

Regular Meeting – November 19, 2024

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular monthly meeting. All board members were present. Also, present Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board Kim Crisp; Finance Director Stacy Carpenter and Project Manager Jason Marino.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks Commissioner Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Nelms led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Nelms asks for changes to the agenda. Clerk Crisp asks that we add Item 5(a). Resolution for Five Point Motel; 10(l). Quote for clearing at P and J Road; 11(m). Permission to pay bill for school of \$2711.40 from sales tax funding; and 11(n). Payment to Attorney JK Coward for services rendered. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the minutes for Workshop and Regular October 15th, Public Hearing October 14th and Special Meeting October 8th. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Nelms asks for discussion or approval of the Resolution for North Carolina Department of Commerce Rural Building Reuse Funds Graham Motel Project. Commissioner Eller made the motion to adopt the resolution as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Chairman Nelms asks Brian Stevens, EM Director to speak. Director Stevens stated that he was here to present the updated Graham County Emergency Operations Plan which is a succession of plans designed to provide coordinated town, county, State, school system and other governmental agencies and voluntary organizations efforts prior to, during and after threat or actual natural or manmade technological disaster or hostile attack. Commissioner Eller made the motion to accept the update plan as presented by EM Director Brian Stevens. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Director Stevens stated that the county had been awarded a pass-through grant of \$73,000.00 with no match that will go to Buncombe County for equipment to be used in our region. The board all agreed to the pass-through grant.
9. Chairman Nelms asks Jason Marino, Project Manager to speak. PM Marino stated that he has a few items for discussion. PM Marino stated that they will be meeting with the school next week regarding the proposed design for the Justice Center and will be presenting a site evaluation for the Board of Education's review.
10. PM Marino stated that construction is underway and reporting at 92% complete for the Graham County Senior Center Kitchen Expansion, the walk-in refrigerator/freezer unit installation is complete and operational. PM Marino stated that the site work is continuing, and the storage building is scheduled to be delivered soon.
11. PM Marino stated that school stadium bleacher replacement is on pause now per the request of the Board of Education.
12. PM Marino stated that Jail project re-bid and we received on bid. PM Marino stated that the bid did contain an error, and he did send an email change however there was a (37%) escalation in pricing. PM Marino stated that the board has several options legally and they can negotiate or reject the one bid and do the work in house. Commissioner Orr made the motion to have the option to negotiate to discuss the project with the contractor and ask for a quote to complete the work with the budget as agreed upon and if the quote is higher, they would like an estimate provided of why and how much is the difference between the first and second bid. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote called. Commissioner Orr, Williams, Cody and Eller voted yes. Commissioner Nelms voted no. Motion carried four to one.
13. Chairman Nelms asks for the finance reporting. Clerk Crisp reported that Stacy Carpenter had a sick child and was unable to come to the meeting. Clerk Crisp stated that the audit work is continuing in the office, and they are making progress in the completion.
14. Chairman Nelms asks for public comment. Clerk Crisp stated that Michelle Shilet has signed in for public comment. Ms. Shilet stated that back in September she discussed trying to get another grocery store to come into the county and after the Hurricane Helene and the one store that we did have only accepting cash only, the county needs to do something. Ms. Shilet stated that she would like to pursue this project and create a team for support and backing and Josh Carpenter has offered to help as well. Commissioner Williams volunteered to sit on the committee. Ms. Shilet thanked the board for their help.

15. Ms. Shiplet stated that they did receive grant funding for digital literacy, and she wants the county to be involved in that as well. The board agreed to assist.
16. Chairman Nelms asks for discussion items. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the releases for \$1236.80 and for the discoveries of \$2337.22. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the releases and discoveries. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
17. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to approve the land purchase of \$230,000.000 for the new elementary school campus on the Beacher Orr properties. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the land purchase. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
18. Chairman Nelms gave the board a new contract with Valley River Humane Society to review.
19. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the following polls:
 - a. Activity Bus Payment for the school 10/24/24 for \$36,254.17
 - b. School survey for property purchase 10/31/24 for \$4800.00Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the poll for the activity bus. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve the polls for the school survey. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Chairman Nelms stated that Yuletide Ministries Christmas 2024 is needing donations and if anyone could donate, please call Ruby Turpin at 828.735.0032.
21. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to reappoint Billy Brown to the Travel and Tourism Board effective date 12/5/2024. Commissioner Williams made the motion to reappoint Billy Brown as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
22. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to reappoint Connie Orr and Dale Wiggins to the Travel and Tourism Board effective date 12/5/2024. Commissioner Cody made the motion to reappoint as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
23. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the Summary of Locally Mandated Regulatory Programs Environmental Health policies as presented with no changes since the last accreditation in 2019. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the policies as presented. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
24. Chairman Nelms asks for approval to lower the bid on the two surplus 2016 Ford Interceptor cars to \$3000.00 each minimum. Commissioner Eller made the motion to lower the price of the vehicle. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Chairman Nelms stated that the Annual NC Cooperative Extension Dinner is December 19th at 6:00 p.m. at the Smoky Mountain Mansion and the board is invited to attend. Commissioner Orr asks that if you attend to bring a side dish or dessert.
26. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to approve the clearing quote for the P and J property where the proposed AG Building will be located. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the clearing. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote called. Commissioner Nelms, Williams, Orr and Cody voted yes. Commissioner Eller voted no. Motion carried four to one.
27. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to pay an invoice for the school for \$2711.00 for City Lock Service. Commissioner Williams made the motion to pay the invoice. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
28. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to pay Coward and Hicks bill for \$26920.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion to pay the attorney bill as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 318.11(a)(1)(3)(5)(6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney client privilege, contracts and personnel. Commissioner Williams made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams made the motion as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Chairman Nelms asks for further discussion. Commissioner Eller made the motion to give every employee a \$5.00 per hour raise. Chairman Nelms calls for a second. No second. Motion failed for lack of second.
32. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Eller made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page for Regular Meeting Minutes November 19, 2024

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