

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular monthly meeting. All the board was present. Also, present Finance Director Stacy Carpenter and Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board Kim Crisp.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks Commissioner Cody to give the Invocation.
3. Chairman Nelms asks Commissioner Williams to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Nelms asks David Artiss to speak. Mr. Artiss stated that he wanted to remind the board of the importance of maintaining town and county offices downtown for the survival of the downtown area. Mr. Artiss stated that the county has two good plans to use Reimaging Robbinsville and The Gateway to Tomorrow Plan Graham County 2015 and encouraged the board to review these studies that were researched by unbiased professional planning experts. Mr. Artiss stated that his recommendations from the October 18<sup>th</sup> Workshop were messed up or misconstrued by Withers Ravenel because his intention is that the entrance be at Court Street and the parking lot and rear entrance would be located on Ford Street. Mr. Artiss stated that the detriments listed by Withers Ravenel are erroneous due to the misconception of the previously recommended building design and location on the property. Mr. Artiss stated that the comments that the site development costs are about 300% higher than the expected base site costs due to a parking deck are based on an incorrect building location and design. Mr. Artiss stated that this should not be a reason for immediate rejection of the downtown location and should be reevaluated based on the recommended Courthouse Square building location and design. Mr. Artiss stated that the plan he proposed was for the building to be up the slope, with the flat area on Ford Street designated for outside parking and there would be no need for a multi-level parking deck. Mr. Artiss stated that while initial costs are of importance, the building will serve Graham County for many decades and should be designed to show/express/the importance and significance of the county and town. Mr. Artiss stated that the Fort Hill location has traffic and congestion issues, and the old Stanley location may have environmental issues, either of which could add to construction costs at those sites. Mr. Artiss stated that Bill Tunnel, a town planning professional and one of the main authors of the studies gave his opinion when recently asked about moving the judicial and municipal offices out of town. "You might just as well drop a bomb downtown; it would have the same effect as moving the Justice Center." Mr. Artiss stated that he hopes that the board will revisit the sites based on the correct information.
6. Chairman Nelms asks Lisa DeLoach to speak. Ms. DeLoach stated that she was here to follow up her letter that was sent January 10<sup>th</sup> concerning Crypto mines. Ms. DeLoach stated that surrounding counties are taking a proactive stance to address these mines because the ones in Cherokee County are causing trouble for the residents near Murphy. Ms. DeLoach asks that the board investigate an ordinance to prohibit these crypto mines from coming to Robbinsville. Ms. DeLoach stated that these mines have eight feet high chain link fences surrounding them with barbed wire running along the top. Ms. DeLoach stated that she knew someone that applied for a job at one of these mines, changed their mind and had to sign a non-disclosure form when he left because it is so secretive, has extremely high security and to her is sketchy. Chairman Nelms stated that Clerk Crisp did give us the ordinance from Clay County, and they will review it.
7. Chairman Nelms asks Shelly Foreman to speak. Ms. Foreman stated that she is the Western Region Relations Representative for Vaya Health. Ms. Foreman stated that they have been in Graham County since 1972 and now has a commissioner that serves on their Board of Directors, Commissioner Orr. Ms. Foreman stated that Commissioner Cody sits on the advisory board and thanked him for his service. Ms. Foreman stated that DSS Director Amy Seay has addressed their concerns on what the proposed Medicaid Transformation will look like in North Carolina. Ms. Foreman stated that Medicaid Managed Care is a way of delivering Medicaid benefits and health care services are still covered under Medicaid, but services are managed by a health plan. Ms. Foreman stated that Vaya is a managed care organization that offers a health plan and will manage physical health care, pharmacy, long-term care services and supports behavioral health, intellectual/developmental disability, and traumatic brain injury services under a single integrated health plan. Ms. Foreman stated that they will continue to manage behavioral health, I/DD and TBI services for residents of our region who are uninsured or do not have enough insurance and cannot afford care. Commissioner Orr thanked Ms. Foreman for all her work and stated that they are overwhelmed already to meet the needs. Ms. Foreman stated that she is asking the Board to approve a second letter of opposition to House Bill 640 / Senate Bill 156, which is the NCDHHS State-Wide Child and Youth Medicaid Specialty Waiver. Ms. Foreman stated that this waiver would place many kids in the DSS In-Home and Foster Care System, their caregivers, and siblings into a single state-wide Medicaid Health Plan, instead of their

assignments now with Vaya Health /other LME/MCO's across the State. Ms. Foreman stated that this would mean each DSS would lose its local relationship and connection with Vaya Health, along with the Vaya staff embedded in DSS, and contacts with Vaya staff who support them in troubleshooting and problem solving on cases. Ms. Foreman asks that this letter be sent to Secretary Kinsley regarding concerns with a private insurance company operating state-wide being able to have a responsive approach to DSS. Ms. Foreman thanked the board for their time and consideration in sending this second letter.

8. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to recess the meeting. Commissioner Eller made the motion to recess the meeting. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
9. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to reopen the meeting. Commissioner Eller made the motion to reopen. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Chairman Nelms asks Interim Finance Director Stacy Carpenter to give the monthly reporting. Clerk Crisp asks that the board pass the resolution appointing Ms. Carpenter as the Finance Officer, she was previously named Interim Finance Director. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to appoint Stacy Carpenter as the Finance Director for Graham County. Commissioner Cody made the motion to pass the resolution as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
11. Chairman Nelms asks Finance Director Carpenter to give the monthly reporting. Director Carpenter stated that the county ended the month with an \$8,586,504.24 cash balance with a negative variance of \$1,568,006.59.
12. Director Carpenter stated that our projects fund balances are:
  - a. Capital Projects – NCCMT \$3,220,930.66
  - b. School Capital Project – NCCMT \$117,210.99
  - c. American Rescue Plan Act - \$847,832.33
  - d. SCIF Grant- Courthouse \$4,844,933.40Director Carpenter stated that our interest to date on these accounts is \$357,372.80.
13. Director Carpenter stated that our current year tax collection for the month is \$123,823.20; prior year \$14,290.76 and DMV is \$67,093.27. Director Carpenter stated that our year-to-date tax collection is \$7,157,053.86 for real and \$490,415.42 for DMV. Director Carpenter stated that our tax collection rate is 96.03% and the total levy is \$7,318,594.39.
14. Director Carpenter stated that our revenues for the month were \$1,342,364.54 and our expenditures were \$2,543,923.28 for a negative deficit of \$1,201,558.74. Director Carpenter stated that our revenues to date are \$15,794,151.79 and our expenditures were \$15,729,169.40 for a surplus of \$64,982.39.
15. Director Carpenter stated that we have received \$454,343.81 in LATCF funding.
16. Director Carpenter stated that our sales tax collection for the month was \$221,913.96 and our quarter cent tax collection for the month was \$93,582.14 and this amount will be transferred to our capital projects account bringing that total to \$2,358,700.89.
17. Director Carpenter stated that our tax office continues to work on the past due taxes.
18. Director Carpenter stated that our capital projects expenditures to date are:
  - a. Election Board/Bathroom Renovation \$263,620.58
  - b. Recreation Building \$202,731.16
  - c. Cemetery Building \$194,112.68
  - d. Justice Center \$362,500.00
  - e. Middle School County Match \$1,197,712.17
  - f. Total to date County Match \$2,220,676.59
  - g. Total to date Middle School Project \$4,579,375.89
19. Director Carpenter stated that our ideal budget remaining should be 31% and we are holding at 33%.
20. Director Carpenter stated that she did have a Project Ordinance to authorize the Little Snowbird Flood Mitigation Project proceeds from USDA-NRCS Program for a total of \$824,073.00. Director Carpenter stated that the following revenues are anticipated to be available for this project:
  - a. USDA-NRCS \$321,366.00
  - b. STRaP Funding \$267,000.00
  - c. SCIF Funding \$200,000.00
  - d. County Match \$35,707.00
  - e. Total Revenues \$824,073.00Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve the Project Ordinance as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
21. Director Carpenter stated that she would need approval to pay the additional fees for the Snowbird Project of \$18,800.00. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
22. Chairman Nelms asks for public comment. No public comment.
23. Chairman Nelms stated that we would now go to the discussion items. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to approve the Releases of \$299.06. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

24. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to approve a support letter for Vecino's requested by Pastor Eric Reece. Commissioner Cody made the motion to approve. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
25. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the following IT costs:
  - a. Cisco Refresh for \$28,974.71 which is half payment. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
  - b. Prodigy Voice and Data for \$27,121.63 which is half payment. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
26. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the following polls:
  - a. HVAC for Sheriff Office \$39,900.00
  - b. Budget Amendment Urgent Care Equipment Fees \$131,603.42
  - c. Select GE X-Ray machine \$131,603.42.
  - d. Replace 18-year-old HVAC at Urgent Care \$10,650.00
  - e. Name Stacy Carpenter the Interim Finance Director
  - f. Approve payment \$96,309.50 to Clerk of Court for foreclosures.
  - g. Approve payment \$9,746.38 for Transit Camera Equipment
  - h. Approve payment \$15,700.00 Tax Annual Mapping Maintenance Fee
  - i. Approve payment \$75,000.00 to Moseley Architects

Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve the polls as stated. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
27. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the Foreclosure Policy after the Bidding Process as recommended by the Tax Collector. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
28. Chairman Nelms asks Manager Crisp about the Senior Center. Manager Crisp stated that the bank at the Senior Center needed to be stabilized and Project Manager Marino is obtaining quotes at this time.
29. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the renewals for Liability and Property \$168,286.00 and Workers Comp for \$92,146.00 to NCACC. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
30. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the renewal for BCBS Insurance with a 10% increase. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve to accept BCBS as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
31. Chairman Nelms stated that the board was invited to Santeetlah Fire Hall Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. for a groundbreaking for their new auxiliary building.
32. Chairman Nelms 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 Williams made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. 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.
34. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to allow leave without pay to employee H. Eller due to an unexpected family emergency. Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to approve two new sites for the Justice Center.
  - a. Site A. Property located just outside of downtown. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve Site A. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
  - b. Site B. Property located downtown. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve Site B. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Chairman Nelms called for a vote. Commissioners Nelms, Williams, Cody and Orr voted yes. Commissioner Eller voted no. Motion passed four to one.
36. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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Jacob Nelms, Chairman

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Natasha Williams, Vice-Chairman

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Lynn Cody, Member

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Keith Eller, Member

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Connie Orr, Member

ATTEST \_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board