

Regular Meeting – April 4, 2017

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their 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. Manager Garland stated that we needed to delete Item #7 Dirk Cody from the agenda due to illness. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the Workshop and Regular Meeting Minutes of March 21<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Eller asks Sophia Paulos to give her monthly report. Manager Garland stated that she would present for Ms. Paulos and continue with the finance and manager's report. Manager Garland presented the board with a printout from Ms. Paulos on the activities for the month and those were:
  - a. Oak Valley Hardwood – Ms. Paulos has begun aggressively seeking occupants for the additional space at the Oak Valley Hardwoods Building. Mr. Lee has agreed to lease upwards of 350,000 square feet to enterprises that will be enticed by the buildings surrounding infrastructure, Graham County's unbeatable quality of life and the very attractive price point Mr. Lee is offering. In working with him and his associates, they have already identified three prospects for the property and will continue to solicit interest until contracts are signed and that space is filled with production and employees.
  - b. Sass E Sisters – Dana Thacker, a pediatric nurse who decided to dedicated herself to her four children as a stay at home mom is doing a startup business and she has modified and updated her website, product line, and marketing strategy. In addition to working on a new approach to PR, Dana has identified several major markets in the southeast region that have a lot of potential to expand her production. Dana is experimenting with a model that will provide other stay at home moms to earn extra income while staying dedicated to their families. Moms in areas like Asheville, will be marketing products in areas that Dana is unable to get to on a regular basis. This will create demand at a much faster pace and Dana will be that much closer to hiring moms in Graham County to help her make her products.
  - c. General – The warm weather has inspired a bit of an early start to the spring tourism season over the last month and many of our local businesses have seen an increase in sales over this time last year. Ms. Paulos hopes that the hard work of the T&T Board, GREAT and our local business owners will pay off in a continued trend of increased revenue during this year's tourism season.
  - d. REDI – Last week was Session 1 of REDI Class XXVII and she is thankful to the board for approving her participation in and helping to cover the cost of the Rural Economic Development Institute. In addition to getting access to the most up to date data and trends in the region and the state and she is making allies for Graham County across the state. Her colleagues in the class of XXVII include a county commissioner, a member of the Rural/Grants Programs staff at the NC Department of Commerce and the regional director of the NC Community Foundation. These are some of North Carolina's finest citizens and she is certain the partnerships she develops with them and the rest of the colleagues will prove incredibly beneficial for Graham County. Part of the REDI program requires an assignment and she has chosen to focus on reviving Robbinsville. It is the heart of the County and in need of a great amount of intention, investment and cooperative effort on the part of her citizens. As a first step toward this effort, she would like to hold a meeting where the Aldermen from each of the counties three towns, the commissioners, the building and land owners in the heart of town, preachers of the churches located in Robbinsville, a representative from the schools as well as members of GREAT and the Graham County Historical Society. It has become clear that

we are all going to need to get together to establish a shared vision for the town and more importantly, a shared idea of the best way to take action toward that vision. She will update more in a week or two.

- e. Broadband – Our contract with Ron Carmanico ended two weeks ago and we will have his report no later than the beginning of next week. At this point, we are planning to take what was learned during that process to re-establish regular meetings of the GREAT Broadband Committee and this will establish the vehicle by which we will obtain the data necessary for the regional survey that will be completed through the Southwest Commission and the Mountain West Partnership. On the advice of Mr. Carmanico, she is going to work with Keith Conover, the regional representative for NC's Broadband Initiative to map out the demand and prime locations for equipment in Graham County. This information will be used to enhance the services that will be coming online over the next month through West Net, Balsam West's residential service provider.
  - f. Real Estate – Ms. Paulos has been working with Bill Steigerwald to generate increasing interest in Graham County as "the" destination for high profile clientele and as a result the most prime piece of real estate in Graham County is now listed with SVN Blackwater out of Asheville.
  - g. Agriculture – Ms. Paulos will continue to work to help expand agriculture and opportunities for agriculture in Graham County. Last month she had the pleasure of being at the cattlemen's meeting hosted by Randy Collins in the extension office and to meet more of our local food producers. In collaboration with the extension office, GREAT, and our local food producers, the Southwestern Commission is working on a project, in partnership with the NC Rural Center, to support agricultural related roundtables to gather more information about the local food scene as well as other healthy living assets. The Southwest Commission will hold the first meeting for this project for Robbinsville and Graham County from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on April 13<sup>th</sup> at the Stony Hollow Farm. The board is welcome to attend but please RSVP to [olga@regiona.org](mailto:olga@regiona.org).
  - h. T&T – Ms. Paulos has been serving on the T&T Budget Committee to discuss the success of last year as well as new possibilities for the upcoming year. The majority of the board members have joined us at some point during various meetings and she looks to have the proposed budget ready to present to the T&T Board at their meeting on April 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - i. USFS – Last month's public meeting was very well received by Graham County's citizens. For weeks, hunters, loggers and business owners have taken the time to let her know just how much they appreciate having the opportunity to have their voices heard, more importantly, their input matters to the forest revision plan process. There have been changes made to the plan based on the input from Graham County. This past week, the Nantahala-Pisgah Partnership invited Graham County to become a full member of the partnership and if you choose this route, Ms. Paulos will need approval from the board to represent Graham County at partnership meetings for a price of \$500.00. If the board chooses not to become a member of this organization, Ms. Paulos can still serve in an advisory role to ensure our citizens input continues to be voiced at these meetings. Ms. Paulos has consolidated much of the information from the meeting and is still working to identify specific locations (noted loggers, EMS, hunters, etc.) and will have a printed report on the community input for each of the commissioners no later than the next commissioners meeting but in the meantime, the board can meet with her and review the maps and citizen input. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to pay the \$500.00 and have a voice at the table. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Manager Garland gave the finance and county manager's report. Manager Garland gave the March report for the 911 Center. The permitting is completed and we received notice to proceed to Western Builders with a commencement date of April 1<sup>st</sup>. Our budget amendment was approved by the 911 Board. Manager Garland stated that we have a pay request from MCP for \$11,407.00 for 34% completion on the technical side and she will need approval to pay this request. Commissioner Orr made the motion to pay MCP \$11,407.00. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Commissioner Nelms asks if he needed to recuse himself from the vote due to his involvement with the Building Inspections office. Commissioner Orr made the motion

to allow Commissioner Nelms to recuse himself but later rescinded the motion. The board all agreed that there is no perceived conflict per Attorney Coward's advice.

8. Manager Garland stated that the RFP for the financing of the P&J project has been submitted and they are due back from the banks on Friday, April 22, 2017. There was 122 banks that received the RFP and this includes our local banks. The RFP is for a total financing of \$3,441,000.00 which includes refunding the purchase price of the building, renovation costs, and refinancing the existing debt on the Health Department and EMS buildings.
9. Manager Garland stated that in conjunction with the RFP, we are hereby requesting the board to approve "Calling a public hearing to be held at the Board's meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup> for the purpose of hearing public comment on the county entering into an installment financing contract under NCGS 160A-20. Manager Garland stated that she would need board approval to have the public hearing. Commissioner Williams made the motion to call a public hearing for the reimbursement itself for the cost of acquiring the Phillips and Jordan building located at 191 P&J Road Robbinsville, NC; pay the costs of renovating and improving the P&J Building; refinance a prior installment financing contract if feasible, the proceeds of which were used to finance the construction and improvement to the County facilities; and pay the costs of entering into the Contract. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Manager Garland stated that the new sanitation director started on Monday morning and he would like to propose adding to the hours at the transfer station by changing the hours from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Saturdays. This could be accomplished by flexing hours with no change in the budget and he wants to try and see if that will encourage people to use the transfer station instead of the dumpsites for illegal dumping. Manager Garland asks the board if this is okay. The board all agreed to the proposed change. Manager Garland stated that she will be working closely with the new director.
11. Manager Garland stated that the work truck for the NC Forest Service has been replaced and the old one is available for sale. It is a 2007 Ford F-150, 4 wheel drive, emergency lights with utility body and is in good shape. It will need a tune up but it is mechanically sound with 102,000 miles. Manager Garland asks the board if they want to make an offer. Commissioner Orr made the motion to give \$2500.00 for this vehicle. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
12. Manager Garland stated that per Tim Howell there was good response to the advertisement for the local forestry technician position. Mr. Howell has gotten the applications back from Raleigh and they will be in touch with Frank soon about interviews. Commissioner Orr thanked the board for putting in motion the provision to hire locally for the Assistant Forest Ranger position.
13. Manager Garland stated that she has the ESRI quote for mapping for 2017-2018 and it is \$6608.25 and she would need board approval. Manager Garland stated that the price had increased by \$27.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the ESRI quote as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Manager Garland stated that there has been some talk about fencing at the P&J Building between the building and the ballfield. Manager Garland stated that we have large gas tanks, a generator and the HVAC units that are accessible to the public and have noticed children playing too close to the area and trying to put rocks into the HVAC units. Manager Garland stated that Asheville Fence gave a quote while they were doing the dumpster sites and they quoted 229 linear feet of 5' fencing with a gate with posts set in concrete for \$3315.15. Manger Garland stated that we have money left in capital outlay projects or we can budget in the next fiscal year. The board tabled this until some of the commissioners could look at the project.
15. Commissioner Williams stated that two bollards was supposed to have been installed at the Bear Creek Site and they were not installed. Clerk Crisp stated that this was not in their contract for this site. Discussion by the board on the dumpster sites.
16. Manager Garland stated that the sheriff is requesting the purchase of radios for the deputies and the estimated cost is \$18,500.00 but he has gotten a quote for \$11,592.00. Manager Garland stated that his fingerprint machine has also gone out at the Sheriff's office that they use for concealed permits and they got two quotes:
  - a. Sirchie: \$7438.00 with a future annual support of \$1148.00
  - b. Morphotrak: \$7113.00 with future annual support of \$1867.00Commissioner Williams made the motion to allow the purchase of the radios and to purchase the Sirchie fingerprint machine. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
17. Manager Garland stated that we had one finding during our jail inspection which was the exit sign above the door but this has been corrected. Manager Garland stated that the jail inspector

made a verbal comment about not having female detention officers working shifts alone with male inmates for safety reasons and Chief Cable was advised by the inspector that this was not good practice. Manager Garland stated that the jail has altered its scheduling.

18. Manager Garland stated that the Southwest Commission Rural Planning Organization (SWRPO)'s next meeting is scheduled for May 22 and there is legislation pending in the House to require an alternate member to enhance participation and attendance. Manager Garland stated that she would report more as this moves through General Assembly.
19. Manager Garland stated that she sent a progress report to Golden Leaf last week. Manager Garland stated that Mark Sorrells requested that she send a letter to him and Dan Gerlach in reference to our progress on the Urgent Care Project and our request to use the money we are holding for them for Urgent Care and dialysis. Manager Garland stated that she has enclosed the letter for record and stated that the Golden Leaf Board meets this week and will be considering our request to use the \$823,735.06 of which we have in restricted funds for this project pending approval by Golden Leaf.
20. Manager Garland stated that we received \$43,169.07 for the US Forest Service Timber allocation last week. This money, per law, is earmarked for public education and because SRS funding was not authorized they have reverted to the old formula under The Act of 1908 which is a 75-80% reduction in funding. Manager Garland stated that she needed budget amendment #8 for \$43,169.07 approved to amend to recognize timber receipts as per the Act of May 23, 1908; SRS was not authorized for the fiscal year. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #8. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Manager Garland stated that she attached two articles for the board to review. The SRS funding from NACO website as well as proposed cuts of elimination of CDBG funds to local governments by the federal government. Since Graham County and the Town of Robbinsville have been recipients of over \$4,000,000.00 in CDBG over the past 10 years and this is major, so as things move through Congress, we may need to advocate that this funding not be lost in the federal budget. It will be very important that we stay tuned into NACO and NCACC as things change in the state and federal government.
21. Manager Garland stated that in follow-up to Sophia's report, Phil Elliott is a voting member under the logging interests and this is an important step forward for Graham County to have a full voting seat at the table. Manager Garland stated that we are being asked to meet with the Forest Service at a special meeting or a workshop session for "friendly" conversation. Manager Garland stated that there was some major misunderstanding on the liability of county workers and volunteers working on the bike trails. Manager Garland stated that this board would like a chance to express their frustrations.
22. Manager Garland stated that Vaya Health has requested that counties write a letter of support from members of the county commissioner advisory board for a grant to create a model program for veterans and their families mental health, including mental health, substance abuse and services for persons with I/DD by creating integrated systems of care for this population and it will start in the 11 counties with the highest veteran population and then be implemented to the other 12 counties. Manager Garland asks if this is something that the board wants to support and if so a letter needed to be sent in by April 20<sup>th</sup>.
23. Manager Garland stated that the property located at 269 Pine Ridge Road is now officially on the market for development for \$3,000,000.00.
24. Commissioner Williams stated that we needed to install the fence at the P&J Fields. Commissioner Orr made the motion to install the fencing at the P&J Building for \$3315.15. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Commissioner Williams stated that the coaches needed to be told to keep the kids away from the building.
25. Commissioner Orr asks about the Stanley Property and can our kids use that ballfield now. Commissioner Nelms stated that the fencing has been installed and the kids can use the Stanley Field.
26. Chairman Eller asks for public comment. No one was signed in for public comment.
27. Manager Garland stated that the county will be closed on Good Friday, April 14<sup>th</sup> but that essential offices will remain open.
28. Manager Garland stated that Melissa Blevins, Assistant to the DSS Director has been nominated to serve on the South Western LTC Committee. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve this nomination. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

29. Manager Garland stated that the sanitation department was requesting a port-a-john to be placed beside the office due to leaving the scales to go to the restroom. Chairman Eller asks that the board find an office trailer to purchase for them instead. The board was in agreement.
30. Commissioner Nelms asks about the concrete bids at the tennis court and the VFW Building. The board had discussion and all agreed that this needed to be fixed.
31. Commissioner Williams asks that an inventory of the dumpsters be done and/or check the pricing for new ones. The board agreed that we needed inventory prior to the next budget.
32. Chairman Eller stated that the board needed to 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 Wiggins made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to authorize Manager Garland to pay \$2000.00 to get the permit for a Brownfield at the Stanley property. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. The board gave a directive to Commissioner Nelms to get the pricing on the restorations on the creek bank at the Stanley Property.
36. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the lowest quote on the cement repairs at the VFW building and the tennis courts. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

---

Keith Eller, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

---

Connie Orr, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

---

Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Commissioner

---

Dale E. Wiggins, Member, Graham County Commissioner

---

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

---

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board