

Regular Meeting – September 20, 2022

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, September 20, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. for their regular monthly meeting located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. All board was present. Also, present Manager Jason Marino, Finance Director Becky Garland, Attorney JK Coward 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 led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chair Orr asks for changes to the agenda. Manager Marino asks that we add Item 12A – Sanitation Director Gavin Colvard and add Chair Orr to Item 17 for closed session. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chair Orr asks for a motion to close the regular meeting and open the public hearing for the 2023 Schedule of Values. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Chair Orr asks Brandy Cook, Tax Assessor to speak. Clerk Crisp stated that Assessor Cook had a family emergency and Chris Ferris, Reval Contractor would speak with the board. Mr. Ferris stated that the Board was presented the Schedule of Values at an earlier meeting and asks if they have any questions or concerns. Mr. Ferris stated that nothing had been added or taken away since the review with the board.
7. Chair Orr asks for a motion to close the public hearing and reopen the regular meeting. Commissioner Eller made the motion as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Chair Orr asks for a motion to approve the 2023 Schedule of Values as presented. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Chair Orr asks Wanda Hill, Senior Director to speak. Director Hill stated that she was here to get permission to apply for the 2023 General Purpose Funds in the amount of \$10,901.00 with a county match of \$3,634.00 for a total of \$14,535.00. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Chair Orr asks Brian Stevens, EM Director to speak. Director Stevens stated that he was here to present the tabulation on the ambulance bids and stated that the lowest bid came in at \$521,070.00 from Northwestern Emergency Vehicles for two ambulances. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to accept the lowest bid with the recommendation of Director Stevens. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
11. Director Stevens stated that he would like the board to consider the hire of a part time paramedic. Director Stevens stated that Clerk Crisp will discuss the potential hire in closed session.
12. Chair Orr asks Tim Stranahan with RUCS Internet Technology to speak. Clerk Crisp stated that Mr. Stranahan was not present.
13. Chair Orr asks Gavin Colvard, Sanitation Director to speak. Director Colvard joined the meeting by teleconference and thanked the board for their time. Director Colvard stated that it is getting very difficult to find Class A Drivers. Director Colvard stated that we do have two Class B drivers, but they must complete 50 hours of college classes prior to receiving the Class C licenses. Director Colvard stated that the normal cost is around \$4,000.00 but Tri-County has agreed to the cost of \$2,750.00 per person. Director Colvard asks if the county would consider paying for the class with a signed employment agreement concerning the cost. Director Colvard stated that he had to contract help last week due to his employees having COVID and he did not have back up employees that had the proper license. Chair Orr thanked Director Colvard for coming to the board and they will study and discuss this request and get back with him.
14. Director Colvard stated that he would like to discuss the Bear Creek Dumpster site. Director Colvard stated that Cherokee County has closed their sites in the Topton, Nantahala area and now they must go to the one at Marble, so we are now receiving more refuse from Cherokee County residents. Director Colvard stated that the county needed to man this site or close it down. Director Colvard stated that it is not fair to our taxpayers to pay for another county's garbage. Director Becky Garland who is a Cherokee County resident stated that Cherokee County now has a sanitation tax and a fire tax with one site that is limited to the number of days

and hours that it is open. Chair Orr stated that we needed to be good neighbors but it is not fair to our taxpayers so they will give this issue serious consideration. Director Colvard stated that the site is full of C&D, Wood, Tires, etc. that is not allowed at the sites, and he understands why people living in Nantahala come to this site instead of driving to Marble but at the end of the day it is our taxpayers that is paying the cost.

15. Chair Orr asks Manager Marino to give the manager and project manager reporting. Manager Marino stated that the USFS Objection Resolution meeting was conducted on August 2, and 3 and Hayden Rogers and Forrest Gilliam are working on scheduling a follow-up discussion with Forest Service officials regarding specific issues raised by Graham County.
16. Manager Marino stated that the CDBG-NR procurement was completed on the Surveying, Environmental and Legal Services so the board will begin to see movement. Manager Marino stated that Director Garland had met with NC Commerce Mary Glascock, and she would be glad to work with us on the project.
17. Manager Marino stated that the CDBG-Schools procurement is complete for the Imagination HUB. Manager Marino stated that the Senior Center advertised for bids on equipment and are working on the RFP to advertise the changes for the kitchen, upgrading freezers and providing more storage. Manager Marino stated that Grace Place is on a third round of bids, and they are using other grant funding to complete their project. Manager Marino stated that procurement is complete on the EMS Funding and the equipment is ordered.
18. Manager Marino stated that the Santeetlah Lake Clean-Up is set for September 24<sup>th</sup> and the USFS would only allow one to roll off dumpster at the Massey Branch and the Cheoah Sites.
19. Manager Marino stated that Franklin Shook, Director with the Nantahala Regional Library was here with the Interlocal Agreement and asks Director Shook if he wanted to speak. Director Shook thanked the board for their time and stated that the library will be 82 years old and is the oldest library system in North Carolina. Director Shook stated that they are now able to share resources throughout the state and since his directorship, have had over two hundred thousand transactions throughout the state and the State has had 7.7 million items exchanged and he was very pleased. Director Shook stated that they are asking for more State support and would appreciate a letter of support from the Board of Commissioners. Director Shook thanked the board for their time and support. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve the Nantahala Library Interlocal Agreement as presented. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Chair Orr stated that she has fond memories of the book mobile in her youth.
20. Manager Marino stated that he would now go to the project managers reporting. Manager Marino stated that the guardrail has been completed at the RDA Moose Branch Subdivision Project and they are waiting on completion of the plat and final invoice.
21. Manager Marino stated that the cemetery building project is 70% complete and they will begin construction of the inside framework.
22. Manager Marino stated that we are at 65% complete of the recreation building and the drainage structure has been installed and grass seeding is complete. Commissioner Nelms asks where we are at on finishing the inside. Manager Marino stated that they have completed the rough in and plumbing and are awaiting the mechanical. Commissioner Nelms asks for an estimated completion date and is their two crews working on these buildings. Manager Marino stated that there were two crews working between the cemetery and recreation building and they are waiting on materials for the bathrooms.
23. Manager Marino stated that we received proposals from three companies on the architectural for the Justice Center and the first meeting is scheduled for September 23 to begin the interviews.
24. Manager Marino stated that the Middle School is 89% complete and encourages the board to go and look at the new addition.
25. Manager Marino stated that we needed further discussion on the Little Snowbird Project and our representative can speak with the board in closed session regarding their contract. Manager Marino stated that our representatives have been able to secure more funding through the STRAP Funds. Chair Orr stated that our State Legislators have also been working for more funding and stated that Senator Corbin needed to speak with Manager Marino. Manager Marino stated that he would reach out to him tomorrow.
26. Manager Marino stated that the contract for the pool resurfacing was awarded, and they are scheduled to begin in September.

27. Manager Marino stated that the NCDOT crack sealing, asphalt surface treatment and fog seal parking lots agreement for \$47,173.85 has been executed and sent to the State for their signatures.
28. Chair Orr asks about the cemetery steps project and where are we on starting this project. Manager Marino stated that they have scheduled the concrete and it should begin in October due to the backlog on obtaining concrete is now six to eight weeks.
29. Chair Orr asks for the finance reporting. Director Garland stated that we ended the month with a \$8,395,637.14 cash balance with a positive variance of \$229,743.54 from this time last year. Director Garland stated that our cash balance has rebounded which is good news and if the board remembers they bought new stadium lights last year which caused the negative variant.
30. Director Garland stated that we have \$2,917,884.73 in our Capital Projects NCCMT account; \$114,710.37 in the School Capital Projects; \$902,505.71 in the American Rescue Plan Act funds and \$5,022,972.28 in the SCIF Grant. Director Garland stated that we have added \$23,000.00 to our SCIF account from interest earned and was very pleased.
31. Director Garland stated that our sales tax collection for the month was \$486,090.18 in real; \$28,868.14 in prior year taxes and \$60,323.53 in DMV. Director Garland stated that year to date real collection is \$1,302,512.47 and our DMV is \$125,809.49. Director Garland stated that our tax rate is 17.43% which is a little behind, but our levy is higher this year.
32. Director Garland stated that our revenues for the month was \$1,544,005.49 and our expenditures was \$1,701,311.02 for a surplus of \$157,305.53. Director Garland stated that our year-to-date revenues is \$2,98,127.13 and our expenditures was \$2,648,214.16 for a year-to-date surplus of \$349,912.97.
33. Director Garland stated that our sales tax collection for the month was \$276,937.23 and we have a positive variance of 30%.
34. Director Garland stated that our ¼ cent collection since inception is \$809,143.56 and she will be transferring \$79,507.00 to our Capital Projects Fund and \$27,798.74 for the Justice Center.
35. Director Garland stated that we have collected \$44,582.85 in back taxes for the month of August.
36. Director Garland stated that she had three budget amendments for the board's approval.
  - a. Budget Amendment #2 for \$74,616.00 to recognize new grant awarded to sheriff department at the end of fiscal year 2022-2023.
  - b. Budget Amendment #3 for \$3,663.00 to record additional Senior Center funding streams.
  - c. Budget Amendment #4 for \$61,200.00 to amend for well construction on former landfill site as mandated by the State.
37. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the budget amendments as stated. Commissioner Wiggins seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Director Garland stated that we received our second allotment on the Opioid Settlement of \$51,361.85.
39. Director Garland stated that finance is halfway through the audit preparations and should have everything to the auditors in October.
40. Director Garland stated that she needed board approval to surplus the old mapping printer machine. Commissioner Nelms made the motion to approve. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
41. Chair Orr asks for public comment. Chair Orr asks Connie Gross to speak. Ms. Gross stated that the Santeetlah Rescue Squad is needing a new building and there are grants that would assist with these costs, and she has a volunteer willing to write the grant. Ms. Gross stated that her question is, does the money go through the county accounts and does the county need to approve this grant application. Director Garland stated that technically the rescue squads are 501-C3's so they manage their own accounts but if the board directed, she would give technical assistance if needed. Commissioner Wiggins stated that the squads are responsible, and the county has no participation in these grants since they are a non-profit. Commissioner Eller stated that they needed to check with Graham County Rescue Squad and Larry Hembree would be the contact person. Ms. Gross asks if the board would write a letter of support if needed. Commissioner Cody stated that he has received grants and they are easy to get and in the event the county needed to assist she can come back to the county.
42. Clerk Crisp stated that Mr. Gross had a question for the Reval. Chair Orr asks Mr. Gross for comment. Mr. Gross did not have comment.
43. Chair Orr asks Manager Marino for the discussion items. Manager Marino stated that we have Releases \$1,079.24 and Discoveries \$5956.21 for approval. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

44. Manager Marino stated that he needed board approval for the poll to go into contract with Southwest Commission for our Economic Development. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion to approve. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
45. Manager Marino stated that U.S. Board of Geographic Names approved the falls names of Santeetlah Bluff Falls and Stewart Falls. Manager Marino stated that the Bemis Camp Falls was deferred to a future meeting.
46. Chair Orr asks for new or old business. No new or old business.
47. Chair Orr asks for a motion to go into 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 Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
48. Chair Orr asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Wiggins made the motion as stated. Commissioner Nelms seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
49. 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