

Regular Meeting – July 16, 2019

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular monthly meeting. All board was present.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Nelms 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 we needed to add Sophia Paulos to Item 6A for the EDC Monthly Report. Commissioner Orr made the motion to amend and approve the agenda as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Wiggins asks Sheriff Jones to speak. Manager Garland stated that Chief Deputy Stewart would be speaking on behalf of the Sheriff. Chief Deputy Stewart thanked the board for their time and was here to discuss purchasing Tasers for the Sheriff's Office. Chief Deputy Stewart stated that the new sheriff has rewritten the policy on the use of Tasers. Chief Deputy Stewart stated that they would be replacing (9) of the old Tasers with new ones. Chief Deputy Stewart stated that the new Tasers are \$600.00 each and the company will give a trade-in on the old ones. Chief Deputy Stewart stated that with the battery, holsters and cartridges the total cost \$15,900.00. Chief Deputy Stewart stated that he feels this is a safety issue with our deputies. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to approve the request. Commissioner Orr made the motion to purchase the Tasers as requested. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Wiggins asks Brandy Cook and Nikki Stewart to discuss the late PUV application and the Doris Brown Discovery. Ms. Stewart stated that Mr. McArthur had filed a timely application for PUV in 2018 but the exact acreage was not listed the same as the Deed in the PUV and he has requested that the entire property to put in PUV. Ms. Stewart stated that the Department of Revenue told them to get the amount of property that was to be in the PUV and the board could waive the error according to G.S. 105-282.1.
7. Ms. Stewart stated that she also had a discovery bill for Bernard and Doris Brown on a 1991 cabin that was never taxed and they had requested that the board waive the interest due to clerical error of the tax office. Ms. Stewart stated that the total discovery bill was \$2889.74 and the interest was \$555.75. Ms. Stewart stated that the Board has the power to compromise and release the interest. Commissioner Orr made the motion to release the interest due to our clerical error. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Chairman Wiggins asks for a decision on the PUV request. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go by statute and change the bill accordingly. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Chairman Wiggins asks Sophia Paulos to give the EDC Monthly Report. Ms. Paulos stated that Michelle Shiplet of the Church Mouse has been a driving force in the revitalization of Main Street. Ms. Paulos stated that last year the Main Street group called REVVED UP began to unite the many efforts being made to breathe new life into our downtown and an immense amount of progress is being made. Ms. Paulos stated that new signs are going up at the entrances to town with the help of the Town of Robbinsville. Ms. Paulos stated that they reflect the destination branding developed by GREAT, the County, Town and Travel and Tourism Board. Ms. Paulos stated that the signs use both the Adventure Portal theme developed in the Outdoor Recreation Economy Strategy as well as the Your Natural Destination tag line. Ms. Paulos stated that Michelle Shiplet secured funding of \$50,000.00 from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation to begin the Murals Project on Main Street. Ms. Paulos stated that the Murals will honor our heritage and will be a great honor to local history while providing excellent free social media marketing with tourists.
10. Ms. Paulos stated that the Historical Society is making great strides with a \$14,000.00 grant through Southwestern Commission. Ms. Paulos stated that the Historical Society is underway on the sustainability study that will guide the architectural plans and designs needed to get to work on the Snider building and preparing it for the grand opening of the Graham County Historical Museum. Ms. Paulos thanked Representative Kevin Corbin for his gracious support in securing \$25,000.00 in funding needed to complete the architectural study and ensure the Historical Societies success.

11. Ms. Paulos stated that she also secured a grant through the NC Department of Commerce for \$7,000.00 to complete \$11,000.00 worth of exterior renovations on Main Street. Ms. Paulos thanked the Town of Robbinsville for their support of the project and for the support of the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Paulos stated that the community garden is set to plant a fall garden and building fronts have been revived to four buildings. Ms. Paulos stated that over \$100,000.00 has been raised to support all the efforts in the Town and looks forward to seeing what more these continued efforts will produce.
12. Ms. Paulos stated that she attended the Outdoor Retailer in Denver last month with the support of Noah Wilson with the ARC funded Growing Outdoors Project and Ryan Nance with EDP of NC which was a great success. Ms. Paulos stated that she had the opportunity to join Noah Wilson and two of the professors from WCU working on designing the new Outdoor Industry certificate and degree programs for a meeting with Patagonia's Director of Human Resources. Ms. Paulos stated that Patagonia shared with us critical information for growing outdoor industry workforce and we learned that outdoor gear companies are not simply looking for professional kayakers, or experienced manufacturing workforce they want their accountants, marketing and administrative staff to have a passion for the outdoors. Ms. Paulos stated that the insights gleaned from this meeting were critical to growing this industry in Western NC. Ms. Paulos also met with Patagonia's lead textile acquisition specialists to discuss and plan opportunities for establishing new supply chains here in NC for products currently produced in Asia and Europe. Ms. Paulos stated that with a strong team from economic and workforce development we are causing attention to be drawn to Western NC companies. Ms. Paulos thanked Sarah Wood from Industry 9, Amy Allison from ENO, Wes Stone and Andy Cohen from WCU, Noah Wilson with Growing Outdoors and Ryan Nance from EDP NC. Ms. Paulos stated that without their support, this event would not have been the incredible success it turned out to be and she will convene with them again on October 10 for the second annual Outdoor Economy Conference in Asheville. Ms. Paulos stated that if a board member is interested in attending to let her know and she would get them registered.
13. Ms. Paulos stated that in May we learned that American Timber Group would be closing their Robbinsville facility. Ms. Paulos stated that a company is interested in the purchase of the site and Mr. Lee is enlisting the services of a commercial real estate broker. Ms. Paulos stated that a veteran owned manufacturer is interested in the location and a possibility of multiple industries could occupy the building as well.
14. Ms. Paulos stated that the Recovery to Work Grant that Chairman Wiggins, Tom O'Brian with IOI and she worked on has gained interest and support from DHHS in Raleigh and could be a model that can be grown throughout the region. Ms. Paulos stated that Graham County is leading the way on this critical initiative to give those who have done the incredibly hard work of coming through rehab meaningful employment that they can be proud of and is confident that this project will be funded. Ms. Paulos will continue to provide updates to the board.
15. Chairman Wiggins asks Manager Garland for the Finance and Manager's report. Manager Garland stated that we ended the month of June with a \$7,838,643.39 cash balance giving us a surplus of \$529,191.63 from this time last year. Ms. Garland stated that our current tax collections was \$8,275.37, prior \$20,114.42 for a total of \$28,389.79. Manager Garland stated that our year to date collection is \$6,249,350.51 and our DMV is \$444,389.60. Manager Garland stated that tax collection rate is 96.92%. Manager Garland stated that our revenues for the month was \$1,067,988.26 and our expenditures was \$1,574,471.86 giving us a deficit of \$506,483.60. Manager Garland stated that our year to date revenues was \$14,915,914.68 and our expenditures was \$14,613,830.84 giving us a surplus of \$302,083.84. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax collection was \$176,052.66, which is up \$72,173.51 from this time last year. Manager Garland stated that we received our first allotment from the ¼-cent sales tax of \$15,476.14. Manager Garland stated that past years tax collections year to date is \$476,485.77 since 2013 and is very proud of our tax office. Manager Garland stated that we ended our budget year with 9% remaining and was very pleased with this number.
16. Manager Garland stated that she would now go to the managers' report. Ms. Garland gave the board a copy of the School Sales Tax Reversion. This is the amount in excess of our debt service and the paving that we paid the State on our school property. Manager Garland stated that the overage is from the 524 monies that we have been receiving since the tax law changed to tax labor on goods and services in North Carolina. Manager Garland stated that the total overage was \$104,546.60 and she would need board approval to revert these funds to the schools.

Commissioner Orr made the motion to give the school the Sales Tax Reversion monies.

Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

17. Manager Garland stated that the Church Mouse Ministries has requested their full annual allocation of \$10,000.00 for the community garden and to do repairs and needs board approval to give the appropriation. Commissioner Orr made the motion to give the Church Mouse their \$10,000.00 appropriation. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
18. Manager Garland stated that the Sheriff has nearly completed the outfitting of the new sheriff vehicles and we received the buyback monies for \$105,000.00 for our four cars. Manager Garland asks for permission to pay the vendor \$44,238.64 for the outfitting. Commissioner Orr made the motion to pay the vendor. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
19. Manager Garland stated that our EPA Grant was declined. Manager Garland stated that we were just shy of a good result but the North Carolina counties did not receive any funding this year. Manager Garland stated that she would be working with Jordan Thompson with DEQ as well as staff from Withers Ravenel to see where we can improve on the next cycle.
20. Manager Garland stated that our work with the CDBG grant cycle is underway and a mandatory meeting will be held July 31 in Raleigh and county staff along with Amanda Whitaker from Withers Ravenel will be attending. Manager Garland stated that Ms. Whitaker has drafted and completed the fair housing plan.
21. Manager Garland stated that the construction is nearly complete on the Mammography project and we will be doing a walk through tomorrow. Manager Garland stated that there is a delay in getting some of the equipment but because it is the fault of the supplier and not the County, we should be in good shape for our CON compliance. Manager Garland stated that to date we have spent \$56,000.00 on the materials and labor for this project.
22. Manager Garland stated that Dirk Cody has been appointed as the Highway Commissioner with the State along with Jack Debnam from Macon County giving us two representatives from the mountain counties. Manager Garland stated that Mr. Cody needs the commissioners and the Town Aldermen to create a list of projects and needs for Graham County.
23. Manager Garland stated that she met with the Election Board last week to go over the report from Homeland Security and they are striving to be cost conscious and as reasonable as possible. Manager Garland stated that they are working on a preliminary plan and will provide the drawings as soon as they are received.
24. Manager Garland stated that the commissioners had agreed to have a public input session for the residents of Stecoah who may be negatively impacted by the road project and she reached out to Brian Burch and Rose Baugess to see if they were willing to participate. Manager Garland stated that they could meet at the August Workshop on the 20th at 4:30 p.m. The board agreed with this recommendation.
25. Manager Garland stated that we have received several resumes for the project manager position and need to schedule some interviews. Chairman Wiggins asks that each board member submit three names to Clerk Crisp for this position and schedule the interviews from the list.
26. Manager Garland stated that we received an email from Olivia Collier on the ARC Grant application and she is asking for stories of how a para-medicine program could have helped families who have had to either leave their jobs or was unable to sustain a job due to having to care for chronically ill patients. Manager Garland stated that the Office of Rural Health is holding a stakeholder's meeting at the Health Department Wednesday, July 24 at 1:30 p.m. and Timothy Webster from Hometown Strong will be in the county if the board would like to meet him. Manager Garland stated that the job for the para-medicine program has been posted and we have received a couple of interested applicants.
27. Manager Garland stated that we have hired for our building maintenance position and will begin on the smaller projects in the county including the acoustical panels in the community room and will do some minor upgrades to the bathrooms.
28. Manager Garland gave the board information on signing up for the new Medicaid Programs under Medicaid Transformation.
29. Chairman Wiggins asks for public comment. Commissioner Cody was approached by some people in Tennessee representing Ronnie Milsap and asked how the board would feel about naming a road after Ronnie. Commissioner Cody stated that his manager has indicated that it would be appropriate. Commissioner Cody stated that Ronnie was not doing well but he could possibly come here for the presentation. Commissioner Orr and Commissioner Nelms both

expressed their support and Commissioner Nelms suggested that the new road be a possibility. Attorney Coward stated that we could contact Dirk Cody, the new Highway Commissioner and see what needed to be done. The board all agreed that this would be appropriate for our county and asks Commissioner Cody to reach out to Dirk Cody and see what needed to be done. The board discussed naming Hwy 129 Business as the Ronnie Milsap Highway.

30. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board would now go into the discussion items. Chairman Wiggins opened the ambulance bids:
 - a. Atlantic Emergency Solutions \$231,040.00
 - b. Southeastern Specialty Vehicles \$209,120.00Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to table the bid until EMS Director Larry Hembree can review them. Commissioner Cody made the motion to table the bid as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Chairman Wiggins opened the concrete bids for the community building.
 - a. McClain Concrete \$10,780.00
 - b. Dadco Construction \$15,205.50
 - c. Robbinsville Custom Moulding \$11,359.00Manager Garland asks that we table this bid until the Election Board submits their plans for the renovations. Commissioner Orr made the motion to table the bid as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Chairman Wiggins stated that there is a webinar July 18 at 1:00 p.m. for Community Responding to Opioid Crisis if the board is interested.
33. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval of the Releases \$4,669.36 and the Discoveries \$49,909.06. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve the releases and discoveries. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board would meet the Stecoah Residents at the August Workshop.
35. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to reappoint Commissioner Cody to the Road Naming Board. Commissioner Orr made the motion to reappoint Commissioner Cody. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to reappoint Billy Brown to the RDA Board. Commissioner Orr asks that this be tabled until the next meeting. Board agreed.
37. Chairman Wiggins asks for the reappointment of Meredith Jenkins to the Travel and Tourism Board. Commissioner Orr made the motion to appoint Meredith Jenkins to the T&T Board. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Chairman Wiggins asks for new or old business. The board discussed the DSS Board Meeting being held on the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville. Commissioner Nelms made a motion to hold the DSS Board Meetings on the second Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
39. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S., 143-318.11A (1) (3) (5) (6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney-client privilege, personnel and contracts. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to appoint Commissioner Orr to the Courthouse Security Board. Commissioner Cody made the motion. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to allow David Maennle (5) days leave without pay. Commissioner Orr made the motion to grant the leave as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page for Regular Meeting July 16, 2019

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