

Regular Meeting – July 18, 2023

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, July 18, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. for their regular monthly board meeting in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. 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 asked 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 Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Chairman Nelms asks Russ Harris, Executive Director with Southwestern Commission to speak. Director Harris stated that he was here to give yearly updates to the board of commissioners. Director Harris stated that Commissioner Orr is the Board Chair for the Southwest Commission, and he appreciates the hard work, the time and effort that she puts into the Council of Government. Director Harris presented a booklet with the yearly annual report. Director Harris stated that this report highlights just a few of the many ways their organization positively impacted the region in the past 12 months and stated that they couldn't do this without the support of our local government partners and the selfless dedication of their staff. Director Harris gave an example of the agencies that they represent beginning with Area Agency on Aging which covers caregiver assistance, elder nutrition health and wellness, promoting vaccine awareness and education promotion of services offered and awareness and education for Veteran efforts and additional support services as needed for our elders. Director Harris stated that our Elders Walk will be held at Senior Celebration in Swain County this year and last year they had (600) people that attended. Director Harris stated that they fed (153,000) meals over the districts and (11,000) meals just in Graham County. Director Harris stated that there were (689) families that received respite care and (400) hours were given in Graham County, and this is a much-needed program that helps the family members. during difficult times of caring for loved ones. Director Harris stated that they had a program that distributed shoes and they gave away several thousand pairs of shoes to our seniors. Director Harris stated that they do community and economic development. and this has been a busy year for this division. Director Harris stated that they have had (8) successful grant applications that secured more than \$7.8 million dollars into the region. and those grants included broadband, housing, downtown revitalization, community enhancements and outdoor national resources. Director Harris stated that \$1.4 million dollars is coming to Graham County for broadband through Zito. Director Harris stated that the commission was able to assist us with \$125,000.00 in grants to build a Graham County Rural Development home. Director Harris stated that Corridor K breaks more ground in 2023 and we will have a land bridge which will be the first of its kind in the state and will be another special attraction for people visiting Graham County. Director Harris stated that the consortium for housing is responsible for identifying and funding affordable housing projects in the region. Director Harris stated that the Graham County Rural Development Authority will partner with Robbinsville High School's Construction Class to build an affordable home every two years in Robbinsville, while helping students prepare to enter the workforce. Director Harris stated that construction materials up to \$125,000.00 will be returned to the Graham County RDA after the home sales. Director Harris stated that they also have grant writing assistance benefits in the region through our Mountain West Partnership and we have been able to secure a \$700,000.00 grant for Fontana Village to assist with water and sewer. Director Harris stated that there are two main objectives to move the region economically forward and that's supporting the businesses that are already here and recruiting new businesses. Director Harris stated that Josh Carpenter is the Director of Mountain West Partnership. Director Harris stated that they do have a workforce development which bridges the gap between students and employers and it's vital to showcase different careers in industry to students who want to live and work here. Director Harris stated that they have the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program, and they are currently (40) youth residents in the Clay County program that are actively participating or in the one-year follow-up that tracks former participants to see if they are in college or working full time. Director Harris stated that they also have the Peer Support Program which is helping people recovering from substance abuse disorders so they can work, which is what peer support is about? Director Harris stated that the annual dinner is coming up to be held in Sylva this year and invites all the commissioners to attend. Director Harris stated that they will continue to work with the local region on the opioid planning and to align with other counties. Director Harris thanked the board for their support and partnership.

6. Director Harris gave congratulations to NCDIT Zitel Holding LLC for the growing rule economics access technology great grant award. Director Harris stated that (66.1%) of Graham County citizens will have access. Director Harris stated that these funds are contingently awarded for the project entitled Graham County Broadband Expansion to deploy broadband services to approximately (217) households and businesses in Graham County.
7. Commissioner Nelms asks for the finance report from Director Stacy Carpenter. Director Carpenter stated that she did not have a budget report this month, as she is in the middle of a soft close for the Fiscal Year 2022-2023, but she will have a reporting next month. Director Carpenter stated that she has been having some difficulties in the payroll system and has been troubleshooting with Ida Taylor who is with Edmunds.Gov Tech to navigate through the system. Director Carpenter stated that she has been working with Becky Garland, our local government commission contact for the year end closing and will have that reporting at the end of the month.
8. Commissioner Nelms asked for public comment. Manager Crisp stated that Rebecca Garland had signed up for public comment. Ms. Garland stated that in February when she resigned, she received a job offer from the Local Government Commission, which she accepted and now she can continue to be part of the unit as a coach. Ms. Garland stated that she is one of (6) coaches and she will be placed over the state from Mitchell County back to Graham County. Ms. Garland stated that in the past she assisted with the finances and related issues, or any problems and she will continue to do so for Graham County at no cost to the taxpayers. Ms. Garland asks that the board feel free to call upon her, email her or ask her for assistance with any questions she is able and would be glad to give local government support to Graham County.
9. Commissioner Nelms asked for discussion items. Commissioner Nelms stated that we had touched on the grant award for Broadband Expansion with Zito Media and asks Manager Crisp to update. Interim County Manager Crisp stated that we had received a great grant in the amount of \$619,916.65 and that these funds are awarded from the American Rescue Plan Act State Fiscal Recovery Funds. as appropriated by North Carolina Session Law 2021-180 and are subject to federal requirements as detailed in the US Treasury. Interim County Manager Crisp stated that the match given by the county was \$15,000.00 with Zito Media paying the remaining required match.
10. Chairman Nelms asked Interim County Manager Crisp to explain the remaining discussion items. Interim County Manager Crisp stated that the BCBS pharmacy problem had been found and was corrected so all our employees should have no problems filling their prescriptions from this point forward.
11. Interim Manager Crisp stated that the Southwestern Commission Annual Dinner is Monday, July 24, 2023, at 5:00 o'clock p.m. and the directions are attached in your packet.
12. Interim Manager Crisp stated that the Southwestern Commission Opioid Planning Meeting is set for July 26, 2023, at 12:00 noon in Macon County and Director Russ Harris had sent an invitation to the board and the meeting will be held at the Macon County Campus of Southwestern Community College.
13. Interim Manager Crisp asked for approval of the polls. Those polls were: a contract proposal for Mark Masters for our Urgent Care Renovations; Cancellation of a special meeting that was to be held on June 23rd. and a cancellation for a continued meeting. Chairman Nelms asked for a motion to approve the polls Commissioner Williams made the motion to approve. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. The vote was unanimous.
14. Interim Manager Crisp stated that a trial is scheduled to start the week of the 24th in Clay County and we will be using the Cherokee Boys Club for transportation. Interim Manager Crisp stated that we will also have to supply snacks and meals for the jurors for the entire trial period.
15. Interim Manager Crisp asks if the board wants to help the students this year and stated that the parents could use help with the tech fees and asks if the board would be willing to assist. The board asked Interim Manager Crisp to get the information of the actual costs.
16. Chairman Nelms asked for new or old business. No new or old business was discussed.
17. Chairman Nelms asked for a motion to go into closed session under General Statutes 143-318.11. A (1)(3)(5)(6) for privileged or confidential information, attorney-client privilege, personnel, and contracts. Commissioner Eller made the motion as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. The vote was unanimous.
18. Chairman Nelms asked for a motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Williams made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Eller seconded this motion. The vote was unanimous.
19. Chairman Nelms asked for a motion to approve the Sansoucy bill for \$27,875.00. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. The vote was unanimous.
20. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to approve Budget Amendments #18 for final year amendments; Budget Amendment #19 for expenditures approved out of contingency FY 2023;

Budget Amendment #1 to recognize lottery distribution to schools; Budget Amendment # 1 to recognize Deed of Trust fees. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve all budget amendments as stated. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. The vote was unanimous.

21. Commissioner Nelms asked for a motion to Reappropriate Expenditures for 6/30/2023 for our finance officer to be able to cut checks. This entry will not affect the overall budget for FY 2023-2024 because items were budgeted in FY 2022-2023 and represent outstanding encumbrances not paid until FY 2023-2024. Commissioner Eller made the motion to approve as stated. Commissioner William seconded this motion. The vote was unanimous.

22. Chairman Nelms asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams made the motion as stated. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. The vote was unanimous.

Jacob Nelms, Chairman

Natasha Williams, Vice-Chair

Lynn Cody, Member

Keith Eller, Member

Connie Orr, Member

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board