

Regular Meeting – May 19, 2022

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Thursday, May 19, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. The meeting was postponed from Tuesday, May 17, 2022, due to the Election Board's use of the commissioner meeting room. All board was present. Also, present Manager Jason Marino, Finance Officer Becky Garland, and Clerk Kim Crisp.

1. Chair Orr called the meeting to order.
2. Chair Orr asks Commissioner Nelms to give the Invocation.
3. Chair Orr lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chair Orr asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chair Orr asks for the approval of the April 19th and April 26th Board of Equalization and Review Minutes. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chair Orr asks Manager Marino to give the manager and project manager reporting. Manager Marino stated that we did receive notice via email May 3, 2022, that Graham County Government was eligible as an Objector on the extension review period for the Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Plan Revision and the resolution meetings are set to be held virtually in August 2022.
7. Manager Marino provided an updated NC DOT STIP schedule update for the upcoming projects.
8. Manager Marino stated that we did receive proposals from a second solicitation for Surveying, Environmental and Legal Services for the CDBG-NR Grant. Manager Marino stated that Withers Ravenel has solicited for a CDBG Housing Rehab Specialist, and those proposals once received will be reviewed by a review board to evaluate the proposals.
9. Manager Marino stated that the CDBG-CV funding has been received and this will help with the community kitchen renovations, workforce training for paramedics, enhancements to the Senior Center for additional food distribution and expand capacity and IT equipment for the schools and they are working with Withers Ravenel on finalizing administration and procurement documents.
10. Manager Marino stated that the US Forest Service worked on the road to Wachacha Bald and did improve it to be passable and will be working on a design for a long-term fix and speaking with AT&T Representatives on paying for the repairs.
11. Manager Marino stated that Graham County provided partnership commitment letters to include a financial match of \$15,000.00 of ARPA funds to Zito Media, Balsam West and Zitel, LLC to expand broadband throughout the county.
12. Manager Marino stated that they have ordered the dumpsters to use to gather cardboard using an out-of-service ambulance and Tri-County had requested the box from the ambulance to use as a training tool if the board would approve to donate. Commissioner Eller made the motion to donate the Ambulance Box to Tri-County Community College as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
13. Manager Marino stated that we did receive the Special Use Permit from USDA-FS for the landfill monitoring at the old landfill site on Atoah. Manager Marino gave a review of the estimated costs for each phase of work. Manager Marino asks if the board is comfortable with MESCO performing the work as presented or would the board like to bid this project. Commissioner Wiggins stated that we needed to stay with one company and this company has represented our county for several years. Commissioner Eller made the motion to accept the work phases as presented for the closed Atoah Landfill for a total price of \$67,045.00. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
14. Manager Marino gave the project managers reporting and stated that the RDA Moose Branch Subdivision was given the name of "Azalea Hills Subdivision", and they are 93% complete at this time.
15. Manager Marino stated that our new cemetery and recreation buildings are at 65% project complete.
16. Manager Marino that the Board of Elections renovation is 95% complete and stated that the offices are very nice and signage for the street will be coming.
17. Manager Marino stated that he has completed the RFQ to solicit for A&E firm qualifications for the new Justice Center and will need to convene with a selection committee to review and make the recommendations to the board for approval.
18. Manager Marino stated that the Middle School Addition and Renovation is 66% and this is a very good project for our students.
19. Manager Marino stated that the design on the Little Snowbird Creek Bank Remediation and Clear and Snag is 100% complete on design and are attempting to award the project. Manager Marino stated that the county received one bid so he had to rebid for a second time and will update once all bids are received.

20. Chair Orr asks Rebecca Garland, Finance Officer to give the monthly finance reporting. Director Garland stated that the county ended the month of April with \$9,632,307.72 cash balance which was \$364,661.76 less than this time last year due to paying for our capital projects. Director Garland stated that she will be refinancing the projects and the board will see the cash balance go back up. Director Garland stated that the county is very healthy at this time and to date we have in our account \$2,265,511.57 in capital projects, \$114,206.97 in our school capital projects, \$82,610.05 ARPA funds and \$5,000,929.20 in the SCIF Grant for our courthouse.
 21. Director Garland stated that our current year tax collection for the month was \$45,043.66, prior years \$9,485.53 and our DMV was \$56,875.47. Director Garland stated that our year-to-date collection is \$7,088,583.13 for real and \$521,882.57 for DMV and our tax collection rate is 97%.
 22. Director Garland stated that revenues for the month of April was \$990,888.99 and our expenditures was \$1,653,913.22 for a deficit of \$663,024.23 but our year-to-date revenues is \$15,906,642.30 and our expenditures is \$14,741,411.07 for a surplus of \$1,165,231.23.
 23. Director Garland stated that our sales tax collection was \$225,771.07 and she will be transferring \$113,763.81 to our capital projects account for a total of \$2,379,275.38.
 24. Director Garland stated that we have collected \$484,000.64 in back taxes for a total back tax collection of \$649,156.95. Director Garland commended the tax office for their diligence in collections.
 25. Director Garland stated that the Middle School project has expended \$2,753,035.95 to date.
 26. Director Garland stated that our budget is holding steady at 28% and our ideal percentage at this time was 17%.
 27. Director Garland stated that she did have Budget Amendments for the board's approval.
 - a. Budget Amendment #18 – to recognize Timber Receipts FY 2021-2022 for \$168,750.00
 - b. Budget Amendment #19 – to amend for the change in the EMS Schedule for \$301,000.00
 - c. Budget Amendment #20 – to amend to recognize additional restricted sources of funds and final closing on USDA Loan / Grant for Sanitation FY 2021-2022 for \$496,130.00
- Chair Orr asks for a motion approve the budget amendments as stated. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
28. Director Garland stated that he needed the board to approve a resolution approving an installment financing contract and delivery thereof and providing for certain other related matters in the amount of \$2,300,000.00. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 29. Director Garland stated that she would like to request permission to open separate accounts for the Opioid Settlement and for the United Community Bank Loan Proceeds. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
 30. Director Garland stated that the NCACC is receiving an award for the 555 Opioid Committee and Graham County is being recognized as well. Chair Orr stated that Commissioner Wiggins and Director Garland was lead players in the whole process and thanked them both for their hard work and dedication to the project.
 31. Chair Orr asks for public comment. Jonathan Allison, Jail Employee, stated that he wanted to board to know that they are being pushed by the State for a new facility and stated that the conditions are pretty bad with the growing number of inmates. Manager Marino stated that the board and he will be having discussion on our facilities during the budget workshops, and they do have the RFQ ready for the new facility. Manager Marino stated that pre-covid the facility was priced at \$15 million and now the board is looking at \$22 million minimum which is a lot of money for our county, but they are moving forward but it is a lengthy process.
 32. Mr. Allison asks about the ARPA funds and if the jail would be receiving funding. Manager Marino stated that the board will be meeting on the funding and the premium pay will be addressed along with other needs that have been previously discussed.
 33. Chair Orr asks Commissioner Lynn Cody to speak. Commissioner Cody stated that he has received comments from citizens regarding HWY 28 being used as a raceway for the cars and motorcycles. Commissioner Cody stated that the board is being asked if there was anything that could be done to slow the traffic down. Commissioner Cody stated that a deputy has been in this area and has written tickets, but it has not helped, and they wanted to bring this issue to the board. Commissioner Cody stated that the area is from the Hike Inn to Lowell Crisp's residence. Commissioner Cody stated that we want our tourists, but we need to honor our citizens and they need to know that we are listening, and they are not being stonewalled. Commissioner Cody stated that the next question was how much revenue has been generated since the sale of alcohol and wanted to know if this has been a benefit or a deterrent. Director Garland stated that the Town of Robbinsville will receive the bulk of the revenue that gets distributed by the ABC Board, but she would be able to do the research and give a reporting at the next meeting. Commissioner Wiggins stated that the ABC Board does post the revenue for all 100 counties, and it is listed by county and town.

34. Chair Orr asks Manager Marino to give the discussion items. Manager Marino asks for approval of the Releases \$618.95 and the Discoveries \$3,037.53. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Manager Marino stated that he needed approval for the following polls which carried a unanimous vote at the time of the poll.
- a. Allow request by DSS Director Amy Seay for employee
 - b. Allow Cancer Society office space in the community building
 - c. Allow Agent of Record Letter to Gallagher Insurance
 - d. Allow \$2,200.00 for Exceptional Children and Regular Education in place of Special Olympics
 - e. Allow purchase of IV Infusion Pumps for \$10,370.00
- Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the polls as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Manager Marino asks that Chair Orr open the bids for the Kubota. Those bids were:
- a. Nelson Tractor Company \$128,480.00
 - b. Mason Tractor Company \$129,750.00
- Commissioner Cody made the motion to accept the lowest bid from Nelson Tractor. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
37. Manager Marino asks for discussion on Pate Cooper Road on Mill Creek. Chair Orr stated that she had been contacted by a citizen asking if the State would fix this road. Commissioner Eller stated that this road is not maintained by NCDOT but is under a homeowner's association who are hard pressed to come up with the funding and the road is in bad shape. Commissioner Wiggins stated that he had been contacted as well and they had looked into the road and NCDOT would not maintain this subdivision. Chair Orr stated that she would reach out and ask again and suggested that the subdivision owners write a letter for her to take to the district office.
38. Manager Marino stated that the board needed to schedule a workshop with Tax Assessor Brandy Cook to discuss the schedules and book of values for the revaluation. The board agreed to August 16th at 4:00 p.m.
39. Manager Marino stated that County Assembly Day is Tuesday June 14th in Raleigh and asks if a board member could attend due to his absence for military training. The board tabled the discussion to allow the board to check their schedules.
40. Manager Marino stated that the NCACC Conference is scheduled for August 11-13 in Cabarrus County and asks who would like to attend. Clerk Crisp stated that she did secure two rooms for this event. The board tabled to have further discussion.
41. Manager Marino stated that the board has a request from our Graham County Fire Chief to approve Larry Hembree and Matt Smith as Fire Department – Board of Directors. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve as requested. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Commissioner Cody asks where we are with the Raymond Williams Plaque. Clerk Crisp stated that she would prepare an example and send to the board for review.
43. Chair Orr asks for closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1)(3)(5)(6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney-client privilege, personnel, and contracts. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
44. 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.
45. Chair Orr asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Connie Orr, Chair

Keith Eller, Vice-Chair

Lynn Cody, Member

Jacob Nelms, Member

Dale Wiggins, Member

ATTEST _____
 Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board