

Continued Emergency Meeting – May 6, 2020

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Wednesday, May 6, 2020 at noon by teleconference to discuss issues related to COVID-19. All board was present. Also present Angela Knight, Graham County Superintendent, Manager Becky Garland, Health Director Beth Booth, Preparedness Coordinator Emily Collins, EM Director Larry Hembree, 911 Director Misty Hembree, Town of Robbinsville Mayor Steve Hooper, Town of Lake Santeetlah Administrators Kim Matheson and Emily Hooper, Project Manager Jason Marino, Graham Star Editor Kevin Hensley, Town of Fontana Dam Administrator Zelerie Rogers, NCDOT Commissioner Dirk Cody, Travel & Tourism Director Daniel Allison, Lt. Jimmy Hyde, Clerk of Court Tammy Holloway, Attorney JK Coward, USFS Ranger Andy Gaston and Resident Jack Gross.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order and stated that discussion was minimal but they did need to discuss the curfew. Chairman Wiggins stated that other counties are withdrawing their curfew.
2. Manager Garland stated that the Courts will reopen June 2 and asks Tammy Holloway to speak. Ms. Holloway stated that on June 2, there will be face-to-face court and she is requesting that Plexiglas be installed in her offices, at the security officer's desk and in the courtroom where the Clerk of Court employees are stationed. Ms. Holloway stated that Project Manager Marino has received quotes. Manager Garland stated that Curtis Glass was the lowest quote and this is her recommendation. Mr. Marino stated that he has been speaking with Nicole at Curtis Glass on several options whether to do a permanent install mount to the desk or hang the glass. Mr. Marino stated that the sturdiest of the two is to mount brackets to each desk and this will allow a securer fasten versus being mounted directly into the desk. Manager Garland stated that this will be part of Phase 1 on getting the buildings reopened and several other offices will need to be evaluated for some type of partition.
3. Commissioner Orr asks if we obtained two quotes. Manager Garland stated that there were two quotes with Curtis coming in as the lowest quote. Commissioner Cody asks if the trials are starting on June 2 and Ms. Holloway stated yes that is the projected date. Dirk Cody stated that the most effective and most important is face covering and they need to be encouraged to wear their masks. Mr. Cody thanked the committee for all that has been done so far and complimented all on their efforts in moving forward, safer.
4. Manager Garland stated that Mr. Dirk Cody is correct on the face shields being the most effective and she will be recommending to staff that they use face covering when dealing with the public at all times. Manager Garland stated that she would need to transition staff back to work who have been furloughed especially the custodial staff. Ms. Holloway stated that the judge would require breaks to allow the custodians to sanitize during court.
5. Chairman Wiggins stated that PPE's need to be required for all Clerk of Court staff and he is fine with the installation of Plexiglas and recommends that the company do the install so that it is done correctly and efficiently. Chairman Wiggins stated that not everyone has the ability to work with Plexiglas and the county would spend more money redoing the installation if they allow non-experienced workers to do the install.
6. Commissioner Cody stated that we needed to restrict the number of people who are allowed in the buildings and allow only the person involved in the court case. Commissioner Cody stated that family members tend to go with each other when attending court and this does not need to be allowed. Lt. Hyde stated that the judge has been discussing this issue and he will separate people including doing rollcall by phone whenever possible. Chairman Wiggins stated that this is a good idea, which will require extra work and asks that Ms. Holloway obtain feedback from the judges.
7. Mr. Cody stated that some people will wear the masks and some will not but the board can suggest that they do as a way to protect our people. Encouragement can be very effective.
8. Commissioner Nelms stated that we can do strong recommendations but getting our hands on the PPE's may be difficult. Mr. Cody stated that at his station they give masks to the public and this could be done in the county buildings as well.
9. Manager Garland stated that dental will be reopening as well and Director Booth is putting a plan in place.
10. Manager Garland stated that Brookfield cancelled the whitewater release until the end of May and the Whitewater Association has requested a meeting with Brookfield.

11. Ms. Holloway stated that Judge Walker will request that everyone use hand sanitizer prior to entering the courtroom and will recommend several breaks throughout the day to allow custodial staff to sanitize and disinfect but the problem will be in the hallways. Ms. Holloway stated that she made a request with Clerk Crisp to purchase thermometers so that the public will be checked for temperatures prior to entering the courtroom. Ms. Holloway asks that something be put in the paper on the recommendations of coming to court and requests that the shields be installed quickly. Ms. Holloway stated that all the judges will wear masks and they do not require a shield at the bench. Manager Garland stated that we have two weeks to get the shields up; the floors marked at six-foot intervals and make the supplies available. Ms. Holloway stated that spectators will not be allowed in the courtroom and they request that people do not bring their family with them. Ms. Holloway stated that our custodians are top notch and they should not have any problem with the judge's request of extra sanitizing.
12. Resident Jack Gross stated that ultra violet lights are a good way to keep germs down and they make some that clean and disinfect whenever the air is on and suggests that the county put notice on their website as well. Mr. Gross asks when the accommodation owners will be allowed to book guests. Manager Garland stated that May 8 is the goal for them to be open and if issues arise then the board will discuss at their May 19 board meeting.
13. Ms. Holloway thanked the board and committee for all that has been done in looking out for our people.
14. Director Booth stated that we received our second case last Saturday and all was quiet concerning the case. Director Booth stated that hundreds have now been tested and we have not seen any more positives. Director Booth stated that Urgent Care now has antibody testing but if the test comes back positive, the person will be required to take the COVID-19 test. Director Booth stated that her staff is rotating back into the office and she is using most of the staff on contact tracing. Director Booth stated that the dental clinic is opening up at the same time as Dr. Kelly to cut back on confusion of which dental office is open or closed and she will have a full staff this week.
15. Director Hembree stated that we are not cancelling our State of Emergency because we may need federal aid later on and it will be easier to leave the State of Emergency in place with fewer restrictions. Director Hembree stated that they will take down the signage on Saturday and the 14-day isolation will be cancelled as well but still recommends that people bring their supplies with them and use their PPE's while out in public.
16. Director Allison asks about the accommodations. Director Hembree stated that we are going by the Governor's orders, which include the opening of hotels and short-term rentals recommending that they practice stay at home if possible, practice social distancing and follow the CDC on cleaning.
17. Attorney Coward stated that we needed to reword the amendment to state that we will reopen May 8, 2020.
18. Director Allison asks that information on PPE's, masks, etc. be posted on the website and sent to the accommodation owners.
19. Ranger Gaston stated that the Cheoah River releases are cancelled through the end of May and they plan to move toward the reopening of the campgrounds, etc. Ranger Gaston stated that they will continue to work as the Governor moves through his phases and wanted the board to know that timber sales are not being worked at this time. Ranger Gaston stated that the contractor has begun work on the removal of danger trees on Joyce Kilmer Road and this road will be opened as soon as this work has been completed.
20. Chairman Wiggins stated that he did not see the need to continue the weekly meeting at this time and if something does come up for discussion he will call a meeting. Chairman Wiggins stated that he appreciated everyone that has participated in the weekly meetings and he appreciates their thoughts and concerns.
21. Chairman Wiggins adjourned the meeting.

Signature page attached!

Signature page for Continued Emergency Meeting May 6, 2020

Dale Wiggins, Chairman

Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman

Keith Eller, Member

Jacob Nelms, Member

Connie Orr, Member

ATTEST: _____
Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board