

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting. Board present was: Connie Orr, Jacob Nelms, Dale Wiggins and Raymond Williams. Board absent: Keith Eller.

1. Vice-Chairman Orr called the meeting to order.
2. Vice-Chairman Orr asks Commissioner Williams to give the Invocation.
3. Vice-Chairman Orr asks Commissioner Nelms to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Vice-Chairman Orr asks for approval of the agenda. Manager Garland asks that we add Connie Orr to the Discussion Items for the Roy Stiles Property. Commissioner Williams made the motion to amend and approve the agenda as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Vice-Chairman Orr asks for approval of the minutes for the Special Meeting – November 2nd and the Regular Meeting – November 7th. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Vice-Chairman Orr asks Sophia Paulos, EDC Director to give her monthly report. Ms. Paulos stated that the ARC Distressed County Funding team has been hard at work designing projects to submit for funding and will be submitting applications for the Strategic Tourism Implementation Plan and the Broadband Infrastructure. Ms. Paulos stated that the team would like to submit applications for two additional projects. Ms. Paulos would like to apply for a grant to help fund a 3-D Mammogram Machine in the amount of \$100,000.00 with a county match of \$25,000.00 which will be provided by Goldenleaf. Ms. Paulos asks permission to apply for this grant. Commissioner Williams made the motion to allow Ms. Paulos to apply for the grant as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Ms. Paulos stated that she met with Manager Garland, EMS Director Hembree and members of Jackson County EMS and Harris Medical's paramedicine program on a possible paramedicine program for Graham County. Ms. Paulos would like to apply for a QVR (quick response vehicle) and a modest amount of equipment required for the vehicle to be used for this program. Ms. Paulos stated that the estimated cost is \$40,000.00-\$50,000.00 with a required county match of \$10,000.00. Ms. Paulos stated that this program would decrease hospital readmissions saving citizens thousands of dollars and reduce the number of transports saving the county thousands of dollars. Ms. Paulos asks permission to apply for this grant. Commissioner Williams made the motion to apply for this grant as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Ms. Paulos stated that Broadband continues to be the single, most talked about, issue in the region. As Phase I of Region A's broadband study nears completion we are coming up on the two day symposium designed to inform the region's leaders on issues such as infrastructure, regulatory practices and policies that will drive broadband expansion in the West. The symposium will take place on November 28th and 29th and she strongly encourages the members of the county board to attend any and all portions of the symposium. Clerk Crisp gave the board the agenda and information on the event. Ms. Paulos stated that a critical part of Phase I is the region wide broadband survey that is being conducted by the consultants at ECC Technologies. Ms. Paulos stated that she is happy to report that Graham County is 94% of the way toward our goal for surveys completed and we are leading the region with the next counties having 40%, 35%, 27% and 11%. This level of response is a clear indicator that the people of Graham County are very serious about getting high speed internet and we are all on our way. Ms. Paulos thanked the Cherokee Broadband for coming to discuss their exciting expansions with us. Ms. Paulos stated that partnerships are critical to continually improving the quality of life for our citizens and with this in mind we need to revisit a conversation regarding the use of the current site of the building inspector's office as a potential site for Cherokee Broadband to locate their point of presence in Graham County. Due to unforeseen circumstances the site owned by the Town of Robbinsville is not feasible within reason and as such would like to formally request that the board allow Cherokee Broadband to begin negotiations with this board for use of the site located at 227 Knight Street for their point of presence in Graham County. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to allow this site to be used by Cherokee Broadband for their point of presence. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. The negotiations will begin with our attorney and the Tribal Attorney to decide if they need to purchase the property or lease the property.
9. Ms. Paulos stated that last month she informed the board that we will be getting a new District Ranger. Ms. Paulos stated that our new temporary ranger is Brandon Houcke and he will begin

January 8th. Ms. Paulos stated that she will look forward to working with him as we continue to push for our forests to thrive. Ms. Paulos stated that the search for a full time replacement is underway and she understands that the board's desire is to have a ranger that will stay. Ms. Paulos stated that she will be working to share these and other views expressed by our citizens, in constructive ways, as the hiring process for a new district ranger gets underway. In other news, while the proposal process for the forest plan revision has come to a close, the partnership continues to work hard in collaboration toward a thriving forest. Today, members of the partnership met with Marshal McClung and members of the Benton MacKaye and Partners of Joyce Kilmer to discuss proposals for Graham County. As we head toward the implementation of the USFS Forest Plan, we are hard at work designing projects that will generate opportunities for timber harvest and wildlife while increasing recreation opportunities across the county. Ms. Paulos asks permission to share the county views with the USFS Regional Director.

Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to allow Sophia Paulos to share the county views with the USFS Regional Director. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

10. Ms. Paulos stated that she had the honor of speaking on a panel at Start.Grow.Thrive. an event for entrepreneurs in the region hosted by the Mountain BizWorks and the Small Business Center at Black Rock Community College. Ms. Paulos stated that this was an exciting opportunity to share the amazing opportunities available for investors and entrepreneurs in Western NC and more importantly in Graham County. Ms. Paulos stated that she was able to share the many opportunities available in tourism and small scale manufacturing in our area with entrepreneurs seeking new ideas and opportunities. Ms. Paulos stated that the closest to home is Wehrloom Honey and they are preparing a significant expansion. They will be spending the winter scaling up in order to supply whole sale customers throughout the region and this expansion will create an additional two to three jobs and a sizable increase in sales tax revenues generated by the business.
11. Ms. Paulos stated that she was acting as a mentor at the WCU student networking event and the event is held every semester to teach students proper etiquette and behavior at professional receptions and networking events. Ms. Paulos stated that we will continue to work with our partners at WCU on a variety of projects in Graham County in an effort to continually improve the lives of our citizens and it is an honor to serve the university as a partner on behalf of Graham County.
12. Vice-Chairman Connie Orr asks Manager Garland to give the manager's report. Manager Garland stated that the county ended the month of October with a \$6,612,014.50 cash balance which is up from this time last year and will increase more when the 911 Funds are re-paid to the county. Manager Garland stated that the current year tax collections for the month was \$366,587.32 and the prior year of \$29,883.52 for a total of \$396,470.84. Manager Garland stated that the DMV Collections for the month was \$33,369.93 which is a little under this time last year. Manager Garland stated that our tax collection rate to date is 25.72%. Manager Garland stated that the revenues for the month was \$1,254,511.67 and the expenditures was \$985,760.08 for a surplus of \$268,751.89. Manager Garland stated that our surplus to date is \$49,733.47. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax collection for the month is \$193,873.21 which is ahead from this time last year. Manager Garland stated that our budget should be at 67% and the county is holding steady at 73%.
13. Manager Garland stated that she had two Budget Amendments for approval. Budget Amendment #3 to ratify amendment approved 11/7/2017 for court proceedings in Cherokee County for the rest of FY 2017-2018 and Budget Amendment #4 to extend the contract with VRHS to 6-30-2017 which added \$10,000.00 to the budget and we have revenues to support that were not anticipated in the budget. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve Budget Amendments 3 and 4 as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Manager Garland stated that she had the revised contract for the Humane Society for approval. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the revised contract for the Humane Society. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
15. Manager Garland stated that she has a quote for Stars Creative to maintain the county website, Transit and EDC for \$3600.00. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to renew the contract with Stars Creative. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
16. Manager Garland stated that we have a quote from Franklin Machine in Franklin to install an 11-foot flat bed and tool boxes to the old ambulance cab and chassis for Emergency Management. Manager Garland stated that Larry Hembree has the EMPG money to fund the quote of \$4,164.32. Manager Garland stated that these are funds that needed to be spent. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the expenditure. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

17. Manager Garland gave an update on the capital projects. Manager Garland stated that there may be another change order on the P&J Building due to damaged tile and this has been sent to PFA prior to a recommendation. Manager Garland stated that as we progress on these projects a poll may be necessary to keep things progressing but we will try to keep this to a minimum.
18. Manager Garland stated that the Building Committee met last week and reviewed the preliminary drawings of the renovation of the community building/DSS to be converted to a one stop for the taxpayers. The building would include all offices currently located in the courthouse that are not court related (tax, register of deeds) and mapping, election, administration, building inspections and planning. The committee was not happy with the layout so the architect is working on another draft that we will bring to the board for approval. This will require an addition to the building but will free up the courthouse for the court system and will open the way to begin the process of looking at that facility for upgrades.
19. Manager Garland stated that the NC Sheriff's Association will be coming December 13th at the request of Judge Coward to do an assessment of security in the courthouse. They will be asking to meet with me and commissioner(s) on December 14th to go over findings and recommendations. Following that we will need to appoint a committee as required by the judge to start the process of research and investigation of our options and constraints.
20. Manager Garland stated that the sheriff vehicles are in and will be picked up tomorrow. Manager Garland stated that the sheriff has requested that when we replace the charger that was totaled that we get another Explorer. Manager Garland stated that she will review the cars with the sheriff and surplus any that can be sold before the end of the fiscal year. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to review the number of cars that the sheriff's department has and begin the process of surplus. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. The board asks that we get quotes on Explorers and Chargers.
21. Manager Garland stated that folks are coming to pump out their RV's in the septic receiving station and are beginning to fill up with water at that time. Manager Garland asks the board if they wish to impose any type of fee. Manager Garland stated that she did not see an increase in the water bill. The board did not want a fee imposed.
22. Manager Garland stated that Hope for Families is in the process of cleaning out the house to sell it and have requested that we take a dumpster up for a final clean out December 9th and pick it up at the end of that week and asks the board if they would allow this. Commissioner Williams stated that there are contractors in the county that supply this type of service and they need to use one of them. The board all agreed.
23. Manager Garland stated that the tipping floor at sanitation is being worked on but the asphalt is showing wear and tear and asks if we can start getting quotes for repair costs. The board agreed that the asphalt needed to be repaired and would entertain this at budget time.
24. Manager Garland asks if a decision has been made on the issue of buoys as Cross Creek on Santeetlah Lake. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to take no action. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Manager Garland stated that she would discuss the DSS Pay Plan and pay plan adjustments in closed with Director Butch Sanders.
26. Manager Garland stated that Travel and Tourism had hired a new Director, Daniel Allison.
27. Manager Garland reminded the board of a November 27th Southwestern RPO meeting and a November 28th Vaya Health County Commissioner Advisory Committee meeting.
28. Commissioner Williams stated that he appreciated our DSS Director Butch Sanders, our new librarian Mary Griffin, our new Health Director Beth Booth and our new Travel and Tourism Director Daniel Allison.
29. Vice-Chairman Orr asks for public comment. No one was signed in for public comment.
30. Vice-Chairman Orr stated that we would now go into the discussion items. Manager Garland stated that we had Releases of \$1499.01 and Discoveries of \$161.68. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the releases and discoveries. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Manager Garland stated that she needed approval of the board poll for the Owle Construction change of \$58,000.00. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the poll for Owle Construction. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Manager Garland stated that she needed approval of the board poll for the 911 Center cabling and generator. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the poll for the 911 Center. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Manager Garland stated that the board needed to open the proposals on the Bagged Household Waste. Vice-Chairman Orr stated that we received one proposal from DR Phillips, LLC for service of 5329 units at \$4.85 for a weekly total of \$25,845.65. Commissioner Wiggins asks that

Manager Garland arrange a meeting with DR Phillips to discuss this proposal. Commissioner Williams disagreed. Manager Garland will arrange a meeting with DR Phillips.

34. Manager Garland stated that the board needed to open the proposals for the bush hogging at the EMS Base and the vacant county land across the road below the Senior Center Building. Vice-Chairman Orr stated that the board received two proposals: Joe Waldroup - \$1850.00 and Chris Waldroup - \$2225.00. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to table this until the next meeting so that the board could speak with our maintenance director. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Manager Garland stated that the Sheriff had recommended Jake Phillips for the Child Protection Team. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to appoint Jake Phillips to the Child Protection Team. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Manager Garland stated that Michelle Shippet, Church Mouse Director had agreed to serve on the Child Protection Team. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to appoint Michelle Shippet to the Child Protection Team. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Vice-Chairman Orr stated that Roy Stiles had called her concerning the appraisal that the board has asked for and the outside appraiser wanted to go inside the home and Mr. Stiles was opposed. The board had discussion and gave a directive to Manager Garland to contact the outside contractor and request that he give an appraisal of the outside only.
38. Manager Garland stated that the Graham Star is asking if the board would be interested in taking an ad in the Title Town publication. The board did not take action.
39. Vice-Chairman Orr 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 Williams made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adjust the pay plan for DSS. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nelms 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