

Special Meeting – June 19, 2017

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, June 19, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. in the Graham County Transit Facility located at 201 West Fort Hill Robbinsville, NC for a special meeting to skype with the UNC School of Government, Aimee Wall. Commissioners present was Keith Eller, Jacob Nelms, Connie Orr and Raymond Williams. Commissioner Dale Wiggins was absent.

1. Chairman Eller called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Eller asks Rebecca Garland, County Manager/Finance Officer to proceed. Manager Garland stated that we will be speaking with Aimee Wall with the UNC School of Government on Human Services Organization and Governance: Options under NC Law. Manager Garland stated that Ms. Wall will describe the options under state law and presented the board with a handout on the material that will be discussed today.
3. Ms. Wall stated that she would review the materials with the board to give them a better understanding of which option would work best for Graham County. Ms. Wall stated that Counties are required to provide public health and social services. Ms. Wall stated that in 2012, legislation opened up new opportunities for delivery of these services and asks is change needed in Graham County and if so, what are your options. Ms. Wall stated that we needed to define the goals and asks what the county's goals are and what route will get you there. The goals could be: Improve service delivery for citizens services programs; Create a new vision for human services programs; Create a unified personnel system for all county personnel; Change the relationship between board of county commissioners and the departments; Identify efficiencies and reduce human services spending and others that the board may have.
4. Ms. Wall stated that the options are to stay the same; go with options under the old laws and/or go with the options under the new law.
5. Ms. Wall stated that under the new law the options are: Options #1 Board of County Commissioners are over the Department of Social Services and/or Public Health. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) will abolish the current board and form an advisory board; Options #2 Board of County Commissioners create a Consolidated Human Services Board and/or Consolidated Human Services Agency. Under this option the county manager appoints the director with the consent and advice from the Consolidated Human Services Board.; Option #3 Board of County Commissioners as a Consolidated Human Services Board over a Consolidated Human Services Agency. The board consolidates both and appoints one director to oversee both DHHS and DSS.
6. Ms. Wall stated that if the board went with any of the new options then a public hearing would need to be done first and they are typically not controversial. Ms. Wall presented the board with a map of NC Counties and their options that they are using and advises that the county reach out to a couple of these counties and discuss how well these options are working for them.
7. Ms. Wall stated that under option one the departments are not consolidated; the BOCC assumes powers and duties of board(s) after public hearing; BOCC appoints departments directors and if the public health is affected you must appoint health advisory committee and the employees are subject to the State Human Resource Act.
8. Ms. Wall stated that under option two the BOCC creates a Consolidated Health Services Agency and appoints a Consolidated Human Services Board; the manager appoints Consolidated Human Services Director with advise and consent of the Consolidated Human Services Board and the Consolidated Human Service Director appoints person with health director qualifications and it is optional whether the employees stay under the State Human Resource Act.
9. Ms. Wall stated that under option three the BOCC creates Consolidated Human Services Board and assumes powers and duties of Consolidated Human Service board after public hearing; the manager appoints the Consolidated Human Services Director with advice and consent of BOCC acting as Consolidated Human Services Board; the Consolidates Human Services Director appoints person with health director qualifications; the State Human Resource Act is an option and if the agency includes Public Health, you must appoint a health advisory committee which is made up with the same composition of the current health board.
10. Ms. Wall stated that the board needed to adopt clear policies and assure compliance with state and federal laws. Ms. Wall suggests advance discussion about implications of change; update HR policies / ordinance in advance to comply with federal merit personnel standards and open legal question about transitioning career status employees.

11. Ms. Wall asks that the county attorney give her a call and possibly meet with her at a conference in July.
12. Ms. Wall stated that the budget can be impacted by not filling vacancies including agency director position; cross training program staff to work in both Public Health and Social Services; combining back office functions such as finance; HR and IT; moving operations into new, less expensive, shared space; realizing efficiencies through operational changes; reducing or eliminating optional services and entering into inter-local agreements with neighboring counties for select services.
13. Ms. Wall discussed Senate Bill 594 and House Bill 630.
14. The board had discussion on which option to adopt. The board discussed the State Human Resource Act and the options with the employees. The board discussed personnel policies.
15. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams 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