

Workshop Session – February 17, 2014

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, February 17, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. for their regular workshop session in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC 28771. All board was present.

1. Commissioner Edwards called the workshop session to order.
2. Commissioner Edwards stated that Andy Cable was absent and asks Greg Cable, County Manager to speak. Manager Cable stated that Andy had written and was awarded a grant for a Helipad which is located in Swain County at the area of Tsali. Manager Cable stated that the grant award was \$32,000.00 with an in-kind of \$4,100.00 which can include Andy Cable's time of writing the grant as well as other in-kind contributions that could reduce or eliminate the actual cash payouts. The board asks when the Helipad project would be completed. Manager Cable stated that it should be late spring.
3. Manager Cable also presented an activity update from the Economic Development Department. Those updates are as stated:
  - a. PARTF Grant was submitted on January 31, 2014 for this year's award cycle. We will know if we get the grant in May or the first of June. We had 160 people attend the public meeting for the park and 485 additional signatures of support from the community.
  - b. Swain County was awarded the FLAP Grant to construct a helipad at Tsali, the grant is \$32,000.00 and the local match is \$8,200.00. Graham County's part is \$4,100.00 and can be in-kind match.
  - c. The HUB our newest business to open will receive \$10,000.00 from the Rural Center for Building Reuse.
  - d. Tree House Cabins will open this spring. Financing for this business was provided through a program in the Eastern part of NC but we need to talk about start up financing in our local banks.
  - e. Angel Investment Fund through SWC should be up and running sometime this year which will help with startup capital.
  - f. Working hard with EBCI to start business in Graham County. Not casino related.
  - g. Working with Balsam West and Cherokee Preservation Foundation to get fiber loop on Massey Branch and fiber to Stanley.
  - h. All continuous improvement training for Stanley and Fontana Village is complete. Fontana Village thought the training to be very useful and they plan to get more training in 2014.
  - i. Working with the Sheriff's Department to find grant funding to help with their mission.

The board was pleased with the update and stated that the county had to be at the table to receive grant funding. Manager Cable stated that our \$180,000.00 Telecommunications Grant was still on hold until the lawyers from the state could review the grant. Manager Cable stated that the Governor did sign off on this grant for the county to receive. The board thanked Manager Cable for the update.

4. Commissioner Edwards asks Denise Coleman with the Evergreen Foundation to speak. Ms. Coleman stated that she has been working with the foundation for one year now and she serves as the Public Relations / Outreach for the sever far western counties. Ms. Coleman stated that the mission of the foundations is to improve access to and public awareness of quality prevention, treatment, and support services by the provider to individuals and families with intellectual/developmental disabilities, behavioral health, and/or substance abuse needs in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain counties. And the activities include:
  - a. Infrastructure support to the service network
  - b. Start-up and service provision grants
  - c. Scholarships to enhance the quality of the provider network
  - d. Public awareness/education
  - e. Fund raising to support Evergreen Foundation activities
  - f. Advocacy on behalf of consumers and the provider community

Ms. Coleman stated that the foundation printed an Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2012-2013 for the first time which gives the assets, income, expenses and funding by priority areas. Ms. Coleman stated that the grants issued must meet three of the focus needs and are open to all providers. Commissioner Orr asks if the foundation had a record of deaths from drug overdose. Ms. Coleman stated that she did not have that information but would help the county in obtaining it. The board thanked Ms. Coleman for the information.

5. Commissioner Edwards asks Shelly Foreman to speak on the Smoky Mountain Center. Ms. Foreman presented a handout to the commissioners and stated that she appreciated the hard

work of Chairman Edwards and Manager Cable serving on the previous board. Ms. Foreman gave a brief synopsis of the Western Regional Partnership which serves 23 counties instead of the 7 far western counties. Ms. Foreman stated that the state had reconstructed the framework on mental health services which included a board membership change. Ms. Foreman stated that an advisory committee was established for the county commissioners who are not on the new board. The board discussed the changes and the plans to take all Medicaid funds and contract them out to statewide vendors. The board expressed their concerns on this regionalization of all 100 counties and worried about the services that will be offered to Graham County residents. Commissioner Edwards stated that this is very complicated and will be very challenging for the residents of our county in receiving needed services close to home. Ms. Foreman stated that Smoky would remain committed and provide great care for the county. Ms. Foreman stated that a lot of their people are indigent and local funding is required to pay for this service. Ms. Foreman stated that it was up to the state to make the big decisions on the structuring but her office would be here to listen and make sure that the correct information has been given to the counties. The board thanked Ms. Foreman for her time and information.

6. Commissioner Edwards asks for public comment. No public comment was given.
7. Commissioner Edwards state that he did have one item for discussion which concerns the finance office. Commissioner Edwards stated that the workload is beginning to be too much for the office staff and they would like the board to entertain allowing them to hire a certified business person to help. Commissioner Edwards stated that we are bound to provide the same services as the larger counties and the staff needs help. Commissioner Orr stated that the county works from a 25% tax base. Commissioner Edwards stated that our finance officer has to hide to get the audits done. Commissioner Edwards stated that this person would help with the daily tasks because at the current time our CPA has to stop and do her own filing. Commissioner Williams asks about the plan for the tax office to provide part time help. Commissioner Orr stated that she needed some more information to look at such as a job description. The board was in agreement to viewing a job description and having further discussion.
8. Commissioner Edwards adjourned the workshop session.

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Robert M. (Mike) Edwards, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Billy Holder, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Keith Eller, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board