

Budget Meeting – May 15, 2024

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. for a budget meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC 28771. All board was present.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chairman Nelms stated that the board would now into budget discussions and asks Election Director Teresa Garland to speak. Director Garland stated that her budget did increase due to the number of election workers needed for the upcoming presidential election. Director Garland stated that early voting will be run (15) days and she will need to take over the community room during this time. Director Garland stated that her office is also in need of two more computers, and they must supply one more printer. Director Garland gave a shoutout to Kim Crisp for her help with ADP. Commissioner Cody asks if the lawsuits from Lake Santeetlah were over. Director Garland stated that they were, and this is the reason for the deduction in contingency. Chairman Nelms asks about the increases in salary and asks if this is solely for election day workers. Director Garland stated that the increase is for election workers only. Director Garland stated that in the last presidential election (3400) people voted early and she needed extra help. Director Garland stated that the workers would work in shifts, and she would use a different crew on Saturdays to eliminate the overtime.
4. Chairman Nelms ask Cody George, Chief Deputy to present the Sheriff/Jail Budget. Deputy George gave a copy of the budgets to the board which include a pay increase proposal. Deputy George stated that the increase is 4% for both the sheriff department and the jail. Deputy George stated that the county did not have a pay plan for their office to grow. Clerk Crisp stated that the county did have a pay plan in place and has for years. Deputy George asks for a copy of the plan. Deputy George stated that the staff cannot move forward without COLA's or merit raises. Deputy George stated that the surrounding counties are raising their pay ranges, and he is afraid that staff will leave if ours stays drastically lower. Deputy George explained the budget and any changes that were made. Deputy George stated that the evidence audit is going well, and they will be burning some stuff this week.
5. Deputy George stated that the jail budget did increase due to the high medical costs and the need for two new vehicles. Deputy George stated that there are seventeen full-time employees, and they are averaging (28 to 30) inmates per day. Deputy George stated that they keep some in-house, but the others are sent to other facilities and the ones that are held for safekeeping in Raleigh cost more. The board asks what the cost is to house the inmates out of county. Deputy George stated that it is running \$55.00 per inmate per day but the cost for Madison County is somewhat higher. Chairman Nelms asks what the state mandate is for the jail shifts. Deputy George stated that they must always have two detention officers per shift. Deputy George stated that during the day, they keep one inmate work program supervisor: two courthouse security officers and one admin officer plus a transport officer.
6. Chairman Nelms asks about the pool and recreation. Chairman Nelms stated that we are the only county that does not pay for parking and the board needed to consider this charge. The board had discussion of giving the county residents a pass and charging the out-of-town vehicles. The board agreed to formulate a policy. The board discussed recreation activities and the costs associated with each sport.
7. Chairman Nelms asks Wanda Hill, Senior Center Director and Melissa Crisp, Deputy Director to speak on the Senior Center Budget. Director Hill thanked the board for their patience in dealing with her sick husband and stated that she was back to work full time. Director Hill discussed the shortage in usable space at the center to keep a senior center of excellence and further stated that they are looking for outdoor activities to incorporate in such as shuffleboard, outside dining with umbrellas, etc. Director Hill stated that they are looking for grant money to help with the costs. Director Hill stated that the renovation is going well, and they have applied for more funding to purchase a generator. Deputy Director Crisp stated that they are also trying to start a donation closet for those not on Medicaid to help with the costs of depends, ensure, etc. The board all agreed that this is a much-needed service for those that fall through the cracks on funding streams.
8. Chairman Nelms asks for further questions. No further questions.
9. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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Jacob Nelms, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Natasha Williams, Vice-Chair, Graham County Commissioner

Lynn Cody, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Keith Eller Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board