

Continued Meeting from June 15, 2009 Regular Meeting

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met today, Friday, June 25, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. for a continuation from the Monday, June 15, 2009 Regular Meeting at the Community Building on Knight Street, Robbinsville, NC. All Board was present. Commissioner Snyder called the meeting back into session.

1. County Manager Lynn Cody presented the board with the updated copy of the 2009/2010 Budget for review and approval. He stated that the year 2008/2009 Budget ended in a positive note and that the Finance Officer Rebecca Garland will be presenting the Budget Amendments today for final approval.
2. Commissioner Odom stated that he had two changes that he would like to see to the upcoming budget. The first item is giving the NC Forest Service more money than originally appropriated to help keep a job open due to the cuts that the state has made. Harold Phillips, representative for the NC Forest Service Office, spoke to the board about the money that was needed and why it was so important. He spoke of the many fires that were in Graham County and how much work and finances that this entails. He stated that he understood the financial crisis that the county was in as well but would appreciate the boards consideration on this issue.
3. The second item is the Heritage Museum and Commissioner Odom stated that he had a change of heart after reading the documents from the US Forest Service Office on the requirements for the repairs. Commissioner Smith read aloud the repair requirements for the inside of the building as well as the outside. The list of things for repair was extensive and would result in a greater cost than anticipated. The board discussed the repairs and the general consensus was not to get involved due to new findings. Commissioner Cable made the motion to drop the museum funding at this time due to the requirements for all repairs that the US Forest Service Office demands. Commissioner Odom seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
4. Commissioner Odom made the motion to add \$13,000.00 back to Special Appropriations for the NC Forest Service which would give them the same amount that was appropriated as last year and then take the balance of money that was originally to go to the Heritage Museum and put in Public Buildings to balance the budget. Commissioner Cable seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
5. Commissioner Smith had a question about the utilities appearing in some departments of the budget and not others. County Manager Cody stated that this is just for tracking purposes only because of the different meters and that the money is taken from the same allocations for all utilities. This is to give documentation of where the meters originate.
6. Commissioner Smith also asked about the expenditures to date. The Finance Officer Rebecca Garland stated that the total to date was \$12,299,550.00 and the fund balance to date is \$12,900,000.00. This is not the greatest but we are still in the black. Commissioner Smith asked how long we could run with the money that we have now and Rebecca stated that if the county did not receive any revenues for July and August we would be depleted and as of now our cash balance was \$1.3 million dollar. Rebecca also stated that she would like to continue to being very tight with all expenditures. Commissioner Odom stated that the county had received more monies than anticipated on some revenues for last years budget. Rebecca stated that was correct and that the county was making good progress. Commissioner Smith discussed the need to raise the mileage rate to \$.59 cents per 100 instead of the \$.58 cents per 100 but the board did not agree to this. The board discussed various departments and the need for complete documentation to be given to the board periodically to determine incoming revenues. The board also issued a directive to the county manager to send letters to all special appropriations requesting an accounting of where the county dollars are spent. The board discussed the Domestic Violence Special Appropriations and gave the county manager a directive to hold their money until an accounting of the monies was given to the board, The board also gave a directive to the county manager to increase the burial expense due to the

number of autopsies increasing in our county.

6. Commissioner Smith made the motion to move \$6000.00 of the Heritage Museum monies to the Senior Heating Assistance and that the board administer the funds the same way that the board did with the housing grants. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. After discussion among the board on the legalities, Commissioner Smith rescinded her motion to further investigate. Commissioner Trull rescinded his motion.

7. Commissioner Odom made the motion to adopt the 2009/2010 Budget with the changes by the directives given to the county manager. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

8. Commissioner Cable stated that the board needed to adopt a resolution to control the spending of the finances after the elections are over in November to keep our county from going through the hardships that we have had to face. He stated that the overspending in the past was very vindictive. Commissioner Odom and Trull agreed with Commissioner Cable. Commissioner Cable made a motion to limit expenditures other than budgeted normal expenses for the weeks following the general election until the new commissioners are sworn in. He stated that over \$3.5 million dollars were spent in two weeks time in the past and this left the county in debt that we are still paying for. After further discussion among the board, this issue was tabled to the next meeting to get further information on the legality of this resolution. Commissioner Cable rescinded his motion.

9. Commissioner Odom made the motion to put a spending freeze on the departments and only necessary items be purchased. Commissioner Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. Rebecca Garland stated that we had many challenges coming our way and she commended the board on their very good job of limiting the spending.

10. Commissioner Smith made the motion to adopt a resolution and send the State Senators and Legislatures to allow the portion of Swain County that includes the Deals Gap area to be incorporated into Graham County. She stated that Graham County provides all ambulance, fire, police and sanitation needs to this area and we should be receiving the income generated from this area instead of Swain County. Commissioner Odom seconded this motion stating that the resolution needed to include property from the middle of Fontana Dam, north to state line, west and south west to Tapoco Bridge including the magazine area. The board discussed this at length and all agreed with Commissioner Smith but felt that this is a hot topic and the county needed to be ready for a fight with Swain County. Commissioner Odom stated that we do have a valid argument. Commissioner Smith stated that we either raise our prices for services or we get that portion of land moved into Graham County. The board discussed the issue further with Commissioner Smith rescinded her motion and Commissioner Odom rescinded his second. The board gave a directive to the county manager to invite the senators and representatives to our county and show them what our issues are concerning this request. All board was in agreement to this.

11. Finance Officer Rebecca Garland presented the board three budget amendments. See Attached! She stated that the office had worked very hard on getting the books closed and explained the amendments in detail with the reasons why some departments were over budget. She stated that all purchase orders were accounted for. Rebecca did state that she had concerns with Amendment #4 and she felt the board should look into this matter. The amendment was for the Travel and Tourism Budget and she stated that main problem is occupancy tax and the tax not being paid in a timely manner. She stated that the board needed to look closely at the late penalty and felt they needed to enforce this penalty. The board all agreed that this issue would be reviewed and have the lawyer check the legalities in proceeding. Commissioner Odom made the motion to accept the budget amendments #3, #4, and #5 and give the Finance Officer the flexibility to balance the budget where needed. Commissioner Cable seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

12. The board asked the finance officer about the 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 audits if a timeline had been established for completion. The finance officer stated that she had been

in touch with the auditing firm and the projected date of completion date for both audits is January 31, 2010. She stated that our office will begin the preparations to reorganize files and build spread sheets for the auditors when returning from the July 4th vacation. Commissioner Odom thanked Rebecca for her hard work and for everything that she has done. Rebecca stated that this was a team effort and was very appreciative of Machelles, Kim and Lynn for their help. Commissioner Smith stated that she was appreciative of all that Rebecca had done also and all the board agreed.

13. Commissioner Odom made the motion to accept the Three Year Update to the Solid Waste Plan. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

14. Commissioner Odom made the motion to reappoint Sue Adams to the Social Service Board. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

15. Commissioner Odom made the motion to accept the paving contract for the Gladdens Creek Dumpster site from Caldwell Construction due to the fact that they were the cheapest bid. Commissioner Cable seconded this motion. Commissioner Smith asked if this amount was in the upcoming budget and County Manager Lynn Cody stated that this was put in the new 2009/2010 Budget. Commissioner Snyder called for a vote. Vote unanimous. The Meadow Branch dumpster site is still under review as to where the site will be located.

16. Commissioner Odom stated that he had reviewed the cleaning bids and was not satisfied with the schedules of the cleaning. He felt that the cleaning should stay as is at the present time. Commissioner Trull seconded this statement with the understanding that we discuss the employees in closed session. Commissioner Snyder questioned the motion with the addition. Commissioner Odom made the motion to leave the cleaning as is. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

17. Commissioner Odom made the motion to contact the Verizon state office with a complaint that we have tried numerous attempts to get assistance from the regional managers on the lines around the courthouse. The board felt this was a directive instead of a motion. Commissioner Odom rescinded this motion and put it in form of a directive. All board agreed and gave the directive to the county manager to contact the Verizon state office.

18. Commissioner Odom made the motion to pass a resolution to request that the Department of Motor Vehicles service Graham County two days a week instead of the three days a month or two days a month if a holiday falls on one of those days that they now offer. Commissioner Cable seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

19. Commissioner Odom stated that Buster Stewart with Duke Energy had asked if Duke Energy could purchase the right of way property on Ford Street that connects to their land for the purpose of expansion. The board discussed this issue in detail relating that in the past there were some legal issues regarding another right of way on the same properties. Commissioner Trull stated that he would agree only if the county is held harmless if something happens and the right of way falls through. The board stated that we needed to put Buster Stewart on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss this issue in further detail.

20. Commissioner Odom made the motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11(4)(5)(6) for contracts, personnel and grievances. Commissioner Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

21. No decisions were made in closed session.

Bruce Snyder, Chairman, Graham County Commissioners

Sandra Smith, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioners

Billy Cable, Member, Graham County Commissioners

Steve Odom, Member, Graham County Commissioners

Gene Trull, Member, Graham County Commissioners

ATTEST:

Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board