

## Regular Meeting – March 19, 2019

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. All board was present.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Nelms to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval of the agenda. Manager Garland stated that we needed to remove Item #6 and add Kay Fields, Interim DSS Director to Closed Session for personnel and contracts. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval of the March 5<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Wiggins asks Sophia Paulos, EDC Director to give the EDC Monthly Report. Ms. Paulos stated that she would be attending the Net Inclusion Conference in Charlotte the first week in April. This conference focuses on local, state and federal policies and policy innovations impacting digital equity, sources of financial and programmatic support of digital inclusion programs and digital inclusion best practices from across the country. Ms. Paulos thanked the Rural Center for extending the opportunity to attend this conference with a scholarship from Google Fiber and thanked Commissioner Orr for bringing this conference to her attention.
7. Ms. Paulos stated that last month she requested permission from the board to request an extension on the Department of Commerce Building Re-use Grant for American Timber Group. Ms. Paulos stated that she spoke with NC Department of Commerce and Mr. Jimmy Lee and they recommend that we do not ask for the extension while we are only half way through the project so she will be holding this request to a later date.
8. Ms. Paulos stated that Graham County has been selected for Downtown Strong. Downtown Strong aims to assist local governments by providing economic-development planning and revitalization resources and guidance. The program will operate out of the Commerce's Main Street and Rural Planning Center. Ms. Paulos stated that Robbinsville is one of the (24) communities from across the state that has been chosen as Downtown Strong Communities. Governor Cooper has allocated \$120,000.00 for downtown revitalization and beautification in Robbinsville. A link to the budget will be shared with Clerk Crisp so the board will have access to it. Ms. Paulos asks that everyone voice his or her thanks to Senator Davis and Representative Corbin for supporting this worthy project. Ms. Paulos also thanked the Town of Robbinsville, Mayor Hooper and Alderman Brian Johnson, the Graham County Historical Association, GREAT, the commissioner board and a special thank you to Michelle Shiplet for her extensive efforts toward uniting Main Street efforts across organizations and local governments.
9. Ms. Paulos stated that public lands issues took center stage this past month with the passing of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. This measure is the largest public lands bill approved by Congress in more than a decade and thanked Senator Burr and Senator Tillis for their support and thanked Congressman Patrick McHenry and Congresswoman Virginia Foxx, both of Western North Carolina. The measure combines more than (100) separate bills and creates (2,600) miles of new national trails. It also extends for (7) years the Every Kid Outdoors Act, which allows US Fourth-graders and their families to visit national parks free. It also extends the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conservation Service Corps Act, which governs employment programs for young adults who work on public lands and reauthorizes the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, which expired last fall after Congress could not agree on language to extend it. Ms. Paulos stated that Bow Hunters will now be allowed to bring their weapons through national parks when trying to reach areas where it is legal to hunt and more important it makes all federal lands open to hunting, fishing, and recreational shooting unless otherwise specified.
10. Ms. Paulos stated that she is working with Sheriff Jones and has introduced him to the folks at Hometown Strong and are currently working with Pryor Gibson and Mary Penny Kelley to coordinate a Raleigh visit where they will visit several agencies.

11. Ms. Paulos stated that Michelle Shiplet of the Church Mouse and Main Street could not attend this evening so Ms. Paulos is presenting a letter to the board for possible funding from them. Ms. Paulos stated that Ms. Shiplet has pending grants but are in need of repairs to the VFW building and the construction of the pavilion. Ms. Paulos stated that they are requesting funds to allow for the placement of a new roof on the building to prevent further damage as this building will be one of the two focus areas for the Downtown Strong area. Ms. Paulos stated that the amount to install a new roof would be \$12,939.44. Commissioner Orr asks what the amount that the Town of Robbinsville gave was and Ms. Paulos stated that they were doing an in-kind donation of the lease in exchange for repairs. Ms. Paulos asks if the board wanted to support this request. The board wanted to table this for further discussion.
12. Chairman Wiggins asks Manager Garland to give the finance and manager's report. Manager Garland stated that we ended the month with a \$9,116,969.69 cash balance, which after the 911 monies are added gives us an increase of \$370,979.43 from this time last year. Manager Garland stated that our real tax collections was \$147,390.16 and our prior was \$17,780.53 for a total of \$165,170.68 and our DMV collections was \$36,156.55. Manager Garland stated that our year to date collections are \$6,011,005.53; DMV \$316,873.60 and our tax collection rate is 94.45%.
13. Manager Garland stated that revenues was \$684,548.04 and our expenditures was \$1,128,209.66. Manager Garland stated that our year to date surplus is \$2,606,456.74 and she was very pleased to see this number.
14. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax collections was \$199,621.42 and we are ahead from this time last year.
15. Manager Garland stated that our year to date back tax collections was \$671,163.27.
16. Manager Garland stated that our budget is going good, our ideal percentage is 34%, and we are standing at 42%.
17. Manager Garland stated that she has two budget amendments that need to be voted on. Budget Amendment #4: Recognize additional allocations for crisis and LIEAP funding for \$33,819.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #4 as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Budget Amendment #5: Recognize additional billing fees due to higher than anticipated revenues. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #5. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
18. Manager Garland stated that the Graham County Festivals is requesting \$10,000.00 for the county festivals. Commissioner Orr made the motion to allow for the allocation as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
19. Manager Garland stated that the Special Olympics was requesting their allocation of \$5,000.0 for their upcoming event in Cherokee County. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the allocation as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Manager Garland stated that the recreation department has received a donation for \$500.00 with the request that the money be restricted to the youth fund. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the donations and restrict the funds. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
21. Manager Garland stated that she would now go to the manager's report. Manager Garland stated that she has drafted a resolution to send to our federal and state legislative representatives as well as the NCACC and NACO and our neighbors in the Western (7) counties requesting a new floodplain study based upon actual data and not on formulas and that the funding be appropriated to complete the studies. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve the resolution as written. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
22. Manager Garland stated that EM Director Larry Hembree is here to speak with the board about the tower at Wachacha Bald and the possibility of AT&T placing equipment at the site and issues brought up by the USFS. Mr. Hembree stated that the Forest Service would require that we remove the tower standing now instead of allowing us to have two towers. Mr. Hembree stated that the cost to move our stuff from the old tower to the new tower would be \$33,177.11, we would have to sign a road maintenance agreement to better, and more consistently maintain the access road. Mr. Hembree stated that the road is very rough at this time. Mr. Hembree stated that we would also have to use the Best Management Practices as recommended by the US Fish and Wildlife who would need to sign off on the NEPA analysis concerning nesting birds and a Cost Recovery agreement would need to be put in place. Mr. Hembree did ask if lighting could be installed on the tower and they said no. Commissioner Cody asks how high the new

tower would be. Mr. Hembree stated that it would be 160 feet and AT&T would require using the top 25 feet. Commissioner Cody asks if the forest service would be on this tower and Mr. Hembree stated that they have requested to be. Chairman Wiggins stated that we needed to see the road maintenance agreement because that concerns him. Mr. Hembree stated that the original agreement for the current tower expires in 2025. Chairman Wiggins asks what the road agreement states now. Mr. Hembree stated that there is not one in writing. Commissioner Eller suggested that we wait until 2025. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to table this for further discussion. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

23. The board all agreed that we needed to get someone here from Georgia to test the tower and see what is wrong with our outgoing feed because the radios do not work as they used to. The board all agreed that they wanted this checked out.
24. Manager Garland stated that the public comment period ended March 15 on Corridor K and she attached some feedback on emails from the environmental stakeholders group. The results are unsurprising; supporting upgrades of existing routes and a two-lane configuration and moving away from anything that further fragmentation of public lands. Manager Garland stated that she is also aware of a petition in opposition of a four lane and any crossing at Jutt's Creek and Tatham Gap. Manager Garland stated that she received a forty one-page response to the DOT and Stantec from the stakeholders. Manager Garland also stated that she received a public records request for every email and anything she had on file about the issue from someone in Florida from 2014 forward and she is working on this request now.
25. Manager Garland stated that we had our Census presentation and asks that the board name persons that they want on the Complete Count Committee. The board stated that they would come up with names for the committee.
26. Manager Garland stated that our NCACC dues are increasing to \$1446.00, which is still an excellent investment. Manager Garland stated that our participation and their assistance with the debt setoff program and the EMS cost report program has yielded over \$1.1 million in revenue to the county over a ten year period and that is not a bad return.
27. Manager Garland stated that ARC issued its funding priorities for the coming fiscal year and they are moving away from healthcare and moving towards infrastructure and economic development in the effort of job creation.
28. Manager Garland stated that she and Commissioner Orr would be traveling to Raleigh next Monday for Rural Day on Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Orr stated that she was asked to come to Raleigh last week for a meeting that was cancelled but turned out to be the best day in Raleigh ever. Commissioner Orr stated that she spoke with (8) legislators on our broadband issues and it was very well received. Commissioner Orr used our healthcare as examples on people that may have a heart attack and one of the legislators that she spoke with had a heart attack and listened to her. Commissioner Orr stated that she would like Manager Garland to attend the COG meeting as well with her while they are in Raleigh and the board all agreed.
29. Manager Garland stated that the jail inspection report was attached to the board's packets and there were no exceptions.
30. Manager Garland stated that a community group to use the pool an hour before opening time for water aerobics approached Commissioner Orr and they would not need a lifeguard. Commissioner Eller stated that we needed to talk to the Recreation Director Ronnie Williams first.
31. Manager Garland stated that we have been asked to assist in a grant-writing venture with the National Institute of Health related to addiction recovery. Health Director Beth Booth and Manager Garland has assisted Mike Teem and Christy Sluder, an addiction recovery counselor in the grant process to provide support in getting access to the NIH and provide data. Manager Garland asks Christy Sluder to speak. Ms. Sluder thanked the board for their time and stated that the grant will be around \$375,000.00 with no required match. Ms. Sluder stated that Celebrate Recovery is working hard to create transition housing and support workforce development and if the grant is obtained, there is a better chance to have better success in creating support for addiction recovery. Ms. Sluder stated that the North Carolina drug overdose mortality rate is 22 per year compared to the US Drug Overdose Mortality Rate of 22.5. Ms. Sluder stated that Graham County has had (12) total deaths from drug overdose in our population of 8,651. Ms. Sluder stated that we have major needs here and her own brother died of an overdose. Ms. Sluder stated that Mike Teem and Michelle Shiplet are doing great work in our county and we do need to provide an environment for people to go to recover. Ms. Sluder stated that she has also been working with Health Director Beth Booth because Graham County

is in the top five counties at risk for HEP C and HIV and we need intervention for drug users. Ms. Sluder stated that 19% of Graham County is in poverty, this is very sad, and where you have poverty you have depression and with the proposed grant we can help provide employment opportunities, live coaches and parent education. Manager Garland stated that Ms. Sluder is asking the board for a letter of support to use to apply for the grant because if the grant is awarded then the money will flow through Graham County. Ms. Sluder stated that we need to provide support here in Graham County because at the current time support is given in other counties and the addicts are staying in that county and leaving this county. Commissioner Orr stated that we are in a unique situation, the EDC board is working to help with workforce opportunities, and we need to see a future with our people in it. The board all agreed to give the letter of support.

32. Manager Garland stated that the State Archives has issued new guidance for public records dispositions and retention schedules for public documents and electronic records and we need to update our schedule to match the state standards so that we can ensure compliance. Manager Garland stated that she needed the board to approve the 2019 State General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule agreement so that we can begin to be more systematic in our handling of dispositions based on the retention schedules. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the new 2019 State General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Manager Garland stated that she attached the report from our consultant following our budget and strategic planning retreat and stated that it was a success.
34. Manager Garland stated that the Occupancy Tax increase passed the House and she contacted Senator Davis and he assured her of his support. Commissioner Orr stated that she spoke with him as well.
35. Manager Garland gave the board dates to remember of upcoming meetings and events.
36. Chairman Wiggins asks for public comment. Sophia Paulos was signed in for public comment. Ms. Paulos stated that she has not talked a lot about the public meeting on Corridor K and she heard many comments from citizens and our constituents on extending the road through Forest Service land because there is not enough private lands. As a private citizen who is also an Economic Development Director she wanted the board to consider the impacts to the economy and that it would be impossible to build economic and residential through the forest service lands. Ms. Paulos stated that it puts pains in her chest on all the economic opportunities that would be lost if we use forest service lands. Commissioner Eller stated that we could not get factories to come to our county because we do not have a road for access. Ms. Paulos stated that she could not argue with that. Ms. Paulos stated that we do not have enough land but we need places to develop small businesses.
37. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board would now go to the discussion items. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval of the Releases for \$12.87 and Discoveries for \$14.04. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the releases and discoveries. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board needed to approve of the poll for the generator at Wachacha Bald for \$5540.00 and the vote was unanimous. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the poll. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
39. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board needed to adjust the Board of E&R Schedule to exclude April 16<sup>th</sup> due to the tax office being in school. Commissioner Eller made the motion to exclude April 16<sup>th</sup> from the Board of E&R Schedule. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Chairman Wiggins stated that we needed to name a 2020 Census Complete Count Committee. Commissioner Eller made the motion to table this until the next meeting. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board would now 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 Eller made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Commissioner Cody made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to extend FMLA for three months to Alisa Eller. Commissioner Orr made the motion to grant the extension. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

44. Chairman Wiggins stated that we needed to award the Shielding Design (CT and Mammography) to Landauer Medical Physics for a physicist for \$1805.00 with a (3) day rush. Commissioner Orr made the motion to award the Shielding Design to Landauer Medical Physics. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
45. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to accept the proposal to provide electrical engineering services for the (CT and Mammography) project to Chris Lay for \$4700.00 and include site visits if needed for \$365.00 per visit. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the proposal for Chris Lay for \$4700.00 and include site visits if needed for \$365.00. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
46. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to terminate the contract with Vanguard for Helen Murrell effective this date. Commissioner Orr made the motion to terminate the contract with Vanguard for Helen Murrell. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
47. Manager Garland stated that there is a meeting May 10<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at the school central office concerning a collaboration between the court system (judges, counselors) and the school system to get direction on gaps in services and begin discussions moving forward and they would love to have a commissioner to attend. Manager Garland stated that this is requested by the JCPC. Commissioner Orr stated that she would volunteer to go to this meeting and she is very pleased that our Health Director Beth Booth is taking an active stand.
48. Commissioner Orr stated that Ms. Booth attended the EDC meeting and had discussion on the ARC funds helping with the opioid issue and learned where we can apply for money to assist people to get back to work who are coming back from the addiction. Commissioner Orr stated that we have help wanted signs throughout Graham, Cherokee and Clay counties and we need to get people to work.
49. Commissioner Eller stated that he is not against the needle exchange program if it is used in the right way and that is a needle for a needle. Commissioner Eller stated that if you do not do a real exchange then more needles would be laying around for people to be stuck with. The board all agreed that most drug users are ashamed of the condition that they are in. The board stated that Buncombe County has the program in place and the reporting is that the number of needles laying around has increased. Commissioner Eller stated that we put up boxes for the disposition of the needles and they just tear those down.
50. Chairman Wiggins asks for further comment. No further comment was given.
51. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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Dale Wiggins, Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

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Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

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Keith Eller, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

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Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

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Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board