

Workshop Session – July 18, 2023

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, July 18, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular workshop session. All board was present.

1. Chairman Nelms called the workshop session to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks the Heritage Festival Committee to speak. Jessica Blevins stated that they appreciate the board's time and stated that they are here to discuss Graham County Festivals, Inc and their committee members are Steve Hooper, Connie Orr, Jeannette Nichols, Daniel Allison, Dale Wiggins, and Natasha Williams. Ms. Blevins stated that they have a sub-committee, and they are not happy with the way that the festivals are being done and when they suggest some other way or event they are shot down and ignored Ms. Blevins stated that they have been unable to get a letterhead from the Festival Committee to ask for donations or sponsors and they have asked many times. Connie Gross stated that she is the chair for the semi-board, but they need an official board that is willing to work with everyone. Ms. Blevins stated that it is very aggravating to sit in all the meetings, give opinions, ways to raise money. Ms. Blevins stated that they would like to see all deposits. Steve Hooper, Chair of the Festivals stated that Jeannette Nichols is the Treasury, and she can give copies of the checks. Commissioner Williams requested copies of all the checks to clear up any questions including any debit card receipts and not duplicates. Ms. Blevins stated that she knew more funds had been taken in than just \$1,500.00 because they had the dunking booth, had a pie contest, had drawings, and sold drinks for two days. Mr. Hooper stated that anyone can come in the meetings, but the board members are the only ones that can vote. Ms. Blevins stated that the festival needed to be moved next year because it hinders the traffic to the Urgent Care, and it is hard for the elderly to walk uptown. Jack Gross stated that these are volunteers, and a board should not have the authority to stand alone on decision making. Commissioner Cody stated that a group of volunteers came together years ago and formed this incorporation and Graham County Government has no say in what happens at the festival. Commissioner Orr stated that Dale Wiggins was the chair, and he has been out with sickness, but a meeting needed to be called when he is able to attend. Steve Hooper stated that the event was successful, and they did this in two months.
3. Chairman Nelms stated that all volunteers needed to get together and set up rules and guidelines.
4. Juanita Colvard, Transit Director stated that there was an issue with Urgent Care and the festivals could get sued due to lack of handicap access. Director Colvard stated that in the past, Transit supplied transportation for the elderly and disabled up and down the hills, but they were not asked for this year. Director Colvard stated that they incorporation needed to be careful and comply with ADA.
5. Debbie Orr, Robbinsville Town Alderman stated that the festival uses the town maintenance crew every year and this year they did not pay them for the event, and she presented a bill and gave to the county. Alderman Orr stated that their attorney stated that this is a contractual agreement, and they did need to cover this expense.
6. Chairman Nelms stated that the expense has nothing to do with Graham County Government and this bill would go to the Festival Incorporation.
7. Chairman Nelms stated that there are good people that are willing to work on the festivals and everyone needed to find common ground so that we can continue to hold the festival each year.
8. Mr. Hooper thanked the county for their time and for donating to the festival.

Jacob Nelms, Chairman

Natasha Williams, Vice-Chair

Lynn Cody, Member

Keith Eller, Member

Connie Orr, Member

ATTEST: _____ Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board