

## Regular Meeting – April 17, 2018

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, April 17, 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 stated that we needed to amend Item #9 to exclude the replacement of the RDA Board member and to include the appointment of Brenda Deyton to the LTC Board. Manager Garland stated that we also needed to add Sophia Paulos to closed session for privileged or confidential information. Commissioner Williams also requested to be on closed session for personnel. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the agenda with the changes as stated. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Eller asks for approval of the April 3<sup>rd</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes; the March 28<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting Minutes and the April 6<sup>th</sup> Board of Equalization and Review Board Minutes. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Eller asks Sophia Paulos to give the EDC Monthly Report. Ms. Paulos stated that efforts to revitalize Main Street continues to build momentum and next week she will be meeting with representatives from the Graham County Historical Society, The Church Mouse, GREAT and several property owners on Main Street. They will be meeting to discuss each group's efforts and more importantly to unite those efforts in a way that will increase each group's capacity to serve its individual mission while contributing to the overall efforts on Main Street Revitalization. The Church Mouse is currently working on several grants. Ms. Paulos stated that she submitted a grant for the Graham County Historical Society to conduct a feasibility study and the town is carrying out plans funded by Mountain Wise to place wayfinding signage around the Town of Robbinsville and she feels that it is very important for the county, the town and our local non-profits to stand united in this effort in order to see this dream realized.
7. Ms. Paulos stated that it is that time of year again for our tourism season and we are beginning to show the benefits of working with our recreation partners in the Nantahala Pisgah Forest Partnership. Despite the weather for the river releases so far this year early estimates indicate the numbers are up, Joyce Kilmer is seeing more traffic as word spreads that trails are being repaired and we are gaining the interest of outdoor enthusiasts from around the southeast. Ms. Paulos stated that she recently heard from an individual representing the Access Fund, Carolina Climber's Coalition, East Tennessee Climber's Coalition and Southeast Climber's Coalition regarding a proposal to open the quarry at Fontana Dam to rock climbing, this project would increase revenues in the far western parts of the county especially Fontana Village Resort which is only one mile up the road. Regarding economic benefits the proposal sites several studies around the southeast. A study of climbing in the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests published in August 2017 found the following: Rock Climber visitors spend an estimated \$13.9 million per year in and around the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests; Western North Carolina residents who climb spend an additional \$12.9 million as a result of climbing in the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests; Rock Climber tourism supports the presence of 170 full-time jobs and \$4 million in job income. These studies suggest that opening Fontana Quarry to climbing will bring economic benefits to the surrounding area and the benefits are likely to spill over to Tapoco where climbers can find upscale lodging, good pizza and a restaurant sitting creek side on the Cheoah River. Assuming initial exploration results in a recommendation to open the quarry to climbing by the public, TVA will need to convene appropriate decision makers to accept that recommendation and they hope to build a working partnership with TVA to ensure all work, signage and other management decisions are fully approved by TVA. The local climbing community will explore the cliff for suitability as a climbing site, install and maintain bolts as needed for safe climbing and rappelling and build and maintain access

trails on the site upon TVA approval. They will stand ready to consult with TVA and the Carolina Climber's Coalition and its allies stand ready to assume the main burden of a partnership with TVA to ensure safe climbing on the quarry at Fontana Dam. The Carolina Climber's Coalition that has put this proposal together now ask for your support. Ms. Paulos presented the board a letter of support for their approval. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve the letter of support. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

8. Chairman Eller asks for the finance report. Manager Garland stated that our cash balance for the month end is \$9,666,300.70 which is up one million from this time last year and we are still owed \$200,000.00 from the 911 Board. Manager Garland stated that our current tax collections are \$78,061.03, our DMV collections are \$32,030.49 and our prior year taxes are \$12,516.33 for the month bringing our year to date collection for current year \$6,128,212.29 and our DMV \$336,163.55. Manager Garland stated that our tax collection rate at this time is 95.37%.
9. Manager Garland stated that our expenditures was \$1,191,057.20 and our revenues was \$1,225,228.99 leaving us a surplus of \$34,171.79 giving us a year to date surplus of \$2,640,927.42. Manager Garland stated that we will see a dip in this surplus due to paying off the old health department loan.
10. Manager Garland stated that our sales tax collection for the month was \$126,567.66 which dropped off from this time last year mostly due to the refund that we received.
11. Manager Garland stated that we have collected \$581,179.86 in past due taxes and we are still billing for \$466,807.22 and our tax collector is working hard on debt set off and foreclosures.
12. Manager Garland stated that the School sales tax reversion is around \$89,000.00.
13. Manager Garland stated that she has Budget Amendment #13 for the board's approval. The amendment is to pay off the Health Department / EMS note per loan covenants. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve budget amendment #13 as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Manager Garland stated that she would now go into the manager's report. Manager Garland stated that the capital projects update is we have moved into the P&J building and everything is up and running. Manager Garland stated that we are waiting on HEERY to send the final signed contract back to us to do the courthouse assessment and she had a conference call with them on Friday and they are looking at dates toward the end of this month or early in May that do not conflict with court. Manager Garland stated that they will be here a full three days doing the assessment and will have a meeting with the commissioners with their findings. One bit of good news is that we received a reprieve on the court date in April so there will be no need to move court.
15. Manager Garland stated that Alisa Eller is in the process of cleaning the old DSS building and the back of this building is going to need much cleaning and work. The floors are in really bad shape and there is some work to do. Manager Garland stated that Admin would like for the board to consider moving us temporarily to this facility. Commissioner Orr made the motion to move the administration to the community building. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
16. Manager Garland stated that the DOT A-0009 (Corridor K) meeting will be Thursday, June 14, 2018 in Andrews.
17. Manager Garland stated that Rose Bauguess has sent information related to the Prioritization 5.0 and she provided the board two spreadsheets of county projects and regional projects and is asking the board to mark the top four county projects and the top four regional projects. Manager Garland stated that she will need these rankings by the next meeting date so that she can compile results and send back to Ms. Bauguess. Manager Garland stated that Ms. Bauguess has set July 24<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. for a joint meeting of the TCC/TAC to adopt the Regional Local Input Points for our region and the next TCC meeting is May 16<sup>th</sup> in Andrews for the County Managers and the TAC is May 31<sup>st</sup> in Andrews for the Commissioners.
18. Manager Garland stated that she spoke with a legislative assistant with Representative Kevin Corbin last week about our legislation to increase the occupancy tax to 6%. The process will not be as simple as we thought, at first, we were told that we would not be able to get it accomplished because the towns have passed the 3% tax. Manager Garland stated that she asked them to research further in the interest of equity for those accommodation

owners who are having to remit and pay a total of 6% (town owners) when their counterparts in the county were collecting only 3%. They found that New Hanover County has a similar issue as we do and they want to write a bill that mirrors them. It is not a simple fix, however. It will entail them creating District G, which will be the unincorporated part of the county and these owners will collect the entire 6% but the new 3% will be restricted as to the use of those funds and according to the assistant, the additional 3% will need to be kept and accounted for in a separate fund and can only be spent for projects that benefit the county. In other words, no projects that will relate to the town will be allowable uses so the TDA could not allocate any of the funds for fireworks for either Robbinsville or Fontana or the Heritage Festival. This seems to be similar to the set up that we received when we attempted this a few years ago and she will need to review the drafted legislation. Manager Garland asks the board if they are willing for the bill writers to proceed. Commissioner Orr made the motion to allow this to move forward. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

19. Manager Garland stated that she is a little behind on the budget and will be scarce for a few days but the board did need to set up workshop dates for the budget review. The board agreed to meet May 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:00 a.m.
20. Manager Garland stated that the fence is almost complete at the Snowbird dumpster site and the cans are ready to be placed. Sanitation Director Colvard is hoping to have it open for business end of work day tomorrow. Manager Garland stated that the Peter-built had a problem this morning hauling tires and we had to pull staff to go and get it fixed which caused a small delay in garbage pickup.
21. Manager Garland stated that the new ambulance will be picked up tomorrow and EMS Director Hembree and Manager Garland went and inspected on Friday and found that it was missing some items in the specs and this will be accounted for in the payment of the ambulance.
22. Manager Garland stated that the SRS Timber funding has been restored for two years and they also increased the regular PILT funds by over \$500 million so hopefully we will see a boost there. Manager Garland showed the board a short video from NACO concerning this funding.
23. Manager Garland stated that the NCACC will be holding a district meeting April 26<sup>th</sup> in Asheville. Manager Garland stated that she needed to know if any of the commissioners were planning to attend the Rural Day in Raleigh and the General Assembly Day in Raleigh in May. Commissioner Orr stated that she and Manager Garland would be attending.
24. Chairman Eller asks for public comment. No public comment was given.
25. Chairman Eller asks for the discussion items. Manager Garland stated that the RDA Board had given a recommendation to increase their board members to seven. Commissioner Williams made the motion to increase the number of board members for the RDA and to appoint Edd Satterfield and Brian Johnson to the board. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
26. Manager Garland stated that the jail had its inspection and found no deficiencies.
27. Manager Garland stated that we have a meeting May 31<sup>st</sup> for the SW Commissioner Board of Directors.
28. Manager Garland asks Clerk Crisp to discuss the insurance proposals. Clerk Crisp stated that we had a small increase in our property insurance due to the two new buildings that were added to the policy and we are still working on the health insurance premiums. Clerk Crisp stated that she will give the board more information as the proposals come in. Manager Garland stated that we would be reviewing the policies closely.
29. Manager Garland stated that we received a recommendation to appoint Brenda Deyton to the LTC Committee. Commissioner Williams made the motion to appoint Brenda Deyton to the LTC Committee. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Manager Garland asks for new or old business. No new or old business was discussed.
31. Chairman Eller stated that the board 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 Wiggins made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
32. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

33. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve Budget Amendment #14 for \$47,500.00 to give to the schools. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
34. Commissioner Williams 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