

Regular Meeting – December 17, 2019

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, December 17, 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 Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval or changes to the agenda. Manager Garland stated that the board needed to delete Item 8 Chris Green; he was unable to come to the meeting tonight but would attend the next meeting. 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 December 3rd 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 Dillon Chase Lancaster to speak. Mr. Lancaster stated that he has spoken to the commissioners a couple of times on being banned from the courthouse. Mr. Lancaster stated that he has abided by everything the county had asked him to do including counseling with Kristi Sluder. Mr. Lancaster stated that he has followed all the instructions given to him by Attorney Coward and always had an escort if he went to the courthouse. Mr. Lancaster stated that he has spoken with Tammy Holloway, Clerk of the Court and she was fine with the ban being lifted. Chairman Wiggins stated that Tammy Holloway is here tonight and they will listen to her before any decisions are to be made.
7. Chairman Wiggins asks Tammy Holloway and Carissa Robinson to speak. Ms. Holloway thanked the board for their time and appreciated that they, Manager Garland and Attorney Coward stepped up when an issue of safety was addressed. Ms. Holloway stated that Mr. Lancaster has many things going on with family in the court system but the main concern was the safety of her Magistrate Carissa Robinson. Ms. Holloway stated that in the past, Mr. Lancaster hollered at Ms. Robinson from an area of darkness and this is scary for any woman. Ms. Holloway stated that Mr. Lancaster has abided by the order set in place one year ago and she is okay with his being in the courthouse without an escort with the exception of Carissa's office. Ms. Holloway stated that he did not need to approach Carissa Robinson unless it is job related. Carissa Robinson stated that he has done what was set and she will support his being able to come to the courthouse unescorted. Ms. Robinson stated that she did not want him to do daily visits to her and she requests that if he has to see her for any reason an officer must be present at all times while he is with her.
8. Chairman Wiggins stated that the requests seemed fair and asks Mr. Lancaster if he can abide by the requests. Mr. Lancaster agreed that he can go to the courthouse unescorted but if he has business with Magistrate Carissa Robinson, he will have an escort. All the board agreed to allow the ban to be lifted with the terms stated.
9. Chairman Wiggins asks Juanita Colvard, Transit Director to speak. Director Colvard stated that she was here to do an outreach to notify the public and the Commissioner Board that she is making application for the ROAP Fund FY 2020 in the amount of \$115,266.66, which is an increase of \$16,992.66 from last year. Director Colvard stated that the county will only use ROAP funds to provide trips when other funding sources are not available for the same purpose of the other funding sources for the same purpose have been completely exhausted and the county assures that the required matching funds for the FY 2020 ROAP can be generated from fares and/or provided from local funds. Director Colvard stated that she would send in the application once the board approves and Manager Garland, the authorized official has signed the application. Director Colvard asks for public comment. No public comment. Commissioner Orr made the motion for Director Colvard to make application for the FY 2020 ROAP Funds. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Chairman Wiggins asks Sophia Paulos, EDC Director to give the EDC Monthly Report. Director Paulos stated that we have gotten to the exciting part of the façade grant received from the Office of Main Street & Rural Planning. Director Paulos stated that the conceptual designs for the four new building front renovations are set to begin work in early February. Director Paulos stated that these renovations would coincide with the mural that will be going up on Main

Street in partnership with REVVED UP, GREAT, the Snowbird Community and with funding support from the Z Smith Reynolds Foundation.

11. Director Paulos stated that REVVED Up is now officially a 501(c)(3) not for profit which means they will now be able to seek grant funding on their own and that contributions made to REVVED Up will now be tax deductible. REVVED UP's members include people from the Town of Robbinsville, GREAT, Graham County Historical Association, the Robbinsville High School Student Council, Graham County Travel and Tourism and local business owners.
12. Director Paulos stated that the Graham County Outdoor Recreation Economy Building Strategy & Report has been finished with details on visitor expenditures in Graham County, local tax receipts and estimated tax savings per county citizen. Director Paulos stated that this outdoor recreation economy building strategy is designed to help us keep momentum and growth going. Director Paulos stated that this report will be used and is accompanied by a detailed outdoor recreation asset map already in use by Graham County T&T and several accommodations partners. Director Paulos stated that they will continue building strong partnerships and growing our industry in Graham County.
13. Director Paulos stated that the Recovery to Work; Resilience. Engagement and Growth Project has been recommended to the Appalachian Regional Commission as part of NC Appalachian Investment Program. Governor Cooper's recommendation reserves \$133,681.00 from the State's allocation for the project. Ms. Paulos stated that now the project is at ARC's DC Office and Olivia Collier reports that she will be in touch soon with grant conditions that will need to be met prior to final funding approval from ARC. Ms. Paulos stated that hopefully we would receive final approval early in the New Year.
14. Chairman Wiggins asks for the Finance and Manager's Report. Manager Garland stated that we ended the month with a \$7,528,315.00 cash balance and we finally received our 911 Funding. Manager Garland stated that the county was ahead \$12,446.60 from this time last year. Manager Garland stated that our tax collections for current year was \$905,531.07, prior year \$6,458.20 and our DMV was \$45,311.02. Manager Garland stated that our year to date tax collection was \$2,755,614.40 and our DMV was \$225,208.68. Manager Garland stated that our tax rate was 37.41%
15. Manager Garland stated that our revenues was \$1,636,647.54 and our expenditures was \$1,531,546.29 for a surplus of \$105,101.25. Manager Garland stated that our year to date revenues was \$6,054,879.18 and our expenditures was \$6,144,504.65 for a deficit of \$89,625.47. Manager Garland stated that sales tax collections was \$197,402.91 and we have had a 5% growth in sales tax.
16. Manager Garland stated that our past due tax collections since 2013 is \$623,402.10 with a total remaining of \$387,803.16.
17. Manager Garland stated that our ideal budget should be 59% and we are holding 61%.
18. Manager Garland stated that we had a meeting with Brian Burch, NCDOT and Wanda Austin to go over the cost estimates of the various scenarios, including two scenarios with the tunnel on the "Corridor K" project. Manager Garland stated that they are awaiting the historical and architectural assessments and there was a call with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy following our meeting. Manager Garland stated that there were many questions about a potential footbridge design and no opinion was given at the meeting. Manager Garland stated that one of the main concerns was the maintenance of the bridge and who would take on this responsibility.
19. Manager Garland stated that EMS Director Larry Hembree received \$2,404.00 in fundraising dollars from the REVVED Up group this month and would like to use these funds along with funds left over in his capital outlay to equip the ambulances with Surface Pros. The cost of (5) one for every ambulance and a spare for office use is a total of \$7,363.30 so the cost to the county is \$4,959.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion to allow the purchase of the tablets. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Manager Garland stated that they did a soft opening on the paramedicine last week and Billy Hyde saw his first official patient on Wednesday and got another referral based on the visit from the palliative care nurse that was in the County. Manager Garland stated that they will be doing a press release soon after the first of the year and Duke Endowment wired \$111,500.00 of the total grant funds for \$248,500.00 last week.
21. Manager Garland stated that we received several small grants in the past week from the Trust: \$1500.00 for Transit and \$2500.00 for the Health Department. Manager Garland stated that we are in the process of writing a grant to support our recreation department for \$25,000.00.

Manager Garland asks permission from the board to put the grant committee back to work to help coordinate and monitor the grants we are receiving. Commissioner Orr stated that was a great idea and she requests that we keep up where the grants are spent to allow the public to know.

22. Manager Garland stated that she would like to prepare a comprehensive report with the assistance of our department managers to provide information to the county residents of all the opportunities and challenges Graham County faces and all of the progress we have made and provide information about our capital projects and services we can provide. The board all agreed that this is a great idea and this will be good information for the public to have a good overview of what we are doing.
23. Manager Garland stated that Chris Green with EBCI would be coming here to request the use of some of our property that lies adjacent to the old senior center and the rescue squad building. The board asks if this will be permanent. Manager Garland stated that it would be temporary while repairs are being done to a building located in Snowbird.
24. Manager Garland stated that the North Carolina Health Insurance Pool as administered by Gallagher Associates visited and would like to make a presentation to the board in January. Manager Garland stated that they also are trying to help her get in contact with a benefits specialist for the Medicare Supplement Plan and asks the board if they are interested in seeing their presentation. Commissioner Orr stated that she was open. Chairman Wiggins asks that they be added to the workshop on January 21st. Clerk Crisp stated that we have someone for that date and they would need to be added to the February workshop. The board agreed.
25. Manager Garland stated that she is working to procure another sanitation trailer and they have a quote for an EAST Trailer for \$71,000.00. The board would like a MACK trailer to be priced as well and present at the next board meeting.
26. Manager Garland stated that the Library would be having an open house on December 19th from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
27. Chairman Wiggins asks Jason Marino to give the board an update on the projects. Mr. Marino presented three designs to the board for the new Recreation and Cemetery buildings and the renovations on the Election Board. The board had discussion on the sites that was approved. The Recreation Building will be located at 191 P and J Road and the Cemetery Building will be located on West Fort Hill across from the Transit Facility. The board was pleased with the floor plans and wanted to make sure that the Recreation Facility will have enough room for growth. Mr. Marino stated that he would move forward with a storm water drain plan to eliminate any problems with water at each site mentioned. Mr. Marino stated that he would have to design for one more culvert at the West Fort Hill project.
28. Mr. Marino stated that he sat down with Juanita Colvard on the floor plan for the election board and asks that the board allow the existing bathrooms to be repaired at the same time as the renovations for the election board. Mr. Marino stated that the existing bathrooms need to be updated. Mr. Marino stated that if it were pleasing to the board he would close one bathroom at a time and remodel while we are doing the election board renovations. Mr. Marino stated that one item that he had to test was for asbestos due to the pre 1985 products so they tested the whole area by taking (26) samples and the news was better than he anticipated. Mr. Marino stated that the brown tile did not contain asbestos. Manager Garland asks the anticipated timeline for Mr. Marino to begin the renovations. Juanita Colvard, Chair of the Election Board stated that they would need to be moved prior to one-stop voting and they would need to give a (90) day notice to the public that they are moving. The board wanted Mr. Marino to begin the renovations and have them completed by July so that notice can be given April 1st that the Election Board would be moving to a new location. Mr. Marino stated that he would get with Building Inspector Jacob Nelms and let Juanita Colvard pick the finishes and we will spec out the project. Mr. Marino stated that he would put out a pre-bid mandatory meeting with a two-week deadline on bids being delivered and then we would need to have a public opening of the sealed bids. Chairman Wiggins asks that we bid by mid-January and receive the bids from the contractors the second week in February and plan to complete by June 1, 2020. The board all agreed and directed Mr. Marino to get the bid specs out.
29. Chairman Wiggins asks for public comment. No public comment.
30. Chairman Wiggins asks for the approval of the Releases for \$1,697.56. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Chairman Wiggins asks about the new DMV Schedule for 2020. Clerk Crisp stated that we received an email that DMV will only come to Graham County in May and October 2020. The

board wanted a complaint letter sent to them and asked that Manager Garland see how many offices are located in Cherokee County. The board all agreed that they did not have a problem with them coming only once a month instead of two.

32. Chairman Wiggins asks for new or old business. No further business.
33. Chairman Wiggins 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 Eller made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to grant Jeff Oswalt and Laura Adams extended leave without pay. Commissioner Eller made the motion to grant the extended leave without pay. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to grant Jena Hill five days without pay due to illness. Commissioner Eller made the motion to grant the leave without pay as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion on the plans for the Election Board renovations. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to go with Plan #1 that includes leaving Jason Marino's office where it is. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to accept the gift deed from Mr. Coleman for property located on Hwy 129 of approximately (53 acres). Commissioner Eller made the motion to accept the gift deed for the property subject to a clear title and no outstanding liens or taxes. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
39. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nelms 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