

## Regular Meeting – February 7, 2017

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular monthly meeting. All board was present.

1. Chairman Eller called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Williams to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the January 17<sup>th</sup> Regular and Workshop meeting minutes. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Eller asks Altamont Environmental to speak. Mike Faulkner stated that they have been doing an environmental assessment on the Stanley property which consist of 37 acres. Mr. Faulkner stated that during the Phase I assessment they had heard rumors that some material had been buried on the property and the board decided to do a Phase II. They tested 36 test pits, did 10 soil borings; 3 temporary groundwater monitoring wells; 3 sediment samples and 3 surface water samples and they did identify areas of materials that exceeded regulatory limits. Mr. Faulkner stated that the good news is that no groundwater was impacted and that the rest of the property is fine. Chairman Eller asks for further comment. Commissioner Orr asks how much of the property was impacted. Mr. Faulkner stated that 3 ½ acres was impacted.
7. Chairman Eller asks Edd Satterfield to speak. Mr. Satterfield was not present.
8. Chairman Eller asks Sophia Paulos to give her monthly report. Ms. Paulos stated that they have now had three very successful business owners meetings and this has allowed her to introduce our local business owners to the people in the region who are tasked with helping small businesses begin and grow. Ms. Paulos stated that tomorrow evening will be the first meeting of 2017 and Kathryn Jenkins, Director of the Small Business Center at Tri-County will be the guest speaker at the Robbinsville campus and she would be giving details on what the SBC does for small businesses in our region as well as discussing the many free seminars they will be offering this spring. Ron Carmanico, our broadband consultant, will also be joining the meeting so that he can get information from our small business owners on how the lack of internet has affected them and what they think having internet would do for the economy in Graham County. Mr. Ron Carmanico thanked the board for giving him the opportunity to participate in this project and the internet is essential services that are needed. Mr. Carmanico stated that our county was remarkable and he is very encouraged with the spirit and the approach to better the internet services. Mr. Carmanico stated that third world countries have internet service and Graham County deserves the same.
9. Ms. Paulos stated that Wehrloom Honey continues to take action for growth and this past month we met with a small manufacturer to help the Wehr's develop their (5) year plan. Ms. Paulos stated that this would give them a lot of insight on purchasing equipment, logistics and hiring that they will employ as they continue to grow.
10. Ms. Paulos stated that Oak Valley Hardwoods employment numbers did not align with the building reuse funds and as a result, it is three years later and the actual number of employees is not what was in the application, however, Oak Valley sees the potential for growth in the state and as such may meet the minimum number of jobs required for the grant for this year. Ms. Paulos stated that while meeting the minimum number would not garner the full amount of the grant it would allow us to access some of the money to help pay for the roof. The grant period was set to expire this month but as of last Friday, I applied for an extension through 2018 with commerce. Ms. Paulos stated that it is her hope that they will grant the extension and that we will be able to capture the opportunity to improve our largest commercial facility. Ms. Paulos stated that on another note, she did find \$10,000.00 to upgrade the building through Duke Energy and these funds will go toward the repair of the two old kilns which will help increase production at the facility.
11. Ms. Paulos stated that our agriculture will be increasing in the next 3 to 5 years and LT Ward, Vice President of WNC Communities and Randy Collins, AG Director will be holding a meeting next month to find ways to increase the agricultural activities in Graham County. Ms. Paulos stated that Mr. Ward will be coming to Graham County for the Cattleman's Meeting at the end

of March and at this time we will join Randy Collins at the Extension Office to inform our farming community about opportunities for our kids through the WNC Livestock Center and we hope to increase our youth participants in the agriculture industry.

12. Ms. Paulos stated that the new marketing engine for economic development in the region is the Mountain West Partnership and they will continue to release promotional videos and she will be getting links for us to share on our County's Facebook page as well as posting them on the ED Website.
13. Ms. Paulos stated that a full solar eclipse will occur in August of this year and this event has not occurred in (40) years and we are one of the few places on the planet considered an optimal location for viewing. Ms. Paulos stated that people from all over the country and world have started planning their trips to Western North Carolina months ago and our neighboring counties have spent a lot of time and money advertising and coordinating festivities for this event and as a result several of them have already sold out of accommodations for that day. Ms. Paulos stated that this is an excellent opportunity for Graham County to be presented to the rest of the country and the world and she has consulted the Stecoah Valley Center on this event and will continue to discuss possibilities with the Travel and Tourism Board. Ms. Paulos stated that this would be a good way to market ourselves.
14. Ms. Paulos stated that several months ago she reported that Dr. Doug Keskula, the Dean of Health and Human Sciences at WCU had reached out to Graham County and the meetings continue to flourish. Ms. Paulos stated that the Robbinsville HS STEM Program has scheduled interactive visits for the students at the college's new facility and we continue to develop ways to enhance our children's education and develop the future workforce of the region. Additionally, she has located a brand new funding source that our local non-profits and the schools can use to finance life-science related educational activities and events and North Carolina continues to look to develop jobs in the various industries related to the life sciences and will continue to work with the schools to help ensure that Graham County's students have access to these opportunities.
15. Chairman Eller asks Rebecca Garland to speak. Ms. Garland stated that we have made some significant progress in the IT realm over the past two weeks and most of the "to do list" was in DSS and this has been accomplished. The Miraki WIFI hotspots are in shipment and will be installed as soon as they arrive and this will allow the county to create better guest access which will allow for greater security. Ms. Garland stated that we are still working on issues related to the switches which will further enhance our security. Ms. Garland stated that we found that the email server needs additional upgrades in licensing and we have two projects that will stretch into the next fiscal year: network switch configuration related to efficiency in network traffic and Citrix enhancements. Ms. Garland stated that there is also a project related to the Sheriff Department tough books and the configuration of these. Ms. Garland stated that she is working with Danny and Jerry to coordinate remediation. Ms. Garland stated that these laptops are housed in the deputy cars and have some configuration issues that are preventing them from being fully functional. Ms. Garland stated that TP Technologies and Katalyst are working will together and have implemented a weekly conference call to ensure that projects requiring joint cooperation are moving along but we still have significant work to do. Ms. Garland stated that we have implemented a ticketing system at [IT.Support@grahamcounty.org](mailto:IT.Support@grahamcounty.org) for department managers to send in requests for service and the number of tickets has reduced significantly over the past two weeks.
16. Ms. Garland stated that the need to reconfigure the setup for the Jail and EMS with desktops are approximately \$1400.00 each and the EMS can be paid for out of EMPG funds and Larry is fine with that expenditure coming out of those funds. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the laptops. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
17. Ms. Garland stated that the transmission in the Kenworth truck at Sanitation went down last week and we had to tow it into the county at a cost of \$650.00 but it will cost the county \$3600.00 plus the estimated labor cost of \$1000.00 to get the truck back on the road. Ms. Garland stated that the transmission had went out of the truck. Commissioner Williams made the motion to get a transmission for the truck with the condition that it is warranted. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
18. Ms. Garland stated that they had the 911 Call Center Technology Programming meeting on Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup> and Jacob, Misty and she met with representatives from Mission Critical Partners to plan for a budget amendment between the construction cost and the technology cost with the 911 Board. MCP will be working with representatives of the 911 Board

to request to use part of the balance in the 911 fund for part of the technology budget since the bids for the building construction came in above the budgeted cost in the grant. Ms. Garland stated that she did have an invoice from MCP for \$5,703.50 that needed approval. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the payment to MCP. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

19. Ms. Garland stated that following findings of the environmental review of the Stanley property, the ad hoc committee will be meeting to formulate next steps for the grant project and recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.
20. Ms. Garland stated that she had met with officials with Swain County Hospital on Thursday February 2<sup>nd</sup> and they reported that there had been no issues or problems with the change in hours and services in the Emergency Department at Swain Hospital and there have been no ambulance diversions. Ms. Garland stated that they are aware that this is the slow season, however they feel that Harris will have a lower call volume during the summer months which may offset increases due to tourism for Swain and they will reallocate resources and further ask that we continue to educate the public of the fact that the ER is open. Ms. Garland stated that they will continue to check in with us and have periodic meetings.
21. Ms. Garland stated that she and Larry had met with Tribal EMS and we took a draft contract provided by our billing company for their review.
22. Ms. Garland stated that we needed to update our ambulance rates to reflect the Medicare prevailing rates and this has not been done in the past several years. Commissioner Williams made the motion to update the ambulance rates as presented. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
23. Ms. Garland stated that she had met with the tax collection office and we are investigating the potential of accepting online payments for various revenue sources, including property taxes, occupancy taxes, ems billings and other miscellaneous payments. Ms. Garland stated that they had met with one vendor and would schedule another one later. Ms. Garland stated that this will be at no cost to the county.
24. Ms. Garland stated that we had several contacts with representatives from other agencies including Brookfield's Myra Hair. Mr. Hair called to establish our relationship and to provide information regarding the High Flow Events and the process of changing or canceling these events. Ms. Garland stated that she will attend their meeting in Asheville on October 4<sup>th</sup>.
25. Ms. Garland asks the board if they still wished to pay the dues for the Association of Tennessee Valley Governments. Their mission is to serve the mutual interests of local governments and their partners in both the public and private sectors in the seven-state Tennessee Valley region and we will use our voice to work on a nonpartisan basis for solutions to critical issues that affect us all. Ms. Garland stated that the annual dues are \$400.00 per year and they meet quarterly. Ms. Garland asks which board members would like to attend these meetings.
26. Ms. Garland stated that she also found that TVA has Resource Councils of which Greg Cable was named by the governor while he served as county manager. The resource council members are comprised of citizens of the region who can participate in the important decisions TVA makes regarding the management of the river and its ecosystem and she further asks the board for direction as to the future of the RRSC position for Graham County.
27. Ms. Garland stated that she has a draft of the Newfound Gap Corridor Management Plan and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is seeking the public's input on a draft corridor management plan for Newfound Gap Road. The development of the plan is required for park officials to seek designation for the road as a National Scenic Byway which opens up opportunities to the park and gateway communities to compete for special grants that enhance the travel corridor and further stated that the comment period ends February 27<sup>th</sup> and you can make comments at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/grsm>.
28. Ms. Garland reminded the board of a joint meeting with the department heads at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow.
29. Ms. Garland stated that the budget process would begin soon and she will be setting board retreats to determine the priorities of the board as we move through the process.
30. Ms. Garland stated that at the last meeting maintenance had requested to purchase a bucket and implements including installation for \$3800.00 from Nelson Tractor in Blairsville GA and no other dealers in the area carry a compatible part. We also had a quote of \$650.00 for a spreader and we do have room in the grounds supply and capital outlay budget line items. Ms. Garland asks the board for direction. Commissioner Orr made the motion to purchase the bucket from

Nelson Tractor for \$3800.00 and to purchase the spreader from Lovin's for \$650.00.

Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

31. Ms. Garland stated that she needed the board to adopt the capital ordinance for the financing of the P&J building. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adopt the ordinance. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Ms. Garland stated that Stecoah Rescue Squad had requested their fourth quarter allocation of \$6712.50. Commissioner Williams made the motion to give the allocation. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Ms. Garland stated that the Town of Robbinsville was requesting the \$15,000.00 that the county lays aside for the festivals. Commissioner Williams made the motion to give the Town the \$15,000.00. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Ms. Garland stated that she needed permission to cut Oak Valley their final draw of \$10,000.00 for the kilns. Commissioner Orr made the motion to cut the check to Oak Valley. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Ms. Garland stated that our EMS Director Larry Hembree is requesting to purchase a Code Red Emergency Communications Network out of EMPG funds. This is a notification system for landline, cell, email and text notifications of emergency messages and free weather warnings and the cost is \$4229.00 which is renewed annually. Commissioner Orr made the motion to allow this expenditure. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Ms. Garland stated that Shelley Forman had contacted her and requested a meeting with her and Commissioner Orr and she will need some possible dates to send to her.
37. Ms. Garland reminded the board of the department managers meeting tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. at the EMS Base and stated that we will be covering HR issues, problem solving and scheduling. Ms. Garland stated that we needed to add the Transit Director to the Accident Review Board Committee. Commissioner Orr made the motion to add the Transit Director to the Accident Review Board. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Ms. Garland stated that she would be out of town on February 24<sup>th</sup> for a family medical issue.
39. Chairman Eller asks for public comment. Manager Garland stated that Kevin McCracken had signed in for public comment. Chairman Eller asks Mr. McCracken to speak. Mr. McCracken stated that we needed to keep our four lane as a top priority and he noticed that this had been taken off the website. The commissioners assured Mr. McCracken that the road is still a top priority.
40. Chairman Eller stated that we would now go to the discussion items.
41. Manager Garland stated that she needed approval for the Releases of \$599.17 and the Discoveries of \$585.00. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the Releases and Discoveries. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Manager Garland stated that we had received two quotes for the EMS building repair and asks Chairman Eller to open the quotes. The first quote: Betterbuilt Construction - \$18,311.00; Noah Williams - \$6447.66. Commissioner Williams made the motion to give the work to the lowest quote which is Noah Williams. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. The board all agreed that the doors could be painted by the maintenance staff.
43. Manager Garland stated that we needed someone to replace Lisa Russo with on the Library Board. Commissioner Williams made the motion to appoint Betty Hyde to the Library Board. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
44. Manager Garland stated that we needed to appoint Angela Knight to the EDC Board. Ms. Knight will be replacing Rhonda Anderson. Commissioner Orr made the motion to appoint Angela Knight. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote called: Commissioners Eller, Orr, Wiggins and Nelms voted yes. Commissioner Williams voted no. Motion carried four to one.
45. Manager Garland stated that we needed to appoint Amy Holder to the EDC Board. Ms. Holder will be replacing Randy Collins. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to appoint Amy Holder to the EDC Board. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
46. Manager Garland stated that we needed a replacement for Sharon Edwards on the following boards: HCCBG, Senior Center Advisory; SW LTC County Advisory; SW Region A Aging Advisory; and SW CAC Advisory Committee. The board tabled these appointments.
47. Manager Garland stated that there will be a meeting with the Southwest Commission on Monday, February 27 at 5:00 p.m. if any of the commissioners would like to attend.
48. Manager Garland stated that a new Hillclimb Event would be held October 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

49. Manager Garland stated that she needed approval for the poll to purchase equipment for IT Infrastructure. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the poll. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
50. Manager Garland stated that she needed approval for the poll to hire Amy Holder temporarily at the Senior Center to cook the evening meals for the jail. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the poll. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
51. Manager Garland stated that we needed to appoint Stacy Carpenter, Hope for Families to the Community Child Protection Team. Commissioner Orr made the motion to appoint Stacy Carpenter to the CCPT. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
52. Manager Garland stated that we needed to get quotes to repair the concrete steps at the tennis courts and the concrete slab at the VFW building. The board all agreed to obtain quotes for these repairs.
53. Manager Garland stated that she received a request from the VFW for \$500.00 to help with the Veteran's Day Dinner. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve this request. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
54. Manager Garland stated that the Sheriff had requested the purchase of a 2002 Crown Vic for \$3500.00. The board learned that this vehicle sold today.
55. Manager Garland stated that we needed permission to sell the 2006 Crown Vic that was auctioned and not picked up. The board all agreed to sell the vehicle. The board also stated that it needed to be advertised that it has a bad transmission.
56. Manager Garland stated that it was time to advertise for lifeguards and this ad will run through March 31<sup>st</sup>.
57. Manager Garland stated that the next item dealt with the Health Department Website and she wanted to get more information before presenting this to the board. This discussion was tabled.
58. Manager Garland stated that she needed two commissioners to meet with her either the week of the 13<sup>th</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Forest Revision Plan. The board agreed that Jacob and Dale would attend the meeting.
59. Manager Garland stated that she had one item of old business and this was the variance for Ted Phillips Property. Attorney Coward stated that a new application had been presented and he was fine with the granting of this variance. Commissioner Williams made the motion to grant the variance for the Ted Phillips Property on Snowbird. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
60. Chairman Eller asks for further discussion. Commissioner Nelms stated that in the process of the remodeling of our buildings we needed to think about a new building for maintenance and recreation. Commissioner Nelms suggested a large metal building at the P&J Ballfields for both departments. Manager Garland stated that \$19,000.00 is in the budget for a maintenance building. The board agreed to look for the best locations and solutions.
61. Commissioner Williams asks Sheriff Millsaps how bad the sheriff's department needed a new vehicle. Sheriff Millsaps stated that the vehicle is for the jail and we did need a reliable car for our long distance transports. Commissioner Williams asks that Sheriff Millsaps continue to look for a car and the Clerk can poll the board if a good vehicle becomes available.
62. Attorney Coward stated that he needed to discuss the Edwards versus Graham County Jail in closed session.
63. Commissioner Williams made the 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 Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
64. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
65. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to raise the spending limit for Manager Garland to \$5000.00. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
66. Commissioner Williams stated that the board needed to send the same paperwork to the NC Forest Service on the hiring of an Assistant Ranger that we did when Frank Cline was hired. The board all agreed that someone from Graham County will have this position.
67. Commissioner Williams made the motion to continue the meeting to Wednesday, February 8, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. at the EMS Base Training Room. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page attached!

Signature page for Regular Meeting February 7, 2017

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Keith Eller, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Connie Orr, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Dale E. Wiggins, 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