

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, May 20, 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 Manager Brady Cody, Finance Director Stacy Carpenter, Project Manager Jason Marino, Attorney JK Coward and Clerk to the Board Kim Crisp.

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. Manager Cody asks that we add Item 10(m) new or old business for Work Comp & Liability Insurance; Josh Carpenter, Mountain West Partnership and Item 14 needs to be changed from adjournment to continue until June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated change. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chair Smith asks for approval of the minutes for: Workshop 1/21; Special Meeting 3/11; Workshop and Regular 3/18; Budget Meeting 3/25; Special Budget Meeting 4/2; Budget Meeting 4/8 and Workshop and Regular 4/15. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chair Smith asks TD Hill with RH Accounting to speak by teleconference. Mr. Hill thanked the board for their time and for their partnership with the county. Mr. Hill stated that things are very close for the FY 22/23 Audit and things are going really well, the staff has been doing a great job with Beverly Stroud, Paula Loftin and Stacey Carpenter and her team. Mr. Hill stated that they will be completed very soon, just a couple of items to talk about, there is a material weakness in the closing process, which is a significant deficiency, but those corrections have been adjusted to find a clean opinion. Commissioner Cody asks if there is a corrective action plan in current processes. Mr. Hill stated that yes, the processes have been corrected, and they did note that the office was not fully staffed nor fully trained but basically the corrective plans are basically being implemented now as we move forward. The board thanked Mr. Hill for the reporting and would see him on June 3<sup>rd</sup> to present the audit in person and answer any questions. Commissioner Cody asks if a draft will be provided prior to the meeting. Mr. Hill stated that he would get the board before the meeting.
7. Chair Smith asks for public comment. No public comment.
8. Chair Smith Project Manager Jason Marino for the project manager's report. PM Marino gave an update on the projects beginning with the Justice Center sites. PM Marino stated that the design is underway, and we are awaiting the site decision.
9. PM Marino stated that the Jail Abatement is awaiting budget releases.
10. PM Marino stated that the EMS Base asphalt paving is awaiting budget releases, but they are still looking for grants, etc. to help with the cost.
11. PM Marino stated that the Dogwood Health Trust Homes are beginning and the property on 243 Orr Branch Road demolition is complete, footers and concrete have been placed, and the project is 19% complete.
12. PM Marino stated that the home on 66 Atoah Road is commencing with storage containers being placed on the property and the structure is ready for demolition.
13. PM Marino stated that the Moose Branch Subdivision Azalea Hills home is set to start in spring with the high school doing the construction of the home.
14. PM Marino stated that the Cemetery Commission had (2) sets of concrete steps replaced at the Santeetlah Cemetery and the project is 100% complete.
15. PM Marino stated that the Sanitation Department Improvements are still pending fundings, but they did add ABC Stone to the parking lot to fill the pothole which is a huge improvement. PM Marino stated that building replacement is considered a priority and hopes this is in the upcoming budget. Chair Smith asks if the staff can assist with the site work and PM Marino stated yes, we do have staff available.
16. PM Marino stated that he submits all project invoices for the aforementioned projects including the RDA Project in Azalea Hills.
17. Chair Smith asks Stacy Carpenter, Finance Director, to give the monthly financial reporting. Director Carpenter stated that she did have a budget amendment for the board's review and approval. Budget Amendment #13 includes intra departmental transfer of funds and includes a revenue increase of \$150.00 to the senior center. Chair Smith made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #13 as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

18. Director Carpenter stated that she continues to have her Local Government Commission UAL monthly follow up meetings with Tim Greene and she submitted the draft budget for review to the Local Government Commission.
19. Director Carpenter stated that our auditors continue with their requests for additional information and the anticipated date of filing with LGC was April 30<sup>th</sup>. but it was postponed and the meeting to present to the board was postponed. Director Carpenter stated that she received notification in writing yesterday that they would finalize by May 30<sup>th</sup> and potentially submit it to the board June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Director Carpenter stated that the FY 2023/2024 audit fieldwork is being worked on to be submitted when FY 22/23 is completed.
20. Director Carpenter stated that our income for April is \$1,153,413.29 with a year to date of \$18,694,263.94 and our expenditures for April are \$1,736,815.62 with a year to date of \$18,292,843.87.
21. Director Carpenter stated that our tax collections for current year are \$141,557.54; our prior year \$14,610.34 with a total collection of \$8,920,650.30 with a remaining collection of \$341,304.06. Director Carpenter stated that our tax collection rate is 96.31%.
22. Director Carpenter stated that our sales tax collection is \$244,038.43 with a year to date of \$2,649,686.62. Director Carpenter stated that our school allocation is \$47,830.00 for a total collection of \$549,539.49 and a remaining balance of \$103,633.20. Director Carpenter stated that our ¼ cent collection for public safety is \$19,739.93 with a total to date of \$1,643,192.77.
23. Director Carpenter stated that DMV collections are \$70,126.49 with a year to date of \$594,296.83.
24. Director Carpenter asks for questions from the board and public. No questions.
25. Chair Smith asks Manager Cody to give the discussion items. Manager Cody presented the FY 2025/2026 Budget Ordinance to the board with Director Carpenter and stated that our total operating budget for FY 2025-2026 is \$25,453,201.00 and our ad valorem tax rate is \$.059 which is the same as last year. Manager Cody stated that the draft was submitted to the Local Government Commission, and they recognized additional revenue, so those changes were made and added to contingency. Manager Cody stated that the public hearing will be held June 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. if the board agrees. Commissioner Williams made the motion to hold a public hearing on June 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community building. Chair Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
26. Manager Cody asks for a motion to accept the annual Pay Plan Resolution with no changes. Commissioner Cody made the motion to accept the Graham County Pay Plan as presented. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Manager Cody asks for approval of the 2025-2026 Holiday Schedule. Chair Smith made the motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
28. Manager Cody stated that the Graham County Fire Department is selling a 1987 Ford Fire Truck, and the board needs to surplus the truck because it is titled in Graham County's name. Commissioner Williams made the motion to surplus the 1987 Ford Fire Truck. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Manager Cody asks for approval for the surplus funds from the sale of the 1987 Ford Fire Truck to be designated to the Graham County Fire Department. Commissioner Orr made the motion to designate the funds as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Manager Cody asks for approval for his attendance at the sealed bid opening on June 9<sup>th</sup> to accept the bid for the 1987 Ford Fire truck, run an ad in the paper and present the results at the June 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Manager Cody asks if the board wanted to participate in the Beaver Management Assistance Program with a fee of \$6000.00. Commissioner Orr made the motion not to participate. Chair Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Manager Cody asks for approval of the releases of \$1321.09 and the discoveries of \$1778.32. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Chair Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Manager Cody gave updates on the Sanitation dumpster site and discussed a proposed fee increase on the commercial pick-up services. Manager Cody presented two options, and the board chose option 2. Commissioner Cody made the motion to accept proposal #2 which is In-town \$60.00 per can and out of town \$85.00 per can with a potential gain of \$37,440.00. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Manager Cody stated that he needed approval of the Transit and Senior Center Conflict of Interest Policy. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the policy as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

35. Manager Cody asks if the board would be willing to waive pool fees during the two-day Heritage Festival. Commissioner Williams made the motion to waive the fees as in-kind for the festival. Chair Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Manager Cody stated that the county did receive a bid on the 2008 Ford Truck Vin#94158. Chair Smith opened the bid from Packy Evans for \$500.00. Chair Smith made the motion to accept the \$500.00 bid from Packy Evans. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Manager Cody stated that he was asked to sign a letter of support concerning the Investment Readiness Accelerator Project proposed by Mountain West Partnership. The board wanted to review the letter.
38. Manager Cody asks Clerk Crisp to discuss the insurance. Clerk Crisp stated that she had not intended to quote the insurance out this year but was approached by a local vendor to submit a quote. Clerk Crisp stated that the company gave a quote on Work Comp Insurance but did not quote the Liability. Clerk Crisp stated that NCACC was the lowest quote on both insurances and asks that the board accept the NCACC Quotes for both Work Comp and Liability. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the NCACC quotes for WC and Liability. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
39. Chair Smith asks for public comment. Bill Flannigan stated that the construction on the mountain is hurting the businesses in Graham County, he had to wait 45 minutes in traffic and that is causing people from the Stecoah side of the county to go to Bryson City to shop. Commissioner Orr stated that the project started in 1965 and was never initiated for Graham County and the board was approached that if we did not agree to a super two highway the funds would be spent on Interstate 26 so the board felt that any improvements that we could get would be better than nothing and yes it is very time consuming and aggravating to incoming traffic but she remembers a time when the road was so bad that the roads were completely closed if wrecks occurred. Commissioner Orr stated that the super two we will have passing and pulled off lanes which will allow traffic flow. Chair Smith stated that she has had many complaints as well and looks forward to completion.
40. 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 Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Chair Smith asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams made the motion as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Chair Smith asks for a motion to grant leave without pay to Lisa Hedden. Chair Smith made the motion as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Chair Smith asks for a motion to grant Abraham Husmillo leave without pay contingent that no leave is used from his current balance. Chair Smith made the motion as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
44. Chair Smith asks that Manager Cody put the commissioner's signature lines on the letter of support for Mountain West Partnership and present at the next meeting.
45. Chair Smith asks for a motion to change the payrates for S.Lasater and M. Silvers due to their obtaining certifications as presented by EM Director Brian Stevens. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Chair Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
46. Chair Smith asks for a motion to continue the meeting until June 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building. Commissioner Williams made the motion as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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Meggan Smith, Chair, Graham County Commissioner

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Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Natasha Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board