

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Monday, December 7, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for a special meeting to discuss the new Justice/Jail Center, the A-9 Project, Bids for renovations at DHHS, CARES ACT funds and will go into closed session for personnel. All board was present.

1. Chair Orr called the meeting to order.
2. Chair Orr asks for approval of the agenda. Manager Garland asks that Wanda Austin with NCDOT be allowed to speak to the board first. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the agenda with the stated change. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chair Orr asks Wanda Austin to speak. Ms. Austin thanked the board for their time and stated that NCDOT are working on the plans for the second section of A-9 which includes Stecoah Gap. Ms. Austin stated that NCDOT previously presented to the board a single culvert option for the wildlife overpass and what they are finding in the design has some challenges in it. Ms. Austin stated that she was here to let the board know of these challenges and to receive feedback on some of the things that NCDOT sees that might be an issue to residents. Ms. Austin presented maps to the board for review and stated one of the options is the single culvert option which the board saw during the public hearing meetings and the other is a bridge option. Ms. Austin stated that on the single culvert option it is 82 feet wide and provides a ride in / ride out to the parking area and there would be a concrete median barrier between the two lanes of the four lanes. Ms. Austin stated that NCDOT put this in as an option because they did not feel that it was safe to make a left turn across all four lanes into the parking lot and it would require them to pull left out across all four lanes. Chair Orr stated that with the concrete barriers those that would normally turn left would be required to go past the parking area to make a left turn so how did NCDOT think that this would be safer. Ms. Austin stated that they used the sight distance that you would be providing at the U-turn. Ms. Austin stated that with both options the board can see the U-turn movements located on forest service land right at the power line and the other located at the area where there is currently a billboard and both turns would have a turning lane so you would not impede the flow of traffic. Ms. Austin stated that there will be eight (8) parking spaces positioned at an angle, but you would not be able to turn around. Ms. Austin stated that U-turn area would accommodate a small bus but not a tractor trailer and larger buses would have to go further down from the parking area to turn around. Ms. Austin stated that there would be an island that separated the area from the travel area. Ms. Austin stated that the major drawback for the single culvert is a three-to-five-day closure of Hwy 143 to get the first arch up and once it is up, they could do night closures but would still accommodate emergency vehicles through the construction process but could not accommodate the local traffic. Ms. Austin stated that once they got through the three-to-five-day closure they could open for local traffic. Ms. Austin stated that with the bridge option you will have a pier in the middle which does not come with the single culvert option and they both have the same turn in of right in and right out into the parking area. Ms. Austin stated that they did not foresee a road closure with the bridge option which is one benefit. Ms. Austin asks the board if they have any questions or concerns. Commissioner Nelms stated that the closures make him nervous and asks which option would be without the closures. Ms. Austin stated that with the single culvert option there would be a road closure. Commissioner Nelms stated that they both serve the same purpose and Ms. Austin stated that the bridge option would allow for the road to be wider. Commissioner Wiggins stated that no matter which option the board goes with people coming from Bryson City could not turn left into the parking area as they do today. Commissioner Wiggins stated that when the road is built, we will have two lanes eastbound at the gap. Ms. Austin stated that there would be two lanes both ways. Commissioner Wiggins stated that the reason big trucks pull over at the top of the mountain was to let the traffic flow by and now they would not be able to pull over. Ms. Austin stated that with four lanes traffic flow would no longer be an issue. Chairman Wiggins stated that concerning the road closure what time of the year would be an issue for him because this will not only affect residents but would also have a negative impact on tourism. Ms. Austin stated that it is scheduled to be a winter construction. Chairman Wiggins stated that this would present a problem for our school kids because it would be a long way around the closure. Commissioner Nelms asks the price difference between each option. Ms. Austin stated that the cost was not a factor as much as the

other aspects and aesthetics. Ms. Austin stated that the pictures on the second page show the arch for a single culvert or two arches for the bridge option. Chair Orr asks what the difference is in the cost. Ms. Austin stated that this was not studied at this time. Commissioner Eller asks if this could be done without closing the road. Ms. Austin stated that if the board chose the two arches then the road would not require a closure. Commissioner Eller and Commissioner Cody both stated that they want to keep the road open. Chair Orr stated that keeping the road open is very important to the entire county. Commissioner Cody asks what NCDOT was doing in the Wolf Creek area currently. Ms. Austin stated that they are doing the Geotech study on the rocks in this area. The board thanked Ms. Austin for her time.

4. Chair Orr asks Project Manager (PM) Jason Marino to speak. PM Marino stated that he had taken the comments from the last meeting regarding the Justice Center and needed a final layout for the facility. PM Marino stated that this is not the final design, but he needs the layout approved so that he can move forward with bidding the project. PM Marino stated that today's approval would be for the blocking, stacking, and rendering of the property for the best use. PM Marino stated that the design will come next. PM Marino stated that the Heery / SLAM part of the project will end with the approval and he will be ready to do an RFP for Phase II. PM Marino stated that Heery/SLAM would be giving the board a video conference of the final to Phase 1. Commissioner Cody asks if solar panels had been discussed to cut cost to the operation of the building. PM Marino stated that they have mentioned solar panels and it will help with power, but that discussion will be done in the next phase, but he would be glad to convey this to the design team. Commissioner Cody stated that grant money is available to help with the renewable energy. PM Marino stated that during Phase II he would be glad to look at those options. PM Marino asks for further discussion. Commissioner Wiggins stated that his biggest obstacle is the view when you turn up Fort Hill and he wants to see a beautiful front and that is his opinion. PM Marino stated that these are the types of things that will be addressed in the second phase. PM Marino stated that a video will be presented to the board which will allow them to see and input their preferences. PM Marino stated that the board will have a chance to input all their decisions prior to the formal bid and once the bid is received it can be turnkey. Chair Orr asks if this is the most efficient way and PM Marino stated that it was, and he would be reaching out to our neighboring counties that have built new justice centers to see if they can discuss their challenges to make our process easier. The board thanked PM Marino for his work.
5. PM Marino stated that he received interest from three contractors on the Washer and Dryer for the DHHS offices but only received two quotes. Those quotes were:
 - a. Cliff Hall - \$5,200.00
 - b. Kelly Andrews - \$3,339.81

PM Marino stated that the proposals include all materials, tools, equipment, and labor to install washer and dryer connections in Custodial Storage Room No. 110 in Graham County building #GC016 DPH/DSS Facility based on new requirements for cleaning on site of uniforms and other fabric materials due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Manager Garland stated that we needed to get started quickly on the project for the funding to be paid by the Health Department CARES Act monies. Chair Orr asks the board for a motion to accept a bid for the project as stated.

Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to accept the bid from Kelly Andrews for \$3,339.81. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. The board excused Commissioner Nelms from the vote. Vote unanimous.

6. Manager Garland stated that at the last board meeting she discussed the CARES ACT deadline and stated that we have around \$74,000.00 to spend by December 30. Manager Garland stated that she did reach out to the school concerning food distribution. Manager Garland stated that the board had previously discussed equipment for the school kids to assist with telecommuting but since we received the CDBG-V Funds we will use that money to purchase those items. Manager Garland stated that the school did request radios for the school buses, and this was approved as an allowable expense. Manager Garland stated that the purchase of a food truck was not allowable but we can provide food supplies to assist with food distribution and we have six non-profits that distribute food so the board may want to use those funds earmarked to the different organizations. Manager Garland stated that hazard pay could also be given for personnel that use 50% or more of their time toward COVID and the offices are public safety, DSS, or essential workers and asks the board's desires. Manager Garland requested that the board allow her to purchase a laptop for finance which will be around \$1,000.00. Chair Orr stated that the non-profits have different numbers of people that they serve, and we need to get those numbers prior to the division of the money, and she is for giving the \$30,000.00 to

these organizations based on the percentage of persons served. Commissioner Nelms asks if we would give them a straight amount. Chair Orr stated that some organizations feed a lot more people than others and she feels that the division needs to be based on those percentages. Commissioner Cody stated that he agrees with Chair Orr on the percentages. Commissioner Wiggins stated that this is a good idea. Chair Orr stated that she would get in touch with the organizations tonight and give the numbers to Manager Garland for distribution. Chair Orr asks for a motion to use the \$74,000.00 CARES ACT monies to purchase bus radios for our schools and give the non-profits that help supply foods, healthcare, and sanitary supplies to persons in need \$30,000.00 to be divided by the percentage of persons helped at each non-profit location and to purchase a laptop for the finance office in the amount of \$1,000.00. Commissioner Nelms made the motion as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

7. Chair Orr asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) for personnel. Commissioner Eller made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Chair Orr asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Chair Orr asks for a motion to approve the use of Sick Reserve Leave for Lisa Phillips. Commissioner Eller made the motion as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Chair Orr asks for a motion to purchase Ingles gift card for all county employees. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to purchase \$100.00 Ingles Gift Cards for each employee. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
11. Chair Orr asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Connie Orr, Chair

Keith Eller, Vice-Chairman

Lynn Cody, Member

Jacob Nelms, Member

Dale Wiggins, Member

ATTEST: _____
Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board