

Regular Meeting – September 19, 2017

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, September 19, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. All board was present.

1. Chairman Eller called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Nelms to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Eller asks for changes and/or approval of the agenda. Manager Garland stated that we needed to add Keith Rogers, NCDOT as number 5A. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated change. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Eller asks for a motion to approve the minutes for the Regular Meeting – September 5<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Eller asks Keith (Beefy) Rogers to speak. Commissioner Orr stated that she had asked Mr. Rogers to come tonight to discuss the speed limit on Buffalo Road and hear what the citizens have to say. Mr. Rogers stated that he did asphalt and paving for NCDOT and was not in the division for speed limits but he would be glad to relay the message to the division. Commissioner Orr stated that the complaint is a section of Hwy 143 that suddenly drops to 30 mph from 45 mph and stays 30 mph all the way to the Cherohala Skyway. Commissioner Orr stated that a lot of our local citizens are receiving tickets through this area and being stopped by tribal officers and they are not happy. Chairman Eller stated that the local people feel that they are being picked on because they are not stopping motorcycles and it has not slowed the motorcycles down. Commissioner Orr stated that she understands this was done because of the fatalities on this road. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he would like a resolution to be made to raise the speed limit on NC Highway 143 from Buffalo Baptist Church on Snowbird Road and continue to West Buffalo Bridge after the Big Snowbird turn off to Santeetlah Road, NC Highway 143 to 45 mph. Additionally we request that the speed limit on state road known locally as Big Snowbird Road (SR 1120) be set at 45 mph from NC Highway 143 to the end of the state maintained paved portion of the road known as Little Snowbird Road. Commissioner Nelms stated that he has been hearing the same complaints from our local people. Mr. Rogers stated that this is part of the Safety Signage Program and the Cherohala Skyway is part of the study but he will gladly take the concerns back to Brian Burch.
7. Commissioner Orr stated that Mr. Rogers can update us on the paving of the Old Mother Cemetery. Mr. Rogers stated that this road is SR1210 and the state will repave this road in the spring. Mr. Rogers stated that the interior roads are too narrow for their equipment to be used and they could not take on that liability. Mr. Rogers stated that the size of the roads is 8 feet. Chairman Eller stated that the interior roads was not in bad shape and they seem pretty solid. Chairman Eller stated that our best option is to gravel these areas. Commissioner Wiggins also stated that the interior roads was in good shape. The board thanked Mr. Rogers for the information.
8. Chairman Eller asks for the finance report. Manager Garland stated that we ended the month of August with a cash balance of \$6,948,708.68 which is one million ahead of last year. Manager Garland stated that she is thankful for this amount due to our fronting the money for the new 911 Call Center. Manager Garland stated that it has taken her two months to get \$300,000.00 from the 911 Board but hopes that the contract person has been made and the repayments will come in more quickly from this point forward.
9. Manager Garland stated that we received \$375,504.91 for property taxes current and prior and received \$44,469.81 in DMV. Manager Garland stated that we are tracking a little behind at this time and feels that this has a lot to do with the escrow payments. Manager Garland stated that our tax collection rate is 16.29% which is below the 17.84% last year at this time.
10. Manager Garland stated that we had revenues of \$1,232,982.03 and expenditures of \$934,015.23 giving us a surplus of \$298,966.80 for the month and a year to date surplus of \$506,035.93.

11. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax collection was \$166,930.62 which is \$62,000.00 ahead from this time last year and stated that the school will be receiving \$11,602.04 of this money.
12. Manager Garland stated that the tax office is still working on the back tax collections and since 2013 we have received \$573,614.45.
13. Manager Garland stated that our budget is holding strong at 83% and most departments are above the preferred amount and the ones who are running hot have a reason.
14. Manager Garland stated that she would now go into the manager's report. Manager Garland stated that the PILT Fly in was for the most part a success. The team was comprised mostly of county commissioner from the western states, many of whose counties are 80% or more USFS or BLM lands. Manager Garland stated that it was good to have a representative from the east coast to participate. Our challenges are quite similar, however, with loss of revenue and struggles to provide the essential services on a small tax base. Manager Garland stated that she visited with Mark Meadows and his staff, as well as staff for Senators Burr and Tillis and she worked with congressional representatives from Illinois, Missouri and Kanas. In addition to advocating for PILT to be a permanent budgetary authorization, we advocated for the return of SRS. Manager Garland stated that she is hopeful for the PILT but not for SRS. Manager Garland stated that this will hurt our school systems. Manager Garland stated that NACO has provided some sample Op Ed material as well as advocacy letters and with the board's permission she will send out some information to the press and will be sending some additional advocacy information to our representatives as the vote gets closer. Manager Garland stated that our schools had requested \$630,000.00 and the county gave \$570,000.00 and put the difference of \$60,000.00 in contingency and she is requesting that we release this amount to the schools at this time. Manager Garland stated that we received \$82,457.56 in sales tax under the expansion and would like to release these funds to the school as well. Preliminary discussions with the schools reveal that the loss of the SRS funds placed them into a budget crunch. Manager Garland stated that she has reached out to the schools to discuss the status of funding. Commissioner Orr made the motion to release the funds as stated to the school. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
15. Manager Garland stated that Angie Knight has extended an invitation to the BOCC to attend the October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. Ms. Knight is planning a school tour of the campuses and they will provide lunch at the high school that day. Ms. Knight would like for this to be an annual event to keep both boards apprised of the happenings in our schools as well as needs. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Board of Education.
16. Manager Garland stated that she attended the September TCC meeting of the RPO last week and they showed the following projects. They have split the list from committed to carryover projects and the carryover projects do include Corridor K. Manager Garland reminded the board of the Go To Meeting on September 26 at 10:30 a.m. at the Transit Facility. Manager Garland stated that their trip to Raleigh for further discussions is slated for October 10<sup>th</sup> for the QUANTM study on Corridor K.
17. Manager Garland stated that Rose Baugess at the RPO sent a meeting announcement for a public meeting at the AB Tech provided by NCDOT to provide input for the NC Public Transportation Statewide Strategic Plan for October 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Manager Garland asks the board to mark their calendars and let her know if they would like to attend.
18. Manager Garland stated that garbage has become her pet project and for good reason. We are constantly dealing with security issues now in addition to the illegal dumping and diving. Last meeting, Manager Garland provided a draft copy of the citation and asks the board for any changes. Manager Garland expressed some worry about our ordinance not having enough enforcement power and asks that we try and make the illegal dumping a criminal charge as opposed to a civil offense. Manager Garland stated that sanitation had a break in sometime between Saturday evening and Monday morning and several items of equipment as well as our computers was stolen. Manager Garland stated that Commissioner Wiggins has been helping with camera systems and the quotes are: Camera with recorder for the Transfer Station - \$4695.00 and cameras for sites with recording systems \$4420.00 each for seven sites for a total of \$30,940.00. The board had more discussion on manning the sites. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the cameras with recorders for the Transfer Station for \$4695.00. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. The board will revisit the cameras for the dump sites.

19. Manager Garland stated that the Association of Tennessee Valley Governments fall meeting is scheduled for October 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> in Gatlinburg. Manager Garland stated that the registration is free for our county and asks that the commissioners let her know if they want to attend. Manager Garland stated that she and Commissioner Orr are attending.
20. Manager Garland stated that the Southwestern Commission Board Meeting is this Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Warehouse at Nantahala Brewing in Bryson City and she attached the agenda in their packet.
21. Manager Garland stated that Napoleon Wallace, Assistant Secretary for Rural Economic Development will be visiting Monday, September 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. at the TCCC Center in Mable and he expressed that he would like to meet the commissioners, manager and ED Director. Manager Garland stated that she is planning to attend this meeting.
22. Manager Garland stated that we have some ongoing projects updates.
  - a. The personnel policy review and revision is nearly complete. The personnel committee met last week and a few weeks ago and Clerk Crisp is nearly finished with the draft. It will be provided in the next week or so for board review.
  - b. The Wage Committee will be ready to get started in the next week or so.
  - c. The County Financial Audit is scheduled to begin in the third week of October and she will be sequestering herself and the finance team during the next few weeks to make sure we have all the records ready for review. Manager Garland stated that Clerk Crisp would know where to reach her if issues arise.
  - d. The capital projects continue to progress, no change orders at this meeting. Manager Garland stated that she has attached the architect reports on the 911 call center and P&J. The building committee will need to meet soon about the planned renovations on the existing DSS building and she will need one commissioner to meet with us about questions Scott has about the long range plan for moving offices. It will also be good for the building committee to review the debt model study as well as long range planning for facilities in the county at this meeting.
  - e. Manager Garland stated that they will be reforming the safety committee and this is vital for our insurance and risk management. Manager Garland stated that this committee has not met in a while and this will bring us into compliance with our personnel policy as well.
  - f. Manager Garland stated that she is working on the easements on the internet and other small projects.
23. Manager Garland stated that she would now go to the discussion items. Manager Garland stated that we had Discoveries of \$9656.89 and Releases of \$38,595.26. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
24. Manager Garland asks if the board wished to auction the knuckle boom truck. Chairman Eller stated that we have had an offer to trade the knuckle boom for a track hoe and if this still stands he would like to make this trade. The board all agreed for Chairman Eller to look into this trade. Chairman Eller stated that we needed to look into selling the dump trailer that is not used at sanitation as well. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to trade the knuckle boom for the track hoe and if this is not still an option to advertise for surplus. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Manager Garland asks the board if they want to re-advertise the 1999 Bus for surplus again. Manager Garland stated that we did not receive any bids the last time with a minimum bid of \$3000.00. The board agreed to advertise without a minimum bid. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to declare this as surplus sale. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
26. Manager Garland asks the board if they wanted to revisit the Resolution on Creeks and Waterways. Clerk Crisp stated that she attached a sample resolution with their packets and asks that they revisit at the next meeting.
27. Manager Garland asks the board's desire for the speed limit on Massey Branch to the Skyway. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to pass a resolution to NCDOT requesting that they change the speed limit back to 45 mph and add Big Snowbird to Little Snowbird in the resolution. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
28. Manager Garland stated that we received one bid for the roof repair at the county pool building. Chairman Eller opened the bid from Betterbuilt Contracting for \$1,987.05. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the bid from Betterbuilt. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Manager Garland reminded the board of the GREAT meeting September 21<sup>st</sup> at the HUB.

30. Manager Garland stated that a request from the Election Board has been made to close the offices at DSS on Election Day and allow the employees to have a work day only. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the request. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Chairman Eller asks for public comment. No one was signed in for public comment.
32. Chairman Eller asks Susie Laney if she wanted to speak to the board. Ms. Laney stated that EMS was called for her mother, she had fell and broke her hip. During this call the gurney was too large to fit inside the home so they had to use a back board to transport her mother from the house. Ms. Laney stated that her brother and one paramedic was carrying her mother out when she was dropped causing her mother to hit her head as she fell and to cut her finger. Ms. Laney stated that she had spoken with the manager about this issue and she wanted something done to the paramedic because they did not strap her mother down. Ms. Laney stated that more training needed to be given concerning transporting of patients. Manager Garland apologized for not reaching out to Ms. Laney. The incident took place when she was newly named Interim Health Director. Manager Garland stated that she would speak with the EMS Director concerning this incident and follow up with Ms. Laney.
33. Chairman Eller asks for further discussion. No further business was discussed.
34. Chairman Eller 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 to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Commissioner Orr made the motion to extend leave without pay to Ashton Massey for the period of time that will not be covered by FMLA and/or to accept donated leave from other county employees on her behalf for said period of time with the understanding that the leave will not be longer than (12) weeks as required under FMLA. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve. Vote unanimous.
37. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to extend Janella Verner's FMLA for (3) months due to her illness. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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Keith Eller, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Connie Orr, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Dale E. Wiggins, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board