

Budget Meeting – May 21, 2018

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, May 21, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. for a budget meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. Board present was: Keith Eller, Connie Orr, Jacob Nelms and Raymond Williams. Board absent was: Dale Wiggins.

1. Chairman Eller called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Eller asks Manager Rebecca Garland to begin the budget discussion.
3. Manager Garland gave the board a workbook to review and gave some budget points and highlights.
 - a. Allocated \$166,000.00 to capital reserve fund out of the savings of the debt payment we used to allocate to the Health Department and EMS Base note.
 - b. Provided a 3% COLA to staff with the exception of the offices that had received a raise due to the new pay plan. Manager Garland stated that her challenge is how to bring up the Public Safety Employees to be more competitive with our neighbors.
 - c. Allocated \$40,000.00 to sanitation to go through the 1999 and 2000 Mack Trucks, engines are in good shape but both trucks need to be reworked.
 - d. Allocated \$1,000,000.00 to schools for current expense. Used the \$85,000.00 estimated 524 reversion to go toward the \$100,000.00 “ask” for capital outlay and budgeted \$15,000.00 toward that request out of general fund.
 - e. Capital Outlay
 - i. Budgeted for one vehicle for Sheriff Department as the board provided for in March budget \$35,000.00.
 - ii. Sheriff has requested laptops that are not obsolete for patrol cars \$20,000.00
 - iii. One vehicle replacement for other departments that need it worst - \$35,000.00
 - iv. Go to Microsoft Office 365 and add cameras to Health and Human Services building and Sanitation - \$40,000.00 to \$50,000.00
 - v. Need to replace guttering at Human Services Building - \$13,500.00
 - vi. Ambulance with power stretcher - \$135,000.00
 - vii. Wish list includes:
 1. Upgrade or change the Finance Software – not performing well with all the new security features that Microsoft keeps sending out, need to go to a cloud based application.
 2. Phone System upgrade – has not been upgraded since 2011
 3. Upgrade ESRI for mapping
 4. All of the above can be paid for with sales tax refund.
 - f. Staffing
 - i. Added IT position for “in house” to focus on larger departments. This was approved in March workshops.
 - ii. Need to do more for public safety personnel on wages.
 - iii. In order to maximize funding for 911 Board, would like to split out the addressing again and either use Shaun in IT.
 - g. Other Issues
 - i. Nonprofits?
 - ii. Election Board
4. Manager Garland stated that with all the recommendations we will begin the budget process with a \$9600.00 surplus. Manager Garland gave the board a detailed expenditure budget for each department.
5. Manager Garland stated that the tax rate stays at the current rate of .58.5 and our total budget comes in around \$15,900,000.00. Manager Garland stated that the budget came in a little higher than last year due to sales tax increases, grant for Transit through the Senior Center, and estimated property taxes due to our good percentage of collections from last fiscal year which opened up \$100,000.00 in revenue to support the operation.
6. Manager Garland showed the board the debt payments for the county.

7. Manager Garland will continue to work toward the 2016 State Pay Plan but we cannot do this in its entirety at this time. Manager Garland stated that public safety is the worst out of line and we would need more discussion on this. The board discussed changes to the hours at EMS.
8. The board discussed the issues with the courthouse assessment and the need to understand what our options are going to be regarding the assessment.
9. The board felt that the county could wait one more year to buy another ambulance.
10. The board discussed the hire of a 911 Addresser using 911 monies and agreed to this suggestion due to the work that needs to be done.
11. The board discussed the non-profits. The board discussed audits for the non-profits. The cost of an audit is \$5,000.00.
12. The board discussed the priority sheet on DOT Projects that Rose Baugess needs and she will be here to speak to the board on Wednesday.
13. The board discussed the Election Board's request to meet with the board or with Chairman Eller and Manager Garland on a possible move to the community center. Manager Garland asks that the county not spend a great deal of money on this building at this time until the courthouse assessment is completed.
14. Manager Garland gave a highlight of some departmental budget requests. The Sheriff is asking for \$1,500,000.00 with an increase in wages for all staff and is asking to hire the State of Franklin worker. Manager Garland stated that he is asking for a private IT person and new laptops for the vehicles. Commissioner Orr asks about the purchase of body cams instead of laptops. Manager Garland stated that the sheriff budget is running hot at this time. The board asks if anyone at the sheriff's department has tried to get any grants.
15. Manager Garland stated that the Jail is coming in well within budget and his budget only needed to be slightly adjusted.
16. Manager Garland stated that the Senior Center budget appears larger due to the additional grants that she received.
17. Manager Garland stated that the Communications budget did increase due to their new building.
18. Manager Garland stated that Frank Kline with the NC Forest Service would like to speak to the board. Mr. Kline stated that his boss, Tim Howell had asked him to stop by and discuss where they stand with the budget. Mr. Kline stated that if the county continues to pay at 25% then they could not afford a smoke chaser. Mr. Kline discussed the way their budget works concerning the firefighter fund. Mr. Kline stated that his being a one man office could be challenging if he is needed to different areas of the county. Commissioner Orr asks who makes the hiring decisions. Mr. Kline stated that Tim Howell does. Commissioner Orr stated that somehow the statute concerning the hiring procedures got changed without the commissioner's knowledge and that was not well received because we have a need to hire locally. Commissioner Orr asks the qualifications for a smoke chaser. Mr. Kline stated that they needed a high school diploma, have a Class A License and take firefighting training. Commissioner Orr stated that our guarantee to hire locally is no longer on the table. Mr. Kline stated that the county is paying a different rate than what the Forest Service says. Manager Garland stated that we pay at the 25% level as stated and the Forest Service keeps billing at 35% and we will not pay at this level. The board thanked Mr. Kline for coming and speaking with the board. The board wanted Mr. Howell told that the county will continue to fund at 25%. Manager Garland stated that she did send an email to Mr. Howell and Mr. Kline with this information and only Mr. Kline had read the email. The board wanted the old law restored and asks that it be found to present to Representative Corbin and Senator Davis.
19. The board discussed special appropriations. The board discussed Tri-County. Manager Garland stated that she is still awaiting an attendance list for Graham County residents who attend the Murphy Campus.
20. Manager Garland stated that the Library's request went up some due to insurance increases.
21. The board agreed to fund \$5,000.00 to small appropriations.
22. Manager Garland stated that she did increase contingency by \$100,000.00 to cover the costs of moving the courts to another county if needed.
23. The board discussed our health insurance coming in at an increase of 1% and the general liability did increase due to the new 911 Center and the new Health and Human Services building. Manager Garland stated that Health Director Beth Booth would do a wellness program and once a Health Educator is hired we will begin doing projects such as lunchtime walking.
24. The board discussed the Election Board requests.

25. Manager Garland stated that she would need to go into closed session for personnel. Chairman Eller stated that he needed a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (6) for personnel. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
26. Commissioner Williams made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Manager Garland stated that she would like to reach out to David Hyatt to contract with the county on being our Public Buildings Project Coordinator due to the upcoming projects that the county is considering. The board had no objections to this suggestion.
28. Commissioner Williams made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Keith Eller, Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Connie Orr, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Dale Wiggins, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board