

Regular Meeting – December 15, 2020

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, December 15, 2020 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. Also, present Manager Becky Garland, Attorney J.K. Coward and Clerk Kim Crisp.

1. Chair Orr called the meeting to order.
2. Chair Orr asks Commissioner Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chair Orr lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chair Orr asks for changes or additions to the agenda. Manager Garland stated that Chris Ferriss was unable to attend but she would present for him. Chair Orr asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chair Orr asks for approval of the minutes for the November 17th Workshop and Regular Meeting, December 7th Organizational Meeting, and the December 7th Special Meeting. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chair Orr asks Manager Garland to give the tax office update. Manager Garland stated that the Department of Revenue has sent recommendations for the upcoming 2021-2023 reappraisal and Chris Ferriss is requesting permission to move forward using a full list and measure reappraisal. Manager Garland stated that he was also requesting two temp positions, but she suggests one temp position who will list and measure and pick-up new construction along the way and asks that they be hired as soon as possible to start the process in January. Manager Garland stated that Tax Assessor Brandy Cook stated that she and Myles Webster will be taking appeal letters and preparing to go visit the appealed properties the first of February. Assessor Cook stated that Chris Ferriss will begin to train her and Myles Webster properly in the schedule of values, the valuation of land and properly editing the properties in Bi-Tek along with the commercial appraisals. Assessor Cook stated that they will have meetings with the board along the way for updates and workshops on the schedule of values so that everyone will know what the Schedule of Values is used for and to gain better understanding. Manager Garland stated that she did need the board to approve using a full list and measure re-appraisal. Chair Orr asks for a motion to approve the Full List and Measure Re-Appraisal. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve using a full list and measure re-appraisal. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Manager Garland asks the board if they want to approve the temp position now, poll the board once more information is gathered or wait to hire at the next meeting in January. The board wanted to table a decision tonight to determine the salary and requests that background and pre-employment drug testing be done.
7. Chair Orr asks Project Manager (PM) Marino to give an update on the projects. PM Marino stated that the sign at Topton has now been installed and the contractor did a very nice job. PM Marino stated that he kept the old sign to use as needed.
8. PM Marino stated that the bids for the Cemetery Building are due Thursday along with the Board of Elections renovations with bathroom upgrades in the community building. PM Marino is hoping to receive two bids for each project.
9. PM Marino stated that he met with the bidders on the 6th Grade Wing at the Robbinsville School and they received two bids which both went well over the budgeted amount. PM Marino stated that the overages were from \$880k to \$1M and he would keep the board updated as things move along. PM Marino stated that the good news is the Department of Public Instruction can add money to the project, but a match will be required which will need more discussion. Commissioner Wiggins asks the timeline on breaking ground for the 6th Grade Wing. PM Marino stated that it is scheduled for spring.
10. PM Marino stated that he will be scheduling a meeting with the board to present the final presentation on the new Justice/Jail Center after the holidays.
11. PM Marino stated that Elliott Brothers are scheduled to begin repairs on the HVAC system in the DHHS building and he will monitor their progress.
12. PM Marino stated that the washer and dryer project is scheduled to be completed and are awaiting the appliances to be delivered.

13. PM Marino asks that the board open the bids for the new recreation building. Those bids were: RCM Inc. base bid was \$435,500.00 and Aldridge Brothers was \$341,442.00. PM Marino requests that he be allowed to review the bids prior to the award. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he was hoping to build for \$100,000.00 and this increased amount is due to COVID:19. Commissioner Eller asks how much the county put aside for this project. Manager Garland stated that she put \$100,000.00. Commissioner Wiggins asks the timeline on this project. PM Marino stated that he was anticipating a bid of around \$242,000.00 and was surprised by the increase in materials. Commissioner Wiggins asks Attorney Coward if we could put language in a contract stating that when the material cost went down it would reflect on the bid. Attorney Coward stated that he thinks that the board could do that. PM Marino stated that we can move into negotiations and try to get a number down as much as possible. PM Marino stated that he was already looking at the county covering the cost of the metal building and ask for new pricing to install. PM Marino stated that the prices have gotten crazy, but he will look at some other options. Commissioner Wiggins ask Manager Garland if we were planning to finance this building. Manager Garland stated that she was planning to pay the money up front and back finance when we borrow for the Justice/Jail Center. Manager Garland stated that the board would need to pass a Capital Project Ordinance and asks that the board table the bids at this time. Chair Orr asks PM Marino if the board needed to award to be able to speak with the bidder. PM Marino stated that yes if all the requirements have been met. PM Marino stated that the board could make changes in the interior at this time. Commissioner Eller stated that its very minimal now and the only extra was the exercise room. PM Marino stated that he would look for ways to lower the costs. Commissioner Wiggins asks if the board has the right to reject all bids. Attorney Coward stated that the bid is just an offer and not a formal contract and the county can negotiate. Chair Orr asks for a motion for the bid award. Commissioner Eller made the motion to accept the lowest bid with the condition that all requirements were met and to include a letter of intent to negotiate. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Chair Orr asks Manager Garland for the finance report and managers' report. Manager Garland stated that we ended the month with a \$8,868,208.54 cash balance and this is after we took out \$114,000.00 to put in the capital projects fund. Manager Garland stated that we now have \$2,160,617.29 in our capital projects fund and \$114,165.49 in the school capital project fund. Manager Garland stated that we are at a \$1,339,893.54 positive variance from this time last year and commended the department heads for their diligence in saving.
15. Manager Garland stated that our current tax collections were \$1,069,496.35; our prior years \$11,210.71 for a total of \$1,080,703.06. Manager Garland stated that our DMV collections was \$47,797.52. Manager Garland stated that our year-to-date real tax collections was \$2,972,577.26 and our DMV is \$264,236.18. Manager Garland stated that our tax collection rate was 40.14% which is a little lower than this time last year, but our levy has changed. Manager Garland stated that we are ahead \$245,206.71 in real taxes and \$39,027.50 in DMV from this time last year. Manager Garland thanked the taxpayers of Graham County for their diligence in paying their taxes.
16. Manager Garland stated that revenues for the month was \$2,185,640.45 and our expenditures was \$1,264,630.94 for a surplus of \$921,009.51 and our year-to-date revenues was \$6,841,956.83 and our expenditures was \$5,960,538.83 for a surplus of \$881,417.90.
17. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax collections for the month was \$213,517.86 and we are \$94,000.00 ahead from this time last year.
18. Manager Garland stated that the tax office has collected \$629,476.52 in past due back taxes since 2013 and commended the staff for their hard work.
19. Manager Garland stated that our budget is holding at 61% which is above the ideal 59% and any budget that appears hot is explainable.
20. Manager Garland stated that she did have two budget amendments for the board's approval.
 - a. Budget Amendment #10 – amend to bring in additional COVID revenues for Foster Homes and energy programs from Duke Energy for \$13,600.00. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve budget amendment #10 as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 - b. Budget Amendment #11 – amend to make board directed changes to CARES expenditures for \$60,385.00. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve budget amendment #11 as stated. Vote unanimous. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion.

- c. Budget Amendment #12 – amend for special COVID funding streams for \$53,779.00. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
21. Manager Garland stated that the CARES ACT approved the radio equipment for our buses totaling a little over \$40,000.00 and this will be included in the January final report. Manager Garland stated that they did receive verification that the equipment will be shipped and installed before the deadline. Manager Garland stated that the State did not recommend making allocations to nonprofits via the CARES ACT, but they did state that counties can use the funds for salaries for substantially dedicated employees (EMS, public safety, and public health) which would free up general fund dollars that can be used to make these distributions to nonprofits. Manager Garland stated that she also confirmed that there is no non-supplant issue and she recommended that we continue to claim salaries for the \$30,000.00 allocation to the nonprofits. Manager Garland stated that this allocation is more straight forward and very clearly explained in the law whereas nonprofit distributions are not as clear. Manager Garland stated that she would need approval to allow these expenditures and she will follow up with an amendment. Chair Orr asks for a motion to proceed with the distributions as recommended by Manager Garland. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
22. Manager Garland stated that School Superintendent Dr. Angela Knight and Kevin White contacted her regarding the facility needs survey that is due on January 4th to the Department of Public Instruction. Manager Garland stated that the survey is a wish list that is done every five years and has not been submitted since 2010. Manager Garland stated that the assessment looks at capacity needs and past expenditures for capital needs for the past five years and then projects it into the next ten years. Manager Garland stated that the five-year needs include renovations to the Elementary and High Schools totaling \$7.3M and the ten-year plan shows a new elementary school and some additions to the high school at \$39.2M. Manager Garland stated that these items were calculated using \$250 per square foot which were pre-COVID costs. Manager Garland stated that the most immediate need is the replacement of stadium lights which will be required this coming year if we plan to host playoff games. Manager Garland stated that in addition, the replacement of the elementary school triggers the \$6M addition to the high school campus for a new stadium. Manager Garland stated that Dr. Knight and Mr. White both emphasized that this is a wish list only, but it does require signature by the Commissioner Board. Chair Orr asks for a motion to approve the Graham County Schools facility needs survey. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to sign and send in the facility needs survey as presented. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
23. Manager Garland presented the board with a copy of the resolution from NCDOT naming a portion of Hwy 129 Ronnie Milsap Highway and she submitted payment to NCDOT. Manager Garland stated that if the county wanted a dedication ceremony, she would need to contact Dirk Cody to arrange. Manager Garland stated that NCDOT is working on a replica sign to be presented to Ronnie Milsap.
24. Manager Garland stated that we received notification of the funding on the debris removal in the amount of \$48,116.25 with matching funds of \$4,582.50 for the Little Snowbird Road. Manager Garland stated that the project allows (220) days timeline after the funding is awarded. Manager Garland stated that she needed the board to accept the funding as stated and she will begin work on a budget amendment. Chair Orr asks for a motion to accept the funding for the Little Snowbird Road debris cleanup. Commissioner Eller made the motion to accept the funding as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Manager Garland stated that the 911 Board will take our funding that we have not used, and 911 Director Misty Hembree requested the replacement of the Zetron Workstations for a total; of \$49,063.55 which is 100% 911 Funding and asks for a motion to purchase these workstations. Chair Orr asks for a motion to approve the purchase of the workstations. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the Zetron Workstations as requested. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
26. Manager Garland stated that Southern Software is proposing a Mobile Data Information System which will integrate with the CAD System to allow the 911 system to allow the officers and paramedics to virtually work with the CAD System on their tablets. Manager Garland stated that this will allow them to see what the dispatch is seeing on the CAD system and they can interact with the CAD system by adding notes and clicking their status. Manager Garland stated that the system has a module to allow tracking of the deputies and the ambulance and they work off

hotspots. Manager Garland stated that Cherokee County is using the system and it has been a benefit to the deputies and medics. The cost breakdowns are:

- a. MDIS \$24,488.00 (911 Funds)
- b. Cradle Point \$18,525.00 (County Funds)
- c. Fleet Tracking \$8,300.00 (County Funds)

Manager Garland stated that she will need a budget amendment if approved. Manager Garland also stated that EMS is requesting to purchase a LUCAS device, which is a chest compression system to assist with CPR. Manager Garland stated that the total for this system is \$50,541.30 and a three-year maintenance contract would be an additional \$17,901.00. Manager Garland stated that Director Hembree has about \$26,000.00 in the Census grant money to apply for the equipment and we have been blessed with additional sales tax along with our EMS cost report income being \$59,000.00 will cover the cost of the devices and the non-911 funded portion comes from the communications request. Manager Garland stated that if approved she would need a budget amendment. Chair Orr asks for a motion to purchase the equipment as requested for 911 and EMS. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to purchase as requested. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Chair Orr calls for a vote. Commissioners Orr, Eller, Nelms and Wiggins voted yes. Commissioner Cody voted no. Motion carried.

27. Manager Garland stated that the Duke Endowment accepted our interim report on our Paramedicine program, and we filed for the second-year funding for the program. Manager Garland stated that the final expenditure to make is a portable diagnostics system with a cost of \$25,000.00 and is fully reimbursable by the grant. Manager Garland stated that the system will fully integrate with the EMR system for the primary care provider to see the notes that Billy Hyde will upload into the system. Manager Garland stated that this is the same system that the other county paramedicine programs are using in WNC. Chair Orr asks for a motion to approve the portable diagnostics system. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the expenditure as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
28. Manager Garland stated that our safety committee has identified the need for additional indoor and outdoor cameras for DHHS, Sheriff Office, Library, Sanitation, and our IT department has determined the need for (37) camera (13 indoor and 24 outdoor). Manager Garland stated that Verkada has the cameras that we now use at a 60% discount and the cameras have proven to be highly effective. Manager Garland stated that she will be able to get some of the cost back on the 1571 for the DSS office. Manager Garland stated that the cameras with a three-year license is \$29,182.45 and proposes that we use the additional sales tax monies to purchase the cameras with the three-year license. Manager Garland stated that if accepted she would need the board to approve a budget amendment. Commissioner Nelms stated that with that kind of a discount we needed to buy for the new buildings as well. Chair Orr asks for a motion to purchase the cameras as stated. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to purchase the cameras as requesting adding cameras for the recreation and cemetery buildings. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Chair Orr asks for public comment. No public comment.
30. Chair Orr asks for approval of the poll for the placement of the Town Nativity Scene at the Urgent Care Building. Clerk Crisp stated that it was requested that no cost will be charged to the Town even if there is a difference in the power bill. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the poll with no charge to the Town. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Clerk Crisp stated that she needed approval on the reappointment of Commissioner Orr to the VAYA Health Board. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve the reappointment of Commissioner Orr as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Chair Orr asks for public comment. Chair Orr thanked Commissioner Wiggins and Commissioner Cody for their leadership in the last two years and thanked the entire board for always looking out for our citizens.
33. Chair Orr 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 Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Chair Orr asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

35. Chair Orr asks for a motion to pay the Robinson Claim due to employee error. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to pay the claim as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Chair Orr asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Connie Orr, Chair

Keith Eller, Vice-Chairman

Lynn Cody, Member

Jacob Nelms, Member

Dale Wiggins, Member

ATTEST: _____
Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board