

Regular Meeting – June 21, 2022

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, June 21, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. All board was present. Also, present Manager Jason Marino, Finance Director Becky Garland, Attorney J.K. Coward, and Clerk Kim Crisp.

1. Chair Orr called the meeting to order.
2. Chair Orr asks Commissioner Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chair Orr led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chair Orr asks for changes to the agenda. Manager Marino asks under Item 15 be removed Vaya/Schools; add Chair Orr and Attorney Coward to closed session. Chair Orr asks for a motion to approve the agenda with the stated changes. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chair Orr asks for approval of the minutes for Special Workshop April 5th; Workshop and Regular April 19th and May 19th; Emergency Meeting May 2nd; Special Meeting May 2nd, May 20th; Continued Meeting May 27th. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chair Orr asks for a motion to close the regular meeting and open the FY 2022-2023 Budget Public Hearing. Commissioner Cody made the motion as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Chair Orr asks Manager Marino and Director Garland to present the budget. Manager Marino welcomed the public in attendance and stated that the commissioners have faced a lot of challenges with inflation and increases in all supplies and he appreciated the board and gives an extreme thank you to Director Garland for her work on the budget and asks that she present the budget.
8. Director Garland stated that this has been a challenging budget but there are good things taking place. Director Garland stated that the major priority of this board was to pay no one less than \$14.00 per hour and to correct other inequities due to this change. Director Garland stated that their other priority was our recreation, and they will be resurfacing the pool and looking at other avenues of recreation. Director Garland stated that we are seeing a lot more unfunded mandates from the State and are seeing an increase of 17.7% in our insurance renewal. Director Garland stated that the board recognized the need to revamp our public safety pay plans and recognized that the school was facing a shortage due to unfunded mandates, so they increased those budgets.
9. Director Garland stated that the FY 2022-2023 Budget is \$21,586,224.00 which is an increase from last year, but the tax rate will not be increased. Director Garland stated that the major changes were the pay rates for public safety, increase of school funding, increase in health insurance premiums, increases in the cost of sanitation where we will be purchasing a new Excavator and we will be adding one additional ambulance.
10. Director Garland stated that the largest portion of revenue is from property taxes, but the board chose to keep the mil rate as is and dip into fund balance to cover the increases. Director Garland stated that the board agreed to a fund balance policy of no less than 35% of general fund expenditures. Director Garland stated that they closed FY 2021-2022 with a 47% fund balance and was able to fund the shortfalls with this amount. Director Garland stated that the board also added one additional person to the administration office and one additional person to the finance office. Director Garland stated that the board recognized the age of our Volunteer Fire Trucks and agreed to start putting back \$50,000.00 each year to help with these expenditures. Director Garland stated that the board will be spending around \$150,000.00 to renovate the pool. Director Garland stated that the board has \$819,782.00 in ARPA funds and had a balance of \$82,118.00 left over from the first tranche and they plan to distribute these funds for the best use of the citizens.
11. Manager Marino asks for public comment. No public comment.
12. Chair Orr asks for a motion to close the public hearing and reopen the regular meeting. Commissioner Cody made the motion as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
13. Chair Orr asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1)(6) for privileged or confidential information and personnel. Commissioner Eller made the motion as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Chair Orr asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Eller made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
15. Chair Orr asks John Colwell to speak. Manager Marino stated that Mr. Colwell would be speaking at another time.
16. Manager Marino presented a plaque to Chair Connie Orr from Vaya thanking her for her work with Vaya as a Board member. Commissioner Wiggins stated that Chair Orr does great work with Vaya, and he thanked her as well.

17. Chair Orr asks Manager Marino to give the managers report. Manager Marino stated that he had received notice from the Graham County Forest Plan Objection and meetings will be held August 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, 2022.
18. Manager Marino stated that our CBDG-NR Grant is in procurement, and they received proposals from a second solicitation for Surveying, Environmental, and Legal Services. Manager Marino stated that Monica Chevalier with Withers Ravenel has solicited for a CDBG Housing Rehab Specialist.
19. Manager Marino stated that the CDBG-CV for the community kitchen renovations, workforce training for paramedics, enhancements to the Senior Center for additional food distribution and expand capacity, IT equipment for the schools is currently being worked on by Alice Briggs, with Withers Ravenel on finalizing administration and procurement documents and working through final round of procurement.
20. Manager Marino stated that the Central Carolinas Region Sports Car Club of America will be conducting the annual Dragon Hill Climb event on July 30-31, 2022.
21. Manager Marino stated that he provided a letter of support to Advent Health for their application of a Certificate of Need (CON) to build a new 67-bed acute hospital in the Enka/Candler area of Buncombe County.
22. Manager Marino stated that they have completed Phase 1 and received the Special Use Permit from the USDA-FS signed by Vice-Chair Keith Eller on May 11, 2022, and they applied through the NC DEQ for a no fee permit to construct a monitoring or recovery well system which will have a two-week turnaround time while scheduling for a well drill company.
23. Manager Marino stated that the Board of Commissioners and the School Superintendent will be meeting with our State Legislators, and he is coordinating a meeting in July.
24. Manager Marino stated that he would now review the project manager's report with the board and stated that the Moose Branch Subdivision is 95% complete and are awaiting installation of guardrails due to the delays due to metal shortages.
25. Manager Marino stated that our new Cemetery and Recreation buildings are 65% complete and there have been some delays due to the metal shortages.
26. Manager Marino stated that our Election Board renovation is at 99.7% complete and the bathroom remodel for the community building is set for demolition.
27. Manager Marino stated that our new Justice Center Project is moving forward, and Senator Corbin and Representative Gillespie have requested \$30,000,000.00 for the costs of project and he is currently working with NC OSBM on the \$5,000,000.00 grant that was received towards the new Graham County Justice Center. Manager Marino asks that the board be thinking of who they want to sit on the building committee for this project.
28. Manager Marino stated that the Middle School 6th Grade Addition and Renovation is at 70% complete and encourages the board to go and see the renovations.
29. Manager Marino stated that the Little Snowbird Creek Bank Remediation and Clear and Snag is at 100% complete on the design both projects. Manager Marino stated that we received one bid \$997,362.50 from Adam's Contracting which is way outside the range expected so he will be having more conversation concerning this project.
30. Chair Orr asks Director Garland to give the finance reporting. Director Garland stated that we ended the month with a \$9,142,068.93 cash balance which is lower than this time last year but is very explainable. Director Garland stated that we currently have \$2,266,631.24 in our Capital Projects – NCCMT Account and she will be transferring \$335,968.20 of loan proceeds for this account this week; \$114,263.41 in our School Capital Project -NCCMT account; \$82,675.64 in our American Rescue Plan Act Account and are expecting our second tranche of \$819,782.50 anytime; and, we have \$5,003,400.79 in our SCIF Grant for the new Justice Center and was glad to see that we currently are earning a better interest rate.
31. Director Garland stated that the current year taxes for the month was \$27,868.50; prior year \$9,353.43 and our DMV was \$56,836.54. Director Garland stated that our year-to-date tax collections is \$7,125,805.16 for real and \$578,719.11 for DMV giving a tax collection rate of 97.38% and commended the tax collector's office for their diligence in tax collections.
32. Director Garland stated that our revenues for the month was \$973,317.61 and our expenditures was \$2,167,118.20 for a deficit of \$1,193,800.59. Director Garland stated that she paid \$722,422.41 in appropriation that she normally pays in June. Director Garland stated that our year-to-date revenues was \$16,865,684.36 and our expenditures was \$16,959,477.34 for a deficit of \$93,792.98.
33. Director Garland stated our sales tax collection was \$259,693.66 and further stated that this was the highest collections during her tenure.
34. Director Garland stated our past due tax collections is \$505,434.05 for years 2015-2022 and commended the tax office for their diligence in collections.
35. Director Garland stated that our capital projects expenditures to date is \$1,011,411.89 for county projects and \$2,753,035.95 for the middle school.
36. Director Garland stated that the ideal percentage remaining in the budget is 8% and we are at 21% and commends the department heads for their diligence in keeping spending down.
37. Director Garland stated that she had three budget amendments for approval.

- a. Budget Amendment #22 – amend to recognize additional funding from Duke for Share the Warmth funding for \$12,211.00
- b. Budget Amendment #23 – amend for additional SRS Timber allocations in the amount of \$10,202.00
- c. Budget Amendment #24 – amend for additional grant funds to programs for \$257,193.00

Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the budget amendments as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

- 38. Chair Orr asks for public comment. Connie Gross stated that she wanted to thank the commissioners for the paramedicine program, it has provided a much-needed service for our non-emergency residents. Ms. Gross thanked our Transit service and stated that we are blessed to have this service for our residents. Ms. Gross thanked the board for honoring Raymond Williams with a plaque and stated that the library wanted to do the something similar in his memory, Raymond was a valued board member at the library.
- 39. Manager Marino asks if the board wanted further discussion on the adoption of FY 2022-2023 Budget. No further discussion. Chair Orr asks for a motion to adopt the FY 2022-2023 Graham County Budget. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
- 40. Chair Orr asks Manager Marino to present the discussion items. Manager Marino stated that we have \$2,683.40 in Releases and \$9.15 in Discoveries for the board’s approval. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
- 41. Manager Marino stated that the next item, sanitation fees, is tabled for further review.
- 42. Manager Marino stated that the board needed to approve the Poll for the budget amendment of June 16, 2022, regarding additional SRS money. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
- 43. Manager Marino asks for approval of the FY 2022-2023 Order of Collection for Tajuana Ledwell and Dequina Cable. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
- 44. Manager Marino asks for reappointment of the TAB Board members Ginger Clayborn, Connie Orr, and David Maennle. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the board reappointments as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
- 45. Manager Marino stated that the county offices would be closed July 1st and July 4th for the holiday. Commissioner Eller requests that the area around the monuments be cleaned up prior to the festival.
- 46. Manager Marino asks for new or old business. None discussed.
- 47. Chair Orr stated that the board needed to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1)(3)(5)(6) or privileged or confidential information, attorney-client privilege, personnel, and contracts and asks for a motion. Commissioner Eller made the motion to go into closed session as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
- 48. Chair Orr asks for a motion to accept the quote for the renovation of the pool for \$135,866.38 from Campbell’s Pool & Spa, Inc. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
- 49. Chair Orr asks for a motion to continue meeting to June 28, 2022, at 2:00 p.m. Commissioner Cody made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Connie Orr, Chairman

Keith Eller, Vice-Chairman

Lynn Cody, Member

Jacob Nelms, Member

Dale Wiggins, Member

ATTEST: _____
 Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board