

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, February 20, 2018 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 Williams to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Eller asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Eller asks for changes to the agenda. Manager Garland asks that the board omit the approval of the Opened Minutes from Closed Session January 2016 to June 2017 until Attorney Coward and Clerk Crisp reviews. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the agenda with the change as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the Regular Minutes February 6th. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Eller asks Michelle Shiplet to speak. Ms. Shiplet thanked the board for the opportunity to speak with them of her vision for a community garden which will be located on Ford Street directly behind the Church Mouse. Ms. Shiplet stated that they are utilizing ½ acre with fencing. Ms. Shiplet stated that she has been raising money and has received overwhelming support from the community. Ms. Shiplet stated that the garden would help people come together in a safe environment and they will have access to healthy foods. Ms. Shiplet stated that the 4-H Club, Boy Scouts and the School Science Class are willing to assist in the garden which will educate our children on how to grow fresh foods and become good stewards in the community. Ms. Shiplet stated that the garden will be divided in 4x8 spots and this should yield enough food for a family of two and provide food for them to put up for the winter. Ms. Shiplet stated that the garden should yield enough food for 78 people. Ms. Shiplet stated that the name will be Greater Good Garden and hopes that the garden will teach people to learn how to care for the plants, the earth and give them confidence of self-worth and self-reliance. Ms. Shiplet invites the board to become a part of this project. Commissioner Wiggins stated that our kids needed to learn how to can and store food. Ms. Shiplet stated that she plans to do that part at her church. Ms. Shiplet stated that the garden will be handicap accessible and meets ADA Standards. Chairman Eller stated that they could also learn to can foods at the Extension Office. Ms. Shiplet's dream is for this to provide incentive for other businesses to open such as a coffee bar, juice bar and a rolling store and hopes that this will revive Main Street. The board thanked Ms. Shiplet for her hard work in the garden as well as her work with the Church Mouse and stated that they support the project.
7. Chairman Eller asks Mike Stiles to speak. Mr. Stiles thanked the board for having him and stated that he has worked a lot in Graham County with the Department of Agriculture and stated that Graham County is a great county. Mr. Stiles stated that some people has approached him about trying to improve the habitat for wildlife. Mr. Stiles stated that he needed the support of the commissioners before he proceeds. Commissioner Williams stated that he fully supports these efforts and has in fact planted trees in the past to improve the habitat. Commissioner Williams made the motion to support a proposal to help improve the habitat for wildlife in our county. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Sophia Paulos, EDC Director stated that this will tie in with our Forest Revision Plan with the USFS. Ms. Stiles stated that Randy Collins was the best Ag Director with the Extension Office in the state.
8. Chairman Eller asks Sophia Paulos to speak. Ms. Paulos stated that the applications for Access Women's Health, the 3D Mammogram machine, Para-Medicine Partnership for Health, the Strategic Tourism Implementation project for wayfinding signage, downtown Wi-Fi and a buy local campaign, as well as a grant for broadband expansion in the county are being submitted within the week. Ms. Paulos stated that she received confirmation from Juanita Colvard that Dan Gerlach has sent a letter of support to ARC in Raleigh for the Access Women's Health application. Ms. Paulos stated that we also received word from ARC in DC last week that while ARC has stopped supporting the purchase of vehicles across the board, they feel that an exception can be made for the Para-Medicine Partnership for Health project to purchase the QRV necessary for the program. Ms. Paulos stated that the Para-Medicine Partnership for Health has also received letters of support from Mike Stevenson, CEO of Murphy Medical Center, as well as Steve Heatherly, CEO of Swain Community Hospital. Mr. Heatherly and Swain Community Hospital deserve special mention and have offered exceptional support in particular, not only have they committed to ongoing coordination with the new para-medicine program, they have also agreed to sponsor the Para-Medicine Partnership for Health by paying

some of the match for the grant and the applications being submitted this week are final. Ms. Paulos stated that we will know whether or not these projects receive funding no later than June so please continue to pray that we receive these grants and carry them out for the greatest benefit to our community.

9. Ms. Paulos stated that on March 10th the Carolina's Chinese Chamber of Commerce will be holding their annual Gala in Charlotte and she has been asked by Mr. Jimmy Lee and current CCCC President Michael Wang to be a special guest and speaker at this event. This will be an excellent opportunity to show support to Mr. Lee's business development efforts as well as to highlight the many opportunities for investment in Graham County and Western NC. Ms. Paulos stated that she will be speaking as the Economic Developer for Graham County as well as the Secretary and Treasurer for the Mountain West Partnership. The Gala will be attended by many government officials and business interests from across the state as well as the Minister of the Chinese Embassy and his delegation.
10. Ms. Paulos stated that the RDA Board closed on the property and future affordable housing development on Moose Branch. Affordable housing is a hot topic across all of Western NC and she is proud of our county for being the first west of Asheville to move beyond talk and take action on this important issue. In partnership with Pam Hysong from USDA and Pam Schaffer with United Community Bank we are on track to begin bringing this project into reality with lots of hard work. Ms. Paulos stated that she will be working with McGill to begin finalizing the site design and prep for the board and with On Track Financial to begin preparing potential first time home buyers. Ms. Paulos will also be working to design a marketing campaign for the board as well as identifying and vetting architects and builders who may or may not become involved with the project depending on the will of the RDA Board.
11. Ms. Paulos stated that over 400 Graham County citizens and business owners participated in the Broadband survey conducted by the Mountain West Partnership and Southwestern Commission and 40% of the respondents were unsure what speed internet they are paying for; 72% feel that their current internet speed does not meet the needs of their household business; 74% said they would consider taking online classes if they were available; 55% said that they would telecommute or start an at home business if sufficient internet were available; and, 93% of business owners said sufficient internet is critical to their business while 7% said it is very important. The data produced by this study is now under review by the Mountain West Partners, our Graham County Broadband Committee and the Southwestern Commission. Decisions will be made after the review how best to move forward as individual counties and as a region in the effort to bring affordable high speed internet to all of our citizens.
12. Ms. Paulos stated that this past month she graduated from Business U and the goal of the program was to expand and promote a philosophy shift in Business Service delivery and to change the approach of business engagement from attempting to solve a problem with a one size for all solution to creating collaborative and comprehensive solutions and relationships. The objective is for existing businesses to see a streamlined effort from workforce and other partners who are there to meet the business need and not to push agency solutions to meet internal goals. Ms. Paulos thanked David Garrett for including her in Business U.
13. Ms. Paulos stated that TVA has published proposed rule amendments in the Federal Register for floating cabins and public comments are being accepted on the rules until March 19, 2018. The proposed amendments re-define non-navigable houseboats and floating cabins using one term "Floating Cabins" and prohibit new floating cabins on the Tennessee River System after December 16, 2016. The proposed amendments also include limited mooring standards, clarifications regarding permissible rebuilding and modification of existing floating cabins and a requirement for all floating cabins to be registered. TVA will update this website with instructions about registering your floating cabin if these requirements is incorporated in the final rule amendments to be published. Existing floating cabins may be rebuilt without TVA approval; but owners are required to notify TVA and submit their proposed plans for rebuilding the floating cabin and submit a photo of the rebuilt cabin for their records. Plans for any structural modification that alters the length, width or height of the floating cabin or any attached structures (such as decks or walkways) shall be submitted to TVA for review and approval pursuant to the requirements of subpart A of this part authorizing such construction. TVA will determine if modifying or rebuilding a floating cabin requires a new Section 26a permit and any new fees. New floating cabin means a floating cabin that was not located or moored on the Tennessee River System on or before December 16, 2016. For floating cabins that have a TVA permit as of December 16, 2016, TVA may not require their removal for 15 years. For those without permits on December 16, 2016 TVA may not require their removal for five years and during these year periods TVA may levy necessary and reasonable fees to ensure compliance with TVA's regulations. The property tax, sales tax and jobs that may be lost due to this initiative could cause a severe, negative impact on the county. Ms. Paulos asks the board if they would

like to do a resolution to the proposed amendment prior to the deadline of March 6, 2018. The board all agreed that they need to reach out to Congressman Mark Meadows office and do what they can to stop the removal of the floating cabins.

14. Chairman Eller asks for the finance and manager's report. Manager Garland stated that the county ended the month with a cash balance of \$9,598,161.36 and the county is due monies from the loan and the 911 Board which will bring the true cash balance to \$10,416,161.00. Manager Garland stated that she is very pleased to report those numbers. Manager Garland stated that the tax collector office has collected \$789,653.36 in current property taxes; \$9,997.46 in prior year property taxes and \$30,342.45 in DMV. Manager Garland stated that the total for real property collections was \$5,854,777.11 and a total of \$266,377.43 in DMV and our tax collection rate is 91.40% which is exactly what we had this time last year. Manager Garland stated that our revenues was \$1,539,904.97 and our expenditures was \$973,641.37 giving us a surplus of \$566,263.60 and our surplus to date is \$2,982,031.14 which we will need as we go through our capital projects. Manager Garland stated that we received \$154,471.64 in sales tax collections and have collected \$580,157.38 in past due taxes and is very proud of the tax office for their hard work.
15. Manger Garland stated that the budget was looking good and our ideal percent for this time should be 41% but we are well above that percentage. Manager Garland stated that some departments look over but they can be justified.
16. Manager Garland stated that she would now discuss the capital projects and stated that we will begin a final punch list and an ADA walk through for the health department on Thursday of this week. Manager Garland stated that she has had some issues with getting all of the easements approved and finalized but is beginning to see the light at the end of that tunnel. Manager Garland stated that she had another logistics meeting and the grounds, building and cemetery crew are on tap to do the physical move and she is guessing at the best we are looking at mid-April for the final move in.
17. Manager Garland asks Misty Hembree, 911 Director to speak on the new 911 Center. Director Hembree stated that she has two proposals on the technology side for the new 911 center. Director Hembree stated that requests for proposals was sent out and they were CIC Technologies for \$19,155.22 and Haynes Technology for \$28,600.00. Commissioner Williams made the motion to go with the lowest bid which is CIC Technologies. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Director Hembree stated that the tower is up and everything is proceeding on schedule. Commissioner Wiggins asks if there will be open house. Director Hembree stated that she would have an open house and the 911 Board would assist in a ribbon cutting ceremony. Commissioner Williams thanked Director Hembree for all of her hard work on this project. All board was in agreement.
18. Manager Garland stated that she received another quote on an evaluation study and she needed to take some time and review three quotes and would need a workshop scheduled to talk buildings and planning. Manager Garland reminded the board that Davenport and Associates will be coming to the next meeting to present some preliminary debt modeling for our next steps.
19. Manager Garland stated that the 1999 Mack is having major problems and it is showing signs of transmission problems. Mechanic Randy Rogers has gone through it and has checked the electrical system and is diagnosing it to see if we need to have the transmission replaced. The only question is to have the computer checked, which Shealey's can do but the cost will be \$800.00 to have it diagnosed. A rebuilt transmission will be little over \$5300.00 plus labor and she needs board direction. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to put a new transmission in the truck. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
20. Manager Garland stated that the NCDOT meeting was held February 12 regarding Corridor K, and DOT and Engineers have completed the second round of Quantum and we are down to 12 to 15 possible strands. Manager Garland stated that there is much work to do and they will be meeting again in April.
21. Manager Garland stated that the budget has begun and she has met with most of the department managers last week to get them started and to hear about budget priorities for fiscal year 2018-2019. Manager Garland stated that she has met with the school system and have gotten some preliminary indicators of their projections of unrestricted cash reserves at the end of the fiscal year and they will be at less than \$40,000.00 in unrestricted cash reserves and a big mainstay to their budget is under threat with the President's FY 2019 budget proposal. He is proposing a 5% cut to public education and this will create a significant hole in the school's budget over time. Manager Garland stated that they had discussion on setting a fund balance policy in place which would help govern minimum and maximum fund balances for future planning and stability in both budgets. Manager Garland stated that they discussed projected debt payout of the QZAB and school bond both scheduled to pay off September 2021, as well as

future capital needs of both the county and school system. Ms. Knight expressed interest in having joint meetings to talk about these needs and the idea of working collaboratively to address the needs so that we do not work at cross purposes. Manager Garland stated that she would like to be able to lay out the budget on June 1st.

22. Manager Garland stated that the board needed to set the Board of Equalization and Review dates as well as an all day workshop regarding budget and capital planning. The board agreed to set the Board of Equalization and Review beginning Tuesday, April 3rd through Friday, April 6th. The board agreed to schedule a special workshop session on March 8th at 9:00 a.m. at the Transit Facility located at West Fort Hill. The meeting had to be changed due to a conflict with the use of the community room.
23. Chairman Eller asks for public comment. No public comment was given.
24. Chairman Eller asks for the discussion items. Manager Garland stated that we have Releases in the amount of \$154.92. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the Releases as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Manager Garland stated that she needed approval for the Board Poll for the Right of Entry Agreement that was done on February 9, 2018. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the poll. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
26. Manager Garland stated that she needed approval for the Board Poll for the construction of porch, ramp and underpinning at Sanitation Office that was done on February 13, 2018. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to go with the lowest bid of \$9,980.00. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote called: Commissioners Eller, Orr, Wiggins and Williams voted yes. Commissioner Nelms recused himself.
27. Manager Garland gave a reminder to the board of the Health Board Orientation for March 20, 2018.
28. Chairman Eller asks for new or old business. No new or old business was presented.
29. Chairman Eller stated that they would now 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.
30. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Commissioner Orr made the motion to pay the Town of Robbinsville's past due bills for the Septic Receiving Station for fiscal years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the request from Janet Orr to use (3) days without pay. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. Commissioner Orr made the motion to pay Jeffrey Oswalt II his 84.75 comp time. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Keith Eller, Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Connie Orr, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Dale E. Wiggins, Member, Graham County Commissioner

Raymond Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board