

Budget Meeting Minutes  
May 17, 2019

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Friday, May 17, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at the Transit Facility located at 201 West Fort Hill Robbinsville, NC for a budget meeting. Board present Dale Wiggins, Lynn Cody, Connie Orr and Jacob Nelms. Board absent Keith Eller.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Wiggins asks approval of the agenda. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chairman Wiggins asks County Manager Rebecca Garland to proceed with the budget discussions. Manager Garland presented the board with a folder on the DSS Budget. Manager Garland stated that some employees have been moved up in salary due to more duties being assigned to them. The board reviewed the proposed raises to some employees.
4. Chairman Wiggins stated that the board would need to go into closed session to discuss personnel under G.S. 143-318.11a (6) for personnel and ask for a motion. Commissioner Orr made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Manager Garland asks Melissa Blevins, DSS Administrative Assistant to present the proposed budget. Ms. Blevins stated that there is an increase of \$700,000.00 mostly due to foster care. Commissioner Nelms asks if this has not been fixed. Kay Fields, Interim DSS Director stated that we do have some families going to Black Mountain to finish their training. Commissioner Nelms asks if this number would go down once, we get trained foster homes in Robbinsville. Mrs. Fields stated that this would save us money once we place our foster kids in county. Ms. Fields stated that she found an error by one of the social workers that would have allowed money to be offset for a foster child but at this current time, we have to pay back \$3,000.00 to the state due to this error.
7. Mrs. Fields stated that we may have to pay back Medicaid monies to the state totaling \$60,000.00. Mrs. Fields stated that the State is doing audits and we are in Tier 3 of the audit so hopefully we will have things straightened up prior to their arrival. Commissioner Orr stated that she read an article where the State is owed \$100 million due to Medicaid errors.
8. Manager Garland stated that our agency has (29) foster children at this time. Mrs. Fields stated that the State pays 50/50 for foster care outside of the county and 75/25 for foster care in the county. Mrs. Fields stated that child welfare needed work on permanency placement of children. Commissioner Orr asks if there are plans in place and Mrs. Fields stated no. Commissioner Orr stated that this is not good for the kids. Chairman Wiggins stated that he does not understand the request for \$327,000.00 for foster care when we have only spent \$87,000.00 this year. Ms. Blevins stated that she forecasted the year due to the (6) teenagers that were taken in October who are residing in the state foster care home. Commissioner Nelms stated that we could not continue to do that. Mrs. Fields stated that this needed to be a priority discussion. Mrs. Fields stated that May is the Foster Care Awareness Month and she is trying to get the word out to recruit more foster homes in the county. Mrs. Fields stated that they are having a walk from Ingles down the bypass and back. Commissioner Nelms stated that we need ten or fifteen foster parents for our county.
9. Commissioner Cody asks how long the training lasts to become a foster parent. Mrs. Fields stated that it takes (10) weeks. Commissioner Cody stated that our children are important and the board all agreed.
10. Chairman Wiggins stated that we needed to review the contracts concerning the DSS Attorney. Mrs. Fields stated that we can do quarterly contracts and the board agreed to this suggestion. The board wanted to know if there are ways out of a contract and the board can give a 30-day written notice of termination.
11. The board discussed the capital outlay and Ms. Blevins stated that she is \$8,000.00 in the negative at this time in capital outlay.
12. The board asks about the laptops. Ms. Blevins stated that APS and CPS work in the field and they could type their reporting in at the time of the visit if they have a computer. The board wanted our IT Department to evaluate the need.

13. The board discussed the budget request in length. Chairman Wiggins thanked Mrs. Fields and Ms. Blevins for their time. The board wanted this budget reviewed closely by Manager Garland.
14. Sophia Paulos gave the board an update on the closing of Oak Valley Hardwoods. Ms. Paulos stated that the company is not receiving enough pine to run his business. Ms. Paulos stated that she is hoping that a Timber Products company is interested to purchasing the property. Ms. Paulos stated that even though we pull resources, grants, etc. together to help companies at the end of the day it is up to the owner. Ms. Paulos stated that this is very disappointing and our folks are unemployed once again. Ms. Paulos stated that Shaun Garrison and Charlton Buchanan has helped her in obtaining maps of the property to market this site. Ms. Paulos stated that the site is visually appealing for marketing. Commissioner Orr stated that when a call center had asked Mr. Lee to lease out some space his answer was no. Ms. Paulos stated that Jimmy Lee did not want the liability of a data center due to all the sawdust of his operation. Ms. Paulos stated that part of the reason that Mr. Lee is leaving is that he did not have good use of the yellow pine because he did not have a press.
15. Manager Garland stated that Sheriff Jones and Chuck Stewart had revised their original budget request. Manager Garland stated that she had spoken with Sheriff Jones and he had taken his request from five new employees to three new employees (two detectives and one patrol). Sheriff Jones stated that he is getting a State of Franklin employee to take the place of the one leaving. Sheriff Jones stated that we only have two narcotic officers at this time and we need more. Sheriff Jones stated that heroin and opioids are increasing daily. Sheriff Jones stated that there is more paperwork involved with sex offenders and this take a lot more of their time. Sheriff Jones stated that one of the new officers would be over the sex offenders and one would be for DSS cases and the other one would be for patrol. Sheriff Jones stated that he did not continue the lease at the Stecoah Valley Center and this saved \$1200.00. Sheriff Jones stated that he wanted some software that was more secure and he will designate two computers for drug cases. Sheriff Jones stated that only the deputies involved in the drug cases needed to be able to see the reporting. Sheriff Jones stated that he has shut down the gaming halls and two have already complied and the other three should be doing so in the next few days.
16. Sheriff Jones stated that he would like to trade in the Glock 40's that the officers carry and replace them with a 9MM.
17. Sheriff Jones wanted to move the impound fence behind the building in the grass area. The board asks Manager Garland to check on the monitoring wells to make sure that they are not located in this area. The board agreed that the current location of the impound is not feasible.
18. Sheriff Jones stated that he is also replacing the bulletproof vests for the officers.
19. Sheriff Jones stated that last year his budget was \$873,000.00 and he is asking for \$1,010,235.00 in the new budget. Sheriff Jones stated that they are going to be required to transport juveniles and IVC transports of juveniles to Asheville. Sheriff Jones stated that there have been felony threats to the school.
20. Sheriff Jones stated that our inmate's medical costs are very high and he would like to enquire about catastrophic insurance for the inmates. Chuck Stewart stated that he is not spending a lot of money in the jail due to our new facility that will be built but they did need new cameras. Mr. Stewart stated that the computers needed to be replaced as well.
21. Chairman Wiggins asks for further discussion. No further business was discussed.
22. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page attached!

Signature page for Budget Meeting May 17, 2019

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Dale Wiggins, Chairman, Graham County Board of Commissioners

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

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Keith Eller, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

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Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

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Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board