

Workshop Session - March 18, 2013

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, March 18, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. for their regular workshop session in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC 28771. Commissioners present were: Robert M. Edwards, Keith Eller and Billy Holder. Commissioner Connie Orr and Commissioner Raymond Williams were absent due to sickness.

1. Commissioner Edwards called the workshop session to order.
2. Commissioner Edwards asks Andy Cable, County Planner to speak. Mr. Cable stated that he had a couple of items to present to the board beginning with Stanley Furniture's online financial statement. Mr. Cable stated that the EDC Board toured the facility to give them an idea of the needs that Stanley has in asking for EDC funds. Mr. Cable stated that Stanley was asking for a grant to assist in a training program which will be held by TGG, the Guthrie Group, Inc. and which could benefit county employees and/ or business leaders of the community. Mr. Cable stated that Stanley is devoted to continuous improvement and submitted a request to the EDC for a project cost estimate of \$200,000.00. Mr. Cable stated that the project helps to ensure that Stanley is able to manufacture furniture cost-competitively versus overseas competition and without significant improvements it will be nearly impossible to maintain the jobs at the facility which could and would directly affect the livelihood of 210 Graham County families. Commissioner Edwards asks if this is open to all the residents of the county. Mr. Cable stated that the training is open to the public in our county. Mr. Edwards asks if GoldenLeaf had approved the request. Mr. Cable stated that from previous conversations with GoldenLeaf the project would be approved. Mr. Cable stated that the EDC board would have to have a formal vote on this project prior to submission. Commissioner Edwards stated that our HR Department and other county employees could use this training as a way to advance in their careers which ties in to the counties pay plan and performance evaluations.
3. Mr. Cable also stated that to be fair he was also submitting another project request from the Stecoah Valley Cultural Arts Center which came in at the same time as the Stanley project. Mr. Cable stated that this request was to repair the Stecoah Gymnasium which could help make a more attractive location for business development or relocation. Commissioner Edwards cautioned about the use of the EDC funds because he understood in the past that only revolving loans should be taken and not grant requests. Mr. Cable stated that in his conversations with Golden Leaf they would support projects that could bring more business into the county.
4. Mr. Cable presented the board with a list of names of the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority members and asks that the board review the names and if any are familiar to contact them asking for their support for the proposed recreation park.
5. Mr. Cable presented the board with an interest to develop a Rural Visitor Profile Study and asks the board if they would allow this study to be done with a shared cost between the Town of Robbinsville, Travel and Tourism, EDC Board and hopefully the other towns and the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Cable stated that the county needed to have a better understanding of the tourism that is coming through our county.
6. Mr. Cable also discussed a project to get fiber run to Stanley Furniture with a proposed cost of \$33,000.00 which could be split with Stanley, EDC and the Town of Robbinsville. Mr. Cable stated that he would talk later on this project when more information was obtained.
7. Mr. Cable also stated that solar fields are beginning to crop up and our county is one area that property is being looked at and advises that if the county did not have an ordinance for these types of projects they needed to consider looking into the logistics of having one put in place to protect our tax base. Commissioner Edwards stated that it would be the responsibility of the county to make sure that the property owners are aware of the possibility of solar farms being installed in our county and what impacts if any this would cause to the neighboring properties.
8. Commissioner Edwards stated that he had reviewed the county board's list and found an error on the Smoky Mountain Board and asks Clerk Crisp to make the changes to the list. Clerk Crisp stated that she would make the corrections.
9. Commissioner Edwards asks Commissioner Eller and Commissioner Holder to let the public know about the FEMA visit. Commissioner Holder asks our Floodplain Administrator Larry Hembree to speak about the visit. Mr. Hembree stated that FEMA did visit today and did go look at three sites and found no problems with any of the sites. Mr. Hembree stated that the gentleman assured him that they would go back with their findings and the county should be re-entered into the program with no probationary period. Commissioner Edwards stated that he was still concerned over the statement that Graham County was not cooperating in the process when the clerk has retyped the document several times just to correct an "and" to an "or". Commissioner Edwards stated that the clerk had to send the document PDF and then change it to word and then change back to PDF which in his opinion was not necessary. Commissioner Edwards stated that the only reason that a visit was done today was because the county found

out that FEMA was visiting the Cherokee Tribal land slide. Commissioner Eller stated that his understanding was the county would not have to wait to be reinstated for very long.

Commissioner Holder stated that if FEMA had done the studies like they were supposed to then none of this would have happened. Commissioner Edwards stated that the county could now move forward. Mr. Hembree stated that Mr. Russo would follow up with his bosses and they would inform the county later of the reinstatement date.

10. Mr. Hembree stated that our new ambulance was on its way and would get inspected on Wednesday and would be put on the road after the inspection. Commissioner Edwards thanked Mr. Hembree for the update.
 11. Commissioner Edwards gave a brief update on the recycling program and noted to date that the county had received 9200 lbs. in recycling which he felt was a good start.
 12. Commissioner Edwards asks for further comment. No further comment was given.
- Commissioner Edwards closed the workshop session.

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

Keith Eller, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Billy Holder, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Raymond Williams. Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board