

Special Meeting – February 7, 2023

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for a special meeting to meet with Tim Stranahan, Chief Operations Officer for Tekniam a Remote Universal Community Systems Company. Board present Jacob Nelms, Natasha Williams, Lynn Cody, and Connie Orr. Board absent Keith Eller. Also present Interim County Manager/ Clerk Kim Crisp.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Orr made the motion to approve. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chairman Nelms asks Mr. Stranahan to speak. Mr. Stranahan stated he was the Chief Operations Officer for Tekniam a company based in Kanas that is offering complete turn-key solution to provide broadband internet coverage to virtually any location or area in the world. Mr. Stranahan stated that this solution consists of their patent pending RUCS communication components strategically placed within the coverage area, distribution modules disbursed as needed to serve the users, utility interface for power, mounting devices, internet interface through either existing service providers in the area or satellite solution for remote areas, TekMESH remote management software, installation, monitoring and support services as needed. Mr. Stranahan stated that this provides telehealth to remote areas as well. Mr. Stranahan stated that they have conducted a Pilot Project in Ocracoke North Carolina and the company will provide timely project updates to the residents of Ocracoke and Hyde County officials which define key project moments while providing accountability for both Tekniam and Hyde County. Mr. Stranahan stated that Phase 1 has been completed and select businesses and law enforcement have been given access to the Tekniam network and received instructions on how to use the network. Mr. Stranahan stated that the business owners will act as evaluators to help improve the project and the network.
4. Mr. Stranahan gave a brief review of how RUCs would work in Robbinsville using the fiber connectivity. Mr. Stranahan stated that the system provides communication over internet using Fiber Data Feeds, Cellular Systems, Wireless Broadband, Satellite Services and L Band with parabolic or flat panel self-acquiring antennas. Chairman Nelms asks how much is the cost? Mr. Stranahan stated that for (270) people the cost is \$700,000.00 but the federal government will pay to install on a three-year contract, and it will provide free internet for business development and the State will pay with federal money. Mr. Stranahan stated that the cost depends on what you want to do, and who and where the technology will be located. Mr. Stranahan stated that the purpose of the connectivity is to reach our remote areas to focus on business development.
5. Mr. Stranahan stated that Representative Karl Gillespie had asked that he make a connection here in Graham County. Mr. Stranahan stated that he felt that his company could be successful here and he is not here asking for money but just to give information to the board to see if they are interested in trying this type of project.
6. The board had questions of fiber usage and questions on the speed of the technology. The board asks what the charge would be to hook this up in a residential area. Mr. Stranahan stated that the board needed to look for areas where four or five businesses are located or could be started. The board all felt that Telehealth could be useful in the areas of the county where there is no connectivity. The board all agreed that Graham County is unique where the fiber is located throughout the county. Mr. Stranahan stated that this is a portable system and if fiber can be reached with line of sight this technology would be beneficial. Mr. Stranahan stated that each of the antennae are \$9,000.00 each and they reach as high as 1000 feet. Mr. Stranahan stated that the transmitters batteries are recharged by the wind and are in line with a car battery.
7. Mr. Stranahan stated that this system will allow for internet access for business purposes and Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook or TikTok are not allowed on these systems. Mr. Stranahan asks that the board think of an area where this would be beneficial and successful.
8. The board thanked Mr. Stranahan for his time and agreed to have discussion of areas where the need is the greatest.
9. Chairman Nelms asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Williams made the motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

Signature page attached!

Signature page for Special Meeting February 7, 2023

Jacob Nelms, Chairman

Natasha Williams, Vice-Chair

Lynn Cody, Member

Keith Eller, Member

Connie Orr, Member

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board