

Continued Meeting – June 30, 2017

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Friday, June 30, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. for a continued meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. All board was present.

1. Chairman Eller called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the agenda. Clerk Crisp stated that two items needed to be added under new business: 1) The approval of the Order of Collection for the Tax Collector; 2) Pool hours for July 4th. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chairman Eller stated that we would now close the continued meeting and open a public hearing for the purpose of presenting the Fiscal Year 2017/2018 Budget Ordinance. Commissioner Orr made the motion to close the continued meeting and open the public hearing as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
4. Chairman Eller asks Rebecca Garland to present the budget ordinance. Manager Garland stated that she is presenting the 2017/2018 Budget Ordinance for Graham County. Manager Garland stated that she had found one technical correction to make to the Jail Budget concerning the inmate meals. Manager Garland stated that the Valley River Humane Society has expanded their facility and will go into contract with Graham County for \$5000.00 per year. Manager Garland stated that they have expanded their facility and have affixed outdoor runs for the animals. Manager Garland stated that they are also a no-kill animal shelter and the only exception to this is if the animal is sick or hurt beyond healing. Manager Garland stated that this shelter is shifting half the population to New Jersey and Connecticut. Manager Garland stated that they will send a truck once a week to pick up the strays in the county and if needed they will come twice. Manager Garland stated that the contract is for six months. Manager Garland stated that there will be no cost to the citizens of Graham County and this is a huge step forward. Manager Garland stated that she did add this to the budget pending board approval.
5. Manager Garland asks for public comment. No public comment was given.
6. Commissioner Orr made the motion to close the public hearing and reopen the continued meeting. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Chairman Eller asks for a motion to approve a six month contract with Valley River Humane Society for \$5,000.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the contract. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Chairman Eller asks for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget Ordinance. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget Ordinance. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Manager Garland stated that she had two budget amendments for the board's approval.
 - a. Budget Amendment #10 – Final budget amendments for reallocations related to departmental shifts of personnel and additional expenditures from grants and other restricted funds. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve budget amendment #10. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 - b. Budget Amendment #1 – Amend to recognize increases to phone costs due to changes in 911 rules and also amend to pick up final capital outlay. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve budget amendment #1. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Manager Garland stated that she needed approval for the Order of collection for our Tax Collector, Tajuana Ledwell. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the Order of Collection for Tajuana Ledwell. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
11. Manager Garland asks the board if the pool could be closed on July 4th. The board all agreed to close the pool and gave a directive to Manager Garland to inform the staff.
12. Manager Garland stated that five months ago she had informed the Town of Robbinsville that they were using a county owned switch for their internet and they needed to have their own service instead of coming through the county lines. Manager Garland stated that the Town wants to keep the switch but will move from our fiber. Manager Garland stated that the switch is 9 to 10 years old. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to surplus the switch and give it to the Town of Robbinsville. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

13. Chairman Eller stated that the board needed to discuss some personnel issues concerning the Resolution of Graham County Board of Commissioners concerning the DHHS and DSS and 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 and personnel. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
15. Manager Garland read the Resolution of the Graham County Board of Commissioners to assume direct control of the Department of Public Health and the Department of social Services.

RESOLUTION OF THE GRAHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO ASSUME DIRECT CONTROL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, Graham County Board of Commissioners has the authority, pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 153A-77, to assume direct control over the activities theretofore conducted by or through any commission, board or agency by the adoption of a resolution assuming and conferring upon the Board of County Commissioners all powers, responsibilities and duties of any such commission, board or agency; and,

WHEREAS, the County may also appoint an advisory committee composed of qualified and interested county residents to study, interpret and develop community support and cooperation in activities conducted by or under the authority of the Graham County Board of Commissioners; and,

WHEREAS, the local Public Health Department, as administered by and through the Graham County Board of Public Health, is one such department over which the Graham County Board of Commissioners may assume direct control; and,

WHEREAS, the local Department of Social Services, as administered by and through the Graham County Board of Social Services, is also one such department over which Graham County Board of Commissioners may assume direct control; and,

WHEREAS, the Graham County Board of Commissioners has determined and does so find that the health and safety and the interests of the people of Graham County will be best served by assumption of direct control over the Graham County Board of Public Health and the Graham County Department of Social Services;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Graham County Commissioners that pursuant to G.S. 153A-77:

1. The Graham County Board of Commissioners assumes direct control of the Graham County Board of Public Health and the Graham County Department of Social Services, and over all the duties and responsibilities heretofore conferred upon the Board of Public Health as delineated in G.S. 130A-35, and any other duties and responsibilities set forth in Chapter 130A of the North Carolina General Statutes. It also assumes direct control and over duties and responsibilities of the Board of Social Services, as delineated in Chapter 108B.
2. The Board of Public Health as it is presently configured is dissolved, and its members relieved of any further duties and obligations, while maintaining eligibility to reappointment by the Graham County Board of Commissioners as members of an advisory committee.
3. The Board of Social Services as it is presently configured is dissolved, and its members relieved of any further duties and obligations.
4. The Graham County Board of Commissioners hereby establishes the Graham County Public Health Advisory Committee, consistent with the membership described in G.S. 130A-35. The Graham County Board of Commissioners does not delegate the powers and duties of the Public Health Board to the Advisory Committee, but retains them in full. The membership of the Advisory Board will be determined at a later time.
5. The Graham County Board of Commissioners will hold a public hearing on this Resolution on the 7th day of August, 2017 at 5:00 PM at the Graham County Community Building at 196 Knight Street, Robbinsville, North Carolina.
6. This Resolution shall become effective without further action upon the conclusion and adjournment of the aforesaid public hearing.
This the 30th day of June, 2017, by an affirmative vote of all Graham County Commissioners. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve and accept the resolution as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

16. Manager Garland stated that she would like to address the board and she waives her personal rights to closed session.
The honeymoon is officially over. It has been nearly six months since I took on the role of County Manager. In that time, it may appear that we have made little to no progress, however, we have

made progress in the areas of train wrecks we were left to clean up, notably IT. We have made some small progress in our employee morale and culture. Some employees have stated to me that they feel that they now have someone who will at least listen and seek to work actively with them to seek real solutions to their problems. But, the honeymoon is over.

In January, I pledged to work hard to not disappoint the County Commissioners and especially not the people of this County. Before I took the role, I wanted to ensure that I had the full support of the board. The board unanimously voted for the appointment. The board also pledged their support by stating that they would refer all matters to the County Manager and would not work within departments either actively or passively to undermine the County Manager. Any complaints either from a citizen or employee would be referred to the County Manager. Dale Wiggins read NCGS 153A-82 in that meeting laying out the powers and duties of the County Manager. One area we deferred on until this spring was the powers and duties over personnel. I was fine with it. However, in the spring, the board of commissioners passed a resolution delegating the powers and duties over personnel under NCGS 153A-82(1) to me as manager. I understand that this was a difficult and risky decision. It meant that the Board would allow me to use my judgement and expertise in hiring, dismissal and general discipline. Like all the roles assigned to me as finance officer and county manager, it is not a role I take lightly. It is an uncomfortable role to say the least. Firing an employee is not a pleasant experience and it robbed me of several nights sleep. But I knew what I had to do and I did it. I also know that the Board has been "burned" over and over and, therefore, your decision has been uncomfortable to you. But on my behalf, in the eight years as finance officer and county manager, I never failed to carry out my responsibilities and duties to this board or the people of this County. Now that we have nearly reached the six month point, it is time to assess where we are. I am fully prepared to continue this role, however, several things continue to give me pause.

- a. I still do not feel I have the full support of the board. The rumor mill continues to flourish and I receive reports from the grapevine that complaints about me by commissioners are circulating, or that doubt is being cast about my ability to carry out the role. Even if the commissioner does not intend it as a complaint or a doubt, it is being perceived as such by the employees in the departments. This not only undermines my morale, but undermines my credibility with staff. It is impossible to build a culture built on a solid foundation of trust and accountability if first, commissioners will not communicate their issues with me to me personally and secondly, if staff are worried about yet another manager transition, they will be slow to implement and support programs we need to put forward.
- b. The board needs to set the tone for the County. Because we have commissioners who are also employees, they MUST set the examples as leaders in their work ethic and attitude toward the changes. That means that as we move to re-tool systems of accountability that the staff will look to the commissioners as their example. In addition, when I schedule a staff meeting that is mandatory, it is vital that commissioners who are also department managers attend these meetings. This sends the message that other department managers are not required to attend these meetings. I need your support. PLEASE!
- c. While I try to be responsive to and appreciate all the things you bring to me in the course of a day, it is difficult with our dynamics for me not to jump and run to attend to a directive from one commissioner. Please bear in mind that I want to be responsive, but each commissioner is one of five. I want to bring us to the level that as these things are brought up and it appears that the Board needs to consider it that I am not being disrespectful when I say that I will place it on the agenda for the next meeting so that the entire board can consider the matter. In the event that the issue could bring on immediate liability or be an emergency, I will immediately jump into action. And if it requires a board poll, we will quickly poll the board.
- d. Things will get worse with staff before they get better. We have a wonderful staff. They work really hard. Because of all of the transitions, though, they have become siloed and do not know what they need to answer to. I have worked hard for the past six months to help staff that I am credible and I have treated them all as equally as humanly possible. This is important. Now it is time to help them see that we mean business from the discipline perspective. This is why it is so vital that commissioners not work behind the scenes either in appearance or fact to undermine

the process. **The tail is getting ready to stop wagging the dog.** You will hear complaints as I realign processes, as we continue to push on following policy, and, if necessary, scheduling in departments. You will hear complaints because I am picking on folks. We must all stand firm. If my credibility gets undermined then there is no path forward. We either are committing to create a solid culture of good work ethic and accountability or things can rock on as they have.

So my question tonight in this forum is whether I truly have the full board support in this endeavor. I did not take on this role lightly and I do not feel that you did either. I hope that you feel the same way that I feel.

17. Commissioner Eller stated that Manager Garland had more power than anyone in the county. Manager Garland stated that she has never nor would never abuse that trust and she is not about power play but is about humility and servant leadership.
18. Commissioner Williams stated that Manager Garland has 150% of support from him.
19. Commissioner Nelms stated that Manager Garland has 150% of support from him.
20. Commissioner Orr stated that Manager Garland has 1000% of support from her. Commissioner Orr stated that she has seen leadership in Manager Garland and the work is not easy and thanked Manager Garland for her service.
21. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he supported her totally as well and he appreciated all that she does and he has been in the position of county manager in the past and it is not easy changing culture because you always get pushback.
22. Manager Garland stated that she has the best board sitting at these tables now. Attorney Coward stated that he has served on many boards and he can truly say that this one is top notch and the manager is top notch.
23. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wiggins 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