

Regular Meeting – March 18, 2025

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, March 18, 2025, 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: Meggan Smith, Lynn Cody, Connie Orr and Natasha Williams. Board absent: Jacob Nelms. Also present: Stacy Carpenter, Finance Director; Kim Crisp, Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board.

1. Chair Smith called the meeting to order.
2. Chair Smith asks Commissioner Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chair Smith asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chair Smith asks for changes to the agenda. Clerk Crisp asks that under Item 10 we add Jacob Anderson for contracts. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chair Smith asks for approval of the minutes for Special Meeting 2/3; Public Meeting 2/10; Workshop and Regular meetings 2/18; Budget Meetings 2/24 and 2/25. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chair Smith asks Stacy Carpenter, Finance Director, to speak. Director Carpenter stated that she did have one budget amendment for the board's review. Budget Amendment #8 to amend the general fund the appropriations line-item changes. Chair Smith made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #8 as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Director Carpenter gave a reminder to the board to complete their Local Government Training with LGC by April 15, 2025.
8. Director Carpenter stated that our budget to actual reports and a review of the draft budget ordinance by April 15, 2025. Director Carpenter stated that per Beverly Stroud, our finance consultant, our FY 2022-2023 Audit should be ready by April 15th. Director Carpenter stated that our FY 2023-2024 Audit fieldwork is being worked on to be submitted when the FY 2022-2023 is completed.
9. Director Carpenter stated that our income for the month of February is \$1,202,157.04 for a year to date of \$16,235,123.32 and our expenditure for the months is \$1,649,338.98 for a year-to-date total of \$14,767,344.40.
10. Director Carpenter stated that our property tax collection for February is \$255,401.41 with prior years of \$15,533.85 for a total collection of \$8,639,328.85 with a balance to be collected of \$620,722.59. Director Carpenter stated that our collection rate is 93.30%.
11. Director Carpenter stated that sales tax collection for January is \$304,296.15 with year-to-date collections of \$2,170,960.39. Director Carpenter stated that our sales tax set aside year to date for the schools is \$454,315.15 with an available balance of \$229,977.88 to be used.
12. Director Carpenter stated that our ¼ cent set aside collection for January is \$23,945.52 with a total to date of \$1,605,521.48.
13. Director Carpenter stated that our vehicle tax collections for February are \$58,913.78 with a year to date of \$453,392.58.
14. Chair Smith asks for public comment. Commissioner Cody stated that he wanted to give an update on a couple of things. Commissioner Cody attended a workshop given by the League of Municipalities and wanted to update the board on the claims filed. Commissioner Cody stated that law enforcement is up 42%; public works is up 27%; and the number of claims filed by the police and sheriff departments was (921) claims with is up 262% due to the cost factor on the repair of the vehicles. Commissioner Cody stated that vehicles hitting wildlife have increased and the deductible is going to \$10,000.00. Commissioner Cody stated that they are suggesting brush guards be installed on the vehicles. Commissioner Cody stated that young adults are not getting their driver's license until age 18 or older and now we need to be looking at background checks and checking the driving status for the employees. Commissioner Cody stated that the cost of increase is around 11.25% increase, but workers' compensation is showing a decrease of 4% to 8%.
15. Commissioner Cody stated that Stecoah Valley Fire and Rescue did buy a new truck for the department that was purchased using the LATCF funds and he ensured that those funds were used for the departments. Commissioner Cody stated that they cannot buy new trucks, but they did purchase one from Kentucky with 40,000 miles. Commissioner Cody stated that these states have fire tax that helps with the purchases. Commissioner Cody stated that they did pay for the truck, and it is much larger than the previous truck that was

37 years old. Commissioner Cody stated that our new truck will hold more water than our previous one and they will be able to provide mutual aid for our neighboring counties.

16. Commissioner Orr thanked Kim Crisp for helping to get our Veteran Flag back up.
17. Bill Flannigan asks the board if they can do something about the traffic on Highway 28. Mr. Flannigan stated that these demons come through Tuskegee and Stecoah doing well over 100 miles per hour and stated that we needed radar enforcement on that road. Mr. Flannigan stated that the number of wrecks has increased, and they don't seem to care if they hit people. Commissioner Williams attested to the traffic on Highway 28 as well. Chair Smith stated that she would speak with the Sheriff.
18. Editor Kevin Hensley asks if we have updates on the Justice Center. Chair Smith stated that she did talk about the center in the workshop session, and they do have a new site that they are looking at and made a motion to allow her to speak with the landowners regarding this site on Tallulah. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote was unanimous. Chair Smith stated that to the public it may seem that this board is not working on a justice center, but this board is actively working to obtain the best site.
19. Chair Smith stated that the board would now go to the discussion items. Chair Smith asks for a motion to approve the Releases of \$4287.11 and the Discoveries of \$2063.07. Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Chair Smith asks for an update on the Veteran Flag and the Courthouse Flag. Interim Manager Crisp stated that Brian Stevens has Cherokee County Fire and Rescue to assist with the Veteran Flag and she asks that she be allowed to feed the crew for doing the work pro bono. The board agreed. Interim Manager Crisp stated that we did hire a company to help install the courthouse flag due to the weight of the outriggers that would be placed on the marble.
21. Chair Smith asks for a motion to approve the Animal Refuge Invoice and to allow the finance officer to pay for the invoices as they come in instead of making quarterly installments. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
22. Chair Smith asks for approval of the Safe-T-Works User Agreement for Transit and General Employee Drug Testing. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve. Chair Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
23. Chair Smith asks for a motion to approve the updated Transit Policies: Complaints and Resolution Procedures Policy; Operations Policy; Title VI Program Plan and the Transit Driver Handbook. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the policies as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
24. Chair Smith asks for a motion to approve the Board of Equalization and Review meeting dates. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Chair Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Chair Smith stated that the audit had to be turned over to the Local Government Commission by April 15th and asks for a meeting to finalize the budget. The board agreed Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
26. Chair Smith asks for a motion to appoint Libby Ensley and Randy Moody to the Tri-County Community College Board members. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Chair Smith asks for discussion on the public playground. Interim Manager Crisp stated that needles were found where the needle boxes were located at the bathroom. Manager Crisp stated that they did find the person who reached into the box to retrieve the needles, and he is banned from the playground. The board did not like the needle boxes being installed, although they understood the reasoning but wanted them removed. The board wanted to obtain pricing for new fencing and see if D.R. Phillips could supply some riff raff for the embankment.
28. Commissioner Orr stated that we needed to do something about the dumpster site at the transfer station. Commissioner Orr stated that the hole continues to grow, and this needed to be fixed. Interim Manager Crisp stated that she did get pricing, and the cost is around \$30k to redo the pad. The board also gave a directive to move forward on the Snowbird Road Dumpster Site reopening.
29. Chair Smith asks for a motion to allow leave without pay for A Brooks for a wedding planned prior to hire. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Chair Smith asks Josh Carpenter for an EDC update. Director Carpenter stated that he is actively seeking small business recruitment for the Stanley site and has contacted several sources of interested companies. Director Carpenter stated that they have been speaking with small businesses, and they are in the process of small business grants. Commissioner

Orr stated that it is critical that we keep the small business grants going for job retention of our small businesses.

31. Chair Smith 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 Williams made the motion as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Commissioner Williams made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Cody seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Chair Smith made the motion to allow for an FMLA Extension for S Adams, who is not considered a key employee. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. 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