

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, March 5, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville NC for their regular monthly meeting. All board was present.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Nelms to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Wiggins asks Commissioner Orr to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval of the agenda. Manager Garland stated that we needed to add Juanita Colvard to Closed Session for contracts. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Wiggins asks for approval of the February 19th Workshop and Regular Meeting Minutes. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the minutes as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chairman Wiggins asks Jeff Aldridge to speak. Mr. Aldridge thanked the board for their time and stated that he was here to discuss an issue concerning the Floodplain requirements. Mr. Aldridge stated that he is working for Jerry Gross who has been buying properties throughout our county and has a current staff of 80 people working in Graham County. Mr. Aldridge stated that Mr. Gross has spent a lot of money on improvements to properties such as the Wolf Creek Grocery and Café; Iron Horse Campground; Wolf Creek Rentals and the Tuskegee Motel. Mr. Aldridge asks for the boards support in the issues concerning the floodplain. Mr. Aldridge stated that Mr. Gross is putting in a (23) site campground on the property located beside the Iron Horse and originally they were putting fill dirt in this section of the property until Larry Hembree came and informed them that they were in the non-encroachment and could not put fill dirt in this area. Mr. Aldridge stated that Mr. Hembree was very apologetic and gave them information on a required engineer study that would have to be done before any more work could be done. Mr. Aldridge stated that when he informed Mr. Gross of this he made the statement that he may shut everything down and move it to Townsend Tennessee and if he does this will cost the county a lot of money. Mr. Aldridge stated that he understands the issue concerning flooding but we should not have to pay for the damages a hurricane may do to the coastal areas. Mr. Aldridge stated that in order to hire an engineer and a surveyor to do cross sections of the area the cost could be more than \$35,000.00. Mr. Aldridge stated that the Eastern Band of Cherokee has milder laws than we do and they are on federal grounds. Mr. Aldridge stated that Mr. Gross is hoping to put in a business similar to a Bass Pro and we need his developments to help our county. Commissioner Orr stated that in the past, the commissioners have given a variance and she is very grateful that Mr. Gross wants to build his businesses here and hopefully we can find a way to get around this. Commissioner Orr stated that originally the county did not accept the floodplain and the floodplain insurance went sky high causing a lot of home to have their mortgages called and people were losing their homes. Commissioner Orr stated that our county is over 70% owned by the federal government and then they restrict the rest of the lands and it is not fair to the taxpayers of this county. The board all agreed. Manager Garland stated that she sent a letter yesterday asking them to come and map our county out the way that they promised to do because the formula that they use for flat lands do not work for mountain land. Chairman Wiggins stated that Attorney Coward could do a variance for the commissioners. Attorney Coward stated that he would be glad to. Chairman Wiggins stated that the encroachment area is ridiculous in this floodplain and we will do what we can to remedy this situation. Mr. Aldridge stated that he told Mr. Gross that the board would help him. Chairman Wiggins asks Attorney Coward to do whatever he needed to do to get this resolved because we do need the employment opportunities and the revenues to come into his county. Mr. Aldridge stated that Mr. Gross is planning to hire more employees and this will help the economy of our county. Mr. Aldridge stated that Mr. Gross has kept his company busy for the last two years and this is the first time that they were able to work in our hometown instead of having to work in other states to make a living. The board all agreed to help Mr. Gross on the issues involving the Floodplain. The commissioners stated that they would do what they could to help Mr. Gross.
7. Chairman Wiggins asks for the Managers Report. Manager Garland stated that we received the welcome packet from the Department of Commerce for the CDBG Grant last week and she has the grant agreement and letters of conditions as well as signature cards for the drawdown of

funds. Manager Garland stated that she has posted the announcement in the papers and the website for the Request for Proposals to hire a grant administrator with a deadline of March 29, 2019 at 5:00 p.m. for submission of proposals. Manager Garland stated that she would need board approval for the grant agreement. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the grant agreement from the Department of Commerce for the CDBG Grant. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

8. Manager Garland stated that she asked the auditors to give a brief synopsis of our audit and we have one finding requiring corrective action plan in the Single Audit over DSS programs. The rest of the audit was clean which keeps us in good standing with lenders. Manager Garland stated that we also discussed fund balance to assist with maintaining the tax rate and as of last June we had a \$1.2 million in unassigned fund balance in the general fund that was above the 35% benchmark that LGC recommends for a unit our size and this is in addition to the \$1.5 million already in the capital reserve fund for capital projects.
9. Manager Garland stated that the new LED lights have been installed at the Stanley Field and are now working but Recreation Director Ronnie Williams will be asking Duke Energy to increase the lighting slightly. Manager Garland stated that Recreation Director Williams and Commissioner Nelms has met with Jimmy Lee regarding installing a gate at the Stanley ball field and doing some parking improvements and better signage which Mr. Lee approved. Manager Garland stated that she has a quote for the fencing and it is \$1,249.52 for which we have funding in his budget. In addition, he had the fencing company review a quote to install a chain link fence at the P&J ball fields, which would replace the old horse fence from the gate all the way to the other gate to prevent vehicles from coming onto the practice and game fields. Manager Garland stated that this quote is \$9,777.26. Manager Garland stated that she could use the funds set aside for the pool repair since we are not able to work on the pool at this time. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve all the fencing. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Manager Garland stated that she received a text message from Representative Corbin last night and the occupancy tax legislation is scheduled for a vote either tomorrow or Thursday.
11. Manager Garland stated that she had her first budget meeting with the department managers last week and they are getting their draft budgets together. The staff did an excellent job at the retreat and she was proud of the ideas and the teamwork that was exhibited and the staff came away energized, encouraged, and are anxious to continue to work together.
12. Manager Garland stated that the Buy Local Campaign kicked off week before last and Graham County has a \$48 million annual retail gap, which means that we spend that much more out of the County than we spend inside the county for goods and services. This is why it is so important to Buy Local and this could help offset a tax increase for the courthouse project.
13. Manager Garland stated that the first van has been delivered to the dealer last week for the jail through our Fleet Management and we had a meeting to discuss the program and learned that additional services are available including merging with our Wright Express account at no additional charge. This will provide data on mileage on all of our vehicles as we analyze our fleet usage.
14. Manager Garland stated that the judge for the trial scheduled next week has determined that we can hold court here in the county. Cherokee County had determined that they would not provide the facility at no charge and they determined that we would need to pay \$13.78 per square feet, which would have resulted in added cost of about \$7500.00 for the week.
15. Manager Garland stated that some intervention with our floodplain mapping needed to be done on a federal level. Manager Garland stated that FEMA and the State promised us that they would come and re-study our floodplain mapping and we have had recent incidents where property owners have wanted to make improvements, which would help our tax base and are being expensively regulated by the current non-encroachment and floodplain boundaries. Manager Garland stated that she might need the board to pass a resolution in the future requesting their help.
16. Manager Garland stated that at the last meeting the board opted to table a resolution on Closing the Coverage Gap. Manager Garland stated that our health director received a request from the NC Alliance of Public Health Agencies for a copy of the resolution if we have one. Manager Garland ask if the board has a desire to move on the resolution or decline. No comment was made.

17. Manager Garland stated that we are having issues with our Kenworth that we take to Ballground and she has been talking with Randy Rogers and learned that in the future the Peterbuilt trucks will not have a CAT Engine any longer and this could be very expensive.
18. Chairman Wiggins asks Manager Garland to explain the Buy Local Campaign to the 4-H Group that attended the meeting. Manager Garland did and asks that they take this information to the school and to their parents and help get the word out. Everyone agreed that our greatest export is our kids. Commissioner Cody stated that Buy Local would also affect our economic standpoint because more businesses will be attracted to come to our county. Commissioner Orr stated that when we Buy Local we can provide more opportunities to have things to do here.
19. Chairman Wiggins asks for public comment. No public comment was made.
20. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board would now go to the discussion items. Chairman Wiggins asks if the board would like to adopt a resolution concerning the Floodplain Mapping. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adopt a resolution requesting help from the State and Federal Government on our Floodplain Mapping. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
21. Chairman Wiggins stated that the Road Naming Board had two new road name recommendations: Medlin Branch Ln (Hwy 28) and W Fort Hill Rdg. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve the recommendations from the Road Naming Board. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
22. Chairman Wiggins asks if the board is interested in a resolution for the "Closing the Coverage Gap". The board wanted to wait and see what occurs on the state level.
23. Chairman Wiggins stated that we have a request from NC Works to use an office at the community building. Commissioner Orr stated that this would be temporary mostly during the Job Fairs that are now being held in our county. The board all agreed that this was fine and gave a directive to Manager Garland to take care of this request.
24. Chairman Wiggins asks for new or old business. Manager Garland stated that we needed to set the dates and times for the Board of Equalization and Review to meet. The board had discussion and decided to meet April 2; April 9; April 16; April 23; and April 30, which are on a Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. at the Graham County Community Building. Commissioner Orr made the motion to set the Board of Equalization and Review for the dates as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Manager Garland stated that we are having another hiring event on April 10 by NCWORKS at the community building.
26. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board would now go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11A (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 Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
28. Commissioner Orr made the motion to accept the contract with Mark Masters. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
29. Commissioner Eller made the motion to Gift Deed property to the Grace Mountainside Lutheran Church due to the property lines being located in a portion of the church. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Eller made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page attached!

Signature page attached for Regular Meeting March 5, 2019

Dale Wiggins, Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Keith Eller, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board