

Regular Meeting – September 16, 2013

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, September 16, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville NC for their regular monthly meeting. Commissioners present were: Robert M. Edwards, Billy Holder and Keith Eller. Commissioner Orr was absent due to the loss of her beloved sister, Martha Menard. Commissioner Williams was absent due to illness.

1. Commissioner Edwards called the meeting to order.
2. Commissioner Edwards gave the Invocation.
3. Commissioner Edwards asks Commissioner Eller to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Commissioner Edwards asks for approval of the agenda. Clerk Crisp stated that the agenda needed to be amended to add Joan Stillwell as #5a for the USDA – Funds Presentation and under #9 add personnel. Commissioner Eller made a motion to approve the agenda with the amendments as stated. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Commissioner Edwards asks for approval of the Workshop and Regular minutes of August 19, 2013. Commissioner Holder made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Commissioner Edwards asks Ms. Joan Stillwell to speak. Ms. Stillwell stated that she had received notification that the county had received \$76,955.35 for the Housing Preservation Funds. Ms. Stillwell stated that these funds can only be used for very low income families. Ms. Stillwell stated that she needed approval to submit the actual application which include:
 - Request for Obligation of Funds for \$76, 955.35
 - Application for Federal Assistance
 - The Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs
 - Assurances-Non-Construction Programs
 - Housing Preservation Grant Agreement

Commissioner Eller made the motion to submit the application for the USDA Housing Preservation Funds per the requirements as stated by Ms. Joan Stillwell. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

7. Commissioner Edwards asks for the finance report. Ms. Rebecca Garland stated that the county ended the month of August with \$4.9 million dollars which is up from this time last year and we are holding at our 28% fund balance at this time. Ms. Garland stated that our taxes are coming in well at this time and we are a little ahead. Ms. Garland stated that our efforts on the foreclosures are paying off. Ms. Garland stated that our sales tax is down this month by ten thousand which is a little disheartening. Ms. Garland stated that our budget was tracking well and our department heads were doing okay with their purchase orders. The board discussed the PILT funding and what is happening in the Raleigh concerning the continuation of the funding. The board is very concerned with this funding being cut which would cause a huge financial impact on our rural counties and schools.
8. Commissioner Edwards asks for public comment. Clerk Crisp presented the list to Chairman Edwards. Commissioner Edwards asks Joan Gilliland to speak. Ms. Gilliland stated that she was here to speak on the stray dog issue. Ms. Gilliland stated that she is seeing more and more stray animals and she is aware that this is something that the county can't afford to do but we have to do something. Ms. Gilliland stated that the county needed some kind of animal control and asks could we not tax the people who have animals as a way to raise revenues. Ms. Gilliland stated that animals left to starve end up mauling our children and there will be dogs left to starve at the end of hunting season, which is a horrible subject to bring up. Ms. Gilliland stated that she would be willing to pay her part.
9. Commissioner Edwards asks Robin Mason to speak. Ms. Mason stated that she was here to speak on the issue of animal control and she had two questions. Ms. Mason stated that animal control is a problem in Graham County and we don't have essential services to take care of the problem. Ms. Mason stated that these services used to be provided but they were dropped and now what are residents supposed to do, drop their animals off at the courthouse. Who is responsible for the strays? Ms. Mason stated that the compassionate folks of Graham County are concerned about this issue. Ms. Mason stated that in the past this was a part of the budget each year and she hoped that this could be done again. Ms. Mason suggested that the Travel and Tourism money be used to help fund this issue. Ms. Mason stated that ignoring this problem is not the solution and people do not know what to do but are willing to help in any way possible. Ms. Mason asks that the board please find a solution.
10. Commissioner Edwards asks Vicky Branch to speak. Ms. Branch stated that she has carried dog food in her car to feed animals all of her life because she has such great feelings for animals and she knows of many instances where dogs are picked up at dumpsters and taken to vets but we have bigger problems than the animals. Ms. Branch stated that our problems are the people

who are irresponsible and will not take proper care and she stated that it is time to complain to Senator Davis, WLOS, advocate groups and Betty White from TV. Ms. Branch stated that it takes one voice and she knew that some people feel the same way she does and some don't but it is pitiful that these animals are being left to starve and die. Ms. Branch stated that the commissioners have the power to do something about this issue and something needs to be done. Ms. Branch stated that the board needed to heed the warning that she will contact other people and complain if she has to but she is willing to help in any way that she can. Ms. Branch stated that the county could hire someone and pay them minimum wage and put the animals down rather than let them starve to death or build a building and gas the animals anything was better than watching the cruelty.

11. Commissioner Edwards asks Jeri Dorr to speak. Ms. Dorr stated that she was here a couple of months ago with the issue of animal control and she now has four more dogs at her house. Ms. Dorr stated that the county needed to find a solution to the issue of stray dogs. Ms. Dorr stated that she is aware that this is not just a Graham County issue but a regional problem as well and suggests we all work together to find a solution or consider taking over Valley River Humane Society. Ms. Dorr stated that maybe Tri-County Community College could offer a course at their college that could support an animal shelter and the counties could contribute to them. Ms. Dorr stated that Logan's Run has been very helpful to her and maybe they could suggest programs to the county that could help. Ms. Dorr also suggested that the inmate program could be used to help in the animal shelter to clean and train dogs. Commissioner Edwards asks that any ideas that anyone has to please write down and send in to the county manager's office. Commissioner Edwards stated that an ordinance would be difficult because this would affect the entire county and would require a voice from the entire county including the hunters. Commissioner Edwards stated that we do care and understand the problem concerning the animals and appreciate everyone coming and speaking to the board. Rebecca Garland, Finance Officer stated that the contract with the Valley River Humane Society and Graham County went dead in 2008/2009 but Graham County gave them \$10,000.00 in 2010 without a contract which was verified by a Valley River Human Society Ex-Board Member. Ms. Garland stated that the county is trying to find an affordable way to deal with this issue and they are in no means trying to ignore this situation. Ms. Garland stated that the regional approach may be the best way to approach the issue. Commissioner Edwards stated that if enough people are involved then more animals can get adopted out and less will be euthanized. Commissioner Holder asks where the money is coming from to pay for the program. A lady from the audience stated that if the board would pass ordinances with fees then the program would pay for itself. Commissioner Edwards asks Lynn Kinley to speak. Ms. Kinley stated that she sells real estate and it is very hard to sell a piece of property when animals run a long side your car while viewing the property. Ms. Kinley stated that she would help raise money to put laws in place that charge animal owners taxes on things. Commissioner Edwards asks Glenda Alexander to speak. Ms. Alexander stated that she believed an ordinance would change the way the animals are treated here and it was very embarrassing to her as a business owner to see so many stray dogs running around. Ms. Alexander stated that the biggest problem was the way that animals are allowed to be treated here. Commissioner Edwards asks for further comment. No further comment was given.
12. Commissioner Edwards stated that the board would now go into the discussion items and asks Manager Cable to proceed.
13. Manager Cable presented the totals on the Releases of \$587.38 and Discoveries of \$1,735.40. Commissioner Edwards asks for approval on the Releases and Discoveries. Commissioner Holder made the motion to approve. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Manager Cable stated that he needed approval on the resolution of Graham County's Strategic Approach in the use of the EDC Funds. Commissioner Edwards asks for approval of the Resolution. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the resolution. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
15. Manager Cable stated that the board needed to add a the title of Delinquent/Foreclosure Enforcement Officer to Tajuana Ledwell and Kristi Odom's titles in order for them to work on foreclosures. Commissioner Holder made the motion to add the title to their job descriptions and titles. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
16. Manager Cable stated that the tax collector's office had requested that they be able to purchase Ancestry.com to assist in the foreclosure process. Clerk Crisp stated that the library may have this subscription and if so they could use theirs which would save the county money. The board agreed to table this issue.
17. Manager Cable gave an update on the transportation project prioritization requests stating that this is still in process and a meeting will be held on September 23rd for further information.
18. Manager Cable gave the board an invitation to the Town of Robbinsville Meeting to be held on September 19, 2013. Clerk Crisp stated that she would need to RSVP anyone that wished to attend. Commissioner Edwards stated that he would like to attend.

19. Manager Cable gave the monthly performance report on the 10-C-2231 CDBG Grant and stated that all was on schedule and the 12-C-2417 CDBG Grant and stated that all was on schedule as well for this grant. Commissioner Eller made a motion to accept the monthly performance reporting for the two grants. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Manager Cable stated that the board would be seeing an advertisement for a full time dispatcher and if approved by the board a part time dispatcher due to the resignation of one of the dispatchers. The board was okay with this request.
21. Manager Cable stated that he had sent a Memorandum of Understanding for the Urgent Care to our county attorney for review before he signed the document. Manager Cable stated that this document is for the doctors that will use the Health Department for the Urgent Care and for Dr. Keever, an OBGYN. Clerk Crisp received confirmation from Attorney Cody that the paperwork was in order if the board was okay with the terms. The board was agreeable to the terms.
22. Manager Cable stated that Mitch Colvard had been contacted to make the signs for the In-Rim / Foreclosures which will be cheaper than ordering them through a company.
23. Manager Cable stated that the board needed to reappoint and or appoint five (5) health board members. Manager Cable presented the current names: Commissioner Raymond Williams who is able to serve another term; Anthony Ditmore for the Pharmacist position who would like to continue to serve; Yvette Hooper in the Dr. of Optometry position, she completed her third term and needs to be replaced at this time but can serve at a later date; Melba Millsaps in the Nurse position, she completed her third term and needs to be replaced at this time but can serve at a later date; Tommy Ward in the Public position, he completed his third term and needs to be replaced at this time but can serve at a later date and Lorena Beasley in the Dr. of Dentistry position who would like to continue to serve. Manager Cable stated that several names had been suggested for consideration and those names are Claudine Gibson, Carol Millsaps and Claudie Burchfield. Commissioner Edwards asks for further names for consideration. No further names were given. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the following names for the Board of Health for three year terms: Commissioner Raymond Williams in the Commissioner position; Anthony Ditmore in the Pharmacist position; Claudine Gibson in the Dr. of Optometry position; Carol Millsaps in the Nurse position; Claudie Burchfield in the Public position and Lorena Beasley in the Dr. of Dentistry position. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
24. Manager Cable reminded the board of the GREAT meeting to be held on September 26th at the Snowbird Community Complex Building.
25. Manager Cable updated the board on the Western Highlands and Smoky Mountain Center Structural Change which doesn't represent our western regional counties and this is a cause of concern. The board discussed the board being downsized and authority boards being formed. The board voiced their concern on how the new board is structured and realized that once again the western counties would be left out on any decision making of how they are to receive services and who can receive services. The board all agreed to go with the majority vote of the western counties on the decision of opting in or opting out of services with Smoky Mountain Center. Commissioner Eller stated that we will do better by staying with the majority.
26. Manager Cable asks the board about the Memorandum of Understanding with the Physicians at the Health Department. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the MOU. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Manager Cable stated that Chairman Edwards had been reappointed to the NCACC Board of Director's and congratulated him on this reappointment.
28. Manager Cable stated that he needed to get approval on the polls that were taken. The first poll was the travel for Wanda Hill, Senior Center Director. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve this poll. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. The second poll was the Rip Rap at the Senior Center for \$900.00. Clerk Crisp asks if this poll could be tabled due to the safety issue that has been brought up concerning this ditch. The board agreed to table this for further discussion.
30. The third poll was the Air Conditioning for the Library and Courthouse with Total Comfort receiving the lowest bid. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the poll. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. The fourth poll was the Senior Center wiring for the new sign, timers for the outside lighting and the extension for the pipe at the back of the building for a total of \$1250.00. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the poll. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Manager Cable asks the board to consider a letter of support for House Bill 1526 which will support our Secure Rural School Funding to allow for more timber harvesting in our county. Commissioner Holder made the motion to write a letter in support of this bill. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

33. Manager Cable stated that the office has been receiving post cards on the issue of the stray dogs and wanted this acknowledged in public that our office is not ignoring the subject but are working toward a solution.
34. Manager Cable stated that he had a request to name the new Goldmine Bridge after Pearlle and Ethel Odom and the Tapoco Bridge after Faset and O'neal Jenkins due to their long years of business and service that they provided in their communities. Manager Cable stated that these business owners had made an impact on these communities and this request was made by Mr. Steve Odom. Commissioner Edwards stated that the final decision is for the NCDOT to make but he did not mind making the request because he did know that these folks did help a lot of people in need. Commissioner Edwards made the motion to pass a resolution naming these bridges in their memories. Commissioner Edwards asks for a second. No second was given. Motion failed.
35. Manager Cable stated that the Road Naming Board had met and submitted the following new road names for approval: Havenwood Lane; Chestnut Cove Road; Icie Springs Road; Wynter Lane; Wynter Circle. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the names submitted by the Road Naming Board. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Manager Cable asks permission to surplus the gas and diesel pumps that are going to be removed from behind the EMS Base and asks that the pumps be kept as a backup in case the one at the sanitation department tears up. Commissioner Eller asks that Manager Cable make sure that the county owns the tanks before we move them. The commissioners asks that David Hyatt check into this before the county moves forward.
37. Manager Cable stated that he had a request that Onley Williams be added to the Recycling Board. Commissioner Edwards made the motion to add Onley Williams to the Recycling Board. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Manager Cable stated that the board would be having a public hearing for the Transit ROAP Grant on Thursday, September 26th at 5:00 p.m. at the Community Building.
39. Manager Cable stated that he received an offer from Ernie Cole to bush hog our Fort Hill property and our Old Landfill property in exchange for the hay from the property. Mr. Cole would have to supply the county proof of liability insurance. Commissioner Holder made a motion to allow Mr. Cole to cut the hay with a letter signed exempting the county from any liability. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Manager Cable stated that Stanley is requesting training from Goldenleaf and a formal request will be forthcoming from the EDC board at a later date. Manager Cable stated that the training would have to include participants from other businesses.
41. Commissioner Edwards stated that the board would now go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (1) (6) for privileged or confidential information, personnel and contracts and asks the board for a motion. Commissioner Eller made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Commissioner Holder made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Commissioner Holder made the motion to hire Claudie Burchfield as the DSS Director. Commissioner Edwards seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
44. Commissioner Eller made the motion to enter in to contract with Terminix. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
45. Commissioner Holder made the motion to allow Manager Cable to begin accruing leave time (annual, sick and compensatory) like all other department heads in the county but remain exempt from all other provisions of the personnel policy as stated in the manual. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
46. Commissioner Eller, Commissioner Holder and Commissioner Edwards wanted this statement made clear that if anything should happen to them during their time in office that would not allow them to fulfill their obligation as Commissioner for their term then the next running mate in line "no matter who he or she may be" is to be the one that is to fill their seat until the next election in which a candidate can be elected by the people instead of by the executive party. This wish is to be noted in the official minutes this 16th day of September, 2013.
47. Commissioner Edwards asks for further business. No further business was discussed.
48. Commissioner Holder made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page attached!

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