

Special Meeting – September 29, 2023

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Friday, September 29, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for a special meeting to discuss vacancies in staffing. All board was present. Also present Interim County Manager/Clerk Kim Crisp, Finance Director Stacy Carpenter, Sanitation Director Gavin Colvard, 911 Director Misty Hembree and DSS Director Amy Seay.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks Director Hembree to speak. Director Hembree stated that she had spoken with Manager Crisp on Monday about her concerns on the short staffing issues. Director Hembree stated that she cannot keep people at the center, she trains them, then they leave for a higher paying center in the neighboring counties. Director Hembree stated that she realizes that throwing money is not the answer but at this time she is unsure of what to do except raise the hourly rate. Director Hembree stated that she has been working to cover the shifts because they do not have trained personnel to cover, and her department provides crucial services for the public. The board discussed options with Director Hembree. Director Hembree presented a proposed pay scale that would hopefully attract experienced people to come back to this center. Director Hembree stated that she will use part-time employees, but most have full-time positions in other counties. Director Hembree stated that she loved this county and loves helping our people and hopes that this will help the issues, but she would not guarantee it.
3. Chairman Nelms asks Director Colvard to speak. Director Colvard stated that he was here with the same issues, but his concerns are over Class A drivers and the lack thereof. Director Colvard stated that if he moves the Class A driver's pay and not the other staff that has been here for twenty-three years then he will lose them as well. Director Colvard stated that he knew our county cannot compete with these larger counties, but he felt that the pay had to be increased now. Director Colvard stated that they will be moving forward with the new sanitation plan and the savings should make up the difference in the pay. Director Colvard stated that the current staff are honest hard-working men, and this included the maintenance department as well. Director Colvard stated that he is the director of two departments and his pay is \$19.01 per hour and he likes his job but asks the board to be fair and equitable across the board to him and his staff.
4. Chairman Nelms asks Director Seay to speak. Director Seay stated that she spoke to the board last week on Medicaid Expansion and she will have to fill three positions and currently no one is applying and asks that the IMC positions pay be raised so it might entice people to put in an application. Director Seay stated that she is in the same boat as the other directors and the overtime hours are ridiculous, but she is doing the best that she can with the staff.
5. Chairman Nelms stated that we are at an impasse, and something must be done.
6. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) for personnel. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to approve the raises as presented by the department heads which can be funded without changes to the budget. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Jacob Nelms, Chairman

Natasha Williams, Vice-Chair

Lynn Cody, Member

Keith Eller, Member

Connie Orr, Member

Attest

Kim Crisp, Clerk