

Regular Meeting – September 17, 2019

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, September 17, 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 Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Wiggins asks for changes or additions to the agenda. Manager Garland asks that Item 15A be added for Sheriff Jones and amend Item 20 to include Misty Hembree, 911 Director for personnel. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to approve the September 3, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to close the regular meeting and open the public hearing for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 CT Grant Section 5311 and the ADTAP Funding. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Chairman Wiggins asks Juanita Colvard, Transit Director to speak. Director Colvard gave the Board of Conflict of Interest Statement to sign and asks that they turn them over to Clerk Crisp. Director Colvard stated that she would like permission to apply for the Transit CT 5311 Administration Grant for \$116,056.00 with a local match of \$17,408.00. Director Colvard stated that the grant had been cut from last year's amount of \$154,072.00 with more decreases of \$10,000.00 every year until the amount is \$89,000.00. Director Colvard stated that the state wants to regionalize and this will be very hard on rural areas where the distance between agencies cannot accommodate. Director Colvard stated that she currently works with our neighboring agencies in transports but in our area, regionalization will not work.
8. Director Colvard stated that she would like to replace (5) vehicles in 2021 for a cost of \$381,056.00 with a local match of \$43,908.00.
9. Director Colvard asks for public comment. No public comment.
10. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to close the public hearing and reopen the regular meeting. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
11. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval to apply for the CT Grant Section 5311 and ADTAP Funding. Commissioner Cody made the motion to apply for the Grant and Funding as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
12. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to close the regular meeting and open the public hearing for the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Senior Center 5310 Grant. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
13. Chairman Wiggins asks Wanda Hill, Senior Center Director to speak. Director Hill stated that she was here to ask permission to apply for the Senior Center 5310 Grant which assists people 65 years or older or permanently disabled for \$94,686.00 with a local match of \$9,470.00.
14. Director Hill asks for public comment. No public comment.
15. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to close the public hearing and reopen the regular meeting. Commissioner Cody made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
16. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to allow Director Hill to apply for the Senior Center 5310 Grant. Commissioner Eller made the motion as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
17. Chairman Wiggins asks Sheriff Jones to speak. Sheriff Jones asks Chief Deputy Chuck Stewart to speak first. Deputy Stewart stated that he has two items for discussion. One is the Impound Lot located at the Sheriff's Office. Deputy Stewart stated that the department has parking issues and the lot is not secure due to a window that is located in the building adjoining the fence. Deputy Stewart stated that they received quotes to build the pad and relocate the Impound Lot behind the Sheriff's Office. Deputy Stewart stated that the quote from Adams Contracting to build the pad, install dirt, relocate the Conex boxes, put 4" gravel, cut the curb stops, dig out the stumps and seed the property upon completion is \$28,000.00. Commissioner Nelms asks if they will move the fence. Deputy Stewart stated that Asheville

Fence would need to relocate the fence and would need to replace the posts for \$7,944.00 for a total of \$35,944.00. Deputy Stewart stated that they do have security issues and they do have evidence in the lot that needed to be secure. Chairman Wiggins asks Manager Garland if we have the funds to do this project. Manager Garland asks that the board allow her to go over the budget. The board agreed to table this decision to the October 1, 2019 Regular Meeting.

18. Sheriff Jones stated that Brandon Lovin approached him with information on an excellent Attorney David A. Wijewickrama who works with Sheriff's Offices and Mr. Lovin would pay for his services for six months. Sheriff Jones stated that he could assist Attorney Coward. Sheriff Jones stated that a check has already been written for his services but would like the board's approval. Chairman Wiggins stated that when we are able to obtain free legal counsel that is a win for us. Attorney Coward stated that Attorney Wijewickrama did great work. Sheriff Jones stated that Attorney Wijewickrama would assist him in writing new policies that were needed for the department. Commissioner Orr made a motion to accept the gift from Brandon Lovin for Attorney Wijewickrama's services to the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
19. Sheriff Jones asks about the keycard access to the jail. Sheriff Jones stated that three doors had been left out of the original quote. Sheriff Jones stated that they were warned to get this fixed by the inspector and Clerk of Court Tammy Holloway was willing to pay for half of the cost from her facility fund. Sheriff Jones stated that the cost was around \$10,000.00 after the three doors were added. Manager Garland stated that the total was \$9,785.00. Commissioner Cody made the motion to purchase and install the keycard access to the doors at the jail. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Chairman Wiggins asks Sophia Paulos, EDC Director to give her monthly report. Director Paulos stated that Senator Davis has announced that he will be retiring from the NC Senate and Representative Kevin Corbin would run for this seat with Senator Davis support. Representative Corbin has done a lot for Graham County during his time in the House of Representatives and we look forward to his winning the race for Senator to continue to work hard for Western North Carolina.
21. Director Paulos stated that the quest for broadband has become a state level action item and thanked Commissioner Orr for leading her to attend the Net Inclusion Conference in Charlotte. Director Paulos met representatives from MLab, a third part internet speed and data measuring firm and have partnered with them to take on the FCC's perception of broadband access in rural areas. Director Paulos stated that in the coming months, a new speed test campaign in Graham County will be launched to demonstrate that we along with many other counties have not been delivered what Frontier promised, to secure funding to expand broadband in the county and to be a part of a statewide effort to close the gap on broadband once and for all. Director Paulos stated that she would be working with ECC Technologies to map out the vertical assets in the county and begin designing potential projects to deploy high-speed wireless to our citizens.
22. Director Paulos stated that this past month she joined several Nantahala Pisgah Forest Partnership members in addressing the National Trail Board in Asheville. This board is a division of the USFS responsible for implementing the National Trails Stewardship Act. Debbie Caffin, trails leader for the Southeastern US, arranged the meeting of representatives from across the US to hear about the forest partnerships work to create a better, more profitable, USFS. Ms. Caffin was very impressed with Graham County's work with the partnership and our efforts particularly as they pertain to the Community Engagement requirement of the National Trails Stewardship Act. Ms. Caffin has requested to meet next month to focus specifically on Graham County and is looking forward to following up with this board on this in the coming months. Director Paulos stated that the final draft of the USFS Forest Management Plan is expected to be released in October and she will keep the board up to date as it develops. Director Paulos stated that the administration is seeking to slash the USFS budget by approximately 10% over last year leading to the loss of nearly 3,000 USFS jobs nationwide. Director Paulos urges everyone to encourage our federal elected officials and their representatives to reconsider this proposal and restore the USFS budget to operational levels.
23. Director Paulos stated that Scott Hamilton would be stepping down as Director of ARC's DC Office to become the new Director of Golden LEAF. Director Paulos stated that we are very happy to know that our longtime friend of Graham County will now be at the helm of Golden LEAF.

24. Director Paulos stated that Chairman Wiggins and Manager Garland had the opportunity to share Graham County's story and the importance of ARC in our growth with the national board of directors for ARC. Chairman Wiggins and Manager Garland did an excellent job and we are anticipating a final decision on the Community Paramedicine Grant and the Mammography Grant in the coming months. Director Paulos stated that we will also be submitting the final application for the Recovery to Work Grant at the end of this month and have built a lot of support for this program. Director Paulos stated that she is anticipating that it will be funded and that this project will complement the immense amount of work our community is doing to lift up those with substance abuse disorder. Director Paulos stated that she did meet with Jay Kennedy, the Program Officer for Health Care at the Duke Endowment to take the final steps toward approval for a \$241,750.00 grant from the Duke Endowment to stand up our Community Paramedicine Program and continue to give our citizens better access to good health care.
25. Chairman Wiggins asks for the finance and manager's report. Manager Garland stated that we ended the month with a \$7,872,592.48 cash balance, which is up \$161,817.73 from this time last year. Manager Garland stated that our current year tax collections is \$416,345.40, our prior year is \$25, 1882.00 and our DMV collections is \$50,089.43. Manager Garland stated that our year to date tax collection is \$1,185,575.18 and our DMV is \$94,720.18. Manager Garland stated that we are ahead \$42,994.94 on real taxes and \$6,795.65 on DMV. Manager Garland stated that our tax rate is 16.30%.
26. Manager Garland stated that our revenues for the month is \$1,401,839.72 and our expenditures is \$1,134,106.29. Manager Garland stated that our year to date surplus is \$217,393.85 and we are tracking ahead by \$40,000.00.
27. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax collection is \$211,322.46 and we are ahead \$24,000.00. Manager Garland stated that our ¼-cent sales tax collection to date is \$67,730.81.
28. Manager Garland stated that our past due tax collections since 2013 is \$622,292.87.
29. Manager Garland stated that our budget should be at 84% and we are well within our budget.
30. Manager Garland stated that she did have two budget amendments for the board's approval.
 - a. Budget Amendment #2 – To record additional allotments for FY 19-20 and funds held over following final audit of CSE Incentives (Child Support Incentives) for \$12,749.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #2 as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 - b. Budget Amendment #3 – To record additional allocations per the State for Adoption and LINKS for \$13,831.00. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #3 as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Manager Garland stated that the 911 Call Center Open House will be from 10 am to 2 pm on Friday, September 20, 2019 and all public are welcome to attend.
32. Manager Garland stated that we will be having an auction for Graham County Sheriff Department and General Government surplus items on Saturday, September 21st at the Sheriff's Office and we will have old vehicles and miscellaneous furniture and equipment. Manager Garland stated that we would like to add one additional surplus request, a 20ft General Flat Bed Trailer that has not been used for years. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to surplus the trailer as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Manager Garland stated that the meeting with Duke Endowment went well and the representative wants us to ask for more funding than we originally put in the budget. Manager Garland stated that we did so and turned in a new budget estimate.
34. Manager Garland stated that the ARC meeting went well based on feedback we received from Olivia Collier and Jim McClesky and we are optimistic about the Paramedicine and Mammography Grant. Manager Garland stated that we met with Scott Hamilton at the ARC in DC last Thursday and we congratulate him again for being the new President of Golden LEAF Foundation beginning November 11, 2019.
35. Manager Garland stated that Commissioner Wiggins and she have been invited to tell the Graham County story at the EDP Conference in October in Sanford, NC. Transylvania County Commissioner Mike Hawkins heard about the things we are doing surrounding health care and he wants to feature our "nontraditional and innovative approach" at the State Economic Development Partnership Meeting and asks if anyone else would like to attend. Commissioner Orr stated that she has received a lot of positive feedback concerning the story telling.

36. Manager Garland stated that the county had an IFTA Fuel Tax Audit, which was cancelled after they learned that we are indeed exempt. Manager Garland stated that this was determined following the auditors review of the audit received in 2006. Manager Garland stated that we are in compliance with IFTA/State guidelines.
37. Manager Garland asks if Commissioner Orr would like to give a recap of the Washington trip concerning PILT. Commissioner Orr stated that they took our story on PILT to Washington and worked with Team 8, which included representatives from Utah. Commissioner Orr stated that she gave our story concerning the PILT payments and the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding and how it continues to be decreased. Manager Garland stated that Commissioner Orr represented Graham County very well and made a point on "Joyce Kilmer, who was a Veteran that visited Graham County and wrote the Poem "I think that I shall never see A poem as lovely as a tree" as a great poem but unfortunately the environmentalist took it a bit too far.
38. Manager Garland stated that Josh Deyton with NCDOT would like to speak with the board. Mr. Deyton gave a quick update on the A-9 Project (Corridor K) and asks which route the board would like to take concerning the proposed road. Mr. Deyton stated that we have offered alternates, which should be environmentally acceptable as we try to move forward on this project. Mr. Deyton stated that two meetings are set for October and February to finalize "hopefully" a suitable alternative. Mr. Deyton stated that we do not have enough funds to do the project and will be asking for a federal grant. Mr. Deyton stated that they would follow the existing alignment with a mile long tunnel at the Intersection of Hwy 143 and 28. Mr. Deyton stated that the road would follow Five Point Road with a new bridge due to the floodplain. Mr. Deyton stated that they are looking at a 2 plus 1 one which is two lanes in some areas and then back to one lane. Mr. Deyton stated that Clay County has had success with this type of road. Mr. Deyton stated that one alternate is passing lanes with a median. Commissioner Orr asks if we have to do a tunnel. Chairman Wiggins asks when they plan to start. Mr. Deyton stated that the first section would be from Stecoah area of Stecoah Diner to Johnson Gap and there are four alternatives which include (2) through Stecoah Heights, (1) goes around the other side and the old alternative from years ago which follows the existing road to the tunnel. Chairman Wiggins asks if they reviewed the drawings submitted by the Stecoah Heights residents because we need to keep those homes in our tax base and he is not in favoring of taking homes when you do not have to. Mr. Deyton stated that the county deserved a four-lane road but our county does not warrant for four lanes of traffic and NCDOT needed to look at what would benefit Graham County the best.
39. Chairman Wiggins asks for public comment. Juanita Colvard stated that we would be going live with our CT on October 1st and our Mammogram on October 5th. The board was very pleased with the news that will benefit our county and our neighboring counties as well.
40. Chairman Wiggins stated that we would now go to the discussion items. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval of the Releases for \$122.28 and the Discoveries for \$247,697.71. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the Releases and Discoveries as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adopt the Resolution for Joyce Kilmer Road to be added to the State System. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adopt the resolution as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adopt the Resolution to rename Tapoco Road (Hwy 129N) to Ronnie Milsap Highway. Commissioner Cody stated that he spoke with Ronnie Milsap's Manager and Ronnie Milsap was very enthusiastic with the proposal and thanked the Board of Commissioners for doing this. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adopt the resolution as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adopt the Census Resolution. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adopt the Census Resolution as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
44. Chairman Wiggins asks for new or old business. No new or old business.
45. 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 Cody made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
46. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to go into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

47. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to add Grade 69 Building Inspector Trainee and Grade 71 Building Inspector to the Graham County Pay Plan. Commissioner Orr made the motion to add Grade 69 and Grade 71 to the Graham County Pay Plan. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
48. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to write off EMS Bill Account #44026 for \$443.16. Commissioner Orr made the motion to write off the EMS Bill as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
49. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody 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