

Emergency Meeting – July 18, 2025

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Friday, July 18, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street for an emergency meeting to discuss the Graham County Detention Facility. All board was present. Also present: Manager Brady Cody, Finance Director Stacy Carpenter, Chief Deputy Cody George. Attorney JK Coward and Clerk Kim Crisp was present at the teleconference.

1. Chair Smith called the meeting to order.
2. Chair Smith asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chair Smith stated that the board is here to discuss things that have been brought to their attention regarding the safety of the employees who work at the Jail. Chair Smith noted the Sheriff's absence and asked Chief Deputy Cody George if the Sheriff feels that the employees or the inmates are unsafe. Chief George stated that there are definitely some issues, but that question would need to be answered by the Sheriff. Chair Smith stated that the board wanted to know if they needed to do a temporary closure so PM Marino can carry through with the remediation in the Jail. Commissioner Cody stated that if we close the jail we will not be able to reopen until it is brought up to the new standards. Chair Smith asks if we have a plan about closing the jail for the repairs. Chief Cody stated that they would work with the commissioners, but they must keep staff there. Commissioner Orr asks if you can tape off rooms while the remediation is ongoing. PM Marino stated that they would phase the work and start with the jail intake area where the windows and doors are the worst. Chief Cody stated that they have to keep process here. Attorney Coward stated that the commissioners have knowledge of the repairs needed and if the inspector is aware some type of remediation would have to be allowed for the Jail to close temporarily and then be reopened. Attorney Coward stated that all inmates would have to be removed. PM Marino stated that it is possible to do the work with the staff being relocated. The board discussed how this would look. Chief Cody stated that the staff could not work during the sandblasting. PM Marino stated that everyone thought sandblasting would have to be done but when the report came in the lead was only located where the steel vaults are and Carolina Abatement included this area in their quote. Chair Smith asks if the administration is away from that area. Chief Cody stated that booking is in the actual office where the abatement will be done. Chair Smith asks if there are no other areas available that the staff could be located. Commissioner Orr asks if they could move to the Sheriffs Department. Commissioner Cody stated that they could temporarily use the offices where the magistrates are located. The board all agreed that the repairs would have to be done on non-court days. The board asks PM Marino the timeline for the repairs. PM Marino stated that for the lead and chemical two to three days and for the painting an extra two to three days so a maximum of five to seven days. Chair Smith asks that Sheriff Hoxit give the board his opinion on whether this can be done and if he feels that the employees are in a safe environment.
4. Chair Smith stated that this board wants to ensure that the inmates and the staff are kept safe, especially since black mold has been mentioned. Chief Cody stated that he was not made aware of black mold, but the staff have had twelve years of frustration and buildup. PM Marino stated that he will get the total cost by the August meeting and will minimize the hazard areas to do the booking area first, but it is unsafe during renovations, and they would not allow employees in that area during that time period.
5. Chair Smith asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143.318.11(a)(1)(3) for privileged or confidential information and attorney client privilege. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chair Smith asks for a motion to reopen the emergency meeting. Commissioner Williams made the motion as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. The board spoke with Chief George again and he stated that the Sheriff did not have a good answer, and it would take planning.
8. Chair Smith asks if the employees and inmates are safe or not in Chief George's opinion. Chief George stated that he did not know but this has been decades and PM Marino knows more than he does but if the jail has to close temporarily some staff would have to be temporarily laid off.
9. Commissioner Williams asks if the staff would take a lay off.

10. Chief George stated that Sheriff Hoxit did not have an answer whether it was safe or not.
11. Commissioner Williams asks if Chief George could make that decision would he feel they are safe or not. Chief George stated that he could not say yes or no.
12. Chair Smith stated that Sheriff Hoxit did not have any input or declines to participate in working on remediation so what is the path forward. Attorney Coward stated that the board needs to say that they tried to have discussion with the Sheriff concerning this matter and he refused or chose not to act concerning the jail.
13. Commissioner Cody stated that they are willing to relocate the staff during the remediation.
14. Chair Smith asks what the next steps are. Chief George stated that he would look at the calendar with the Sheriff and try to get input on whether he feels it is safe or not. Chair Smith stated that we have limited resources but asks that PM Marino go to jail and investigate the black mold allegation. Commissioner Nelms stated that the repair is to the windowsills and doors, correct. PM Marino stated that is correct. Chair Smith asks if the health department can investigate the black mold. Commissioner Nelms stated no that they did not do that investigation.
15. Chair Smith asks that she and her fellow commissioners, PM Marino and Chief George go to jail and see what the issues are. Chief George stated that the employees have fourteen years of frustration, and the employees have continuously asked for remedies. Chief George stated that their Administration Assistant Dusti Cox and Chief Jailor Kenneth Hyde are the best people to speak with concerning the jail. Commissioner Orr stated that this board is committed to the safety of the employees and the inmates.
16. Chair Smith asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Meggan Smith, Chair, Graham County Commissioner

Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Natasha Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board