

GRAHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building, located at 196 Knight Street, Robbinsville, North Carolina, for their regular monthly meeting.

Board Members Present: Meggan Smith, Chair; Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman; Jacob Nelms; and Natasha Williams.

Board Member Present by Teleconference: Connie Orr.

Also Present: Brady Cody, County Manager; Stacy Carpenter, Finance Director; and Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Smith called the meeting to order.

2. INVOCATION

Chair Smith asked Commissioner Cody to give the invocation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Smith asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Manager Cody requested that Item 6A, Nikki Stewart – AG Center, and Item 6B, Commissioner Lynn Cody, be added; Item 8f, Justice Center, be removed; and Item 8g, Animal Control Board, be added.

Chair Smith asked for approval of the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Nelms seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chair Smith asked for approval of the September 1, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Nelms made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Cody seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Smith called for public comment. There was no public comment.

A. Nikki Stewart – Agricultural Center

Chair Smith asked Nikki Stewart to speak regarding the proposed Agricultural and Multipurpose Event Center. Ms. Stewart stated that she wanted to be transparent with the Board regarding the newly proposed AG Center and presented a progress update and Phase 1 working budget.

Ms. Stewart stated that the Agricultural and Multipurpose Event Center is currently in the site planning, engineering, and Phase 1 cost-development stage. The project is being structured to move toward a spring 2027 groundbreaking while meeting the September 2027 NCDA grant expenditure deadline.

Ms. Stewart stated that Phase 1 will include a 200' x 200' covered arena/building, site preparation, foundation, erection of the building, and the minimum infrastructure necessary to legally and safely operate the facility without limiting its use. She stated that the timeline is set for an early spring 2027 groundbreaking.

Ms. Stewart discussed the proposed budget and funding sources with the Board, which include:

- NCDA Grant – \$398,000.00
- Required County Match – \$119,000.00, with an unofficial secured private sponsor willing to provide the match
- Possible Graham County Travel and Tourism donation – amount to be determined

Ms. Stewart discussed the next immediate steps, which include finalizing the scope of the project and budget; seeking an official partnership with Graham County Travel and Tourism; financing the building and site design; finalizing written quotes for dirt work, foundation, building, and erection; finalizing project costs by the end of 2026; and continuing to provide progress updates to the Board.

Chair Smith thanked Ms. Stewart for the update and information and stated that Ms. Stewart is working very hard and that she appreciates the phased approach.

Manager Cody stated that he is working with Ms. Stewart regarding the civil engineer to ensure that the building is designed and constructed in a cost-efficient manner.

Amber Benton, Assistant Director of Graham County Travel and Tourism, stated that they are awaiting final numbers from Ms. Stewart and will provide gap funding.

The Board expressed appreciation for the proposed multi-use building and the update.

Ms. Stewart thanked the Board for their time.

B. Commissioner Lynn Cody

Chair Smith asked Commissioner Cody to speak. Commissioner Cody stated that he served on the jury the previous week and that the heat in the courthouse was unbearable. He stated that people were complaining and asking if some type of air conditioning could be installed to alleviate the heat upstairs and downstairs. Commissioner Cody stated that some of the older jurors indicated that the extreme heat was making them sick.

Manager Cody stated that he would try to find a reasonable solution. He noted that, with the County planning to build a new Justice Center, the County would not want to install expensive permanent units in the existing courthouse, but he would try to find a suitable solution.

7. STACY CARPENTER, FINANCE DIRECTOR – FINANCE REPORT

Chair Smith asked Finance Director Carpenter to present the finance report.

Director Carpenter presented three budget amendments to the Board:

- **Budget Amendment #19** – Sheriff Fleet Management – \$28,000.00
- **Budget Amendment #20** – Healthy Communities – \$1,600.00
- **Budget Amendment #21** – Fund 50 – \$86,000.00

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the budget amendments as presented. Commissioner Nelms seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

Director Carpenter stated that the current budget to date is \$23,060,238.31. Revenues to date are \$2,399,082.05, and expenditures to date are \$3,083,503.18. Director Carpenter explained that the County pays large expenses, such as insurance and dues, in July, which accounts for the higher expenditures. Expenditure exceeded revenues by \$684,421.13.

Director Carpenter reported that tax collections for the month were \$516,518.13; Vehicle Tax System (VTS) collections were \$67,572.89; sales tax collections were \$351,917.12; and ¼-cent sales tax collections were \$32,176.20.

Director Carpenter stated that the schools' sales tax portion for the month was \$64,521.63, with a current balance of \$776,827.27. The school has requested a draw of \$75,807.34, pending the expenditure, which will leave a balance of \$701,019.93.

Director Carpenter stated that Local Government Commission Coach Tim Greene will be on site September 24, 2026, and advised that the Board may attend.

Director Carpenter stated that the audit draft should be received soon, with plans to file by October 31, 2026. The FY 2025/26 audit is scheduled to be filed by March 31, 2027.

Commissioner Cody asked about the increase in fuel costs and how it may affect County departments. Director Carpenter stated that she and Manager Cody are keeping a close watch on the individual line items. At this time, all departments are at their ideal percentages, and additional funds will be allocated as needed rather than in advance.

Commissioner Williams stated that they anticipate the fuel lines will exceed budget. Director Carpenter stated that she will continue to monitor the fuel expenses and report back to the Board at the next meeting.

8. BRADY CODY, COUNTY MANAGER – MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Christmas Decorations

Approval of the poll for Christmas decorations by the Sunshine Committee was considered. Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve. Commissioner Cody seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

B. Releases and Discoveries

Approval of Releases in the amount of \$2,233.52 and Discoveries in the amount of \$494,231.34 were considered.

Chair Smith made a motion to approve the Releases and Discoveries as presented. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

C. Proposed Graham County Seal

The Board reviewed the newly proposed Graham County Seal. The Board requested feedback from county residents.

D. Vaya Board Confirmation of Board Member

Manager Cody stated that the Vaya Board is being restructured and is requesting the appointment of a Board member to serve. Commissioner Connie Orr and Commissioner Lynn Cody currently serve on the boards.

Manager Cody stated that Commissioner Connie Orr will be leaving the Board of Commissioners in November but has been asked to remain on the Vaya Board as a qualified member.

Chair Smith made a motion to appoint Commissioner Lynn Cody to the Vaya Commission Board seat and appoint Commissioner Connie Orr to the advisory committee. Commissioner Nelms seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

E. Justice Center Update

The Justice Center update was discussed during the workshop session. A meeting will be scheduled the following week with COPE Architects.

F. Animal Control Board

Manager Cody stated that there have been numerous incidents involving dangerous dogs and that the County's ordinance provides for an appeals process. He stated that the Board needs to make appointments to the Animal Control Board.

Commissioner Williams requested that the Animal Control Board be added to the list of County boards and that the County determine whether residents are interested in serving.

Chair Smith asked whether the County had received much feedback regarding board appointments. Clerk Crisp stated that the County had received some feedback but had not previously listed the Animal Control Board.

The Board requested that the Animal Control Board be added to the list of boards for which residents may express interest in serving.

9. CLOSED SESSION

Chair Smith stated that the Board would enter closed session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1), (3), (5), and (6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney-client privilege, contracts, and personnel matters.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to enter closed session as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

10. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Chair Smith asked for a motion to return to open session. Commissioner Williams made a motion to return to open session. Commissioner Cody seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

11. BUSINESS FROM CLOSED SESSION

Chair Smith asked for a motion to approve the September 1, 2026, Closed Session Minutes. Commissioner Cody made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

Chair Smith asked for a motion to approve the 2026 Employee Evaluation for Angela (Angie) Knight, Interim Health Director. Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the evaluation. Commissioner Cody seconded the motion. Vote unanimous.

Manager Cody requested permission to apply for a Starlink Grant, which would provide mini Starlink units for County departments to use. The Board agreed to allow Manager Cody to apply for the grant.

12. ADJOURN

Chair Smith asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded the 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