

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular monthly meeting. Commissioners present was: Jacob Nelms, Keith Eller, Lynn Cody and Raymond Williams. Commissioner Connie Orr joined the meeting by teleconference.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks Commissioner Williams to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Nelms asks Commissioner Cody to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the agenda. Manager Edwards stated that we needed to add Commissioner Lynn Cody as Item 12A. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the agenda with the amendment. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Nelms asks for the approval of the May 3rd Regular Minutes and the May 10th Emergency Meeting. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Nelms stated that he needed a motion to close the regular meeting and open a public hearing for property acquisition. Commissioner Williams made the motion. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Chairman Nelms asks Juanita Colvard, Claudine Gibson and Rebecca Garland to speak. Ms. Colvard stated that over the course of the feasibility study for an Urgent Care Center, Nancy Lane our consultant stated that the best fit for a building was the old post office on Main Street until she learned that the P&J Building was for sale. Ms. Colvard stated that this was the alternate plan. Ms. Colvard stated that Nancy Lane had spent time in our county and realized that the need would be best met with the P&J Building. Ms. Lane stated that the building could be utilized as a Health Department and Health and Human Services, use the Health Department as the Urgent Care Center, use the DSS building as an Administrative building and overall this was a good fit. We met with Avis Phillips, toured the building and told her of the plans for the building. Ms. Phillips let us know what her decision would be and the building does include 4.53 acres of land, a large generator and a video conference room. Ms. Colvard stated that the county was offered a very good deal and after meeting with the Board of Commissioners with a presentation of the offer, the board felt that this was a better fit for the county and entered into negotiations.
8. Chairman Nelms asks for public comment. Jay Kelly stated quite a bit of work has been done on this and they have done an outstanding job and he is for it but his final vote will be after he finds out the total cost that will be required to remodel the building to perform the services required and asks where are the funds coming from and will this be a tax burden on the county. Will it be financed or paid for with savings or require an increase in sales tax? We need a few more details before a decision could be made by the public and we need a plan in place for direction.
9. Ms. Colvard stated that Rebecca Garland could explain the cost of the building. Ms. Garland stated that until negotiations are final she cannot give the final cost and until we have that and the architectural study we will not have the final cost but as soon as we obtain this we will release this to the public. We are above our threshold of 35% in our surplus as mandated by the Local Government Commission and can use our surplus to pay a portion of this purchase. A portion of the building will be reimbursable through DHHS using the 1571 report which is up to (2/3) two-thirds of the depreciated cost that will come back to the county's general fund. Ms. Garland stated that the county has been working diligently for the past seven years to be able to do things like this.
10. Chairman Nelms asks for further public comment. Christine Crisp stated that she works at the health department and deals with the elderly and disabled and sees the need for better healthcare services. Ms. Crisp stated that her heart is for her people of this county that have to rely on transit services or have to go long distances to get medical care and is all for better services. She has worked at the health department for five years and learned of this plan on social media and this was a shock and she felt that it would be good to work with the people at these target locations to get their input. Ms. Crisp stated that the health department is set up to provide the services now and does not understand why we would be relocated into a building that would have to be refurbished when our current one is set up to meet our needs. Ms. Crisp is curious to know if we have spoken with Mission to see if they would offer urgent care at the clinic and provide service for afterhours care.

11. Ms. Colvard stated that Mission was contacted in these studies and the best fit was provided to the board of commissioners, there are five providers who are interested in offering services to Graham County as well.
12. Chairman Nelms asks for further comment. Chairman Nelms stated that he can assure all that this board is doing what is best for the county and are facing challenges but at the end of the day we feel it will be better. We are trying to be as transparent as possible and will release information as it comes out. Commissioner Williams stated that we had public meetings for all the public and we have not tried to hide anything. Commissioner Williams stated that all employees are invited to all meetings and we are working hard for the benefit of Graham County.
13. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to close the public hearing and reopen the regular meeting. Commissioner Williams made the motion as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Chairman Nelms asks Mr. Warsak to speak. Mr. Warsak stated that he is with McGill and Associates and is the project manager on the Stanley Park project and was here to give an update. Mr. Warsak stated that his company was not involved up front but are now engaged in the project. Mr. Warsak stated that they had to wait on the topo map that was done outside of their firm before moving forward and once that was received they began working on a conceptual plan for the park. Mr. Warsak stated that the anticipated completion date will be met once the plan is finalized and understands that the county will not give extra funds above the PARTF Grant amount for this project. Mr. Warsak stated that the original plan did exceed the budgeted cost and he would need to work with the board on downsizing the plan. Mr. Warsak stated he understands that the county will be developing a committee to assist in the project and will look forward to working with them. Manager Edwards stated that he met with McGill and Associates to see where the county stood concerning the plan and learned that the project had a total cost of \$1.3 million which is not acceptable by the board so he recommended an ad hoc committee be formed to move this project forward. Manager Edwards stated that he was not blaming anyone for the miscommunication but felt that the county could only do the park in phases. Manager Edwards stated that he is doing his homework and will move the project forward.
15. Commissioner Nelms asks for the finance report. Ms. Garland stated that the county ended April with a cash balance of \$7,250,305.00 which is a little drop from last month but up from this time last year from \$5.8 million. Ms. Garland stated that we have collected \$36,625.00 in current and back year taxes and our DMV collections was \$42,029.00. Ms. Garland stated that our tax rate is 95.1%. Ms. Garland stated that the tax office was still working diligently on foreclosures and commended them for their hard work. Ms. Garland stated that our revenues for the month was \$928,580.69 and our expenditures was \$891,610.90 giving us a surplus for the month of \$36,969.79. Ms. Garland stated that our year to date surplus is \$2,407,972.19 which will dwindle due to large payouts in May and June. Ms. Garland stated that our sales tax collections was \$97,751.00 which is a little under last month but the overall growth in our sales collection rate is 8% and she was pleased to see this. Ms. Garland stated that she is very pleased with the budget which should be holding at 17% but the county is maintaining a higher percentage at this time. Ms. Garland stated that we are still working on the new E911 Center with Mission Critical Partners and should be presented a design soon. Ms. Garland stated that a vehicle had been approved for the health department in this year's budget but the purchase was tabled and she needed to know the board's desire on this item. The board discussed the cars and a needed fleet plan. Commissioner Williams made the motion to surplus the Ford Explorer and Taurus that is at the Health Department and to purchase a new four wheel drive vehicle for the health department. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. The board wanted the cars that are not driven to be surpluses and asks that Manager Edwards compile a list of these cars.
16. Ms. Garland stated that it was time to give the Heritage Festival their \$15,000.00 and would need board approval for the check to be written. Commissioner Williams made the motion to give the Heritage Festival \$15,000.00. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
17. Ms. Garland stated that she and Manager Edwards was working on the budget but would need the board to schedule a couple of budget workshops. The board agreed to meet Tuesday, May 24th at 12:00 noon and Friday, June 3rd at 1:00 p.m.
18. Chairman Nelms asks Commissioner Cody to speak. Commissioner Cody stated that he has been working on the numbers with Ms. Garland's help on a possible referendum to raise the sales tax to construct a new jail. Commissioner Cody stated with the rise in sales tax, the county would have visitors contributing to the cost and not just county taxpayers. Commissioner Cody stated

that ¼ cent sales tax raise would generate around \$150,000.00 per year and we are currently spending around \$10,000.00 per month on inmates housed in other counties. The board had discussion and felt that the county needed to include a justice center as well. Commissioner Cody made the motion for the Board of Commissioners to adopt a ¼ cent increase in sales tax to be voted on by the people on a referendum in the upcoming November election to build a Jail and Justice Center. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

19. Commissioner Cody thanked Claudine Gibson and Juanita Colvard for their hard work on the Urgent Care that has been ongoing for almost a year. The board all agreed.
20. Chairman Nelms asks for public comment. No one was signed in for public comment.
21. Chairman Nelms stated that we would now go to the manager's report. Manager Edwards stated that the meeting held on the houseboats was disappointing but the TVA Board did give an extra 10 years before the houseboats would be removed from the lake. Manager Edwards stated that this was being done because Lake Norris is a cesspool and in order to correct this problem they had to involve all TVA Reservoirs. Manager Edwards stated that Congressman Mark Meadows did make an effort to get the meeting venue changed so that we could make comment but this did not happen.
22. Manager Edwards stated that the memorandum of agreement had been signed for a period up to one year by EBCI Senior Citizens and Graham County Senior Citizens that will combine the two agencies while a new center is being built for EBCI. The center will provide the meals including the home delivered meals for a price of \$5.65 per meal. The two centers will interact in all other activities offered through the senior center program. The board was very pleased.
23. Manager Edwards stated that he would now go into the discussion items. The first item is for the Health Department vehicle but this has already been decided.
24. Manager Edwards stated that the board needed to open the bids for the senior center cabinet. Those bids are: MCD Woodworking, Inc. \$2,875.00; Williams Construction \$2,000.00 and Betterbuilt Construction \$1988.39. Commissioner Williams made the motion to go with the lowest bid which is Betterbuilt Construction. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Manager Edwards stated that the county offices would be closed for Memorial Day on May 30th.
26. Manager Edwards stated that we are currently taking bids for a camper and EMS Director Larry Hembree asks if the proceeds from the sale could be used to purchase a gas grill for the base. The board did not object to the purchase of a grill but not with the entire remaining proceeds over \$1,000.00. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the purchase of the grill for the actual cost. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Kevin McCracken, a member in the audience, stated that he agreed with the increase in the sales tax as a way to pay for a new jail and although the amount may seem high in the beginning the payoff will save the county money.
28. Chairman Nelms stated that we would now go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (1) (3) (5) (6) for privileged or confidential information; attorney-client privilege, personnel and contracts. Commissioner Eller made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Commissioner Eller made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Commissioner Williams made the motion to allow Christie Edwards the use of the five days without pay as stated in the county policy with the submission of sick notes. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Commissioner Eller made the motion to hire Sophia Paulos for the EDC Director. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Commissioner Williams made the motion to authorize the Chairman of the Board and the County Manager to sign the contracts concerning the purchase of the P&J Building. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Commissioner Eller stated that he has the records of all the county cars since 2008 on how many miles they are driven. Manager Edwards asks that he be allowed to formulate a data base with this information. The board was in agreement.
34. The board gave a directive to Manager Edwards to speak with the PARTIF Grant Administrator on any studies that may need to be done by the county.
35. Commissioner Williams stated that he wanted the fencing fixed at the Bear creek and Sweetwater Dumpster sites. The board had discussion on the sites and the conditions that they are being left in for our personnel to have to clean. The board also is aware of an arsonists that is setting the cans on fire and would like to prosecute those individuals. The board discussed the installation of cameras at the sites. Attorney Coward stated that an ordinance can be adopted by the county commissioner that makes this a punishable violation.

36. Commissioner Williams stated that the Travel and Tourism Board had hired someone for the office who will work on Saturdays and work with Kathy Wilson on alternate schedules so that the office will remain open through the week.

37. Commissioner Williams made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page for the May 17, 2016 Regular Meeting

Jacob Nelms, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Keith Eller, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Lynn Cody, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board