

Workshop Session – May 19, 2020

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. for their regular workshop session in the Graham County Community Building and by GOTOMEETING in Robbinsville, NC. All board was present.

1. Chairman Wiggins called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Wiggins asks Manager Garland to discuss budget preparations. Manager Garland stated that she is currently working on the insurance quotes, which will contain an increase, revenue projections are down and the NCACC is suggesting that we project sales tax with a 40% decrease. Commissioner Orr stated that as accelerated as Ingles, the Dollar Store and Family Dollar have been she would think that the sales tax would be increased significantly. Commissioner Orr stated that she could understand with the other businesses being closed that a percentage would be down but was unsure about 40%. Manager Garland stated that with the accommodations being closed and our restaurants working carryout only, there would be an impact to the sales tax.
3. Manager Garland stated that our tax collection rate last year was 98% and this year we will be at 95%, which is down \$50 to \$75 thousand dollars in March and April due to COVID-19. Manager Garland stated that the Department of Revenue is suggesting that we plan for a reduction in TVA PILT and keep in mind that if other surrounding dams made improvements our portion could be less.
4. Manager Garland stated that we are holding steady on DSS and Health Department funding and these departments are cutting their budgets for us.
5. Manager Garland stated that EMS numbers stayed low with people staying at home but she will be diving into this department on collections.
6. Manager Garland stated that she hoped to have the first draft on the budget by June 1, 2020 but she could not guarantee this. Manager Garland stated that she is very concerned with this budget but we are holding at 45% fund balance compared to the required 35% but again these funds are holding for the mandated courthouse that the county is being required to build. Manager Garland stated that she is grateful to NACO and the NCACC for their help in obtaining funds for our counties. Manager Garland stated that she plans to treat this budget like the one that was done in 2008/2009.
7. Manager Garland stated that she does not have the amount for the shortfall at this time but she will have to have quiet time to work on the budget. Commissioner Cody stated that Graham County is not the only county that is suffering; he knows that others throughout the State are having these same issues.
8. Commissioner Eller stated that he did not believe this year would be as bad as next year and felt that all of our people will have a hard two years ahead but we will recover. Manager Garland stated that we can do these cuts and if we see more revenue coming in we can adjust to that amount.
9. Manager Garland stated that she is not happy with this budget but she is grateful for the hard work that the county has done for the last ten years to put us in a better financial standing. Chairman Wiggins stated that it could be worse. Commissioner Orr stated that by large our rural counties are very fortunate because we have always had to adapt to tough times. Manager Garland stated that she was very grateful to Representative Kevin Corbin for his work on obtaining funds for Graham County that will cover all of our expenses during the COVID-19 pandemic of which is still ongoing.
10. Manager Garland stated that she has spoken with Pryor Gibson, Hometown Strong and he stated that the Governor is still working to allow our counties to use funding as revenue replacement.
11. Chairman Wiggins stated that Memorial Day is Monday and this town will be covered up for the weekend. Commissioner Orr stated that she is thankful for our businesses that have adjusted to this pandemic. Manager Garland stated that she will continue the budget processes and will hope for the best.
12. Chairman Wiggins asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Dale Wiggins, Chairman

Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman

Keith Eller, Member

Jacob Nelms, Member

Connie Orr, Member

ATTEST: _____
Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board