

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, May 21, 2019 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 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 changes and approval of the agenda. Manager Garland stated that we need to add Beth Booth for recommendation on the EDC Board; add the Stecoah Valley Lease and add Juanita Colvard to closed session for contracts. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval of the minutes for May 7th Regular Meeting and May 3rd Budget Meeting. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Wiggins asks Lorita Eller to speak on the Community Fatality Prevention Team Member Appointments. Ms. Eller stated that Graham County needed to reappoint or appoint the following members of the team. Ms. Eller stated that the following persons are willing to serve on the team. Jerry Crisp with the Local Law Enforcement; Larry Hembree, EMS Director and Crystal Buchanan, Mother of a deceased child. Ms. Eller stated that the board had the option to appoint (5) more members. Ms. Eller stated that Shawn Turpin, RN will serve as the chair and Ms. Eller will serve as the Record Review Coordinator. Ms. Eller stated that the team meets quarterly but if a death occurs, they will meet more often. Ms. Eller stated that the team receives education on topics to ensure child safety and one huge issue on educating people on leaving children in a hot car. Ms. Eller stated that the team in the past had poor attendance and hopes this board will be an active team. Commissioner Orr made the motion to appoint the team as stated by Ms. Lorita Eller, RN Supervisor. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Chairman Wiggins asks Sophia Paulos to give the EDC Monthly Report. Ms. Paulos stated that this month we learned of the closing of the Oak Valley / American Timber Group Facility here in Robbinsville. Mr. Jimmy Lee deeply regrets having to close down and is working with the county, regional and state partners to ensure that the building is taken over by a new company as soon as possible. Ms. Paulos gave thanks to NC Works, Monica Holley for her swift action in getting the workers affected the resources they need and helping them to get back to work as soon as possible. Ms. Paulos stated that the details of the closing and plans to market the building were discussed in a meeting on Friday. Ms. Paulos stated that with the closure our unemployment rate as gone from 13% to 6.3% and that is encouraging. Ms. Paulos stated that new and up to date marketing materials have been developed to market the site and gain interests from manufacturers and industries from across the county and thanked Charlton Buchanan and Shaun Garrison for their help.
8. Ms. Paulos stated that the Mountain West Partnership was granted \$5,000.00 to support the attendance of one of their members at the summer Outdoor Retailer Shows in Denver June 17th through June 21st. Ms. Paulos stated that they have asked her to attend at no cost to the county and asks permission to attend. Chairman Wiggins stated that yes she can go.
9. Ms. Paulos stated that she attended the National Net Inclusion Conference in Charlotte and thanked Commissioner Orr for encouraging her attendance at the event. Ms. Paulos stated that the NC Rural Center secured a full scholarship for her to attend from Google Fiber and two important potential resources for our citizens was gained. PCs for People and TechBoomers. PCs for People is a nonprofit centered on getting low-cost computers and affordable broadband internet into the homes of low-income individuals. Ms. Paulos stated that through an unwavering commitment to the communities they serve, they have distributed over 80,000 computers, subscribed thousands of families to low-cost internet and recycled millions of pounds of electronics. Ms. Paulos stated that a potential recipient must be below the 200% poverty level or be currently enrolled in an income-based government assistance program. Examples of income-based government assistance include EBT or SNAP benefits, free or reduced lunch, as well as Medicaid and many others. Ms. Paulos also stated that they work to get

needed technology into the hands of registered non-profits like GREAT and The Church Mouse. Ms. Paulos stated that TechBoomers is a free educational website that teaches older adults and other inexperienced Internet users with basic computer skills about websites that can help improve their quality of life. Ms. Paulos stated that TechBoomers provide three main services: 1) Introduction to trusted websites and Internet based applications like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat; 2) provides free video and article tutorials in a language suited to those who may not be the most tech savvy; and 3) keeps its users informed of important news and information about their favorite sites and apps via on-site alerts and periodic email newsletters. Ms. Paulos stated that she shared this information with Mary Griffin, our local librarian and she will be sharing the program with the new Director of the Nantahala Library to find the best way to promote and facilitate this free resource in Graham County.

10. Ms. Paulos stated that Graham County was not included in the \$10 million dollar Broadband Grant for the State. Ms. Paulos stated that NC is one of only seven states in the union that does not allow local governments to own/operate high-speed internet infrastructure and are not allowed to apply for funding. Ms. Paulos stated that this is the reason that our non-profits apply for these type grants. Ms. Paulos stated that in the past Frontier had received funding in Graham County and they reported that over 750 homes have been upgraded to 10/1 service across the county and because we received these CAF funds it disqualified us for the GREAT grant funding. Ms. Paulos provided a link to their publication.
https://data.usac.org/publicreports/caf-map/?mc_cid=41free496&mc_eid=19b28c5681. Ms. Paulos stated that only internet service providers can apply for GREAT funds from the state and when you look at the map so many areas in Graham County are disqualified. Ms. Paulos stated that awards were granted to Cherokee, Swain, Macon and Clay (all counties that were moved to Tier 2 only months after the grant was released) but because at the time of the application period these counties qualified because they were previously in as Tier 1 counties. Ms. Paulos stated that she is working with Keith Conover and the NC Broadband Infrastructure Office to navigate a way to address this discrepancy.
11. Ms. Paulos stated that progress is being made on the revitalization of Main Street. Ms. Paulos stated that Liz Parham from the NC Department of Commerce was able to secure \$7,000.00 in funding for \$11,000.00 worth of exterior renovations on Main Street. Ms. Paulos stated that this project is set to build pride in Main Street by highlighting the glory of the past and the promise of the future. The grant will support architect fees and the revitalization of four non-profit or government owned buildings on Main Street. The building fronts of the VFW Building, the Old Town Hall, the Old Phillips Grocery and Church Mouse will share in \$8,000.00 work of renovations that everyone traveling on Main Street will be able to see and enjoy.
12. Ms. Paulos stated that the Graham County Historical Association has made the kind of progress that many in the beginning did not believe was possible. Last October, Ms. Paulos asked the board permission to move forward on a grant application for \$14,500.00 in OPT-IN funding from the Southwestern Commission. Ms. Paulos stated that this grant has been awarded as well as the \$25,000.000 appropriation secured by Representative Kevin Corbin. Ms. Paulos stated that last year the board appropriated \$10,000.00 in funding for the historical association and they are asking that the board release \$5,800.00 of those funds for expenditures for the sustainability study and asks the board to grant this request. Commissioner Orr made the motion to release the \$5,800.00 to the historical association. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Ms. Paulos stated that the historical association would request the remaining \$4,200.00 funds before the end of this fiscal year.
13. Ms. Paulos stated that she received word from Olivia Collier that our pre-application for the Recovery to Work: Resilience, Engagement Growth Project has met the initial eligibility requirements for up to \$100, 00.00 in ARC funding and we have been invited to submit a full application by July 31st.
14. Chairman Wiggins stated that during this Broadband research, we found that Graham County has fiber that has never been lit up and we will be exploring ways to do that, which could possibly open up quicker internet service to the Stanly Plant. Ms. Paulos stated that she would speak to Keith Conover about this finding. Commissioner Orr stated that we need to ask Balsam West why we are not hooked up. Chairman Wiggins stated that there are (12) strands that have never been used.
15. Chairman Wiggins asks Manager Garland to give the Finance and Managers Report. Ms. Garland stated that we ended the month with a \$9,008,981.34 cash balance and we are ahead \$587,246.46 from this time last year. Ms. Garland stated that we have collected \$61,131.83 in

property taxes and \$43,796.33 in DMV for the month. Ms. Garland stated that our year to date collections are \$6,187,926.78 for personal and real and \$397,256.49 for DMV. Ms. Garland stated that we are owed \$136,933.09 from the 911 Board. Commissioner Orr asks if we are going to have a grand opening for our new 911 Center. Manager Garland stated that she would get with Misty to set a date. Manager Garland stated that tax rate at this time is 93.13% which is a little below this time last year but our levy was higher. Manager Garland stated that our revenues was \$1,054,940.93 and our expenditures was \$1,089,713.34 giving us a deficit of \$34,772.41 for the month. Manager Garland stated that our year to date revenues are \$13,069,200.698 and our expenditures are \$11,478,476.11 for a year to date surplus of \$1,590,724.57. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax for the month was \$152,691.60 and we are up by \$45,520.73.

16. Manager Garland stated that our ideal budget should be at 17% and we are holding at 28% and commended the department heads.
17. Manager Garland stated that she did have Budget Amendments 8, 9, and 10 for board approval.
 - a. Budget Amendment #8 – Amend to recognize additional JCPC discretionary funds for the administrative services for \$400.00
 - b. Budget Amendment #9 – Amend to recognize SRS Funding received on April 2019 for \$175,241.00
 - c. Budget Amendment #10 – Amend to recognize grant expenditures for replacement of HVAC system at Wachacha Bald, Red Alert System, and camera replacements at EMS, additional EMS cost report revenues and repairs to garbage trucks for \$60,000.00.Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve Budget Amendments 8, 9, 10. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
18. Chairman Wiggins asks about the new proposed AT&T antennae that they want to build at Wachacha Bald. Manager Garland stated that this is still being discussed but the Forest Service wants us to sign a road maintenance agreement. The board had discussion on the maintenance of this road and did not feel that we should have to keep the road up.
19. Manager Garland presented the Manager's Report. Manager Garland stated that the Occupancy tax is still sitting in the Rules Committee and Senator Davis has given written evidence of his support. Manager Garland stated that she could send a letter asking support from Senator Hise if the board wishes. The board agreed to the letter and Commissioner Orr will get with Beverly Elliott on sending a letter of support as well. Beth Fields, Director of Stecoah Valley Center stated that she would be glad to write a letter as well.
20. Manager Garland stated that we have some new legislation encouraging plastics recycling and if we do not participate this could affect our solid waste tax reversion funds.
21. Manager Garland stated that the House passed a Local Option Sales Tax Flexibility last week with the option to increase the $\frac{1}{4}$ cent to a $\frac{1}{2}$ percent local option under Article 46.
22. Manager Garland stated that there are now requirements for finance officer in local government. NCGS 159-25 requires a local entity to contract with an outside entity to perform the duties of a finance officer if the government has a unit letter of an internal control finding and where there is a significant deficiency in internal controls. In addition, it gives the Local Government Commission the authority to require minimum standards for finance officers for education and qualification. This will allow small entities to contract out the duties of finance officers in keeping books and allow small entities to contract out the duties of finance officers in keeping books and records to CPA's while requiring a local finance officer to handle all other duties. This was designed to help units in smaller areas who cannot recruit qualified finance officers.
23. Manager Garland stated that the probation office has requested more space. Manager Garland stated that the State would be adding officers because the General Assembly passed a bill where they will be releasing more prisoners quickly and there will be a need to increase capacity of probation officers in the counties. Manager Garland stated that they are asking to occupy the building that we just vacated but with the reasons of why we vacated he stated that he might have to go to Swain County. Manager Garland stated that the HVAC system is out in this building and it is unsafe and unhealthy. The board did not want them to occupy that building due to the dangers.
24. Manager Garland stated that the Homeland Security representative came last week and he will provide a detailed report by mid-June of his recommendations.

25. Manager Garland stated that she has the contract with Withers Ravenel for our CDBG project grant administration for \$75,000.00 and asks if she will be the authorized official to sign the documents. The board agreed that Manager Garland could sign as the authorized official.
26. Manager Garland stated that she has the grant agreement related to the \$8,000.00 grant from Commerce where we will act as the fiscal agent and administrator for the Town of Robbinsville for the Main Street façade project. Manager Garland stated that she has written confirmation signed by Aldermen Debbie Beasley and Brian Johnson and the finance officer that any monies beyond the grant amount have been budgeted by the Town in their 2019-2020 budget. Manager Garland stated that she would need the board chair to sign the grant after the Board ratifies the board poll conducted this past Thursday.
27. Manager Garland stated that she has drafted a job description for a project manager and asks the board to review and advise if changes need to be made. Manager Garland stated that she needed to advertise as soon as possible.
28. Manager Garland stated that NCWORKS now has a career advisor located at the Shope Building at TCCC campus the second and fourth Wednesday of each month from 9am to 4pm.
29. Manager Garland stated that she attached some material from the Corridor K project on public comment responses.
30. Attorney Coward stated that he was notified on the No Wake Zone at Lake Santeetlah on how to get the process rolling and contacted a woman in Raleigh and she will send a Wildlife Officer to look at the area. Attorney Coward stated that the county has to contact them first, and then an officer will look at the area. Commissioner Eller stated that he did not think that the board wanted to fool with this issue. Attorney Coward stated that this is not a county commissioner decision it will be up to the Wildlife Officer for the decision.
31. Manager Garland reminded the board of the budget meetings to be held at Transit.
32. Manager Garland stated that the county with the exception of the essential services would be off Monday, May 27th for Memorial Day Holiday.
33. Chairman Wiggins asks for public comment. No public comment was given.
34. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board would now go to the discussion items. Manager Garland asks that the bids for renovations at 21 South Main Street be discussed in closed session. Chairman Wiggins stated that we would move this item to closed session.
35. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to renew the Stecoah Valley Center lease for 25 years or until 2024. Chairman Wiggins stated that the center's current lease is good for one more year. Commissioner Cody made the motion to renew the Stecoah Valley Center lease for 25 years at \$1.00 per year. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Chairman Wiggins stated that Commissioner Connie Orr has been asked to serve on the Care 4 NC Board. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to appoint Commissioner Orr to serve on the Care 4 NC board. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Chairman Wiggins stated that an Outdoor Recreation meeting will be held June 19th at Cullowhee NC and encourages the board to attend.
38. Chairman Wiggins asks for the appointment of Beth Booth to serve on the EDC Board. Commissioner Orr made the motion to appoint Beth Booth to the EDC Board. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
39. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11A (1) (3) (5) (6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney client privilege, personnel and contracts. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to approve of (5) days of leave without pay for Connie Fowler. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the request. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to send Manager Garland as the authorized official to the mediation on Jerry Crisp who has sued the county. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page attached!
Signature page for Regular Meeting May 21, 2019

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