

Regular Meeting – May 18, 2021

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC 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.

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 changes to the agenda. Manager Marino asks that we add #7A – Bethany Leonard and Clinton Jones to the agenda. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to approve the agenda with the stated change. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the agenda as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for approval of the minutes for the April 30th Workshop and Regular Meeting and the April 27th Board of Equalization and Review. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Wanda Hill, Senior Center Director to speak. Director Hill stated that she is here seeking permission to apply for the 2021-2022 HCCBG Funding in the amount of \$119,865.00 with a required county match of \$13,318.00. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to allow Director Hill to apply for the 2021-2022 HCCBG Funding as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Gavin Colvard, Sanitation Director to speak. Director Colvard publicly thanked the board for the new garbage truck that they received and to report that the new truck was struck by lightning, and they are in the process of estimating the damage to the ABS System. Director Colvard stated that when he received confirmation on the repair and cost, he would update the board.
8. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Bethany Leonard to speak. Ms. Leonard stated that she is the Community Social Services Technician at the Graham County Health Department, and she is working closely with Clinton Jones, our new Certified Peer Support Specialist in the Recovery to Work program which is intended to increase workforce engagement among individuals with substance abuse disorders through a collaboration of community resources. Ms. Leonard stated that they identify individuals coming out of rehabilitation as well as recovering, unemployed citizens who will then relate to resources via a Certified Peer Support Specialist Clinton Jones. Ms. Leonard stated that they have been able to place (12) clients so far and they are participating in either Medication Assisted Treatment, therapy, or recovery groups and Tallulah Community Health Center and Celebrate Recovery have been instrumental in this area. Ms. Leonard stated that one of the clients has removed themselves from a domestic violence situation and has found temporary housing at a homeless shelter and are on the waiting list for more permanent housing. Ms. Leonard stated that they are working with Legal Aid and the Social Security Administration to get benefits to help them support themselves and they are receiving regular medical care, including therapy which is helping them to remain sober. Ms. Leonard stated that they are beginning to explore making crafts to have additional funds to support themselves since they are not job ready at this time. Ms. Leonard stated that she has made over (325) contacts. Ms. Leonard stated that the biggest obstacle is housing in Graham County because there are no options for emergency housing so most of the clients will be housed in other counties that do have housing available and likely they will find employment in that county.
9. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Clinton Jones to speak. Mr. Jones stated that he runs his support office through the Jail, and he has (32) people that he is assisting with the same things as mentioned by Ms. Leonard and he is there to offer support to those who are making changes in their life. Mr. Jones stated that each client is responsible for their own success, but their focus is to provide the support and the resources to ensure that they do succeed.
10. Vice-Chairman Eller asks a speaker with the Drug Coalition to speak. Patrick Odell served as the spokesman for the coalition. Mr. Odell stated that he was called to preach, and his job is to win souls and he would rather not speak but he was asked by concerned citizens. Mr. Odell stated

that he thanked and appreciated the programs such as Recovery to Work and Mike Teems program Celebrate Recovery. Mr. Odell stated that no one will get help until they want help, and he is thankful to the people who want to help and further stated that most of the concerned citizens want to know what can be done to keep the drugs off our streets. Mr. Odell stated that they wanted to work with the commissioners and law enforcement as a community effort and wanted to know if stricter laws are needed or should they be speaking with the District Attorney Ashely Welch. Mr. Odell stated that he was saved by the Grace of God because he personally took a wrong turn at one time in his life, and he lost a child, but he is very worried about our county. Mr. Odell stated that he was tired of standing over caskets of young people. Mr. Odell asks if this is about budget because he believes that the community would be good stewards if money is going to help law enforcement. Mr. Odell stated that it has been said many times about the other counties paying more money to the officers so can our county increase the pay, can we hire more law enforcement or is the problem something else. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that money could have something to do with it but not entirely. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that our youth is not interested in law enforcement or EMS. Mr. Odell stated that maybe we need to provide some type of assistance that would cause them to want to stay here. Mr. Odell stated that we have broken homes everywhere and drugs are being dealt in the open during daylight hours and our town is covered up with drugs and they as concerned citizens want to help. Mr. Odell stated that he knows that it takes God to change people, but we are all concerned, and we need to see change not only in our county but our homes, our hearts and our country and he loves Graham County and how our people come together. Mr. Odell stated that there is corruption on every level in our country, but do we have corruption in our sheriff's department, is it in our justice system, in our churches, we are here tonight to ask what can be done and how can we help. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a show of hands of how many in this room has been affected by drugs and everyone raised their hands. Mr. Odell stated that they are meeting with State Representatives on Friday and invites the commissioners to attend the meeting and try to work together because he is tired of the destruction and death that these drugs are doing to our community. Mr. Odell stated that we live in a small town, and we hear things and hear who the sellers and runners are, but these things are overlooked, and he knows that people go and ask the Clerk of Court to get them out of speeding tickets or to get their kids out of their drug charges and we should not do this. Mr. Odell stated that we have fought alcohol for years and no one wanted it to be here, but it will be on the ballot on the Town level, and he is so tired of seeing people strung out of their minds and the people who are behind the drugs are never arrested and this is corruption. Mr. Odell stated that our own FNP Meggan Smith is very concerned, and she researched and found that there have been (94) overdoses and (84) was given Narcan and revived and (10) are dead. Mr. Odell stated that his heart is heavy for these families that are burying their children and he is willing to travel to Raleigh if we must, to do anything, to help keep these drugs out of our children's hands. Mr. Odell stated that he knows that there is corruption and drugs are rampant, but they as concerned citizens want to know what they can do to help get this stopped.

11. Citizen Travis Orr stated that no one is blaming the commissioners, but he has two brothers that have almost run him crazy, and grandparents are raising grandkids because of this issue. Mr. Orr stated that he has spoken with State Senator Kevin Corbin this week and he has agreed to help us look for funding if money is the problem. Mr. Orr stated that he will help in any way that he can because it is awful, and this is real, and he feels so sorry for the Phillips family and for the Buchanan family who have recently lost children. Mr. Orr asks that the commissioners attend the meeting on Friday at the school with Senator Kevin Corbin, Representative Karl Gillespie, and District Attorney Ashley Welch. Mr. Orr stated that our representatives can find us the money. Mr. Orr stated that years ago you would have to travel out of town to find drugs now you can purchase them anywhere in Robbinsville. Mr. Odell stated that there are so many more drugs out there and it is so cheap and so available, and it is a pandemic. Mr. Odell stated that COVID is a great concern, but the drug situation is the larger issue in America and in our County. The board agreed to attend the meeting on Friday.
12. Mr. Odell stated that there are people willing to help in anyway but the person has to want the help and at one time in his life, he didn't want help and he was into drugs but he got saved and we need to help these people because this is a problem, the justice system is a problem and we do not want to attend another child's death in this county or any other county. Mr. Odell stated that he loved each and everyone in this room and thanked the board for their time. The board thanked everyone for attending. Commissioner Cody stated that Swain County is dealing with

the same issues that we are faced with as well. Mr. Odell stated that he has spoken with Curtis Cochran in Swain County, and he stated that Graham County hurts themselves by not keeping a Sheriff longer than one term and the good people of the county keep voting them out, so this causes the corruption to continue. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that he did not get elected by the good people and ever since Melvin Howell, a sheriff has not lasted more than four years, and some have been caught up in corruption.

13. Dennis Crisp, Chief Deputy stated that Sheriff Jerry Crisp was on military training this week and could not attend tonight's meeting. Chief Crisp stated that the issue did include the budgeting. Chief Crisp stated that Swain County has a budget of \$2.9 million and they have (30) officers plus the Bryson City Police Department so they can patrol more adequately. Chief Crisp stated that they have had (3,861) calls for service and have logged (2,745) hours on those calls. Chief Crisp stated that they reached (3,360) calls in five months, so the officers are spending 82% of their time which leaves 18% left to patrol and they need more officers. Chief Crisp stated that we have (21) officers which includes (4) detectives that have (25) active cases each and this is pretty much all the time. Chief Crisp stated that they have (2) narcotics officers, and they cannot cover properly and then most cases get dismissed by the District Attorney. Chief Crisp stated that there are more crimes that involve computers and phones so other cases are delayed. Chief Crisp stated that they need better software and hardware that will assist the officers in responding to calls. Chief Crisp stated that 95% of the calls are drug related and they are seeing more and more overdose calls which is hard for the officers to see and to deal with these deaths. Chief Crisp stated that Graham County does not have all the basic tools that are adequate. Mr. Crisp stated that the lack of coverage makes us appear weak and they need (6) more people with (3) on night. Chief Crisp stated that our county always keeps looking back and we need to move forward. Chief Crisp stated that a new jail facility is a top priority because we have nowhere to house these inmates and the other counties are refusing to take our overages. Chief Crisp stated that we can hold (11) people in our jail, and they are transporting inmates to Rutherford County which is miles and hours on our vehicles just to house the inmates. Chief Crisp stated that summer is here, and the officers will be dealing with the motorcycles and smaller cars which keep the officers tied up. Chief Crisp stated that they intend to use the funds that they are given to provide a safer, better county and if his taxes must increase to make this happen to keep us safe that has got to happen. Chief Crisp stated that the City of Andrews is bad, and they have a huge drug problem, and we are beginning to feel the effects here. Chief Crisp stated that the hours of 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. for the county is patrolled by one officer and the drug dealers know this. Chief Crisp stated that these individuals need help as much as we do but as quick as they get incarcerated, they are released and back on the streets. Chief Crisp stated that we must work together to make a difference, but they do need more funds and more people. Chief Crisp stated that the public will view the county as being weak when the officer's presence is not seen, and it will get worse than it is. Chief Crisp stated that their focus is to provide a better and safer county and to get people off the streets.
14. Officer JJ Wooten stated that the Andrews Police Department is a wreck and they have not shown a strong police force, so the drugs have moved in with full force. Officer Wooten stated that last week Cherokee County took 8 ½ lbs. of meth off their streets and it is not going to stop. Officer Wooten stated that the drugs are pouring in from Mexico and we have crooked politicians making money and this will not stop so we must show a united force. Vice-Chairman Eller asks if the SBI or other agencies are helping us. Chief Crisp stated that they can barely get their assistance with a murder.
15. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that for (8) years that he has been a commissioner they have been approached to hire more personnel each year for the department to do a better job. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that they went from (14) officers to (21) and now Graham County is being made by a Judge to build a new Justice/Jail Center with a price tag of \$22 to \$24 million and our taxes are the highest in the State now. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that this is what this county is facing, and the county has 30% of land that can be taxed with the other 70% belonging to the government. Chief Crisp stated that they were trying to apply for every grant possible to help with the cost because they need body cams and repeaters, and they were asked by the Coalition to come and tell what was needed to allow for better coverage in the county. Hank Dinschel asks if the funding we received for opioid grants could be used to help purchase the needed equipment. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that it depends on how the grant is written. Hank Dinschel asks why the Town of Robbinsville does not have a police department. Chief Crisp stated that they have requested funds from the town many times and it was refused. Hank

Dinschel asks who needed to be called on this issue. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that Steve Hooper was the Mayor and Brian Johnson, Debbie Beasley and Shaun Adams are the aldermen.

16. Mr. Robert Carver asks if the problem is money and wanted to be told straight up if the money is the problem and asks why the board would not purchase this or that and is money the problem and asks again will somebody answer the question. Commissioner Nelms stated that money is part of the problem, but this is a complex issue, and we must have money to pay the officers to work. Mr. Carver stated that there was enough money in this room to go around and asks if anyone disagreed with him. Hank Dinschel stated that yes, she disagreed and stated that this is a poor community and throwing money at this drug issue is not the answer. Ms. Dinschel stated that Christian Organizations that provide rehab has a 90% rate of the person not going back into the system and they get results but the rest of the rehab's may have a 25% rate of persons not returning to their old lifestyle and we need a place that will get results because right now we are not getting results and it does not matter how much money you throw at it, if there is no place for the people to go to get the treatment, the use of the drugs will not stop. Ms. Dinschel stated that she did not have a lot of money, but a partnership can be done and then it is up to the people to get the help. Ms. Dinschel stated that we needed to think outside the box. Ms. Dinschel stated that it is no different than getting the vaccine shots, why are people not doing it because they believe they are harmful to you and their kids, we need to get the voices out and heard and she will be glad to help because she wants a solution. Mr. Robertson stated that he loves this community and they do need to try and figure out this horrible problem and asks do we need more law enforcement. Mr. Robertson stated that the Bible says that idle hands are the devils work, we need a recreation center for our kids because there is nowhere for them to go. Mr. Robertson stated that people are always asking where the community center for Graham County is located and he is having to say we do not have one and we need to have programs here for our community and we need to channel other counties to see how they are doing it. Mr. Robertson stated that it takes a lot of money to fund this and to build and he understands the big question is where the money is going to come from, but we have ways here to get money for to build these places for our county. Mr. Robertson stated that some of the most beautiful river's flow in this county and we need to have the things for our children because we really have a big problem so what is the solution, we need to do something for our children and build more recreation centers and give them something to do.
17. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that there will be another meeting on Friday to meet with State Representatives and encourages everyone to attend. Mr. Odell stated that we all needed to work together and stated that we are the smallest county in North Carolina, and we are overlooked but we need to begin by asking our representatives for help. Mr. Odell thanked the board for the opportunity to speak.
18. Vice-Chairman Eller asks John Colwell with Revved up to speak. Mr. Colwell was not present.
19. Commissioner Cody made the motion to recess the meeting for fifteen minutes. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to go back into session. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
21. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for Manager Jason Marino to give the manager's report. Manager Marino stated that he attended the NCDOT Corridor K meeting and gave the details on the timeline for the proposed sections and stated that right of way acquisition is August 2021, and the actual project award will be August 2022.
22. Manager Marino stated that Finance Director Garland will have the rough draft of the budget by May 20th and the target date for the public hearing and adoption is by the June 15th Regularly scheduled meeting. Manager Marino gave the scheduled Budget Meeting Dates of May 21, May 28, June 4, and June 11th if needed.
23. Manager Marino stated that a draft assessment was provided on the Transfer Station Assessment by Jay Zimmerman, Regulatory Compliance Officer and it was noted that overall, the facility was well run with no significant issues. Manager Marino stated that we will receive a written report by the end of June.
24. Manager Marino stated that the Elementary School Gym has had apparent movement on the east side of the gym where the preschool is located. Manager Marino stated that the hardwood floor is buckling, the brick façade has cracks, and the windows are showing movement. Manager Marino stated that officials from the school felt it necessary to close the preschool and structural and civil/geotechnical engineers have been hired to perform masonry and soil testing. Manager Marino stated that the school is scheduling to remove flooring to give access to sonar

equipment to see what is happening under the structure and the estimated cost at this point is \$10,000.00.

25. Manager Marino stated that the new 2021 Mack Trash Truck was struck by lightning that caused electronic issues immediately and the company we purchased the truck from was notified immediately and we had it towed the same day to Shealy's Truck Center in Asheville. Manager Marino stated that from the initial inspection of just the truck, it appears to have two sensors bad, an ABS Sensor and a Speed Sensor, regarding the bed, the Packer is not working, and we are awaiting a scheduled inspection. Manager Marino stated that they have been in consultation with our insurance company and the repairs have been approved with Shealy's consent to proceed with the repairs.
26. Manager Marino stated the 21st Century Summer Camp is requesting the use of the pool as in the past and we have charged a fee of \$250.00. Manager Marino asks if the fee will remain the same. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the fee of \$250.00 for the summer camp as requested. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Manager Marino stated that he would now give an update on the projects in the county. Manager Marino stated that the Rural Development Authority received \$470,000.00 from the Dogwood Trust to proceed with the Moose Branch project. Manager Marino stated that due to the additional funds they can construct (13) affordable homes instead of (6) and they are very pleased. Manager Marino stated that the site prep has been bid out and the contract bid came in way higher than expected due to a building demo and an asbestos abatement, but they will continue to move forward.
28. Manager Marino stated that the Cemetery and Recreation Buildings are expected to be delivered in September and he is pleased with the progress.
29. Manager Marino stated that he received two quotes for the Board of Elections renovation and the demo is 90% complete with our staff and our inmate work program's hard work. Manager Marino stated that they did leave some walls until the contractor could assess the building and they will be plumbing for bathrooms. Manager Marino stated that the contract is to be completed in 100 days and the cost came in at \$54,600.00 for WNC Contracting Jeremy Lunsford for weekly amount of \$3400.00, full crew, (6) days a week. Manager Marino stated that if they run into issues with the plumbing, etc. the time can be extended if needed. Manager Marino stated that the second quote was from Mitch Crowe for \$4500.00 per week with labor. The board reviewed the contracts. Manager Marino stated that the county will be purchasing the materials. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to accept the lowest quote of WNC Contracting. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Manager Marino stated that he did receive three quotes for the site work on our metal buildings per our design and the quotes were: Graham County Land \$26,215.00; Lovin Construction \$11,700.00 for the Recreation Site; Graham County Land \$8,035.00; Lovin Construction \$6,500.00 for the Cemetery Site. Commissioner Wiggins asks if this cost will be in the next budget year. Director Garland stated that money was put into capital projects and will carry forward. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go with the lowest quote on both sites and award to Lovin Construction who was lowest on both projects. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Manager Marino stated that the new 6th grade wing at the school is under way and the metal building is complete and they are moving forward with the foundation at this time.
32. Manager Marino stated that the Justice Center is scheduled to go to contract by 2023 and reminded the board that this building takes time due to the dynamics of more than just court facilities. Manager Marino stated that the next phase is the design quotes which he anticipates could take up to one year. Commissioner Wiggins stated that it will be interesting to see the increases in materials within a one-year span. Manager Marino stated that it will go up a percentage each year and the current total is estimated at \$22M to \$24M.
33. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Finance Director Becky Garland to give the finance report. Director Garland stated that the board ended the month with a \$9,952,750.75 cash balance which is down from this time last year, but we have spent extra money on capital projects. Director Garland stated that we have \$2,181,125.89 in our Capital Projects account and \$114,170.19 in our School Capital Project account. Manager Garland stated that we are ahead \$782,000.00 from this time last year.
34. Director Garland stated that we have collected \$62,024.34 in current year taxes; \$19,946.53 in prior year taxes and \$65,310.48 in DMV taxes. Manager Garland stated that our year-to-date real tax collection is \$7,127,648.68 and our DMV is \$508,129.35. Director Garland stated that

our tax collection rate is 96.60% which is ahead from this time last year of 95.08% and we are ahead \$209,000.00 in collections at this time.

35. Director Garland stated that our revenues for the month of April was \$1,041,029.16 and our expenditures was \$1,712,053.41 for a deficit of \$671,024.25. Director Garland stated that our year-to-date revenues is \$15,316,974.88 and our expenditures is \$13,302,952.87 for a surplus of \$2,014,022.01.
36. Director Garland stated that our sales tax collection for the month of May is \$174,094.16 which is ahead from last year's collection of \$157,383.20. Director Garland stated that our sales tax collection has stayed healthy, and the total did not include the ¼ cent sales tax. Director Garland stated that we are up 16% in sales tax and was very pleased that people are buying local.
37. Director Garland stated that we have collected \$482,607.86 in past due taxes and the current amount of back taxes due is \$605,405.54. Director Garland stated that our tax office continues to work hard on tax collections.
38. Director Garland stated that our budget should be at 16% remaining and we are holding at 22%. Director Garland stated that some departments may appear hot but there is an explanation for the cause which is justified.
39. Director Garland stated that she did submit the American Rescue Act application and it was accepted. Director Garland stated that some of the money is very restricted and there are seventy-five pages of regulations that she must go through. Director Garland stated that the county will be receiving around \$1.63Million of which two are federal monies that will be highly restricted. Director Garland stated that the money can be used for Broadband, but it cannot be used to supplant revenue in the general fund. Director Garland asks that she be allowed to open a Special Revenue Account Fund for these funds. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to allow Director Garland to open a special account fund for the American Rescue Act Funds. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Director Garland presented an update from VAYA Health, and they currently have \$19,914,074.00 in spendable cash and this is good news because during COVID they were in the red in spendable cash. Director Garland stated that they received CARES ACT funds which allowed them to do better.
41. Director Garland stated that she did have an Amendment to the Graham County Procurement Policy which will now state that Graham County follows all requirements for procurements under Title 2, Subtitle A, Chapter II, Part 200 for grant administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for federal awards. Graham County follows requirements for CFR 200.320 – Methods of procurement to be followed for procurements to be made using federal funds. Director Garland stated that these requirements supersede any earlier procurement policies where federal funds are expended on any project of the County. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the amendment to the Graham County Procurement Policy. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Director Garland stated that she did receive the funding for the Snowbird Project, and they will have (220) days to complete the entire project. Director Garland stated that they did file an extension. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that the whole project should be completed by the end of November.
43. Commissioner Wiggins asks if the American Rescue monies could be used to supplant revenue in our budget. Director Garland stated that it can only supplant the loss of revenue between March 2019 – March 2020. Commissioner Wiggins stated that the sales tax collections on Occupancy Tax have increased, and we are very fortunate to see this during the pandemic.
44. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for public comment. Vice-Chairman Eller asks Hank Dinschel to speak. Ms. Dinschel stated that she emailed every commissioner with some concerns and only one commissioner responded. Ms. Dinschel stated that she did speak with Clerk Crisp concerning the sound at the meetings and she has been trying to listen to the meetings at home and you cannot hear. Ms. Dinschel stated that she cannot hear Vice-Chairman Eller or Commissioner Wiggins ever and it is very frustrating, and she has sent several emails asking that this be fixed. Ms. Dinschel stated that she wants to listen, and she will be going to the school board meetings as well because she is passionate about our county and what we are doing. Ms. Dinschel stated that we have a great administration, but she has complained about this issue before. Ms. Dinschel stated that she can hear Becky Garland, but she cannot hear Keith Eller or Dale Wiggins and she did send the emails and has yet to hear what would be done. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he and Commissioner Cody did respond to the email. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that he did not do email or text and Clerk Crisp can answer for him. Ms. Dinschel stated that she was

not here as a watchdog and she believes that the board members are nice people, but she does not trust anyone anymore. Ms. Dinschel stated that concerning the group that spoke on the drug issues, money is not the answer. Ms. Dinschel stated that people must be willing to seek help and Patrick Odell came and spoke with a lot of emotion and is asking the leaders of our county for a solution. Ms. Dinschel stated that Patrick Odell stated that God had provided for him but what about the non-faith people who do they go to and from what she hears the people expect it to be the leaders of the county which are the commissioners. Ms. Dinschel stated that we heard how easy it was to get drugs here and that group came to the leaders for help. Ms. Dinschel stated that she wants to listen to the meetings in her home and she is asking the board to work for "us" and do not follow the same protocols and please fix the sound because she has been asking for four months. Ms. Dinschel stated that these are her comments and if a member of the board does not want to work for the people, they need to get out of the commissioner seat and let someone else do the job and further asks that they do not play games and she wished them good will. Ms. Dinschel stated that she intends to be involved like a hurricane and she wants to see results and she knows that we live in a small county and to get the drug problem stopped you find the drug dealer. Ms. Dinschel stated that the statement was made that the drug issue speaks to corruption and you, our leadership, are called upon to fix the problem. Ms. Dinschel stated that what they have been told about the COVID virus is that there is a 96% success rate and wearing shields and masks is not the reason. Ms. Dinschel stated that we needed to do right and try to stop the drug problems but if corruption is involved, we needed to do something about it and if you do not then don't run for office next time and put people in those seats who will do the work and the same with our Nation, we need to put leaders in the office that will do what the people asks. Ms. Dinschel thanked the board for their time and asks again that the commissioners fix the sound problem. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that he ran for Sheriff and did not get elected because some will sell other people drugs to get them to vote against you, but he will help in any way that he can. Commissioner Wiggins stated that sometimes the people who make the statements "we need to" are the ones that will not do. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that he is tired of watching people die and cutting them out of cars because of drugs. Commissioner Cody stated that he has worked in the Rescue Squad for forty years and he has seen many young people die from drug use, and he knows places that can get treatment results, but we must go so far away for treatment that the ones that need the most help will not go because of the distance. Manager Marino stated that we will use the paper and Facebook to find ways for the meetings to be heard.

45. Vice-Chairman Eller stated that we would now go to the discussion items. Manager Marino stated that the phone that our paper is using needs a microphone that is external because a phone alone will pick up all the sound and he will get with the Graham Star to see if we can work together to find a solution. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he wanted a microphone with a base instead of the lapel microphone. Manager Marino stated that he will work on this request. Ms. Susan Kirkpatrick stated that she would love to be able to hear all the board and Clerk Crisp sends us emails of the meetings and she has total respect for this board, but they have been asking for four months. Commissioner Cody stated that we will figure something out and Clerk Crisp is reminding us of every meeting to put our mics on and he is working for the people. Ms. Kirkpatrick stated that she had to come to the meeting to speak because some of you do not do email and cell phones do not work in all parts of the county.
46. Manager Marino stated that we have Releases in the amount of \$1,360.57. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve the releases as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
47. Manager Marino asks for discussion to allow AT&T use of the Viper Tower on Wachacha Bald. Commissioner Cody stated that this needed to be done in closed session due to a contract being reviewed. The board agreed. Manager Marino stated that we will move this discussion to closed.
48. Manager Marino stated that Director Garland needed approval of the CDBG-COVID Duplications of Benefits Policy. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the policy as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
49. Manager Marino asks for approval of an Opioid Settlement and County Resolution for the State Settlement. Director Garland read the resolution to the board. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the resolution as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
50. Manager Marino stated that the county offices will be closed for the Memorial Day Holiday on May 31st.

51. Manager Marino asks about the NCACC Annual Conference. Clerk Crisp stated that Chair Orr usually attends but it would be a good idea to allow Manager Marino to attend and asks if Chair Orr is unable to attend if one of the other board members would be willing to go as well. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he would attend if Chair Orr could not.
52. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for new or old business. No new or old business.
53. 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 to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
54. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
55. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to grant leave without pay to Kay Rowland. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to allow the leave as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
56. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a FMLA extension for Cindy Raxter. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to grant the FMLA extension. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
57. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to grant leave without pay to Janet Orr. Clerk Crisp stated that Janet Orr had requested use of the leave without pay in the past, but she did not use the leave as requested the first time. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to allow the leave as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
58. Vice-Chairman Eller asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adjourn. 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