

Regular Meeting – Monday, June 1, 2009

The Graham County Board of County Commissioners met Monday, June 1, 2009 at 5:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Graham County Community Building at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC. Present were: Commissioners Bruce Snyder, Sandra Smith, Billy Cable, Gene Trull and Steve Odom. Commissioner Snyder called the meeting to order.

1. Commissioner Cable gave the invocation.
2. Commissioner Trull made the motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner Cable seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Commissioner Odom made the motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Smith seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
4. Commissioner Snyder opened the floor for public comment. Claudine Gibson spoke first and stated that she wore two hats. The first hat as a mother. She stated that earlier today in the budget workshop Commissioner Trull commented on the school students in reference to the funding and spending of money and stated that we spend all this money and all we get are stupid kids and she was offended by this comment. She thanked Commissioner Snyder for stating where the school money goes. The second hat she wore was by being an insurance agent. She stated that she had gotten copies of the insurance bids and they are public record and she reviewed those and found it interesting that the proposal from Fallen Insurance Group had different dates and had her current renewal rates on Shenandoah and they also referenced her BCBS renewal rates. She also stated the T.I.S. Insurance made a reference to her BCBS renewal rates and the dates those rates were obtained and stated that she didn't turn her renewal rates in until May 27 and she did not have a clue how these companies obtained these rates and found that very interesting. She stated that these rates were obtained two weeks before she turned in her proposal. Commissioner Trull stated that he would like to address the comment made by Claudine Gibson. He stated that if she would tell the whole story that the comment was not said like that. He stated that the board was discussing the amount of money spent in the country and we spend as much or more on our kids and we don't have the education and he said is that because we have all stupid kids, no, I don't think so! He stated that was how the statement was said. Commissioner Snyder asked for other comments. Chip Carringer, Superintendent of Graham County Schools, spoke next with concerns about the statement that was said in the budget workshop and said that he wouldn't be doing his job if he didn't stand up for our kids. He stated our kids did very well on scores and he was honored to be a part of our school and we have an excellent school system. Commissioner Trull stated again that he did not make any comment against our kids in this county he stated he spoke about the country. Rick Davis spoke next on the comment that he heard was said and stated that he takes offense at the comment that was said. He was a graduate as well as others in this room and his children were graduates and have obtained highly skilled occupations so we do not have stupid kids. Commissioner Trull stated that he did not either. Rick Davis stated that he is very proud of our school system and he thanked Chairman Snyder. Commissioner Snyder stated that he had worked in the school system for years and is very proud of Graham County and our school is excellent and he will always think that. Commissioner Snyder asked for further comment. Billy Holder spoke next on the flood plain ordinance and wanted to see what the board had

decided about lowering the taxes on all the property affected. He also stated that this issue would not go away. He stated that Commissioner Snyder made the statement that we didn't deserve tax cuts. He also stated that he would go straight to the commissioner's faces not behind their backs. He said the flood plain needed to be rechecked by FEMA. He stated that FEMA would give grants to oversee this and then the counties will be required to pay for this service in the future. Donna Cody spoke next on the budget workshop for the county and stated that comments were made without thinking and our school funds are at the bottom and its embarrassing and gives the impression that we don't value our children's education and in the future you should be cautious on words that you say because its fighting words when it concerns our kids. Virginia Zakroski with the Meadow Branch Fire Department spoke to the board on an update on their fire department. She stated that they were in the process of closing the loan on the building. She presented a copy of the operating budget and stated that she hoped the board would reconsider cutting the appropriations that the county gives to their department. She also mentioned that they had a contract with the county and hoped that the board could keep their payment as high as possible. She stated that Joe Gladden had spoken with Keith Eller about a fire truck and thought they were going to receive one from the Graham County Fire Department. She also stated that she would like for the board to be at the ribbon cutting ceremony. Commissioner Snyder thanked Virginia for her time.

5. Next on the agenda were insurance contracts. The lawyer advised if the board discussed going into actual contract then they needed to go into closed session first. The board delayed this item of business.
6. Josh Carpenter, County Planner, spoke to the board on obtaining monies through the State Department of Energy. He stated that a board would need to be established. After discussion among the board, they decided to table this until other people could be asked about serving on the board. All board was in agreement.
7. Commissioner Smith made the motion to amend the agenda and allow Mitch Crisp, item #14 to be allowed to speak now. Commissioner Odom seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
8. Mitch Crisp, Auditor with Dixon & Hughes whom completed the 2006 / 2007 audit spoke to the board about the results and the problems that the county had. He stated that he would be brief on the audit problems and issues that needed to be addressed and how to resolve these issues. He stated that all the remarks were not entirely critical but some areas needed attention. The finance office is very important to the county and they had a loss of knowledge, talent, skill and the understanding of how and when to do things to meet deadlines. There were personnel issues that impacted the office. and a lack of trust in interoffice communication. There is a breakdown in support between departments and a lot of time is spent not accomplishing things. Priority setting went by the wayside and losing money is very important to the county. The finance office was out of the loop and everyone was operating in the dark. Purchase orders were approved after the fact and budgets in departments are different that regular budgets and had lots of issues with problems. Those problems resulted in late audit reports and lost opportunities. The county had a fund decrease of one million dollars and the percentage went to 15% and this is too low for Graham County. The percentage should be kept around 24%. The county had spending issues and a statutory budget violation which gave a black mark to the county. Another problem was getting financial audits to the department heads and finance officer

in a timely manner. He encouraged the board to study G.S. 159 Article 3 on the duties of the finance officer. He stated that there needed to be interdepartmental cooperation and working together and stop turf protection and step back to look at what the people do. Commissioner Odom stated that this audit was for the year of 2006/2007 and the commissioners seated now were not here. He stated that our county is working on the purchasing system and we have hired a finance officer who has over twenty years in CPA experience. He stated that he knew that this board had to hear the results even though they did not have a hand in it. He wanted to assure everyone that the county was making a drastic turnover. Commissioner Trull stated that the report was what just as he thought it would be. Commissioner Smith thanked Mitch Crisp for coming and stated that the county is trying and this gives us an idea of where the problem lies. Commissioner Cable stated that some of the problems had already been fixed. Commissioner Smith stated that she had taken notes to which Mitch Crisp stated good and if anyone had any questions he would be glad to answer them. Mitch Crisp stated that the board needed to give the finance office the support to turn their office around. Commissioner Smith recommended that the board read G.S. 159 Article 3 so that they could review other things that needed to be addressed. Mitch Crisp thanked the board for allowing him to speak.

9. Commissioner Snyder made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting and ask the board for a motion to open the public hearing for the 911 Road Naming Board. Commissioner Odom made the motion to open the public hearing for the 911 Road Naming Board. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
10. Terry Slaughter presented the board with the 911 names to be accepted. See Attached! There were three names recommended. Commissioner Cable made the motion to accept the names that were recommended. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
11. Commissioner Odom made the motion to adjourn the public hearing and return to the regular meeting. Commissioner Trull seconded. Vote unanimous.
12. Commissioner Odom made the motion to close the regular meeting to open the public hearing for the Board of Equalization & Review. Commissioner Snyder seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
13. Commissioner Snyder stated that the appeals would be heard tonight but the board would not make the decisions tonight. He stated that the board would notify them with their decision. There were five taxpayers who spoke on their appeals and three taxpayers who were not present. See Attached!
14. Commissioner Odom made the motion to close the public hearing and to reopen the regular meeting. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
15. Blair Hyder, Tax Assessor, presented the board with the Releases and Discoveries. See Attached! Commissioner Odom and Commissioner Snyder had questions to which Blair gave the answers to. Commissioner Cable made the motion to approve the Releases & Discoveries. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
16. Blair Hyder also needed permission to accept a late application on a tax payer to enter the agriculture program for a tax cut on their land. Commissioner Smith made the motion to accept the late application. Commissioner Odom seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
17. Commissioner Snyder opened the floor for old business. Commissioner Smith stated that the board needed to approve the 911 Road Naming Board Members. Debbie Beasley and Marshall McClung were the two members up for reappointment. Commissioner Trull

made the motion to approve the two names recommended. Commissioner Odom seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

18. Commissioner Odom made the motion to pass a resolution endorsing the G.R.E.A.T. Strategic Development Plan and stated the G.R.E.A.T. has a wonderful vision for our county and is working extremely hard to make that vision a reality. He also stated that the program was made up of numerous volunteer from the county who has the counties best interest at heart. Commissioner Cable seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
19. Commissioner Odom asked County Manager Lynn Cody where we stood on the swimming pool. Mr. Cody gave the board an update on the windows, sidewalks and the drain system. He also reported to the board that more cracks have been found and the tile is coming up in the front of the access area leading into the pool. Commissioner Smith asked about an email on work change orders. Mr. Cody reported that no change orders had been given. The board decided to go and inspect the pool themselves and directed the county manager to get with McGill and Associates to have a written agreement on helping with the costs on the sidewalks instead of the verbal agreement that was previously given. Commissioner Trull stated that he has been against the pool from the very beginning when the troubles first began. The board agreed to table this issue for a later date.
20. Commissioner Trull stated that he had questions on a bill from a previous meeting. The lawyer stated that this was a closed session discussion due to hippa laws.
21. Commissioner Snyder asked the board for any new business. Commissioner Odom made a motion for the mapping software to be added to the Register of Deeds Office for easier access in showing property lines. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Commissioner Cable asked for further explanation and after discussion the board was all in favor of the motion.
22. Commissioner Odom spoke to the board on the septic tank permit fees when you add a line to an existing structure being too high. He stated that to add one line the fee was \$300.00. Commissioner Odom made the motion to cut the fee in half and charge \$150.00. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
23. Commissioner Odom spoke to the board on the possibility of buying our own gas and diesel tanks to eliminate some of the high costs. He stated that the cost up front would be expensive but it would pay for itself and we would not have to worry about not knowing the exact price that the county would be billed.
24. Commissioner Odom spoke to the board about the Census Bureau and the need for the county to cooperate fully with them. He stated that the county would lose money if a correct head count is not given. The commissioners were in agreement about stressing to our county the need to cooperate when the census began.
25. Commissioner Smith asked if the board would pass a resolution on the Assistance for US Merchant Marine Seamen of WWII. Commissioner Cable stated that he was against this for personal reasons. Commissioner Snyder stated that he needed more information. Commissioner Odom asked the board to table this issue until a later date. Commissioner Cable stated that his answer will remain no.
26. Commissioner Snyder presented the board with two items. One item was the downtown revitalization and the need to adopt a resolution in support of this. This project was to be a joint venture with the Town of Robbinsville. The clerk stated that the town had refused to participate in this project. The board tabled this issue.

27. The Clerk presented the board a vacancy on the Health Board. The seat that is open is for a local dentist. There were four names recommended by the current board of health. Commissioner Odom stated that the board should table this in order to search the county for a dentist that could serve. The board all agreed.
28. The Clerk presented the board with six names for the positions of lifeguard. Jason Sawyer, Recreation Director, recommended the names that were submitted. Commissioners Odom and Smith felt we should discuss the names in closed session. All board agreed.
29. Teresa Garland presented a request by letter to the board requesting that a plaque be put up at the tennis courts in memory of Al Palmer. Mr. Palmer had donated his time and own equipment in having the tennis courts built. Commissioner Cable stated that issue has been brought before the board at least three times. Commissioner Odom made the motion to allow the plaque to be placed at the tennis courts. Motion failed for lack of a second.
30. Commissioner Smith asked the board about Josh Carpenter, County Planner's presentation of the Historic Preservation. The board tabled this issue due to the fact that Josh forgot to mention this tonight.
31. The Clerk presented the board with the request to appoint Velda McGuire to the Jury Commission Board for two years. The request was made by Johnnie Brooms, Clerk of Court for Graham County. Commissioner Trull made the motion to appoint Velda McGuire to the Jury Commission Board. Commissioner Odom seconded this motion. Vote unanimous. See Attached!
32. The Clerk presented the board with the bids for the jail meals. There were two bids: Lynn's Place bid \$5.53 per meal and Our Daily Bread bid \$5.25 per meal. Commissioner Trull made the motion to award the bid to Our Daily Bread. Commissioner Odom seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
33. The new business pertaining to the fire and rescue squads was taken care of in the public comment session by Virginia Zakroski.
34. Commissioner Snyder made the motion to go into closed session under G.S. 143-318.11A (6) (3). Commissioner Odom seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
35. Commissioner Cable made the motion to go back into open session. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
36. Commissioner Snyder recognized Juanita Colvard, Transit Director with congratulation on obtaining the grant to build a new Transit Facility.
37. Commissioner Smith made the motion to hire Paul Shope as the Recreation Assistant. The pay will be \$10.00 per hour. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
38. Commissioner Odom made the motion to hire five lifeguards and one alternate for emergencies. The pay will be minimum wage. Commissioner Cable seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
39. Commissioner Cable made the motion to hire Jeffery Ennis and Cindy Nations as part time emergency management technicians at the wage set for EMS employees. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
40. Commissioner Odom made the motion to adopt the Red Flag policy. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

41. Commissioner Smith made the motion to accept the business credit card applications for the jailors. The purpose is so the deputies and jailors will have money when take commitments. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
42. Commissioner Smith stated that the board needed to make a decision concerning our insurances for the county. The board had postponed the discussion which was listed as item five until later in the meeting and failed to bring the issue up before entering closed session. The only thing discussed in closed session pertaining to the insurance was that the board could not discuss this in closed session due to the fact the board was reviewing proposals and not actual contracts. Commissioner Smith stated that based on this year's premiums, the following company will save the county \$175,094.60 in the upcoming FY 09-10 budget so Commissioner Smith made the motion to accept Cigna Health Care (Plan G), the Cigna Dental and Life Insurance Policies and the Traveler's Commercial Property, Liability and Workers Compensation as proposed by Tennessee Insurance Services of Knoxville, TN. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
43. Commissioner Cable made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Trull seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.