

Regular Meeting – July 17, 2018

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, July 17, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular 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 changes or approval to the agenda. Manager Garland asks the board to add Erma Phillips as 5A, to change the totals of the Releases to \$30,592.80 and Discoveries to \$15,058.29 and to add contracts to closed session. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes for July 3rd. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Eller asks Erma Phillips, Tax Assessor to come up front where he presented her with a plaque for her 23 years of service to the county. The board all stood and thanked Ms. Phillips for her service and commitment to the county and wished her the best on her retirement.
7. Chairman Eller asks Mark Kimball, CEO of Erlanger to speak. Mr. Kimball thanked the board for their time and he was here to introduce himself to the commissioners. Mr. Kimball stated that he grew up in Georgia and he enjoys this area and his goal is to bring topnotch services to our area. Mr. Kimball stated that Murphy Medical Center has been under-utilized and they have great capabilities to offer women's health and primary care. Mr. Kimball stated that all the people he has met has been a great group. Mr. Kimball stated that Murphy will be offering service to Graham, Clay and Cherokee Counties. Mr. Kimball stated that they have started improvements and making changes one of which is valet parking for families at no charge. Mr. Kimball stated that some needed assistance getting out of their cars. Mr. Kimball stated that they will be installing directional signs on the campus to help people with where they need to go and that he has a designated parking area for employees which is not in the front of the building. Mr. Kimball stated that he wants to offer the best patient care and there will be a lot of changes. Mr. Kimball stated that they will be offering Erlanger On-Demand where people can call in 24 hours a day 365 days per week. The cost is \$49.00 per visit and insurance is not billed and it is for all age groups. Mr. Kimball stated that this is for minor medical issues only and they are not trying to replace the relationship with Primary Care Providers or Urgent Care Centers. Chairman Eller ask if positions were being cut. Mr. Kimball stated that they did cut out some phlebotomists and are giving this duty back to the nurses. Mr. Kimball stated that he is not laying people off but they did do away with (4) positions in an effort for the lab to work as accurate as possible. Mr. Kimball stated that the intention is to run services as they do at Erlanger. Commissioner Williams asks if some of the doctors will be traveling to Murphy from Erlanger. Mr. Kimball stated that some will but not every provider will offer this service. The board thanked Mr. Kimball for coming.
8. Chairman Eller asks for Sophia Paulos to give her EDC monthly report. Ms. Paulos stated that while the news about American Timber Group choosing Robbinsville for its new home was announced in the Graham Star two weeks ago and she is pleased to finally say in a board meeting that American Timber Group will be investing \$2.3 million dollars at the former Stanley site, creating 74 new jobs over the next two years and further strengthening the economy of Graham County. Ms. Paulos thanked the board for working hard to help secure the \$370,000.00 incentive package from Governor Cooper's office and the NC Department of Commerce as that played a significant role in the decision to locate in Robbinsville. Ms. Paulos gave a special thanks to Chairman Eller and Clerk Crisp for the work behind the scenes to overcome several new hurdles and ensure that this project gets off to a good start. Ms. Paulos stated that last minute notarized letters to Beijing are no joke and she wanted to thank them for being ready to do whatever it takes to get the job done for the people of Graham County.
9. Ms. Paulos stated that the 2020 Census is well underway thanks to Shaun Garrison at the Graham County Mapping Department. Ms. Paulos stated that an accurate census is critical for a

small county like ours as census information is used by a wide variety of federal government departments and agencies, regional and local authorities, non-Governmental organizations, academics, researchers, students, businesses and local groups for a wide variety of purposes. The US Census Bureau presented Mr. Garrison with the challenge of sorting through 6814 data points and to date he has verified 3,350 addresses, corrected 1,515 addresses and added 1,949 addresses. Ms. Paulos stated that Mr. Garrison has now moved on to the roads portion of the project and when he is done, the US Census Bureau will have up-to-date, accurate, information for every single address and road in the county known to mapping and emergency services. Ms. Paulos thanked Mr. Garrison for his hard work and attention to detail as this information will strongly influence funding and resources for Graham County until the year 2030 when the next census is complete.

10. Ms. Paulos stated that last week she attended the first ever Energizing Rural North Carolina held by the Economic Development Partnership and their partners at the NC Rural Center. Governor Cooper started things off by clearly stating his commitment to rural North Carolina and outlining the ways he and his administration are taking action on the ground by finding out what rural communities need and securing state resources to get them taken care of. Dan Gerlach with Golden Leaf shared his insights on the way the state is growing and opportunities that rural parts of the state can seize. Rep. Jason Saine, senior chairman of the house finance committee remarked on the legislature's commitment to rural issues and specifically the need for last mile broadband and high-speed internet. EDP NC and the Rural Center were wise enough to seat us together by region and this allowed for built-in discussion time. This proved particularly fruitful on the second day when myself, Josh Carpenter, Rich Price (Jackson County), Arthur Salido (WCU), Forrest Gilliam (Madison County Manager), and Tommy Jenkins (Macon County) had the opportunity to drill down specifically on broadband, health care, and outdoor gear industry recruitment for tourism and manufacturing. The team was able to develop a list of action items that they will address in upcoming meeting with the Mountain West Partnership and at regional workshops that encompass the entire west. Ms. Paulos stated that she was proud of the team and all of the ideas and action items they took away from this conference.
11. Ms. Paulos stated that this past month she had the honor of meeting Philip Belcher, Vice-President of the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. The foundation manages \$311 million in assets with a long-term investment strategy that permanently protects and grows these funds. In partnership with fund holders, the foundation has awarded more than \$216 million in scholarships and grants across their 18 county region. She discussed the incredible strides made by our county and town officials and our army of volunteers at The Church Mouse, Graham County Historical Association, GREAT, Partners of Joyce Kilmer Slickrock, and the Stecoah Valley Center and Mr. Belcher decided it was time for a visit. Ms. Paulos honor and pleasure of sharing what's new in Graham County with him and Elizabeth Brazas, President and CEO of the foundation. Ms. Paulos stated that they enjoyed the new Courtyard of the Cherokee at Stecoah, met with Michelle Shiplet and walked the grounds of the new community garden and toured the Snider Building while discussing the incredible amount of progress being made toward the revitalization of Downtown Robbinsville. Mr. Belcher stated that it was an excellent opportunity "to see the terrific progress that's been made in recent years" and that they're "encouraged to see positive momentum in Graham County with all that is going on and hopes that our relationship with the foundation will strengthen and grow over the next several years.
12. Ms. Paulos stated that the amount of momentum picking up in the county has given birth to a whole new group of people willing to try their hand at grant writing and last week she, with the help of Ann Bass and Beth Fields, hosted a grant writing workshop for members of the Graham County Historical Association. Those attended gained clarity on the grant writing process as they worked to demystify ARC, highlight grant writing musts that apply across all funding sources, identify and develop best practices with regard to procurement, and how to administer a grant once it has been awarded. Ms. Paulos stated that this workshop made her a believer in empowering members of our community to take on the task of grant writing. Ms. Paulos has discussed holding a grant writing workshop for county employees, volunteers and generally anyone in the county who would like to learn more about grant writing with many of our regional and state partners and they are excited to help in any way that they can. Ms. Paulos asks if the board would like her to pursue this endeavor and see what resources will be needed to offer a one day writing course for our people and asks if there are resources available to provide to them.

13. Ms. Paulos stated that next week she will be in Denver representing Graham County and the Mountain West Partnership at the Outdoor Industry show and she has been working with Rich Price and Southwest Commission and have been strategizing how to make the most out of this visit. Equally important they have worked with her to pull together the materials necessary to share this beautiful part of the world with outdoor gear manufactures, retailers, adventurers and media. Ms. Paulos thanked David Huskins and our partners at Smokey Mountain Host in addition to being a friend to our Travel and Tourism Board he continues to prove an exceptional ally in economic development. Ms. Paulos stated that in support of this trip Mr. Huskins provided hundreds of maps and guides to be distributed over the course of the conference. Ms. Paulos thanked Mr. Huskins and the Smokey Mountain Host for the support and his vote of full confidence and in addition a video was funded by an additional partner in the region and produced by our friends at Stars Creative. Ms. Paulos stated that this 3 minute 30 second video has been tailored to run a loop and features people in our region actively engaged in outdoor activities like mountain biking, rock climbing, fly fishing, horseback riding, kayaking and more. This video is a beautiful display of all that nature has to offer here and she is excited to have that medium to draw people in. Ms. Paulos stated that she is honored to have the opportunity to represent Graham County and the region in this event.
14. Chairman Eller asks for the finance and manager's report. Manager Garland stated that we ended the month with a cash balance of \$7,367,474.50 which is up from this time last year and we are still due \$294,534.90 from 911. Manager Garland stated that our tax collections for the month is current year \$11,469.05; prior year \$5,310.44 and DMV of \$44,464.63. Manager Garland stated that our year-end tax collection rate was 97.21% and commended the tax collector's office for their hard work. Manager Garland stated that the year-end total real tax collection was \$6,275,076.74 and DMV was \$470,415.44 and we are ahead from this time last year on VTS. Manager Garland stated that our revenues was \$927,970.96 and our expenditures was \$1,664,746.10 giving us deficit for the month of \$639,043.58. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax for the month was \$85,783.68. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax for year end is \$165,908.97 compared to last year of \$145,316.54 so we are seeing a slight increase which is always a good thing for the county. Manager Garland stated that our year end revenues was \$14,484,365.38 and our expenditures was \$13,900,014.80. Manager Garland stated that so far for the year end we are looking at a \$584,350.58 surplus and this includes paying off the loan for the health department and EMS Base.
15. Manager Garland stated that we have collected \$609,000.00 in back taxes for a five year period and commends the tax office for their hard work.
16. Manager Garland stated that she did not do a budget report with it being year-end but she would present the final at the next meeting.
17. Manager Garland stated that it was time to renew our Citrix licenses. We have reduced the number of licenses to 30 which better represents our offsite usage. The total for the license renewal is \$8733.00 and asks for board approval. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the Citrix licenses. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
18. Manager Garland stated that during our conversations regarding school funding last fall, we determined that their cash flow needs peak during the first six months if they are fully funding. The allocation if we take 1/12 each month is \$83,333.34. They have requested \$120,000.00 each month the first six months and \$46,666.67 for the second six months OR \$100,000/\$66,666.67 for the first and second six month periods, respectively. Manager Garland recommended giving them the \$120,000.00 for the first six months and then \$46,666.67 for the second six months. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go with Manager Garland's recommendation. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
19. Manager Garland stated that she reached out to Jonathan Shuffield at NACO about the SRS funding. Congress released the funds to the States on May 31. Graham County is scheduled to receive \$200,654.94 and she has contacted the NC Office of State Budget Management and made an inquiry as to the timing and process for us to receive the allocation and has not gotten any word back from the State as of today.
20. Manager Garland stated that the Sales tax referendum is in the process of being placed on the ballot. Manager Garland stated that she has an updated resolution this evening directing the Board of Elections to place the issue on the ballot for board approval and we have been working on some promotional materials and hope to bring those to you for review next meeting. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the resolution as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

21. Manager Garland stated that we have received some requests from the general public about the possibility of serving breakfast in addition to lunch at the Senior Center. Senior Center Director Wanda Hill did some analysis of food costs, staff costs and capital costs if we started the program. We also inquired with her funding agency to determine if there would be an adverse effect on funding and there would be no issue with serving breakfast. The following are our findings:
- a. Require to have an additional PT staff hired at an approximate cost of \$11,500.00 per year.
 - b. Food costs would be approximately \$10,000-\$12,000 per year depending on demand. Wanda polled the 20 seniors who attend regularly and 4 stated that they would eat breakfast. The cost per plate would be about \$1.65 per plate. If 8 eat then the cost would be double.
 - c. Capital costs would include pans, buffet table, and another convection oven because the staff will be working on meals on wheels and lunch while doing breakfast. The estimated cost of the equipment is \$7000.00
 - d. Wanda did a pros and cons analysis. The biggest advantage is that we would be better serving the community with meals for seniors who cannot physically prepare their own meals. The biggest question from Wanda is whether we would charge a cost or provide at no charge. There is an issue if someone does not have a slot for lunch and want to eat lunch too, under the grant they would have to pay the \$5.65 charge for lunch until they get a slot. The other issue is that it could not be a short order process as we do not have the staff or storage space for short order cooking.

The board had discussion. The board asks that a survey be done to see how many citizens would be interested in using this service. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to table this until more research is done. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

23. Manager Garland stated that she received an email from Kevin Leonard at NCACC. Jonathan Shuffield with NACO had contacted her asking if she could attend the PILT Fly In. They liked the presentation she made at the Congressional briefing and the advocacy work she assisted with in the Congressional offices. The Fly In is in September 5-7. She will need to get airfare and hotel booked soon if it is pleasing to the board for her to attend. Congress failed to make the SRS and the PILT a permanent appropriation and NACO is still pushing that agenda. She would love for a commissioner to attend with her as most of the attendees last year were county commissioners. She asked for a volunteer. NCACC also asked her to be a judge for their Innovation Awards. This was an easy task, but more importantly, it points to the fact that we are being noticed in Raleigh and in DC. This will be good for Graham County. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to send Commissioner Orr and Manager Garland to this fly-in. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
24. Manager Garland stated that she looked into the paving of the parking lot around the community building and met with Keith Rogers this morning. He surveyed the entire area and stated that we needed to fix the whole parking area. This would be tar and chip with fog seal. He stated that it would be a poor use of resources (time, effort, and money) to fix one part and not all of it as the whole area is in poor shape. His best estimate is \$27,097.00. Manager Garland stated that the cost to pave the county parking lot on Main Street is \$10,000.00. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to pave both the Community Center and the county parking lot on Main Street. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Manager Garland stated that Director Gavin Colvard got a rough estimate to do the sidewalk in concrete at the Sheriff's office and it is estimated to be \$4500.00 to redo the sidewalks. The board discussed this project and did not want to change the appearance of the building and asks that we get someone to repair the bricks.
26. Manager Garland stated that it is time for the NCACC Goal Setting and she enclosed the call for proposals for goals for the biennium session of the General Assembly. Deadline for submission will be September 21, 2018.
27. Manager Garland stated that the Southwestern Commission has sent invitations to their annual dinner at the Historic Clay County Courthouse in Hayesville on Monday July 30, 2018. Social hour is 5:30 pm and dinner is served at 7 pm. The Executive Director of the ARC will be the guest speaker. It would be good to have a good showing at the dinner since we are hopeful to get the ARC grants this fall. RSVP by July 23. You should have an invitation card in your mail.

28. Manager Garland stated that on Monday July 9, Commissioner Eller and Orr and she met with Greg Smith, the regional forester with the NC Forest Service and Tim Howell, the district forester, regarding the NC Forest Service funding and relationship. We asked that Mr. Smith work with his assistant commissioner regarding the funding formula and the disparity between the general statutes and the NC Administrative Code. Commissioner Eller also asked what would need to occur to get the smoke chaser position restored in the budget. The difference in the budget line item would be about \$11,000-\$12,000. Mr. Smith met with his assistant commissioner and called us back on Friday. The assistant commissioner stated that he will be happy to refer the issue with the legislative and rules disparity to their legal department and request them to go to the General Assembly. He could not promise any changes because he stated that legal may find that it could cause more harm than good to the counties. We asked that the research be done and give a report. Mr. Smith also said that the smoke chaser position was still open and were we willing to return to the 35% funding model for this year while they do the research. They have the position budgeted for a 40% county, but Mr. Smith is willing to move the position back to Graham County with the assistant commissioner's blessing. Commissioner Williams made the motion to give the 35% to the state forest service with us receiving a smoke chaser. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Manager Garland stated that we had a phone outage in Yellow Creek and she got a report from Commissioner Williams that the phones were out and that Frontier had told them that it would be the first of August before the issue was fixed. She began calling and finally got a helpful assistant supervisor with the NC Utilities Commission. This was after I had to enlighten the first person she called that we are not Wake or Mecklenburg county and that the landlines are the only possible means of communication with the outside world and that this was a major public safety issue. The assistant commissioner called me back yesterday morning and stated that her boss had been on the line with Frontier at the executive level and that the issue would be fixed within days. Manager Garland received a report from a resident in yellow creek that phone service was restored yesterday afternoon and she kept the number of the person at the Utilities Commission to call in the event it occurs again.
30. Manager Garland stated that she wanted to clarify some things she said in budget. As you know we get a \$2000 allocation from the NC Veterans Administration each year to be used for the VA office. We have to match the \$2000 with an additional \$2000 in local funding. While Commissioner Orr works tirelessly for the veterans she does so purely on a voluntary basis. The NC Veterans Office has to show a paid employee of the County as the designated officer. They designated Kim Crisp as that officer. In order to show the NC Veterans Administration that we are utilizing the funds, she allocates each year part of Kim's salary and part of the physical plant expense (utilities, etc.) to that funding line item in the budget. During budget workshops, I was under the weather with my autoimmune issues, and misspoke. Manager Garland stated that she allocates part of Commissioner Orr's salary. Commissioner Orr gets no recompense for the work she does for the veterans. Manager Garland apologized to Commissioner Orr and wanted to set the public record straight. The cost of the office administration is taken from the governing body expenditures during the audit process to ensure that we are appropriately accounting for the cost of the veteran's office.
31. Manager Garland gave the board some dates to remember.
- July 19, 2018 – Recreational Stakeholders Meeting at Blue Waters (Becky)
 - July 19, 2018 – GREAT Annual Meeting –Dinner at 5:00; Meeting at 6:00 – Robbinsville High School
 - July 24th SW RPO Meeting 3-4 PM
 - July 31st – 10 AM – EPA Debriefing on grant application – Becky's Office
 - August 7, 2018 – 10AM – Health Care Collaboration Meeting – Duke Life-point
 - August 23-25, 2018 – NCACC Annual Conference – Hickory NC
 - August 28, 2018 – Becky Sinus Procedure – will have to be out 29th too
 - September 5-7, 2018 – PILT Fly In – Washington DC
32. Chairman Eller asks for public comment. No public comment was given.
33. Chairman Eller asks for the discussion items. Manager Garland asks for approval of the releases of \$30,592.80 and the discoveries of \$15,058.29. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the releases and discoveries as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Manager Garland stated that the board had received a request from Jacky Ayers to be removed from the RDA Board. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to appoint Pam Shaffer to fill the

unexpired term of Jacky Ayers on the RDA Board. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

35. Manager Garland stated that the board needed to replace Carla Icenhower and Keith Rogers on the EDC Board. Commissioner Orr asked to table this decision so the EDC could meet. The board all agreed.
36. Manager Garland stated that the board needed to replace Revonda Williams on the T&T Board. Commissioner Williams asks that the board table this decision so the T&T Board could meet. The board all agreed.
37. Chairman Eller asks for new or old business. Commissioner Orr stated that Kevin Corbin was able to get the Graham County Historic Society a \$25,000.00 grant and he will be presenting this on July 30th at 3:00 p.m. at the museum.
38. Commissioner Nelms asks the board's decision on the monuments. The board all agreed to have them placed in front of the courthouse.
39. Chairman Eller asks for a motion 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 Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Chairman Eller asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Commissioner Orr made the motion to pro-rate the taxes on the Old Mother Cemetery that was donated to the county in January. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Commissioner Orr made the motion to contract with Turner and Co. for the extra requirements by the state auditor on our county audit for approximately \$3,000.00 to \$6,000.00. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Commissioner Williams made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Keith Eller, Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Connie Orr, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Dale Wiggins, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board