money to maintain the roads. Mr. Beasley stated that he knew how the money works and if you do not spend your allotted money then the state will cut your funds the next year. Mr. Beasley stated that he needed the commissioners to speak for the citizens. Mr. Beasley stated that he had spoken to Joe Bonnette and his answer was that the roads freeze and thaw and this would damage the roads. Mr. Beasley stated that he has friends who would love to come to our county to hunt but they won't because of the closed roads. Mr. Beasley stated that he buys his permits and they shouldn't be allowed to tell him where and when he could hunt. Mr. Beasley stated that if you close the gates during big game season then the gates would be torn down. Mr. Beasley stated that he travels to South Dakota to small game hunt and we could have the same thing here. Mr. Beasley stated that he buys his permit to use the forest but the hikers do not pay one dime and this is unfair. Chairman Nelms stated that he agreed with Mr. Beasley and the board would do all that they could and one way to start is through the forest plan revisions that are taking place now. Commissioner Williams stated that we needed to start this tonight and made a motion to send Wildlife and the Forest Service a letter asking that all roads that are open during big game season remain open during small game season which is the end of February; close them then reopen the gates in April. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Commissioner Eller stated that the roads and they are: Big Fat #62; Farley Cove #407; Tatham Gap and Long Creek #423; Long Hungry #1127 and Santeetlah Creek #81. Mr. Beasley stated that he would also like a copy of the letter and his address is 890 Gladdens Creek Road Robbinsville NC. Commissioner Orr stated that she would get a copy to NACO as well and that she would mention this at the next meeting in Washington. Commissioner Orr sits on the public lands steering committee.
13. Manager Edwards stated that the next person for public comment is Jay Kelly. Mr. Kelly stated that he had a few issues. He asks that the commissioners ask DOT where the guardrail is that was promised to be installed on HWY 28 and Lower Sawyer Creek. Mr. Kelly stated that this section of road is very dangerous and this is a safety measure. The board asks Manager Edwards to follow up on this issue.
14. The second comment is a huge thank you to our county employees, ems employees, sheriff and transportation for the outstanding job that they did during our last snow. Mr. Kelly stated that they worked 24 straight hours and he commended them for a job well done.
15. The third comment is that Community Health Assessment and commended the health department and stated that we need to work on our health in our community.
16. The fourth comment is the saving's of the one million dollars which is smart business where no one is accessible to it but felt that awarding the Town of Robbinsville \$150,000.00 is a gross mistake so people can dance on Friday nights. Mr. Kelly stated that this is not county property and the Town of Robbinsville didn't need something that they could not afford. Mr. Kelly compared this project to the Kevin Costner movie Field of Dreams and this project has too many holes in it and asks that the board do not waste that money on a pavilion. Mr. Kelly asks how much the Town assisted in the million dollar pool.
17. The fifth comment is the dialysis center and suggested that we spend the \$150,000.00 on this instead of wasting county dollars on a pavilion.
18. Ms. Juanita Colvard stated that the county was in the process of an Urgent Care Center and we are in the first phase of the project and WCU was doing a dialysis study on the county to see if a center would be feasible and sustainable. Mr. Kelly stated that the county needed to offer sites for the care center.
19. Manager Edwards stated that Lisa Russo was the next speaker. Ms. Russo stated that she was confused on the Connect NC Bond because at the last meeting the county seemed reluctant on the bond. The board stated that our local colleges and community colleges will be receiving

- some of the funds and they felt the need to support this issue and Commissioner Orr also stated that the county could receive more funds for sewer and water.
20. Ms. Russo stated that she attended the Friday night dances but was disappointed by the design that was shown for the pavilion. Ms. Russo questioned the amount of money that they say it will take to build the pavilion and felt that this was not feasible.
 21. Chairman Nelms asks Manager Edwards to proceed with the discussion items. Manager Edwards state that the board had received notice of a NCACC District Meeting in Waynesville on April 13th and needed a head count of how many commissioners would attend. Commissioner Orr and Commissioner Cody would attend the meeting.
 22. Manager Edwards stated that Jean Perkins needed to be reappointed to the Joint CAC Advisory Committee. Commissioner Williams made the motion to reappoint Jean Perkins. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 23. Manager Edwards stated that it was time to rebid the county insurance and wanted to let the board know that they would be seeing advertisement of such.
 24. Manger Edwards stated that we had to make a couple of changes to our county personnel policy. Manager Edwards stated that our policy is good but we will have to make modifications from time to time. Manager Edwards stated that the first amendment deals with retirement and the number of hours that an employee works to become eligible for retirement. Manager Edwards stated that the second amendment is for our adverse weather policy. This policy needed some modifications done to plainly state when and how the county offices are to be closed. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve Amendment 1 and 2 of the County Personnel Policy. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 25. Manager Edwards stated that he did have some old and new business. Manage Edwards stated that the company will be here this week to install "In God We Trust" at the courthouse and the community building.
 26. Manager Edwards stated that we are making progress on Fort Hill and will be installing handholds within the next few weeks which will allow fiber connectivity to the Transit Facility and the new 911 Center.
 27. Manager Edwards stated that the county had received a letter of resignation from our County Attorney Donna Cody effective Monday, February 1, 2016.
 28. Manager Edwards stated that the complaint filed against the Graham County Sheriff's Department and Jackie Slaughter has been resolved by the insurance company.
 29. Manager Edwards presented the board with a fact sheet of the Appalachian Mountain Community Health Center which speaks largely on the lack of access to primary care in Graham County.
 30. Ms. Garland stated that in February 2015 the Travel and Tourism Board passed a resolution to align our occupancy tax with that in the state and this resolution was passed. The board needs to adopt another resolution accepting the legislative Session Law 2016-128 House Bill 347. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adopt the resolution to accept legislation to better align our occupancy tax with provisions defined in Session Law 2015-128 House Bill 347 with other counties and townships in North Carolina. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 31. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (a) (1) (3) (6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney client privilege, personnel and contracts. Commissioner Eller made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 32. Commissioner Williams made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 33. Commissioner Williams made the motion to accept the resignation from Attorney Donna Cody. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 34. Commissioner Williams asks that the directive be changed from a letter to a resolution concerning the closing of Forest Service Roads during small game hunting. All board was in agreement to this directive.
 35. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page attached!

Signature page for Regular Meeting February 2, 2016

Jacob Nelms, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Keith Eller, 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