

Budget Meeting – May 3, 2019

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Friday, May 3, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. for a scheduled budget meeting in the Graham County Community building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville NC. All board was present.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the budget meeting to order.
2. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to move the meeting to the Transit Facility. Commissioner Orr made the motion to recess the meeting and move to the Transit Facility on Fort Hill. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting back to order at the Transit Facility.
4. Chairman Wiggins asks Manager Garland to begin the budget review. Manager Garland stated that our revenue neutral tax rate is 59.49 cents on the mil and our current tax rate at present is 58.5 cents on the mil. Manager Garland stated that we have .5% loss in our tax base. Manager Garland stated that the total appraised value including utilities is \$1,074,238,728 with possible minor adjustments with the Board of E&R findings and the finalization of the business property tax entry. Manager Garland stated that if we stay at 58.5 cents on the mil, it is a loss of \$103,377 in the budget. Manager Garland stated that one cent on the mil produces \$103,823 in revenue at revenue neutral.
5. Manager Garland stated that we are facing budget challenges that include shrinking revenue streams, increase in retirement contribution requirements, and large increases to budget requests in public safety and human services, large needs for capital maintenance and repairs. Manager Garland stated that the board did commit money over the next five years to fund deferred maintenance and projects. Those needs are planning for a new courthouse, Urgent Care Mammography and CT, deferred maintenance at sanitation, renovation costs for election board and final planning for administration.
6. Manager Garland stated that the retirement rate went up an average of 15%, which translates, into \$75,000 in additional unfunded mandates by state to the county.
7. Manager Garland stated that our public building repairs have amounted to \$214,000.00 and these repairs need to be prioritized. Manager Garland stated that our own labor force would do as much as possible.
8. Manager Garland stated that we need a project manager for the courthouse project and the CDBG grant.
9. The board discussed the sanitation department heavily with thoughts of privatization and compactors. The board all discussed the closing of sites and leaving one open and available to the public. The board discussed the expense of the equipment that will be forthcoming. Manager Garland stated that we are not doing trash efficiently and we needed to be fair across the board. The board all agreed to have equitability for our taxpayers.
10. The board discussed putting out RFQ's on privatizing the garbage services. Chairman Wiggins asks who will be responsible for paying the contractor. Commissioner Nelms stated to close all sites and put compactors on the only site, which would be more cost effective. The board discussed leaving Snowbird, East Buffalo and Sawyer Creek with compactors. The board wanted a lot of publicity and discussion from the public and we need to re-vamp the sanitation ordinance.
11. The board discussed the revenue neutral rate, which will be .59.49 cents with the upcoming budget. The impacts of not going with revenue neutral rate will be in our low wealth funding to the schools which would go down from \$90,000.00 to \$25,000.00. Manager Garland stated that we needed our fair share of the money when it comes to the ADM monies. Commissioner Cody stated that if we leave the tax rate the same then the county will lose \$103,000.00. Manager Garland stated that the average mil rate is .66.2 cents and we are at 87% of the state pier. Manager Garland stated that we are taxing below the state average. Manager Garland stated that the county is facing challenges with the upcoming capital projects as mandated by a Judge for new justice/jail facilities. Manager Garland stated that our revenue shortfall of \$581,891.00 does not help the situation. Manager Garland stated that we are receiving less money for our dams and we have three in our county. Manager Garland stated that we are losing the 5310 Grant next year and upgrades to our phone system will be \$108,500.00. Manager Garland stated that our EMS Fees have gone down \$40,000.00; the health grant of \$80,000.00 has gone away and our retirement has increased by \$80,000.00.

12. Manager Garland stated that we needed to hire a project manager for our courthouse and our CDBG Grant. Commissioner Eller stated that these projects needed to be done right. Manager Garland stated that she could put a project manager to work today. Manager Garland stated that we have several renovation projects scheduled. Commissioner Orr made the motion to hire a project manager to oversee the new construction, the renovations and the CDBG homes with a rate of pay ranging from \$60,000.00 to \$75,000.00 and to add this position with salary to the Graham County Salary Pay Plan. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
13. Manager Garland stated that we would doing pool repairs to the tune of \$100,000.00 and hopes that we will be able to put this project off until the next fiscal year. Manager Garland stated that we needed septic repairs at the Stanley Ball field, Concrete work at the Community Building and the renovations for the Election Board are forthcoming as well. Manager Garland stated that we will be re-doing the tile in the EMS Base and we needed to outfit the Sheriff's office with cubicles. The board asks that we install temporary cubicles in the event we repurpose this building when the new justice center is completed. The board all agreed to put off the pool repairs. The board agreed to pull out the bids on the concrete work at the community building for the exact cost. The board also discussed the mapping office and the tax office. The board discussed the needs at the dental clinic and the cemetery is in need of a building to store their equipment. The board wanted prices for a 30x50 or a 40x40 building and move the cemetery staff to our sanitation property. The board discussed the needs of DSS for computers that configure to NCFAST. The board discussed the jail and the sheriff's department.
14. The board was informed of the request for ex-employee Carpenter to be paid for time that she worked in January. The board asks why this was not taken care of in January. The board wanted the times checked to make sure the hours were correct. The board discussed the sheriff department request for more staff and for card swipes to be placed on the doors at the jail.
15. The board discussed bulletproof vests for the sheriff's department and wanted grants sought and if they were not available then the county would purchase them through contingency.
16. Manager Garland stated the need to cancel the budget meeting for May 10th due to the administration staff traveling to Asheville for continuing education.
17. Chairman Wiggins asks for further discussions. No further discussion at this time.
18. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Dale Wiggins, Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

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

Keith Eller, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board