

Regular Meeting – December 16, 2013

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, December 16, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville NC. All board was present.

1. Commissioner Edwards called the meeting to order.
2. Commissioner Edwards asks Commissioner Williams to give the Invocation.
3. Commissioner Edwards asks Commissioner Eller to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Commissioner Edwards stated that the agenda would be amended to include Rick Davis with G.R.E.A.T. as Item #6a and asks for a motion with the amendment. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the agenda with the amendment. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Commissioner Edwards stated that every year the board was required to re-elect a chairman and vice-chairman among its members and turns the meeting over to the Clerk.
6. Clerk Crisp asks for a motion to elect a Chair to the board. Commissioner Williams made the motion to elect Mike Edwards as Chair. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Clerk calls for a vote. Vote was unanimous.
7. Clerk Crisp turns the meeting over to the Chair Robert "Mike" Edwards. Commissioner Edwards asks for a motion to elect a Vice-Chair to the board. Commissioner Eller made the motion to elect Billy Holder as the Vice-Chair to the board. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Commissioner Edwards calls for a vote. Vote unanimous.
8. Commissioner Edwards asks for approval of the regular and workshop minutes for November 18, 2013. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Commissioner Edwards asks Rick Davis with G.R.E.A.T. To speak. Mr. Davis thanked the board for allowing him to speak and stated that the GREAT Organization had been going for (5) years now and he thanked the board for their support. Mr. Davis stated that the organization with the partnership of other groups had provided over \$4,000,000.00 to our community. Mr. Davis and the board discussed the various projects and further stated for clarification that he did not receive 10% of every grant that was received by the organization. Mr. Davis stated that this was a rumor. Mr. Davis invited the board to the next meeting on Thursday, January 23, 2014 at Fontana. The board thanked Mr. Davis for his hard work and dedication to the county. Mr. Davis thanked the board and all the G.R.E.A.T. members which are over 100 active members at this time.
10. Commissioner Edwards asks Rebecca Garland to give the finance report. Ms. Garland stated that the county had closed November with a \$5.1 million dollar cash balance which is tracking ahead from last month. Ms. Garland stated that the county is collecting more in DMV taxes with the new system at this time and the tax office is doing very good on collecting the back taxes since the board implemented the foreclosure process. Ms. Garland stated the sales taxes were below from last year at this time and she contributed this to the weather and the ripple from the government shutdown and encouraged everyone to buy local. Ms. Garland stated that most department budgets were okay but some were running hot.
11. Ms. Garland stated an issue had arisen about a batch of DMV bills that did not get mailed out and refunds would need issued to those taxpayers that had to pay interest because of this error. Manager Cable had found the law where interest could not be charged to the taxpayer due to the error of this type. The board all agreed to a directive to call the taxpayer and ask them to come by the tax office to pick up their refund of all amounts under \$1.00 or credit to their account and to issue a refund check for all amounts over \$1.00.
12. Ms. Garland stated that payroll would be brought back in-house next week and she, Machelie and Kim would be in training.
13. Ms. Garland stated that her next project would be to tighten the pre-auditing process and she would be getting with the department managers on their blanket purchase orders for their everyday vendors. Ms. Garland stated that if purchases are made in advance without a pre-audit certificate then that person is held liable for that purchase. Ms. Garland stated that we are not alone in this process and that there are other counties dealing with these issues in court so this is very serious. This is being implemented to cover the county and to honor the charges made with the vendors. Commissioner Edwards stated that the county does not lay a blank check down there has to be communication and a budget is a guideline not a blanket check.
14. Ms. Garland stated that the RDA audit is underway and the Local Government Commission stated that an audit for the prior years would have to be done this year. Ms. Garland stated that she should have a draft by the end of this week and unfortunately they would be written up for not having had previous audits. Ms. Garland stated that she felt the previous RDA board did not realize they were body a politic, and did not realize they were required to have yearly audits.

15. Ms. Garland stated that she would be going to Durham in February to accept a scholarship award from the NCCMA on behalf of Graham County. The board was very pleased with this recognition and thanked Ms. Garland for her hard work.
16. Ms. Garland also asks that everyone watch WLOS Person of the Week on December 27th at 6:00 p.m. her son, David Maennle would be recognized for his work at the EMS Department and for being a graduate of Western Carolina University.
17. Commissioner Edwards asks Sheriff Anderson to speak. Sheriff Anderson was not present.
18. Commissioner Edwards asks for public comment. Commissioner Edwards asks Jill Gottesman to speak. Ms. Gottesman wanted to make comment on the resolution that the board was presenting tonight. Ms. Gottesman wanted to make one quick statement on what is allowed in wilderness. Ms. Gottesman stated that camping, hunting, fishing and horseback riding is allowed as well as honoring the mountain tradition. Ms. Gottesman stated that you can manage fires, build fire at campsites and manage search and rescue efforts. Ms. Gottesman stated that the wilderness society is building trust with the timber and forest interests and the conversations have been pretty amazing over the last few meetings and she offers one more word of encouragement to please join the cooperative and come up with a plan to present to the forest service where everyone can find common ground and work together in our far western counties. Commissioner Williams stated that if we don't stop the wilderness then the buffer zone area will take the entire town. Ms. Gottesman stated that she was not familiar with the buffer zone. Joe Bonnette stated that in North Carolina you cannot ride horses in the wilderness and there are areas that are marked for buffer zones in the management plans of the Forest Service. Commissioner Williams stated that Graham County keeps getting limitations and restrictions put on us all the time and it happens little by little every time these plans get changed. Commissioner Edwards stated that we need to express these things and move to have this changed. Ms. Gottesman stated that this region has to work for these changes and the local forest service will not work to get this changed without the people voicing their need for these changes. Commissioner Edwards stated that the county needed the opportunity to participate in making changes that would benefit the county.
19. Commissioner Edwards asks Manager Cable to present the discussion items. Manager Cable presented the board with the Senior Center Monthly Performance Status Report CDBG 10-C-2231 and 12-C-2417 and stated that the performance schedule was on and everything was running smoothly. Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the reporting on the two status reports. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Commissioner Edwards asks for a motion to approve the releases and discoveries. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the releases and discoveries. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
21. Manager Cable stated that he needed approval for the reappointment of the Road Naming Board Members Connie Orr and Brian Johnson for a (1 year) appointment. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
22. Manager Cable stated that he needed approval for the reappointment of the T&T Board Member Barry Levy for a (1 year) appointment. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
23. Manager Cable asks for the Adoption of the Opposition to Wilderness in Graham County Resolution. Commissioner Williams made the motion to adopt the resolution. Commissioner Eller seconded the motion. Commissioner Edwards calls for comment. Commissioner Edwards stated that this comes to the issue of having any more of our land put in the wilderness area and where do we go as a board to say no and where do we go as a board to accomplish this and if we go with this resolution tonight I feel that we are closing this door and I will have to be opposed to the resolution at this time as it is written. Commissioner Edwards calls for a vote. Commissioner Williams, Eller, Holder and Orr voted yes. Commissioner Edwards voted no. Motion carried four to one.
24. Manager Cable asks approval to allow Andy Cable to apply for the PARTF Grant for 2014. Manager Cable stated that the application had to be submitted in January. Commissioner Edwards asks about the property. Manager Cable stated that the property was not a problem and the county can use the property as the county match for the grant.
25. Manager Cable stated that it is time for the board to consider their 2014 NCACC Legislative Goals. Manager Cable stated that the main issues are the PILT monies and the Inmate Medical Costs.
26. Manager Cable stated the he needed approval for a TB Screening fee of \$5.00 at the Health Department. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the fee. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Manager Cable stated that he would now go over the polls and a vote could be taken at one time.

- a. Personnel poll taken 11/19/2013
- b. Senior Center poll taken 12/03/2013
- c. DSS Office Equipment 12/03/2013
- d. Jail Supplies Purchase 12/04/2013
- e. Nativity Scene Purchase 12/06/2013

Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the polls. Commissioner Orr seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

28. Manager Cable stated that one change needed to be made to the personnel policy on the insurance benefits to begin after 60 days of new hire after January 1, 2014 due to the Affordable Health Care Act. Clerk Crisp will be typing up the change for the board to sign by the next meeting date. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the change to the personnel policy as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Manager Cable stated that he had another request from the department heads that a change be considered to the personnel policy on the leave benefits. Clerk Crisp asks that this be tabled for further review. Manager Cable stated that the department heads felt that six months were too long of a wait for employees to receive leave benefits. Clerk Crisp asks that the board do not entertain this issue at this time due to the impact it would have on the budget due to the huge turnover of employees in some departments. Rebecca Garland reiterated what Clerk Crisp stated about the budget impacts. Commissioner Williams made the motion to table this issue. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Commissioner Edwards stated that this issue needed to be readdressed at the next budget cycle for further conversation. All board was in favor.
30. Manager Cable stated that he did have a couple of new business items. Manager Cable stated that he needed approval for Larry Hembree and Brian Johnson to travel to Raleigh for the EMPG Meeting in January. Manager Cable stated that Larry's department will receive a grant of \$2500.00 for attending this meeting. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the travel. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Manager Cable stated that an incident had occurred at the EMS Base during the heavy rain with flooding into the base and the safety committee had gotten three proposals of an approximate price for possible repairs which are around \$3000.00. Manager Cable stated that the recommendations were to pour a concrete pad to turn the flow of water away from the building. Commissioner Williams wanted this work put out to bid.
32. Manager Cable also opened discussion on the possibility of remounting or purchasing a new ambulance. The board is trying to implement a fleet management plan and Manager Cable was seeking permission to do RFP's. The board gave a directive to Manager Cable to proceed.
33. Manager Cable stated that he did not expect a federal shutdown but would like the board to consider approving the plan he submitted for their review so that if circumstances occur the county will have a plan of action in place that will allow us to better prepare in the future. Commissioner Edwards asks for a motion to approve the plan. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the plan submitted by Manager Cable. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Commissioner Edwards asks for old business. Commissioner Williams gave a directive to get the fencing at the dumpster sites evaluated for repair. Commissioner Williams stated that they need to be fixed. Manager Cable stated that he would get with Sanitation Director Donnie Orr on this issue.
35. Clerk Crisp stated that the county has paid \$3239.42 on the vehicles that was burned at the impound yard. Clerk Crisp stated that the county cannot claim these vehicles on the insurance because they were illegally impounded and the county is responsible for paying the tow bill as well as the replacement cost for the vehicle.
36. Commissioner Edwards asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (1) (3) (6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney-client privilege, personnel and contracts. Commissioner Holder made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Commissioner Edwards called a Special Meeting to be held on January 6, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. at the Graham County Community Building to meet with the Sheriff and his staff over his budgetary issues. All board was in favor of this meeting.
39. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Holder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Regular Minutes – December 16, 2013

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

Billy Holder, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Keith Eller, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board