

## Emergency Meeting – March 9, 2016

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Wednesday, March 9, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street for an emergency meeting. All board was present.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms stated that we were here to further discuss the proposed Urgent Care Center and he understands that we have new news that needed to be shared with the board.
3. Nancy Lane, PDA President stated that the county was looking at two options at this point and she believes that an urgent care center has a chance of working here. Ms. Lane stated that the paper was correct on that a stand-alone urgent care would not sustain here but an urgent care / primary care stands a good chance. Ms. Lane stated that she sees the need for after-hours care and the desire of the community is acute care. Ms. Lane stated that we will not have a typical urgent care center but a blend of urgent care / primary care that will work for this community.
4. Manager Edwards asks where this conversation is leading and with whom. Ms. Lane stated that she has spoken with Cherokee Health concerning the primary care and has spoken with Dr. Castor regarding urgent care and would be speaking with Dr. Castor again in the morning. Ms. Lane stated that the board and these individuals as stated would need to sit down together and see if this would work for each of you. John Rodgers stated that you can offer urgent care and offer point of care services at the same location. Mr. Rodgers stated that most urgent care doctors will see the same patients and over time they become their primary care doctor. Chairman Nelms asks how this looks to them as a board, what, can we do to help this process along because we cannot dictate services. Ms. Lane stated that you need to be comfortable offering primary care in an urgent care environment and be comfortable not having a 24 hour service. Rebecca Garland stated that neither Cherokee nor Swain was open 24 hours a day and Graham County did not expect that type service. Ms. Lane stated that weekend service was a need in our county.
5. The board learned that the Tribe is willing to sit down with the county for discussion. Casey Cooper is the new CEO of the Tribal hospital and has built a new model of care that is working.
6. Ms. Lane stated that another avenue to look to would be Duke Life Point who have taken over Harris Regional Hospital. Ms. Lane stated that they have regional vice-presidents whom the county would actually speak with and they fund and support primary care centers. Chairman Nelms asks if the county is being asked to a partner with a larger entity. Ms. Lane stated that long term success is higher with larger practices.
7. The board discussed that recruitment is a big issue for our area but debt loan forgiveness is available to doctors who would come to the rural areas such as ours.
8. Ms. Lane stated that she had spoken with Dr. Kelly, our local dentist, and stated that he is a treasure and commended his work for this community.
9. Ms. Lane discussed the county reaching out to our churches for support and further stated that many churches belong to organizations that can and will help fund projects such as urgent care and assist the center with doctors.
10. Commissioner Cody stated that the negativity that came out of the meeting on Tuesday night was unfortunate and people left thinking that urgent care would not be possible in our county. Commissioner Cody stated that Graham County is stricken so hard with no jobs and no health care and people are going to other counties for care and we need to attract trade back to our county and not away from it. Commissioner Cody stated that an urgent care will not survive if the people are not happy and we want this center to thrive.
11. Ms. Lane apologized to the board and stated that she should have presented the public hearing in a different manner but she would work to rectify and find a solution. Commissioner Cody stated that we support what our residents want 100% and we want this center to succeed.
12. Rebecca Garland stated that we need to look at our options that was presented tonight and we as county government take a proactive stance. Ms. Garland stated that we have the power to educate and reeducate the public and she didn't know what the editor of the paper was thinking when he wrote the headline that he did but we can create positivity and stop reacting and be proactive. The board all agreed.

13. Ms. Lane stated that she would draft a statement up for the people of the county that the board can issue. Chairman Nelms stated that we knew this would be a challenge but we as the county board will step outside the box and do what's best for our community.
14. The board all agreed that the citizens will back this center and this is a doable project for our community. The board will hear from Nancy Lane on Thursday and possibly set up meetings to discuss terms.
15. Rebecca Garland suggested that we create a Facebook page and put the statement out there for all the public to read. The board all agreed to this and agreed that we can make this work.
16. The board thanked Ms. Lane and her staff for their work and will look forward to speaking with them and possibly others soon.
17. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (1) (5) (6) for privileged or confidential information, contracts and personnel. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
18. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
19. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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Jacob Nelms, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Keith Eller, 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