

Special Meeting – March 8, 2016

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, March 8, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for a special meeting to host a charrette for Urgent Care. All commissioners was present.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to recess the special meeting and open a public hearing for Urgent Care. Commissioner Eller made the motion as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chairman Nelms thanked everyone for attending and stated that the intent of this meeting is to receive public input for an Urgent Care Center which is extremely important. Chairman Nelms invites everyone to participate and feel free to voice their opinion.
4. Manager Edwards thanked everyone for attending as well and stated that we are here tonight to go through a charrette process to determine if we can sustain an Urgent Care Center. Manager Edwards introduced the PDA representatives – Nancy Lane, President of PDA; Fred Wolters, Architect Consultant and John Rodgers, PDA Facilitator. Manager Edwards asks Nancy Lane to proceed.
5. Ms. Lane thanked everyone for attending and stated that they will be working with the public tonight, which is a little intimidating due to the large turnout, on their views of an urgent care center. Ms. Lane stated that they had received 1000 paper responses to the questionnaire and 700 on-line responses.
6. Ms. Lane stated that the contract and community goals are: Health care improvement for Graham County; Feasibility study for sustainable urgent care; Finish by end of March 2016 and consider the market, costs and construction issues.
7. Ms. Lane showed a slide presentation to the audience. Ms. Lane stated that the requirements for a sustainable center is to have a surrounding population of 50,000; have a Family Practice/ Emergency/ Internal medicine Physician or a Mid-level practitioner; an x-ray; 8,000 to 14,000 annual visits and about \$800,000.00 in capital. In reality, Graham County has a population of 8,900 with 12,000 tourists; total population of Graham, Macon, Cherokee and Swain Counties is 87,000; Urgent care centers are in Swain, Cherokee and Macon Counties and the demand for urgent care in Graham is 2,800 to 3,400 visits.
8. Ms. Lane discussed primary care; urgent care services; typical urgent care market; Viable 8 hr. day practice; staffing; burnout and payers.
9. Ms. Lane stated that the on-line responses were: 76% of respondents from Robbinsville; 85% under 65; 66% in households of 3 or less; mean of 3; 91% strongly agree; 89% currently use; 94% would use with mid-level staffing; 74% use 3 or more times per year; 85% want Sundays; 59% agree with \$150.00 visit payment by self or insurance and 85% have dependable internet.
10. Ms. Lane stated that there are components such as first impressions; positive outcomes; patient satisfaction; repeat business and referrals that needs to be studied.
11. Ms. Lane discussed the location and whether to build new or renovate and/or add other type services to the center.
12. Ms. Lane asks that the public break out into groups and give their opinions of the location for the center which could be: the old post office; other (beside the new post office); Health Department; Tallulah Valley Clinic or the EMS Base and to choose which services they felt needed more attention such as Urgent Care; Primary Care; Behavioral or other such as Dialysis need.
13. The public voted on the location and the services with these responses: Location: Old Post Office – 91 votes; other – 27 votes; Health Department – 14 votes; Tallulah Health Center – 12 votes and the EMS Base – 13 votes.
14. The public voted on the services that they would like to see and these responses were: Urgent Care -83 votes; Primary Care – 23 votes; Behavioral – 21 votes and other – 14 votes.
15. Ms. Lane stated that a tie breaker was not needed with these votes and the response was made clear what the public wanted. Ms. Lane stated that this county is too small to accommodate a 24/7 urgent care center and would everyone settle for an 8 or 9 hour day instead. The public was agreeable to less hours. Commissioner Orr stated that limited hours would not be a deal breaker for the citizenry for their main goal is an urgent care center. Commissioner Williams suggested hours of 4:00 p.m. to midnight or 3:00 to 11:00. Tina Lee, a member in the audience

and an employee of Mission – Tallulah Health Center stated that they would be glad to do weekends and after hours if they had the manpower to accomplish this goal and further stated that their main goal is to provide the best healthcare for our community. Commissioner Williams stated that in Raleigh there are 15 urgent care centers within a mile of Duke Hospital. Commissioner Williams stated that we have more summer visitors than was listed and they will use the center. Commissioner Orr stated that the statistics are based on numbers from communities that have hospitals. Commissioner Cody stated that in a rural community we do not have the advantage of walking down the street to an urgent care center. Lisa Russo, a member of the public stated that she and her family have used the urgent care center in our neighboring town due to the occurrences happening after hours and on weekends and she will use an urgent care center. Yvette Hooper, a member in the audience stated that our county is unique with an aging population and it is extremely hard for them if they are sick to get to a doctor and they need quicker treatment. Ms. Hooper stated that school age children needed access afterhours as well.

16. Nancy Lane stated that she will review all the notes and get the study back to the board by the end of March. Ms. Lane turned the meeting over to Manager Edwards.
17. Manager Edwards stated that we have a unique character here and we cannot be compared to national statistics and life experiences have taught that decisions are predicated by what is around you. Manager Edwards stated that he has used the urgent care in Bryson City as well as members of his family and each time he was there four or five residents from Graham County was waiting for treatment. Manager Edwards stated that he nor the board is suggesting that the clinic is not doing a great job but the need for after hours and weekends is strong and this clinic will sustain in our community. Manager Edwards stated that sustainability is based on how the people operate their business. Manager Edwards stated that we are different people than the national surveys but we need this center in our community and if not he will still jump in his car and take services elsewhere.
18. Chairman Nelms stated that the board is not in competition with any other entity but we will work for the goal of establishing an urgent care center in our community. The board all agreed.
19. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to close the public hearing and reopen the special meeting. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Commissioner Eller made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Jacob Nelms, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Keith Eller, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Lynn Cody, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board