

Regular Meeting – April 20, 2021

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street for their regular monthly meeting. Board present Keith Eller, Lynn Cody, Jacob Nelms and Dale Wiggins. Board absent Connie Orr. Also, present Manager Jason Marino, Finance Director Becky Garland, Attorney JK Coward and Clerk Kim Crisp. This meeting was open to the public and opportunity for comment was provided.

1. Vice-Chairman Eller called the meeting to order.
2. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Nelms to give the Invocation.
3. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Wiggins to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to approve the agenda. Manager Marino asks that we move Item 8(a) to Item 7(a). Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated change. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for approval of the minutes for the March 16th Workshop & Regular Meeting; March 12th and March 23rd Special Meetings. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Vice-Chairman Eller asks John Colewell to speak on the Mural Project. Mr. Colewell thanked the board for their time and stated that he wanted to give a quick review on the Mural Project. Mr. Colewell stated that he was here a few weeks ago asking support for our Music and Arts Festival and to partner with the Town of Robbinsville, the Graham County and the Town of Robbinsville Travel and Tourism asking each entity for a \$10,000.00 appropriation to have two murals painted uptown. Mr. Colewell stated that they will be using the Lovelace Building to paint a mural displaying our mountains and the other mural will be of Ronnie Milsap on the Extension Office. Mr. Colewell stated that these projects were started with Reimagining Robbinsville to draw tourists to our Uptown. Mr. Colewell stated that the Town of Robbinsville has agreed to provide \$10,000.00 support for these projects. Mr. Colewell stated that he was not seeking financial support tonight but needed approval to have the mural placed on the Extension Office Building. Mr. Colewell stated that their intentions is to have Ronnie Milsap come to Graham County for the festival the third week in June. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that the board would discuss the funding during the budget process and asks if the board had any objections to the mural being placed on the Extension Office. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to allow the use of the Extension Office Building to paint a Mural of Ronnie Milsap. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Manager Marino asks if the choices for paint color will be approved by the board. Mr. Colewell stated that they will bring the concept to the board prior to installation for their approval.
7. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Manager Jason Marino to give the managers report. Manager Marino gave an update on the ongoing projects in the county. Manager Marino stated that the Rural Development Authority received an award of \$470,000.00 to complete the (13) lot project on Moose Branch which will provide affordable housing.
8. Manager Marino stated that he ordered the two metal buildings today, one for our recreation and one for our cemetery department with a twenty-one-to-twenty-four-week delivery date so he will be making plans for this delivery around the first of September. Manager Marino stated that this will give the county ample time to prepare the site work.
9. Manager Marino stated that the Board of Elections demolition has started, and he had SS Electric to safe up the electrical during this demolition. Manager Marino stated that the Sheriff is allowing the use of the Inmates and he is grateful for this assistance. Manager Marino stated that the PPEs were delivered last week, and he will continue to receive quotes from contractors for the framing, finishing, electrical and mechanical. Manager Marino stated that he may have to poll the board on some of the quotes depending on the time frame. Manager Marino stated that the area was tested for asbestos and it was negative.
10. Manager Marino stated that the school has broken ground for the new 6th Grade Middle School Wing, and they have a (365) day contract time, and he will be tracking their progress and report back to the board.
11. Manager Marino stated that the board needed to sit down and have discussion on the Justice/Jail Facility and asks that SLAM be included in assisting with the RFPs for the design team. Manager Marino stated that these RFP's will need to be done with the grading team prior to award so that we can keep moving forward.

12. Manager Marino stated that the contractor for the HVAC at the DHHS Facility has completed phase one and he will be doing a walk through with Elliott Brothers. Manager Marino stated that they did find two changes regarding the duct work and further stated that everything else was doing good and we have received positive reactions to the changes. Manager Marino stated that he will continue to make improvements as they go along with the evaluation of the system.
13. Manager Marino stated that he spoke with Poss Buchanan regarding the bridge naming, and he stated that NCDOT needs a board of commissioner action with 100% census to approve the bridge naming. Manager Marino stated that the bridge to be named is the West Buffalo Bridge and if this is accepted the application can be submitted. Manager Marino stated that there is no cost to the county. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the bridge naming as presented by Poss Buchanan. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Manager Marino stated that the board needed to schedule the budget workshops and Finance Director Garland will have the rough draft by May 15th. Manager Marino presented a list of dates for the board to meet that will give us plenty of time to schedule our public hearing at the June 15th Regular Commissioner Meeting. Manager Marino stated that the targeted dates are May 21st; May 28th; June 4th; and June 11th and asks what time the board would like to meet. The board had discussion and agreed to those dates as presented and the meetings will begin at 9:00 a.m.
15. Manager Marino stated that the State required assessment on the Transfer Station went well and the consultant said our yard, trailers, and tipping floor looked good and appeared to follow State regulations. Manager Marino stated that the consultant will send the final report within a couple of weeks.
16. Manager Marino stated that we had been asked to support the Black Knights with a radio ad for the playoffs if the board was interested. Manager Marino stated that the cost per game is \$100.00 or \$300.00 for the playoff season. The board tabled this request.
17. Manager Marino stated that the board needed to ratify the board poll for the cardboard hauling trailer purchased by Millsaps Trucking for \$8,500.00.
18. Manager Marino stated that the Senior Centers Transport and Holding Heating Cabinet went out and we priced a Vulcan Cabinet for \$5,881.45 which will be paid with General Purpose Funds and asks the board for approval on this purchase. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to purchase the cabinet as requested. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
19. Manager Marino stated he needed to make an organizational change in the Custodial Department after Ms. Garland saw that there were inefficiencies in how this department was being managed but she did not get the necessary changes made during her tenure. Manager Marino stated that we lost a staff member, and this gave us opportunity to make the necessary changes. Manager Marino stated that they named a supervisor which is Patsy Monroe to this department and hired for two vacant positions.
20. Manager Marino stated that the school maintenance department requested that he come to look at an issue with the school brick façade at the school gym on Moose Branch Road. Manager Marino stated that it is showing signs of mortar cracks and it was noted that there is also an issue with movement occurring on the inside which could be the slab, or the flooring is having issues. Manager Marino stated that he recommended that a structural engineer make an assessment and once this is done, he will update the board. The board had concerns that it could be more than structural. Manager Marino stated that these issues are at the NW corner of the gym where it shows a lateral crack and shows some bowing outward.
21. Manager Marino stated that there will be a meeting forthcoming regarding the GREAT Grant for Broadband, and he will get the meeting details to the board once he receives them.
22. Manager Marino stated that we are beginning the office locations move in Administration and believe that this will be a more efficient working environment plus we did not have to do any type of demo work. Manager Marino stated that the office that he now uses will be turned into storage that is desperately needed.
23. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Finance Director Becky Garland to give the monthly finance reporting. Director Garland stated that we ended the month with a \$10,522,101.42 cash balance which is \$794,000.00 ahead from this time last year. Director Garland stated that our tax collections for the month was current year \$98,211.76, prior years \$21,960.97 and DMV of \$380.35. Director Garland stated that our year-to-date tax collections is \$7,045,877.81 with DMV \$398,163.21 which she is very pleased to see. Director Garland stated that our tax collections rate is 95.73% and our VTS is very healthy.

24. Director Garland stated that our revenues for the month was \$1,020,063.71 and our expenditures was \$1,348,304.57 which included our debt service payment for a deficit of \$382,240.86. Director Garland stated that our year-to-date revenues is \$14,295,095.96 and our expenditures is \$11,590,899.46 for a year-to-date surplus of \$2,704,196.50. which is healthier than this time last year.
25. Director Garland stated that our sales tax for the month of February was \$230,841.16 which is higher than this time last year's \$154,034.04. Director Garland stated that she will be transferring \$86,000.00 to the capital projects fund.
26. Director Garland stated that the tax office is still collecting past due taxes and our balance of collections since 2013 is \$632,017.52.
27. Director Garland stated that the budget should be at 25% and we are holding at 29% and all departments are working hard to stay within budget.
28. Director Garland stated that she did have three budget amendments for the board's approval.
 - a. Budget Amendment #20 – Amend to make appropriation for fireworks for Heritage Festival for \$10,000.00
 - b. Budget Amendment #21 – Amend to make an appropriation for Museum project that was placed on hold for COVID19 for \$10,000.00.
 - c. Budget Amendment #22 – 3rd quarter amendments for additional CARES Act funding, other grants, capital outlay and move cost of maintenance on radiology equipment to General Fund for \$927,495.00.

Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the budget amendments as stated.

Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

29. Director Garland stated that she has a Capital Project Ordinance for the intent to back finance the Recreation and Cemetery Buildings purchase and the renovation for the Election Board. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the Capital Project Ordinance as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Director Garland stated that she has a Citizen Participation Plan for CDBG Grantees that needed to be approved. Director Garland stated that the plan is an essential element of the Graham County's present and future community development process and is developed to comply with the regulations and requirements of the CDBG program as administered by the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality – Division of Water Infrastructure – the North Carolina Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Division and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Director Garland stated that the plan is required by Section 104(a)(2) of the Housing and Community Development Act and by regulations at 24 CFR 570.486(a)(6). Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the Citizen Participation Plan as presented. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Director Garland stated that she also needed approval of the American Rescue Plan which provides funding to respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts; to provide premium pay to eligible employees for essential work (\$13.00 per hour); to address certain revenue reductions and to make infrastructure investments in water, sewer or broadband. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to apply for the funding through the American Rescue Plan. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for public comment. No public comment.
33. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for the approval of the Releases \$506.41 and the Discoveries \$506.41. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the releases and discoveries as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to approve the poll for the Cost Share at Ag/Extension Office. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the poll as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for discussion of the mower for grounds maintenance. The board agreed to table this discussion to budget meetings.
36. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to reappoint Brian Johnson, Jason Marino and Edd Satterfield to the Rural Development Authority. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to reappoint as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for new or old business. No new or old business.
38. Vice-Chairman Eller 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 Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

39. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Nelms made the motion as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that Manager Marino is currently serving as the Interim County Manager and asks for a motion to appoint Jason Marino as our County Manager. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to grant leave without pay for April Beasley and Donna Bollinger. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the leave. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms 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