

Regular Meeting – November 19, 2019

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street, Robbinsville, NC. All board was present.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Wiggins asks for changes to the agenda. Manager Garland stated that she needed to be added under Item 11A for Attorney-Client privilege. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 5, 2019. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Wiggins asks Sophia Paulos to give the EDC Monthly Report. Ms. Paulos began by thanking our Representative Kevin Corbin. He continues to advocate for sensible policies to help bring high-speed internet to the people of his District and all of rural North Carolina. In the quest for high-speed Internet Representative Corbin supported a standalone bill to pass funding for the state GREAT grant. The legislature successfully passed and Governor Cooper supported with his signature, a \$15million GREAT grant program for this new fiscal year. The funding represents a 50% increase over last year's budget. Currently she is working with the state broadband office to ensure that we have all of the information needed to entice internet service providers into applying for grant funds to bring high-speed internet to our citizens. The grant is expected to be announced on Dec 12th and is likely to have a 60 or 90-day application period. Ms. Paulos will keep the board apprised of any and all updates on this project as they arise.
7. Ms. Paulos stated that she is working on submitting another EPA Brownfields grant to address the property behind the former Stanley Furniture Building. After adapting, the resume submitted last year to address points the EPA suggested it could be strengthened and a new one has been submitted to the New Jersey Institute of Technology to receive a free consultation on our application prior to submitting the final application to the EPA. My hope is that this year, the EPA will fund this project so that we can continue with our plans to build a healthy community recreation space for the children, citizens, and guests of Graham County.
8. Ms. Paulos stated that she is very pleased to announce in this public forum that ARC has finally awarded two applications that has been submitted in a previous funding cycle for distressed counties. Ms. Paulos thanked the Appalachian Regional Commission for a \$100,000 grant to help fund the 3D Mammogram machine now located in Robbinsville at the Urgent Care Facility as well as a \$50,000 grant to purchase a Quick Ready Vehicle, the vehicle needed to begin our community paramedicine program. In total, ARC awarded the county \$150,000 over the last month.
9. Ms. Paulos stated that she would also like to thank Governor Cooper and his support for us as a Hometown Strong Community. Since being designated Hometown Strong Community we have received immeasurable support from Governor Cooper's team. That support has manifested in many ways but particularly when it comes to health care in Graham County. Whether it was helping us to tell our story in a way that would paint a true picture for the folks in DC or the incredible amount of assistance and staff support we have received through the Office of Rural Health, Governor Cooper's Hometown Strong has been a true blessing to Graham County. The most recent example of this is something I am very excited to share with the board and our community tonight. With significant support from the Office of Rural Health, the Duke Endowment has awarded Graham County \$248,250 to launch our Community Paramedicine program. No longer will caretakers and distant family members have to worry about their loved ones who are chronically ill in our county. The community paramedicine program will provide on the ground support for clients who have just been released from surgery, have chronic illnesses with frequent calls to EMS, and family members and caretakers who find themselves having to take time away from work to care for their people. Without the support of Governor Cooper, the Graham County Board of Commissioners, the Office of Rural Health, and Larry Hembree and Billy Hyde with our very own Graham County EMS, this would not have been possible.
10. Ms. Paulos stated that since September, the county has been awarded \$398,000 in grant funds. County wide, when adding the Linkage to Care grant from DHHS secured by Beth Booth, we pulled in \$643,250 in the last six weeks. Ms. Paulos thanked the board for their support and stated without it, these grant awards would not have been possible.
11. Chairman Wiggins asks Beth Booth, Health Director to speak. Director Booth stated that she was here to present the 2018-2019 Annual Report for the Graham County Department of Public

Health. Director Booth presented the board the report and gave brief highlights, which included achieving Reaccreditation with Honors. Director Booth stated that a Graham County Substance Use Coalition was created in collaboration with county and regional partners; she held the first annual Touch A Truck event; held an annual Wellness Fair; launched a county employee wellness program; obtained approval by the board for a Human Services Planner position with focuses on accreditation and preparedness; moved the WIC program from a paper-based method of WIC benefit issuance to an electronic benefit transfer system (e-WIC); electronically filing all well and septic permits, past and present; joined The Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) consortium with regional and state partners to address the substance use crisis; completed the 2018 Health Assessment; launched a new website: health.grahamcounty.org; displayed all food and lodging permits on the website as well as allowing for electronic submission on all food, lodging and septic on the website; moved into the new Graham County Health and Human Services facility; held focus group sessions with Celebrate Recovery members and Beta Sigma Phi; began offering Nexplanon (a long-acting birth control method that lasts up to three years) insertion and removal; had our Water Lab receive a Certificate of Excellence and received an Award of Excellence for Immunization Rates. The board congratulated Director Booth for the grants and thanked her for the reporting.

12. Director Booth stated that she made some minor adjustments to the Delegation of Authority policy and would need the board's approval. Director Booth stated that some verbiage changed to include the County Manager who is over personnel as assigned by the County Commissioners. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve the Delegation of Authority Policy as presented by Director Booth. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
13. Director Booth stated that she would need approval of the Immunization Policy that was discussed at the last health board meeting and asks Lorita Eller, Nursing Supervisor to discuss this policy with the board. Ms. Eller stated that the purpose of the policy is to assure that designated employees of Graham County Department of Public Health are properly immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases and to promote the prevention and/or spread of those diseases. Ms. Eller stated that the policy is designed to cover all employees that have direct contact with clients with the exceptions of Environmental Health staff; Finance/Personnel Director and the Health Director. Ms. Eller stated that the Department of Public Health has the required vaccines and will offer annual flu vaccinations, Hepatitis B, MMR, Varicella (chickenpox);Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Ms. Eller also stated that all employees must have documentation of a Tuberculin Skin Test upon employment. Ms. Eller stated that the immunization will not be required but employees who are not vaccinated will be required to wear a mask during outbreak periods of the above named vaccines. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the Immunization Policy as presented. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote called. Commissioner Wiggins, Orr, Cody and Nelms voted to approve. Commissioner Eller was opposed. Motion carried four to one.
14. Chairman Wiggins asks Becky Garland to give the Finance and Manager's Report. Manager Garland stated that the county ended the month with a \$7,472,943.99 cash balance, which is \$88,483.65 ahead from this time last month. Manager Garland stated that we have collected \$341,891.41 in current year taxes, \$11,901.80 of prior year taxes and \$38,954.43 of DMV taxes. Manager Garland stated that our year to date collections was \$1,843,625.13 for real; \$179,897.66 for DMV. Manager Garland stated that our tax collection rate is 24.62%.
15. Manager Garland stated that our revenues for the month is \$1,287,957.29 and our expenditures is \$1,287,610.36 for a surplus of \$346.93. Manager Garland stated that our year to date revenues is \$4,432,427.12 and expenditures is \$4,612,958.36 for a surplus of \$180,531.24.
16. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax collections for the month is \$207,629.32.
17. Manager Garland stated that our budget is doing good holding at 69% and the ideal remaining percentage is 67%.
18. Manager Garland stated that she would be shifting \$107,000.00 to the Capital Trust Fund.
19. Manager Garland stated that she needs the board to accept the Duke Endowment Grant for \$111,500.00. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to accept the Duke Endowment Grant. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Manager Garland stated that she has two budget amendments for the board's approval.
 - a. Budget Amendment #4 – To recognize the Duke Endowment Grant and the ARC Grant for Paramedicine in the amount of \$166,500.00
 - b. Budget Amendment #5 – To recognize the ARC Mammography Grant in the amount of \$100,000.00

Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the Budget Amendments as stated.
Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

21. Manager Garland stated that the Mammography would be up and running as soon as the accreditation has been accepted and the Paramedicine program is up and running. Manager Garland stated that there will be a lot of record keeping and every business owner will be paid a visit.
22. Manager Garland stated that they would like to use Electronic Medical Records for the bookkeeping and this is 100% paid by grant funds and the cost is \$29,280.00 Manager Garland stated that she would need approval from the board. Commissioner Orr made the motion to use Electronic Medical Records for the Paramedicine Program. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
23. Manager Garland stated that Graham County Schools was notified that they have been awarded the \$3.2 million dollar grant they applied for in September. The board discussed these grant monies over the past year with a county share of \$1,066,667.00. Manager Garland stated that she did an analysis and amortized the note over (20) years at 4.5% and the debt service would be \$82,000.00 per year which is about \$40,000.00 less than the 524 allocation we made in the past fiscal year.
24. Manager Garland stated that the quotes for the Clerk of Court's Office came in for the carpet tile and the cost savings would be \$2,722.05 compared to the LVT Tile that was previously quoted and asks for direction from the board. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go with the lowest fix since this is temporary. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Manager Garland stated that Jason Marino is getting the estimates for the recreation and cemetery buildings and would present those at the next meeting.
26. Manager Garland stated that Jason Marino has been working on floor plans for the election board renovation and hopes to have those final plans by the next meeting date. Manager Garland stated that Mr. Marino is reaching out to companies that will test for asbestos on the floor tiles and Manager Garland recommended that they seek the lowest responsible quote and go ahead and get the testing in place so that we can proceed to do a RFP for abatement if necessary. The board gave Manager Garland a directive to go with the lowest quote and proceed.
27. Manager Garland stated that she and Mr. Marino walked the Fort Hill property to talk about potential building footprints for the new justice center. Manager Garland will be speaking with Heery and Associates and will report findings as soon as possible.
28. Manager Garland stated that she and Mr. Marino had a lengthy call with Amanda Whitaker with WR Martin and they are awaiting final approval on the environmental study to begin the CDBG projects. Manager Garland stated that the first pay request for the administrative fee has been submitted and we will continue to move forward.
29. Manager Garland presented the board a listing of projects that Mr. Marino is currently studying and will be asking the board's consideration on these projects at a later date.
30. Manager Garland stated that she would need the Board of E&R to open to discuss a tax appeal, which contained a clerical error. The board agreed to meet Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. to open the Board of E&R for this error.
31. Manager Garland stated that the cemetery board is requesting approval to go ahead and purchase the mower that was budgeted from Lovin Equipment and Sales. Manager Garland stated that the cost is \$8,155.52 and needs board approval. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the purchase. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Manager Garland stated that NC A&T University sent a letter regarding our county cost share and they intend to increase the county portion to 50% by 2022. Manager Garland stated that we current fund 30%. Manager Garland stated that they also want counties to opt into a new model, whereby we would pay for each pay increase on the state side automatically, currently; we do not follow this model. Manager Garland stated that this would be an increase of \$7000.00 to the 2020-2021 budget with an additional \$7,000.00 for a total increase of \$14,000.00 by the 2021-2022 budget. Manager Garland stated that a representative from the University is expected to come and meet with Randy and herself on December 11th at 10:00 a.m. in her office. Manager Garland invites a commissioner to attend.
33. Manager Garland stated that EMS Director Larry Hembree and she would be reviewing our county contract with the current billing company and feel that it is time to reconsider the EMS Billing Contract. The board all agreed.
34. Manager Garland stated that the defective sanitation trailer has been returned with a full refund from the dealer.

35. Manager Garland stated that she has located a benefits specialist to discuss the Medicare Premium Reimbursement Plan and would bring the recommendation to the board once she determines what the county can offer.
36. Manager Garland stated that the fieldwork for the audit is complete and so far, no negative comments were given. Manager Garland stated that our DSS Single Audit went well with no reportable conditions to DHHS. Manager Garland stated that she is still awaiting payment from the 911 Board and she will be finishing the EMS Cost Report next week.
37. Manager Garland stated that she would be submitting the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant next week and will be working with DENR on remediation. Manager Garland asks for public comment regarding the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant. No public comment.
38. Chairman Wiggins asks that a room be incorporated into the new recreation building for a public exercise room.
39. Chairman Wiggins asks for public comment. No public comment.
40. Chairman Wiggins stated that they would now go to the discussion items and asks for a motion to approve the Releases of \$1,543.32 and the Discoveries of \$1,159.00. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the releases and discoveries. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to approve the poll for HVAC Replacement at the DHHS building, which was a unanimous vote. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the poll as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Chairman Wiggins stated that the county would observe the Thanksgiving Holiday November 28th and November 29th.
43. Chairman Wiggins asks for new or old business. No new or old business.
44. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a) (1) (3) (5) (6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney-client privilege, personnel and contracts. Commissioner Eller made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
45. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
46. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to hire Municipal Engineering to continue assessment at the old landfill for \$4,000.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the quote from Municipal Engineering. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
47. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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