

Special Meeting – March 4, 2013

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, March 4, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. for a special meeting held in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. The purpose of the meeting was to review and pass a resolution for the Transit Department; discuss acquisition of property and to work on the county pay plan with the option to go into closed if necessary for privileged or confidential information and contracts. Commissioner present was: Robert M. Edwards; Billy Holder, Keith Eller and Connie Orr. Commissioner Williams was excused for illness.

1. Commissioner Edwards called the meeting to order.
2. Commissioner Edwards asks Juanita Colvard, Transit Director to speak. Ms. Colvard stated that she was here to present a resolution for consideration authorizing Graham County to enter into an agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Ms. Colvard stated that the state needed to recognize the extra monies that were given to the new Transit Facility. Ms. Colvard stated that she had sent an email to the state office due to the form being changed from her previous forms. Commissioner Edwards stated that he would like to table this issue to allow Ms. Colvard to make sure this is the correct resolution format. The board was in agreement to tabling this issue at this time.
3. Commissioner Edwards stated that the county wanted to clarify the circumstances relating to the acquisition of the property in which the Transfer Station is located for a purchase price of \$450,000.00 and stand by the commitment that the county made on the acquisition of the building that houses our Sheriff's Department at present time. Commissioner Edwards asks Clerk Crisp about her conversation with Herve Cody who is the owner of these properties. Clerk Crisp stated that she had phoned Mr. Cody with the decision from the board and he verbally agreed to the purchases of both properties. Commissioner Orr stated that any conversations needed to be documented in writing. Clerk Crisp stated that she did type a letter for Mr. Cody to sign and would present to the board after she received the signature. Commissioner Edwards asks Rebecca Garland, Finance Officer if the county could buy the Transfer Station with the general fund money and she stated that yes we could. Ms. Garland suggested that the county make one plan of any properties to be purchased and was grateful that Mr. Cody allowed us to have two transactions with the Transfer Station becoming the priority. Ms. Garland stated that she would begin the paperwork to send to the NC Local Government Commission and suggested that the county consider plans for any renovations to upper plant building. Commissioner Edwards stated that a new administration facility would be great in the upper plant building due to the new transit and senior center facilities being located at this property. Commissioner Holder stated the county did need to use this property as county offices. Commissioner Edwards requested Manager Cable to find the old plans that was drawn up for the renovation of the plant building. Ms. Garland stated that when the county asks for a loan the LGC will look at the need to use this building for the benefit of the taxpayer and to have a one-stop location to do all their county business with the exception of the Sheriff's and Health Departments would be favorable and further stated that the upper plant building has remained empty since its purchase. The board all agreed that it would be more convenient to have all the offices at the same location. Commissioner Holder stated that the main goal of this board was to eliminate the county paying out any rent. Commissioner Orr stated that a plan needed to be in place on who will occupy the building. Commissioner Orr also stated that with the purchase of the sheriff's department building the county could plan for a new jail facility in the future. Clerk Crisp stated that the county needed to hold a public hearing to give the residents a chance to make comments and this could be done at the next regular meeting. The board was in agreement to the public hearing. Commissioner Eller agreed that the building needed to be utilized and was large enough to house all county offices with the exception to those stated. Manager Cable stated that the county needed to consider doing some of the work in-house. Commissioner Edwards directs Clerk Crisp to advertise the public hearing to allow comments on the acquisition of the properties located at 400 Snowbird Road and 300 Rodney Orr By-Pass. Manager Cable asks permission to get surveys on the properties before the next meeting. Commissioner Orr made the motion to allow Terry James to do the surveys on the properties that are an investment. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
4. Commissioner Edwards asks Juanita Colvard, Transit Director to speak. Ms. Colvard stated that she did receive confirmation on the form to be used that it is the original resolution. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adopt a resolution authorizing Graham County to enter into an agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Commissioner Edwards called for a recess.
6. Commissioner Edwards called the meeting back to order and asks Manager Cable to speak on the pay plan. Mr. Cable stated that he used the format from Cherokee County's pay plan and presented the board with three items to review. The first is the listing of all employees in the county with their current pay. The second is the listing of pay grades and the third is the scale for minimum, market and maximum rates of pay. Commissioner Orr asks how many employees the county currently has on payroll. Assistant Finance Officer Machelle Crisp stated that there were around 170 employees. Commissioner Orr stated that our county was ranked number four in

having more employees versus population. The board began by reviewing the number of hours that each employee works and Machelle Crisp stated that these figures are low because there are times that seventy hours of overtime is paid. Commissioner Orr asks if the EMS breaks even or makes a profit. Ms. Garland stated that we lose a little but for the most part the county breaks even. The board discussed the offices that fell under the NC State Personnel Act. Commissioner Orr stated that the county would now have a starting place and putting the performance evaluations in with the pay plan was a step forward. Commissioner Edwards stated that we needed steps between grades so that the evaluations would come into play. The board discussed some salaries being at the maximum and stated that a freeze could be put in place until all the other offices have been brought into compliance. The board discussed the possibility of cost of living adjustments that would be equitable. The board discussed new hires and the need to implement the policy in full force and further agreed that the county did not need to pay for any schooling except for the first time and if the employee did not pass the class that was required the employee would be responsible for the cost thereafter. Commissioner Eller stated that in the past the county did not pay for classes if they did not pass. Commissioner Holder stated that it was not the county taxpayers responsibility to pay for training and education if the employee did not pass their class and this needed to be addressed. Ms. Garland stated that under the ADA Act employees who did not do well on written tests could apply for assistance to take an oral test instead. Clerk Crisp stated that some classes are required as a condition of employment and class is typically paid for but if the class has to be retaken then the employee should bear the cost. Commissioner Orr stated that everyone is held accountable when using county funds and more internal controls needed to be put place not only with training but with county personal property as well. The board also discussed the grievance policy that the employee may file if they disagree with the county's performance evaluation. Commissioner Edwards stated that county employees currently hired will not always be in line with the proposed pay plan but from this point forward all new hires will go by the pay plan. Commissioner Edwards stated that he wanted steps to be listed between grades so that this will work with the evaluations. The board all agreed with this and wanted the plan to be changed to include the steps. The board discussed the level of responsibility that the department heads had in determining the steps in which the employee receives. Ms. Garland suggested that the board fix the gross inequities in the lower salaries first and then move forward with the new pay plan.

7. The board all agreed that they needed to hold another meeting on Monday, March 11, 2013 at 10:00 a.m. at the regular meeting place.
8. Commissioner Eller made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Commissioner Edwards stated the board needed to review a contract and would need to go back into session.
10. Commissioner Orr made the motion to reopen the meeting. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
11. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (1) (5) for privileged or confidential information and contracts. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
12. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
13. Commissioner Holder made the motion to accept the lowest quote from Tyler Technologies, Inc. at \$30,000.00 for the Schedule of Values assistance; Commercial Data Verification and Review, Hydroelectric Dams Valuation and Informal & Board of E&R appeals pending our attorney's review of said contract. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

---

Robert M. (Mike) Edwards, Member, Graham County Commissioner

---

Keith Eller, Member, Graham County Commissioner

---

Billy Holder, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

---

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

---

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board

---

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

