

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular workshop session. All board was present. Also, present NCDOT Commissioner Dirk Cody and NC Highway Patrol First Sergeant Mike McCloud; Trooper Brad Hoxit and Trooper David Williams.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Wiggins stated that he had received a call from Joel Turner, a county resident in the Snowbird / Santeetlah Community and he expressed concerns on the road conditions to the Snowbird and Santeetlah Communities. Chairman Wiggins stated that he had called Brian Burch and Wesley Grindstaff to have them meet with Joel Turner today at the workshop. Chairman Wiggins stated that those two men were unable to attend due to sickness and had asked NCDOT Commissioner Dirk Cody to attend in their place. Chairman Wiggins thanked the Highway Patrol for coming tonight and stated that the issues are mostly about the motorcycles. Mr. Cody asks that Highway Patrol speak prior to him.
3. First Sergeant Mike McCloud stated that he was a trooper here in the mid 1990's and he is now the first sergeant in Swain, Graham and Jackson Counties and will try to answer any questions. Sgt. McCloud gave the various road numbers involved in the Snowbird, Santeetlah and Sweetwater Roadways. Sgt. McCloud stated that they have had three wrecks on the Massey Branch Road and have written (11) tickets in the last while. Sgt. McCloud stated that they try to focus on the highest incident locations first but asks that they keep in mind that there are only three troopers in our area. Sgt. McCloud stated that they work with Education, Engineering and Enforcement. Sgt. McCloud stated that they would gladly work with the commissioners on their issues. Chairman Wiggins stated that for the most part the motorcycles are well behaved but there is always an exception with most of the issues being in the Massey Branch area and the Cherohala. Commissioner Wiggins stated that for the last three days, car clubs have been non-stop, riding people's bumpers and acting like crazy people and he felt that more presence needed to be seen in these areas by the highway patrol.
4. Sgt. McCloud asks that a complaint form be filled out so that they are aware of these issues and he understands the balance on tourism and enforcement. Chairman Wiggins stated that he knows that they cannot be everywhere at once and he appreciates the efforts that are made but felt in the summer months the traffic needed to see more of a presence by the highway patrol.
5. Sgt. McCloud stated that they would be glad to work for a solution together with the commissioners and the board thanked him for his time and for listening.
6. Mr. Cody stated that the conditions of the roads seem to be an issue and he is not qualified to give an assessment but he would like to help if he can. Chairman Wiggins stated that the roads are breaking off with huge cracks, we recently had a school bus slide down an embankment, and now that more traffic is being seen, it is getting unsafe. Mr. Cody stated that NCDOT plans to upgrade but are waiting on funding streams. Mr. Cody asks that Chairman Wiggins write a brief letter outlining these concerns and he will gladly take those concerns to the board especially when safety and security are a concern. Chairman Wiggins stated that he would get a letter with these concerns and send to NCDOT. Chairman Wiggins thanked Mr. Cody for his time.
7. Chairman Wiggins asks for further discussion. No further discussion.
8. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous

Dale Wiggins, Chairman

Jacob Nelms, Member

Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman

Keith Eller, Member

Connie Orr, Member

ATTEST: _____
Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board