

Graham County Board of Commissioners and Graham County Board of Education
Emergency Joint Meeting – June 29, 2023

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met jointly with the Graham County Board of Education on Monday, June 26, 2023, at 11:00 a.m. to discuss the Big Oaks Stadium Bleacher repair project. Board members present: Graham County Commissioners Jacob Nelms, Keith Eller, Connie Orr, and Natasha Williams. Commissioner Lynn Cody was absent. Graham County Board of Education Rodney Nelson, Chip Carringer, Pam Knott, Jonathan Allison, and Hank Dinschel. Also, present Superintendent Dr. Angela Knight; Assistant Superintendent Robert Moody, School Finance Director Lester Greene, County Finance Director Stacy Carpenter, Interim County Manager/Clerk Kim Crisp and Clerk Charlene Cline.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order for the County Commissioners. Chairman Rodney Nelson called the meeting to order for the Board of Education.
2. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Chairman Rodney Nelson called for a motion to approve the agenda. Pam Knott made the motion to approve. Chip Carringer seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. The boards turned the meeting over to School Superintendent Dr. Angela Knight. Dr. Knight stated the reason for the meeting was to discuss the bleachers located at the Big Oaks Stadium on Moose Branch Road. Robert Moody, Assistant Superintendent discussed the handout he presented to the board about the history of the bleachers and the current situation, showing pictures of the necessary repairs that need to be made to the existing bleachers. Mr. Moody presented a slide presentation to the boards of the bleachers and answered questions. Dr. Knight stated that they have been speaking with an engineer and received his reporting earlier this week.
4. Chairman Nelms stated that the engineer's report was a plan to repair the existing bleachers. This repair would be a very expensive and extensive and would be almost impossible to complete in the limited amount of time prior to football season. Chairman Nelms stated that they have decided the best plan forward would be to demolish our existing bleachers and install new ones and several community leaders have worked hard to make this plan possible. Chairman Nelms stated that with the new plan, they believe that the stadium would be ready for opening season. Chairman Nelms stated that the old bleachers would need to be removed and the site would require some prep work and they do not have a proposed cost at this time. Chairman Nelms stated that the plan will be expensive, but it will be permanent and if we go with the engineer's plan, the work would be temporary. Chairman Nelms stated that the boards are looking at a tough timeline and if they want our team to play football, something had to be done soon. Commissioner Orr asks if the bleachers can be repaired just through the football season with anchor support or is replacing the only option. The boards agreed to look at the cost but again they are looking at a very limited time frame. Commissioner Orr ask for a time frame on the cost estimate. Chairman Nelms stated that the engineer must go off the bleacher specs and this cannot be done without a site visit, and they needed board approval, so the timeline is not set at this time. Commissioner Orr asks if it would be done within two weeks. Chairman Nelms stated that they are ready to begin today once the boards agree on the path forward.
5. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to appoint Jason Marino as the Project Manager for this project. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
6. Dr. Knight stated that the school can go through an informal bid process up to \$500,000.00 and the bleachers are a rent-to-own project over the next four years. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to commit to the purchase as the primary funding source for the purchase, installation, and site prep for this project. Commissioner Eller asks the annual cost. Dr. Knight stated that the cost is \$67,000.00 per year including delivery and set up with the option of rent to own. Commissioner Eller asks how many years. Chairman Nelms stated that this will be spread out over a four-year period. Commissioner Orr made the motion that the Graham County Board of Commissioners would approve an annual payment of \$67,000.00 for the purchase of the bleachers. Dr. Knight stated that this needs to include the site prep and retaining walls as well. Commissioner Orr added the site prep and retaining walls to her motion. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
7. Commissioner Orr asks if lottery funds could be used. Finance Director Lester Greene stated that they cannot obligate those funds for this purchase, but it is up to his board. Interim County Manager Kim Crisp stated that the school bond has been paid and the sales tax that was being used to make that payment can be used to make this purchase and that amount is \$250,000.00. Commissioner Williams made the motion to spend up to \$250,000.00 for the bleacher project

including purchase, delivery, site prep and installation with retaining walls. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

8. Dr. Knight asks if this is the green light to move forward. The boards all agreed to move forward. Dr. Knight stated that this could not have happened if it wasn't for a lot of people working together and some generous sponsors and a good working relationship between our boards and staff. Dr. Knight stated that football affects the whole community and helps fund a lot of other sports especially our band, our youth leagues and more. Commissioner Orr stated that she agreed with that statement and thanked everyone for their hard work in making the project happen.
9. Commissioner Nelms asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr made the motion as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Rodney Nelson asks for a motion to adjourn the Board of Education. Pam Knott made the motion as stated. Jonathan Allison 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 to the Board