

## Regular Meeting – March 7, 2017

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. The meeting time was changed in order to allow the commissioners to meet with the County Manager prior to the commencement of the regular meeting at 5:30 p.m. All board was present.

1. Chairman Eller called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Eller asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (1) (6) for privileged or confidential information and personnel. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
4. Chairman Eller called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
5. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Williams to give the Invocation.
6. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
7. Chairman Eller asks for changes to the agenda. Clerk Crisp stated Item #15 Surplus Ford needed to be changed to Crown Victoria and the county did receive one bid after the agenda was typed. Chairman Eller asks that a Vehicle Maintenance request for the health department be discussed under new business. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the Workshop and Regular Minutes for February 21, 2017. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Chairman Eller asks Lorita Eller and Christy Silvers to speak. Ms. Silvers stated that they were here to discuss the Child Fatality Protection and stated that in 2016 the team had a clean report with no fatalities. Ms. Eller stated that the local team has had some staff changes and the Board of Commissioners can add up to (5) more members if they desire. Ms. Silvers stated that the team meets for safety and injury prevention for children and other issues such as the MIKA Virus. Ms. Silvers stated that our next meeting is March 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. at the Health Department. Ms. Eller stated that in 2015 there were 1335 deaths of children aged one and under in North Carolina but in Graham County we did not lose one child of which we are very thankful. Ms. Eller stated that in 2011 we had two child deaths and the team did review these deaths. Ms. Eller stated that the board was welcome to come to the next meeting. The board thanked the ladies for their reporting.
10. Chairman Eller asks Steven Pressley to speak. Mr. Pressley stated that he was here to advocate for a new van for the Senior Center. Mr. Pressley stated that he was the activities director for the seniors and they had asked that Wanda Hill, Senior Director compose a letter requesting the van as well. Commissioner Orr asks Mr. Pressley what he does or would do with the van. Mr. Pressley stated that they go to Cades Cove, ride around and look at our scenery, hair appointments, shopping in Sylva, go on picnics, go to Fontana for boat rides and further stated that they would gladly take the Transit vans but they are not allowed to go out of state. Mr. Pressley stated that the seniors would go other places if they had the van because now they have to provide their own transportation and some cannot drive long distances. Commissioner Nelms asks if our insurance would cover this type of travel. Manager Garland stated that we did have coverage. Ms. Garland stated that she did reach out to Southwest Commission and was told that the grant money that we receive could be used to pay the note payment. Wanda Hill stated that other centers in our region have their own van. Commissioner Orr asks how long we are guaranteed to have the extra money for having a Senior Center of Excellence and what can we spend the money on. Manager Garland stated that we are guaranteed for five years. Commissioner Wiggins asks if we have any quotes for the vans. One quote was for \$30,233.00 and the other was 31,098.00. Commissioner Wiggins asks why the transportation vehicles cannot be taken out of state. Juanita Colvard, Transit Director stated that the 21 passenger bus could not be taken out of state because it did not have the proper stickers. Ms. Colvard stated that the 5310 Grant will pay back at a rate of 90% if Transit is used and Ms. Colvard stated that the transit vans can go out of state. Ms. Wanda Hill stated that the one problem has been that Steven Pressley does not have the training to be allowed to drive the vans. The question was asked about a lift equip van and the need to provide one if someone asks to take a trip that is disabled. Commissioner Orr asks again what can the money be spent on. Commissioner Nelms

stated that he was confused as to why the transit vans were not being used to go out of state. Commissioner Orr stated that the bus was the only one that was not allowed out of state and asks if the new bus that transit is receiving will be allowed out of state. Juanita Colvard, Transit Director stated that the new van will be allowed to go out of state. Commissioner Williams made the motion to purchase a van for the Senior Center and to go with the lowest quote. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous after discussion. Commissioner Orr asks how many seniors usually go on the out of town trips. Steven Pressley stated that 12 or 13 go now but this number would increase once the seniors was not required to take their own vehicle. The issue of a lower van was also discussed where the seniors did not have to use the lift equip van to board. Commissioner Orr asks that she be told what other uses the grant money could be spent on. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he was for the seniors having a van but was concerned if it was needed since we now know that the transit vans can go out of state. Commissioner Eller stated that with the purchase of the van the senior center would still have over \$42,000.00 in this pot of money to be used for other purposes. The seniors in attendance thanked the board of commissioners.

11. Chairman Eller asks Sophia Paulos to speak. Ms. Paulos stated that some of you may know Dana Thacker, a pediatric nurse who decided to dedicate herself to her four children as a stay at home mom. Ms. Thacker has begun venturing into the business world in a way that would not disrupt her family life with a unique business model for the production of natural products and Ms. Paulos has been working with Ms. Thacker over the past month to strengthen the brand identity of Sass E Sisters and to create a direct business marketing campaign that will allow her to maintain her priorities. Ms. Thacker looks to grow at a pace that will allow her to employ other stay at home moms with opportunities that allow them to prioritize their families. While she is just getting started in the transition from small scale country fair sales to wholesale production levels her strong work ethic leads Ms. Paulos to believe she will do great things with her business in Graham County.
12. Ms. Paulos stated that Wehrloom Honey continues to work hard toward expansion and recently they were accepted to participate in the fifth class of ScaleUp WNC. This is one of only 15 SBA Scale Up America Communities where business with the highest potential for growth are chosen to receive education and assistance to ensure they reach their fullest potential. Each class of 15 businesses is selected through a highly competitive, merit based application process and each participant becomes part of a CEO Network of peer business leaders and receives tailored services to measurably advance their business and achieve significant business development milestones. Program elements include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Entrepreneurship education curriculum.
  - b. Management assistance and support.
  - c. Access to capital.
  - d. Connections and networks.

Thanks to the generous contract awarded to Mountain BizWorks and their partners from the US Small Business Administration (SBA) there is no cost to participate in Scale Up WNC and as a result of this and other efforts and hard work Wehrloom Honey will be looking to hire several additional new employees over the next few months.

13. Ms. Paulos stated that Oak Valley Hardwood needed a one year extension to the building reuse grant needed to make additional improvements to the Snowbird Building. Ms. Paulos stated that she received notice from the Department of Commerce yesterday that they have agreed to grant a one year extension and as such Oak Valley Hardwoods will have until February 19, 2018 to meet the necessary requirements to qualify for the grant. Ms. Paulos stated that she has been working with Mr. Lee to create terms that would allow her to market the remaining space in the building for further economic development and she is happy to inform the board that they had reached agreeable terms and she has been aggressively marketing the space to attract additional capital investment and jobs in Graham County.
14. Ms. Paulos stated that the contract with Ron Carmanico will be up on March 15<sup>th</sup> and while he will be submitting a final report, she wanted to update the board on the progress and successes that his presence and our efforts for the county have created. First and most importantly, our work has ignited the call to action for broadband both in the county and in the region. Prior to our work on this issue many were talking about the need for high speed internet but very few people were doing anything to address the issue. When they were it was like putting a band aid on a flesh wound and as a result of our effort Balsam West decided to buy DNET. The new company West Net will provide high quality residential service to many residents in Graham

County and with direct access to our consultant Balsam West was able to identify multiple avenues for residential service in Graham County and will be announcing a roll out of West Net in Graham County by the end of this month. In addition, they will be working with us to improve the quality of the Public Wifi in Robbinsville. With these improvements, not only will our citizens be able to have high quality, free, internet access in town, our T&T and small business will be able to advertise this service to out of towners who rely on internet access for information prior to adventuring off into non-service areas. While this progress is good news, there is still much work to be done to ensure the majority of Graham County's citizens have access to reliable, high speed, internet.

15. Ms. Paulos stated that this past month she was approached by Dr. Jonathan Snover, Director of NC Biotech's western office and he is tasked with assessing current opportunities for regional growth by organizing existing assets and seeking strategic partnerships and large investments from outside the region. Ms. Paulos stated what this means is that his job is to take what the area already has and figure out the most profitable industries that may come from it. Ms. Paulos stated that Dr. Snover sees great potential in the natural products industry, particularly the medicinal plants and herbs that have always grown in these mountains and are highly valued in Europe and Asia because so much of the land in Graham county is undeveloped and remains in its natural state, there is great potential for our farmers and land owners to profit from this program once it is developed. Ms. Paulos stated that Dr. Snover is even working to gain access to USFS land so that the program helps to maintain those natural environments while providing economic opportunities for our citizens. Currently, she, the Extension Office, WNC Communities and other partners like NC Biotech are hard at work to find the next big opportunity for our farmers. Her hope is that the next big thing will be even more profitable than tobacco and while the process will not roll out quickly, she wanted each of the board to know that she is hard at work to generate economic opportunities for our farmers and land owners.
16. Ms. Paulos stated that on Thursday, March 16 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. she will be hosting a public meeting at the community building regarding the Forest Revision Plan. The Forest Revision Plan was created to answer the question, "What can the plan do for Graham County?" and to reflect the economic and quality of life needs of our citizens who are affected directly by USFS lands. Through the Forest Revision Plan, local citizens, official and business interests have been working to 'revise' the forest service's wilderness plan to reflect the needs of the people and she has met with many citizens in the county to find out firsthand the needs of loggers, hunters, EMS, small business owners and those who seek special use permits. Ms. Paulos stated that while she has worked tirelessly to make sure the needs and wants of our citizens are truly the top priority of this plan it doesn't compare to having citizens come and take the opportunity to say for themselves what their needs are and her hope is that on the 16<sup>th</sup> the Community Center will be full of loggers, hunters, small business owners and EMS members all there to declare what they want and need from that land.
17. Ms. Paulos stated that the solar eclipse is set to occur in August and the unique opportunity this provides for Graham County. She is happy to report that the T&T Board has created a committee to organize activities for this once in a lifetime event. Ms. Paulos stated that she has spoken with Juanita and the county transit will be able to provide shuttle service from several locations around the county to prime viewing areas like Hooper Bald and the festival that will be held at the Stecoah Valley Center and she would like to request that the board consider granting permission to designate the P&J parking lot for public use as a shuttle site to Hooper Bald. Hooper Bald is according to NASA the prime viewing location for this event and we all know what the parking situation is up there. It is nowhere near sufficient for the hundreds of people who will want to be up there that day and she asks if the board would like to go ahead and grant permission for the use of the parking lot for the eclipse.
18. Ms. Paulos stated that she wanted to thank Commissioner Orr for sending her and our County Manager Rebecca Garland to the WCU LEAD Conference for tourism. The conference focused on growing partnerships with outdoor tourism and local communities and the overwhelming theme of the conference was that businesses bring outside dollars into the County and attract new capital investments. This is particularly true in Graham County where so much of our land is undeveloped. We have the land and pristine environment to attract large numbers of people year round. The most important point made during the conference was this: "Outdoor tourism and recreation is an industry that can never be exported to another country." The opportunity exist and generate significant increases in property tax revenues. I will be working with our T&T Board and our partners to do everything we can to seize this opportunity.

19. Chairman Eller asks Juanita Colvard to give an update on Urgent Care and Dialysis. Ms. Colvard gave the updated timelines to the Urgent Care and Dialysis Project.
- a. Graham County bought the P&J Building last fall to re-house the Health Department and Social Services under one facility. This will free up the current health department facility for urgent care and dialysis.
  - b. Graham County was awarded an exception for the certificate of need for a five bed dialysis center which will also be housed in the current health department with urgent care.
  - c. We contracted with Padgett and Freeman architects for a design to retrofit the HD and SS in the P&J Facility.
  - d. Commissioners approved the plans.
  - e. Becky Garland, Finance Officer and County Manager is currently working on a loan for the cost to retrofit the new human services facility. (P&J Building).
  - f. The loan has an estimated date for approval of March or April 2017.
  - g. We estimate bid packets for the construction will be advertised in late April or May.
  - h. The award to begin construction estimated date is late May early June.
  - i. Construction should begin by late June and completed by December 2017.
  - j. The current Health Department should be ready for use by the Urgent Care provider by the end of December 2017 or January 2018. They will share the space with DaVita Dialysis.
  - k. We are currently gathering information and cost for the equipment necessary to be utilized for the urgent care.
  - l. Met with Billy Hyland Regional Director for DaVita Dialysis on 3/1/2017.
  - m. Toured the current Health Department facility and provided him with the building plans.
  - n. DaVita will submit an application to be the provider for the Graham County dialysis center. The deadline for that application is March 15, 2017.
  - o. Graham County Commissioners and Human Service Departments will provide support letters and an alternate site designation for dialysis and this must be provided to DaVita before the March 15, 2017 deadline.
  - p. The estimated timeline for DaVita dialysis approval as provider of services by the state will be August or September, 2017.
  - q. After approval DaVita will have architectural plans drawn and renovation to existing Health Department for treatment will commence when the Health Department staff has vacated the premises.
  - r. Estimated time for opening of the Graham County Dialysis Center is March, 2018.
- Ms. Becky Garland stated that she had spoken with Josh Carpenter with the state and he had stated that some funds could be available for the building reuse of up to \$12,500.00 per job. Ms. Colvard stated that Bill Hyland will build the awning and could hopefully use some of the building reuse funds for this project.
20. Chairman Eller asks for the Finance and Manager's Report. Manager Garland stated that she will be having a phone conference the next day with Davenport on the financing of the P&J Building and that Scott Donald should have the construction bids by early April. Manager Garland stated that we should get the RFP's for the loans out by next week.
21. Manager Garland stated that she attended the WNC-LEAD Conference on Tourism sponsored by WCU on Tuesday. It was a very informative session and as brick and mortar industries continue to shift away from our area, tourism is a valuable tool to increase our economy and our tax base. The more overnight visitors we have the more we can attract entrepreneurial activity which increases both of the above. They stated over and over that tourism jobs are the only kind of jobs that cannot be shipped overseas because the base of our tourism is our natural resources. They encouraged partnerships between Towns and the Counties and between the local government, the TDA and the EDC in every area. They also focused on the point that people are usually oblivious to the name of the County they find their tourism experience and that we have to focus on the attractions and the experiences. We must work toward meaningful partnerships and alignment of goals so that we are all working together. They also focused on the concept of cooptation where we work with other venues and areas to recycle visitors from one area to our area. They used Sevier County and Winterfest as an example of creating alignment of purpose and goals.
22. Manager Garland met with Sarah Thompson at Southwest Commission and had a fruitful discussion about how to continue to work with them to move Graham County forward. We

- discussed everything from roads and transportation to internet to long term planning and she is more than happy to come here to do some work with the board on setting priorities and guiding the process discussed about and further stated that this is a valuable resource that we can use.
23. Manager Garland stated that she had met with Rose Baugess with Southwest Commission RPO and she gave more insight with Corridor K as well as sharing some information we may want to pursue with biking in our area. Manager Garland stated that we could promote the Cherohala Challenge and get folks in here for biking expeditions across the skyway since the event is already starting in Tellico and ending close to here. There will be a TCC meeting March 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. in Franklin. There will be the meeting on the A-0009 project we will need to attend in Raleigh April 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. and asks that the board chair plan to attend with the county manager.
  24. Manager Garland stated that the servers have been ordered and she was able to get some small discounts by ordering two and this will help us to enhance our ability to be more secure and stable in our network infrastructure.
  25. Manager Garland stated that she and Commissioner Orr will be meeting with Shelley Foreman with Vaya Health at lunch time on Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>.
  26. Manager Garland stated that the State of NC has re-opened the position of NC Forestry Technician I for applications through March 24<sup>th</sup> and the information has been posted to Facebook and will be in the paper as well as posted in public buildings.
  27. Southwest Commission has posted the following public meeting for the WNC Bike Plan. The meeting for Graham County will be conducted by Rose Baugess on Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the community building.
  28. Manager Garland stated that our recreation director was having some problems with the number of children that signed up for spring ball. On some of the teams there are too many players but they are not enough players to split into two teams. Manager Garland stated that he will be talking to the parents about this problem. Commissioner Williams wanted all the kids to have a chance to play. Commissioner Nelms stated that by league rules you can only have so many kids per team. Commissioner Orr stated that after the parents meet maybe someone will be willing to coach one of the teams.
  29. Chairman Eller asks for public comment. Manager Garland stated that Bill Flannigan had signed in for public comment. Mr. Flannigan stated that something needed to be done about the littering. Mr. Flannigan stated that DOT needed to put up signs that a fine will be imposed if you are caught littering. Mr. Flannigan stated that one of the county's garbage cans had litter flying off the top of it and this is uncalled for. Mr. Flannigan stated that he followed the Fontana truck and garbage falls off of their truck as well. Commissioner Williams asks Manager Garland to call our sanitation department and report the garbage truck that the paper was coming out of. Manager Garland stated that the only way to stop the littering is to have an ordinance officer. The board will have more discussion.
  30. Chairman Eller asks for the discussion items. Manager Garland stated that we have Releases in the amount of \$908.58. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
  31. Manager Garland stated that it was now time to schedule the Board of E&R meetings. Commissioner Williams made the motion to begin the meeting on Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
  32. Manager Garland stated that a Full Partnership meeting will be held on March 9<sup>th</sup> at the WNC Community Foundation in Asheville and asks if any board member would like to attend.
  33. Manager Garland stated a GREAT meeting will be held Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at Fontana Village if any board member would like to attend. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he would attend.
  34. Manager Garlands asks Chairman Eller to open the quotes for the concrete work at the tennis courts and the VA building. The quotes was: Veteran's building – Betterbuilt \$5320.00 and RCM \$4165.00. The quotes for the tennis courts was: RCM - \$11575.00 and Betterbuilt - \$19200.00 Commissioner Williams made a motion to table this discussion to a later date and after the commissioners have a chance to look at the repairs needed. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
  35. Manager Garland stated that we still needed someone to fill the vacant seats held by Sharon Edwards. Commissioner Wiggins volunteered to serve on these boards. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve Commissioner Wiggins to the HCCBG, Senior Center Advisory Board, SWLTC County Advisory, SW Region A Aging Advisory and the SW CAC Advisory Committee. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

36. Manager Garland stated that we have one bid for the surplus Crown Victoria that was sold at the auction and not picked up. Chairman Eller opened the bid. The bid was \$110.00 by Raymie Williams. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to accept the bid. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Manager Garland stated that we needed one more member for the Animal Control Board. Commissioner Williams made the motion to put Donnie Orr on the Animal Control Board. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. The board discussed speaking with the sheriff on enforcement of the animal ordinance. Manager Garland stated that we needed an ordinance officer to help enforce the laws.
39. Chairman Eller stated that the Health Department truck needed a transmission and the repairs had been added to the budget. Chairman Eller stated that the cost would be between \$1600.00 and \$2000.00 at Carolina Transmission in Franklin. The board gave a directive to Chairman Eller to get the transmission fixed with a warranty. All board was in agreement.
40. The board asks that Clerk Crisp and Manager Garland could shop the senior center van and try to receive better pricing.
41. Chairman Eller 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 Williams made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Commissioner Williams made the motion to research the avenues to start the process of consolidation of the health department and social services. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
44. Commissioner Williams made the motion to accept the letter for the Urgent Care / Dialysis Center to Martha Frisone with the NC Department of Health and Human Services.
45. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the new 911 Facility Construction Contract in the amount of \$1,487,877.00 to Western Builders from Sylva, NC. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
46. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adopt a resolution giving the hiring, firing and disciplinary action per NCGS 153A to our County Manager, Rebecca Garland. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
47. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion add Juanita Colvard, Byran Farley and Manager Becky Garland to the Board of Equalization and Review. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
48. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept Amendment 5 to the Graham County Personnel Policy concerning Qualification Standards on Recruitment and Selection. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
49. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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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

