

**OXFORD, NORTH CAROLINA**  
**April 4, 2022**

The Members of the Honorable Board of Commissioners of Granville County, North Carolina met in a regular meeting on Monday, April 4, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium, Granville Expo and Convention Center, 4185 US Highway 15 South, Oxford.

***Present were:***

***Chair:*** Tony W. Cozart

***Commissioners:*** Jimmy Gooch Timothy Karan  
Sue Hinman Russ May  
Zelodis Jay David T. Smith

***County Manager:*** Michael S. Felts

***Assistant County Manager:*** Korena Weichel

***County Attorney:*** James C. Wrenn, Jr.

***News Reporters:*** David Murray – *Oxford Public Ledger*

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

At 7:00 p.m., Chairman Tony W. Cozart called the meeting to order. He then recognized Commissioner David T. Smith for the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED**

Upon a motion by Commissioner David T. Smith, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the consent agenda as follows:

- (A) Approved the Summary of Contingency (p. 3) and Use of Fund Balance report that showed the following balances:

General Contingency Balance	\$	14,000
School Bond D/S Contingency	\$	100,000
Environmental Disaster Contingency	\$	10,000
General Fund Appropriated Fund Balance	\$	4,485,783

- (B) Approved the contract with Rob Bailess, the Bailess Group, for consulting services for the Granville County Sheriff's Office, for an amount not to exceed \$73, 000 with an effective date of January 1, 2022.

**BOARD RECOGNIZED GRACIE LUNDWALL**

Commissioner Russ May recognized Gracie Lundwall on behalf of the Board of Commissioners for her volunteer service with Wreaths Across America. Commissioner May stated that the Granville County Veterans Affairs Committee recommended that Gracie Lundwall, an 11-year-old six-grader at Falls Lake Academy, be recognized for her volunteer work with Wreaths Across America. Miss. Lundwall made remarks after being presented with the following proclamation:

**Proclamation Honoring  
Miss Gracie E. Lundwall**

*Whereas*, on January 18, 2022, the Veterans Affairs Committee of Granville County recommended recognition by the Granville County Board of Commissioners, without hesitation, to endorse the outstanding voluntary service of Miss Gracie E. Lundwall; and

*Whereas*, Gracie Lundwall's representation of the County of Granville and the State of North Carolina, for her service work at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. as a registered member of Wreaths Across America, at which her mission started at five years of age, to honor her grandfather, and others who have served in the armed forces of the United States of America; and

*Whereas*, still, at 11 years of age, a sixth-grade student at Falls Lake Academy, Gracie Lundwall, now registers with Wreaths Across America by herself, and helps her mother purchase the five wreaths they usually donate for "the mission" and the journey to Washington, D.C. every December, to place wreaths on our county's Veterans graves, and

*Whereas*, Miss Lundwall, at such a young age exemplifies the motto of Wreaths Across America, to "**Remember**" our Fallen Veterans, by remembering their sacrifice; to "**Honor**" those who serve, while she places wreaths, even in the harshest of weather conditions, without even complaining; and to "**Teach**" others the value of freedom, by teaching and inviting her best friend to share in the importance of "the mission," such as acknowledging the name of a fallen Veteran, before placing a wreath on their grave, and

**NOW, AND THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, THAT THE** Granville County Board of Commissioners extend its sincere admiration and congratulations to Gracie E. Lundwall for the gracious spirit in her volunteerism and dedication to "the mission" in her work with Wreaths Across America and reminding us all not to forget our countries Veterans.

Presented, this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April 2022

Commissioner May thanked Mike Turner, Chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee for the recommendation of recognizing Miss. Lundwall.

**BOARD RECOGNIZED ROB MONTAGUE – 2022 GOVERNOR'S AWARD WINNER**

Chairman Tony W. Cozart stated that the North Carolina Service Granville-Vance Area Ranger Robert Montague was a recipient of the 2022 Governor's Award for Excellence in Customer Service. He then presented him with the following Resolution of Recognition and Appreciation and thanked him for his service to the community on behalf of the Board:

**Resolution of Recognition and Appreciation  
NC Forest Service Granville-Vance Area Ranger Robert "Rob" Montague**

*Whereas*, Granville-Vance Area Ranger Robert Montague, who has been an NCFs employee for 18 years, is a recent recipient of the Governor's Award for Excellence in Customer Service, which is one of the state's highest honors; and

*Whereas*, he is still driven and dedicated to serving and protecting the area he services as well as his community, by striving to be informative, so as to prevent the dangers of fires and falling trees, not only in the forest but also by helping landowners learn about the vegetation surrounding them; and

*Whereas*, his ability in investigation, forest management, and social skills has earned him the respect of his four-member team he supervises as well as his community and others in his field; and

*Whereas*, his tireless commitment to his profession and community motivated him to answer over half of the 189 emergency response calls involving forest fires in his area in 2020 – 2021, on and off duty. His empathetic and friendly demeanor makes him easy to talk to those affected by disasters be it fire or other acts of nature; and

*Whereas*, just these few reasons alone, along with his other acts of kindness, have made Ranger Robert Montague a worthy recipient of the Governor's Award for Excellence in Customer Service.

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*, that the Granville County Board of Commissioners expresses its sincere appreciation to North Carolina Forest Service Granville-Vance Area Ranger Robert Montague as a recipient of the 2022 Governor's Award for Excellence in Customer Service.

This the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April 2022.

Mr. Montague stated that he enjoyed serving beside true servants and thanked the Board for the recognition.

**BOARD RECOGNIZED TELECOMMUNICATOR WEEK WITH A PROCLAMATION**

Commissioner David T. Smith recognized Granville County Telecommunicators for National Public Safety Telecommunicators on behalf of the Board. He presented the following proclamation to Emergency Communications Director Trent Brummitt and his staff and presented them with a 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Coin:

**Proclamation For  
National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week**

*Whereas*, emergencies can occur at any time that require law, fire or emergency medical services; and, when an emergency occurs the prompt response of law enforcement, firefighters and emergency medical services is critical to the protection of life and preservation of property; and,

*Whereas*, the safety of our law enforcement officers, emergency medical services, and firefighters is dependent upon the quality and accuracy of information obtained from citizens who telephone the Granville County Emergency Communications center; and,

*Whereas*, Public Safety Telecommunicators are the first and most critical contact our citizens have with emergency services; and, Public Safety Telecommunicators are the single vital link for our law enforcement officers, emergency medical services, and firefighters by monitoring their activities by radio, providing them information and ensuring their safety; and,

*Whereas*, Public Safety Telecommunicators of the Granville County Emergency Communications have contributed substantially to the apprehension of criminals, suppression of fires and treatment of patients; and,

*Whereas*, each Telecommunicator has exhibited compassion, understanding and professionalism during the performance of their job in the past year.

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, THAT* the Granville County Board of Commissioners declares the week of April 10<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to be National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week, in honor of the men and women whose diligence and professionalism keep our county and citizens safe.

This the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2022

Mr. Brummitt made comments and thanked the Board.

**AFTER HOLDING PUBLIC HEARING, BOARD APPROVED THE RESOLUTION DEFINING AND ESTABLISHING THE GRANVILLE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION SERVICE DISTRICT TO PROVIDE FIRE PROTECTION AND RESCUE SERVICES**

Chairman Tony Cozart stated that the purpose of this public hearing was to present a proposal to establish a unified fire protection service district in Granville County for the purpose of funding fire and rescue services in the unincorporated areas of Granville County. He noted that all required notices have been made as required by North Carolina General Statutes. He stated that the public hearing notice ran in the Oxford Ledger on March 10<sup>th</sup> and March 17<sup>th</sup> and in the Butner-Creedmoor News on March 11<sup>th</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup>.

At this time, Chairman Cozart declared the public hearing open and recognized Greg Grayson, NC Fire Chief Consulting Group, for a brief overview.

Mr. Grayson thanked the Board and stated that it was a pleasure to be back before them once again. He stated that the consulting group has been working with staff and with the fire service here in Granville County. He continued that it would be important that he note the level of cooperation not only from the staff, but the fire service in this endeavor as they have worked cooperatively to continue to serve the people of Granville County. Mr. Grayson stated that they work with cities and counties throughout North Carolina, especially as the NC League of Municipalities Fire Consulting Provider; working with cities and counties across our state and that it certainly has been a pleasure working with Granville County in that endeavor.

He stated that when looking at the goals for Granville County and the fire protection service district, a couple of key goals were looking at sustainable funding and strengthening the fire protection delivery system. Also having goals of working for equity in the service delivery system across the county; being able to provide a strengthened governing structure for the county, having dynamic funding formulas that work over time and adjust as your county grows over time, and having an equitable level of taxation across the county that works in all areas of the county as well. He stated further that when looking at where we are with this process, you will see these different steps that they have worked through. They have worked through a few data reviews and research points. They presented a report to the Board as required by North Carolina General Statutes, noting it is a very detailed report that is required that they look at a number of pieces that are necessary in order to present to you information. He stated that the Board has looked at this information, voluntarily capped the rate at this service district which the Board elected to do, and called for this public hearing in step 3. He stated further that the Board has advertised and is holding this public hearing tonight and if you chose to move forward, you will be adopting the item and also adopting the budget with a

rate for this service district. Municipalities will have an opportunity to become part of this service district if they so choose and they would have to come back to the Board with the Board to choose to accept those and then obviously implement the service district. Therefore, he said, there are several steps that are included. He stated further that they are also recommending a fire commission for the governance that comes back to the Board of Commissioners. The Board would remain the authority have jurisdiction over the fire protection service district, but the fire commission would be advisory to the Board of Commissioners, and the recommendation is that it be a board comprised of both residents and fire service with representation from the north, the central, and southern areas of Granville County. Also, he stated that for tonight, the purpose of a fire protection service district is to enable a sustainable funding system and governance structure that provides fire and rescue services for the people of Granville County. He said as noted by Chairman Cozart, the scope is for the unincorporated areas of Granville County. Those areas outside of the municipal limits though municipalities may request to join that service district by resolution.

Mr. Grayson also shared a couple of reminders beginning with the North Carolina General Statutes state that the Commissioners must find that all four of these findings do apply in order to adopt a service district. He stated that the Board has reviewed those and determined that all four of these findings do apply for a fire protection service district here in Granville County. There is a statutory report that is required that does provide a map as well as a statement, as well as a plan, and those have all been presented and that the Board had noted where the proper advertisement for tonight's notifications has been given. He stated further that the mechanics of this particular recommendation is that the funding for the fire departments in Granville County would follow several components. One of those would be to provide baseline funding. Direction is to not reduce any of the funding for fire departments in Granville County. The past funding, the 2021-2022 funding, would become their baseline funding so there would be no loss to the departments in Granville County, but in addition to that they would have an opportunity to gain additional funding and there would be some service delivery enhancement. In addition to that, there would be some capital improvement or capital ability to replace capital equipment. He continued that there also would be some grant funding that would be available to them through this program, each of which is all service delivery driven. In addition to that, the service tax district would have one service district throughout

the entire unincorporated area of the county. He stated that the Board has elected to set a maximum rate of 15 cents per hundred, again that is a maximum rate long term, but that rate would be set as part of the annual budget process. Mr. Grayson continued that a review of the dates would say that the Board looked at the resolution setting the cap back on February 25<sup>th</sup> and calling for a s public hearing (we are here tonight on April 4<sup>th</sup>) between April and May, that would be the time to consider any requests from municipalities that may want to come forward to look at joining the service district. Also, he stated, that this is a time for looking at setting up the fire commission and the membership to that fire commission and that rate set is part of the budget adoption all the way into June for the next fiscal year, the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This just outlines a timeline moving forward. Mr. Grayson referred to a particular chart that showed some illustrative numbers of what the service district may look like. He noted that again, that is completely up to the discretion of the Board of Commissioners, but that they have been asked to show what this might look like in outlay of funding. He stated that they have shown several models and what this may look like at 4.5, 5, 5.5, 6 cents per \$100 valuation would be. Again, this shows what that baseline current funding would be for all of the departments. There is some funding to help grow and enhance services. There is funding to help with capital replacement, as they had noted to the Board earlier, they have a significant amount of apparatus that is in need of replacement and then there is some funding for grant funding, to help your fire departments match federal and state grants so that they can apply for those. He continued that they show what that looks like under several different models for illustrative purposes.

He then stated he would take any questions that the Board might have and then the Board would hear from the public.

Chairman Cozart asked if the Board members had any questions for Mr. Grayson.

Commissioner May asked if the model that Mr. Grayson showed was for the unincorporated area only.

Mr. Grayson stated that was correct. He noted that it was unincorporated areas only and any modifications or changes to that obviously would change those numbers and that they are illustrative only.

Chairman Cozart asked that anyone signed up and any others wishing to speak to come to the podium as the Clerk called their name.

**Jackie Sergent, Mayor of Oxford, 114 High Street, Oxford, NC**, thanked the Board for the opportunity to appear before them. She noted that she also had with her Chief David Cottrell with the Oxford Fire Department. She brought greetings from the City of Oxford Board of Commissioners and staff, and thanked the Board for the amount of thought and work that has gone into the process of determining the value of creating a fire protection service district for the County at large; including allowing input from Chief Cottrell and the other Chiefs and staff from the volunteer fire departments. She continued that the history of Oxford Fire Department is long, with the first formal assembly being documented in 1876 and officially adopted by the city in 1905 to serve its residents and taxpayers, and upon request, those not within the city. The results of those investments are a full-time staff of 11, a part-time staff of ten, and a volunteer cadre of 21. She stated further that they built a new fire station in 1991 and stocked with 5 vehicles, a 95-foot aerial platform, a 75-foot aerial ladder truck, a Class A compressed air foam engine, a medium-duty rescue truck, and a special operations trailer. She stated that they have also invested in a matrix 200 drone with thermal imaging capability and state-certified medium and confined state rescue providers. Ms. Sergent stated further that their constant investment is related not only to the needs of the residents and businesses within the city, but also for the critical needs posed by the industries that encircle Oxford with whom they have built a relationship over the years. To assure not only their ability to have the capacity to handle an event at their locations, but also to be called as a first responder to an event rather than risk arriving later to the scene in a response to a call for mutual aid. She continued that they know that the County Board of Commissioners is committed to all of their residents, not the least of which are those within their municipalities and that the Board understands the importance that any action they take should, if not benefit at least hold harmless all the jurisdictions that it will impact. With that in mind, the City of Oxford respectfully requests that the County of Granville take the action this night of establishing a fire service district in the county that recognizes that we have and will continue to provide the highest level of fire protection service to those within the service area and establish this new district outside the city's ETJ or extraterritorial jurisdiction, which by state law, you have the ability to do. She stated further that if they chose not to do so, that a minimum your motion commits to hold the City of Oxford harmless from any impacts that may result from implementing the proposed county-wide fire district proposal so that we may

all prosper and deliver the critical services that have been identified and are needed by our county, so while you are strengthening the capacity and funding stream of our esteemed colleagues throughout the county, you are not at the same time diminishing theirs. In closing, Ms. Sergent thanked the Board very much for the opportunity to come before them.

**Doug Dickerson, Fire Chief of Granville Rural, 4014 Chewning Road, Oxford,**

**NC,** made the following comments and sent a copy to the Clerk:

Thank you, County Board of Commissioners, for allowing me to speak tonight.

My name is Doug Dickerson, and I am currently the Fire chief of Granville Rural Fire Department. I come to you tonight to voice my opinion and concern I feel that the fire service in Granville County faces. Those 2 main issues are funding, and daytime manpower. These are also two top issues I believe that most Chiefs in this county would say they worry about the most day to day. These are also 2 problems that can possibly be addressed with this proposed tax and fire study being done.

Every fire department in the state of North Carolina is required to maintain a minimum of at least 15 active members on their rosters. For one single firefighter they must be equipped with a turnout gear suit consisting of coat, pants, boots, gloves, Nomex hood, and helmet. This suit cost on average of \$4,000. There is also the air pack, the bottle and mask that cost upwards of \$8,000 for a single unit. Also, pagers and radios add an additional \$500 and \$3500 to those expenses. This can bring the total close to \$15,000 to outfit one firefighter. This is for 1 member. Other expenses the department faces include truck purchases, fuel expenses, building utilities, insurance, and many other items to run day to day. Another big-ticket item for fire departments would be apparatus replacement. The average cost of a fire engine today is around \$400,000, and that number increase by 5% yearly. This amount can be financed from 20-30 years, leaving yearly payments around \$60,000. So, as you can tell just from these few figures I have named, the budget of money we currently receive from the County is quickly overrun. With so many high-priced items required just to operate day to day and provide the best fire protection we can to our citizens in our districts, departments are left depending heavily on donations and fundraisers to make up the difference.

Another top-rated issue in my opinion we face is daytime staffing/manpower. Just a few years ago volunteer departments kept a waiting list of applications for membership. Today that is not the case as evident across the entire state. Higher demands by the state in training, work schedules, increase call volumes, and other things have caused a drastic decline in the fire service. According to FEMA, 72% of North Carolina Firefighters are volunteer. That number is decreasing by 11 to 12 percent every year. This loss in manpower has caused departments in Granville County and across the state to leave calls unanswered or it contributes to very extended response times. This in return reduces the level of service we can provide our citizens in the county. With the decline in volunteers, other departments have had to resort to paid staffing to fill the void. The times of farmer/business owner/firefighter has passed us, and the unanswered and low manpower calls continue to increase. During the daytime a very large majority of the rosters are employed at their full-time jobs. This means that they are unable to leave, and answer calls for service. This during the daytime is extremely difficult and causes significantly increase response times for apparatus and personnel. All counties that currently set around Granville County have recognize these issues and acted on them by employing daytime staffing into the fire departments. These include Person, Franklin, Vance, Wake, Durham, and Warren counties. Most of these departments are staffed with 1-2 firefighters during the daytime hours, ranging from different times. By having this our response and turnout times will be cut down from minutes to just seconds for apparatus leaving the station and responding to the incident. Earlier response and on-scene times not only affect and benefit structure fire calls, but they also vehicle accidents some of which have entrapment of victims, cardiac arrest responses,



and all other types of emergencies we respond to when someone in the community is in need of help. Faster on scene times of apparatus, can mean a higher probability of properties and lives being saved.

In conclusion I would like to thank the Board of Commissioners for our current funding we receive and also our pension fund reimbursement, radio replacement, workers compensation payment this year. Also thank you for any type of consideration you give this program that is being worked on. Again, thank you.

**Bobby Wheeler, 607 Forest Lane, Creedmoor, NC**, stated that he is the Mayor for the City of Creedmoor, a business owner in Creedmoor, and lifelong resident of Creedmoor. Mayor Wheeler stated that he has been campaigning for a fire district for years but felt like he needed to come before the Board and ask some questions. He stated that he may or may not get answers to his questions but that he would like to get answers before the Creedmoor City Board decides on what they are going to do. He said that he would like to stress the fact that he has two main purposes: (1) he has to support the Creedmoor Fire Department; that they are a vital part of his community, both the citizens, first responders, and firefighters; and (2) he also has to represent the taxpayers of the City of Creedmoor. He continued that one of the issues that he has always had is that he felt like Creedmoor, because they were providing fire services to the county residents that were not paying city taxes, his folks were carrying the burden of a budget for a fire department that continues to need additional equipment, additional manpower, etc. He stated further that the way that he was looking at the fire district is that it is going to be a big help to them. However, he stated, where he has questions is, one of the biggest things is, if the City of Creedmoor agrees as a municipality to be part of the fire district, they will be paying 4.5% like the rest of the county for this fire district service, is that going to be enough money for his department or is Creedmoor going to have to continue to help fund that fire department like it is? He stated that the most critical thing to them is that the fire department gets the money they need to provide the services for the people that they represent and that will be county and city. He continued that if it is not, then Creedmoor is going to have to add additional taxes in order to cover any secondary contracts or anything with their fire department, which again just adds more money to them. Mayor Wheeler stated that another option that they have is not to be part of the fire district but just tax their citizens 3 or 4 cents a hundred and put in their share that way with their fire department getting the money from the county as far as the fire district so it would be two separate things. He stated that his interest is not only to protect his taxpayers, of which he is one, but also to protect their fire department so that they are not worrying about where any of the money is coming from. He stated further

that Mr. Dickerson brought up a good point that if Creedmoor is not in the fire district, but their fire department is, how does that affect their equipment, utilities, and things that they are hoping to get extra funding for through the fire district? He continued that Creedmoor is in that area that he is sure some of the other municipalities are, not only are the citizens better off, but is his fire department better off going with the fire district or opting out? He stated further that the other question he has is if they opt out, and it seems as if it is not working, or vice versa, can they opt in the other direction later or would they be locked in for a specific time or forever? He stated that they are assuming that the fire departments are getting extra funding for hazardous pay, hazmat suits, this type of thing and that would include all fire departments, not just one, such as the one in Butner, which has the hospitals and are more likely to see that. Mayor Wheeler also questioned if the capital reserve for equipment will include their fire department at an equal amount from the others or is that another thing that Creedmoor is going to have to help supplement later. He stated that they also want to make sure that their fire department is being provided everything they need to help, again as Mr. Dickerson noted, for retention. Again, he stated that their number of volunteers is slowly decreasing and they have to go more and more with paid firefighters, and they want to make sure that they reward their volunteers and be able to encourage more to join that plan. Mayor Wheeler stated that he is fully in support of the fire district, and he believes that the citizens of Creedmoor would be and hopefully that the fire department would be supportive, but that they must decide which way is going to be the best way for them—either to opt-in or opt-out and the best way to provide for their fire department. He continued that, if possible, he needed answers to his questions at later date or as soon as they could so that he could present them to his board, he would appreciate it.

In closing, Mayor Wheeler stated that on behalf of the citizens of Creedmoor and their fire department, he thanked the Board for putting this proposal together. He stated that even before Commissioner May was elected to the Board, they have talked about trying to get this in place.

**Georgana Kicinski, 310 Whitehall Drive, Creedmoor, NC**, stated that Mayor Wheeler had covered a lot of what she had to say, but the one thing that she wanted to say was thank you. She thanked the Board for the time they put in on this and for understanding that the need is as great as it is. She stated that everyone is aware that Creedmoor went through a

rough time last year with the fire department and noted that she is all about public safety and their fire department as well as their police department are very important to her. She stated that there is not one that is more important than the other and noted that the funding for the fire department is way behind the time in every community. She stated that she has learned that it is not just Granville County, but that there are three counties in the state that do not have fire districts. However, she stated, it is time, and she is glad that we have all finally realized that the time has come.

Ms. Kicinski stated that the one question that she had is if they opt into the fire district tax, will the City of Creedmoor still have to go into a contract with the fire department for the service to fund the balance of what might not be enough coming out fire district tax? She questioned if they would still have to negotiate contracts with the fire department as a municipality. She continued that she would like to see them be able to have paid firemen as Mr. Dickerson said during the day; the response time for families and homes where there is nobody there. She stated that she did read in the Butner-Creedmoor newspaper about the little boy who called 9-1-1 and was talked through CPR for his sister until fire responders from Brassfield got there, along with a deputy sheriff and paramedics and they saved her life and noted, that that is all very important, and they can't minimize it. She stated that their ISO ratings are homeowners in Creedmoor. They do not need to have the fear of losing their homeowners insurance and losing the ratings that will raise their rates, and this will help. Again, she thanked the Board for their time and effort that they put into this.

**Gilbert English, 698 Oxford Ridge Drive, Wake Forest, NC**, stated that for full disclosure, he is a firefighter and President of the Board of Directors of the Brassfield Fire Department. He stated that he wanted to start by thanking the Board of Commissioners for the job that they do and noted that they have a difficult task each and every day. He noted that they have decisions to make that are not always popular but that they make their decisions in the best interest of the citizens of the county. He stated that he was there to ask them to make another difficult decision that could obviously mean the difference between life and death and that is the support of this fire protection service district. He asked that the Board support this because Brassfield, like every other department in the county and in most other areas, is facing difficult times with the rising cost of doing business, meeting the demands of an increased call volume, and all this while facing volunteer shortages as it is shown across the nation. He

continued that volunteers across the nation are decreasing and that their department is no exception to this. Mr. English stated that what staff they do have, they are having to meet the increased call volumes. They are having to meet the demands of increased training, equipment upkeep, station upkeep, and other demands that are called on them, and for this reason that the fire service in general is losing volunteers. Volunteers already hold a full-time job, and then you add the duties of a volunteer fireman on top of that and try to maintain a healthy family life and that is quite demanding, and a lot of people are not willing to make the sacrifice. He stated that the Board can help them with the support of this fire service district. It will take one less worry off their mind and that it will help them replace aging equipment that is outdated and give some relief to their volunteers that are overtaxed and that they are tired. He thanked the Board and asked them to support this matter.

**Larry Mitchell, 1689 NC Hwy. 96, Franklinton, NC**, stated that he is a current taxpayer and landowner. He stated further that he appreciates what the Board does and to see the people who had been previously recognized for what they do and to see what the county does for its citizens is really touching. He stated the fire protection district report from the consultant that he read and was presented was very thorough and, in that report, it kept referring to “rescue” so he wanted to make sure that he understood correctly that these funds would be going to support the volunteer fire departments and the municipal fire departments if so passed, and he encouraged the Board to do so. He continued by saying that funding on the fire tax in our community when we have the municipalities that have spoken along with volunteers, he agreed to everything and believed that was the reason the Board had them at the meeting because they are trying to do something about it and that they are trying to do it constructively. He asked as a taxpayer, if when it is voted on it and they get the fire service tax district, if everybody gets a base, noting that according to the figures that were presented earlier of 4 to 5%, it would take about that much just to get the base done. He stated that 1 cent based on the current tax rate will create about \$312,000. He stated further that if the five municipalities do not partake or feel that it is not in their best interest, will the base still be given to all fire departments in the county? He asked if the five do not partake and pay the fire service tax district, will all the fire departments still be funded, or just the one that is going to participate?

Mr. Mitchell asked regarding the evaluation, if the information that he received is correct, it states that the property evaluation value is \$3,166,436,099. If correct, that figure

has all the 501C and the churches and all the people who do not pay taxes; that is backed out—that is true tax assessment values. He stated that if you look a little further (and this is public knowledge), at different tax-assessed values in the different fire districts in the county, the value that you are looking at doing the fire service tax district is \$3,166,436,099, noting that one district in our area that has \$1,101,000,000 worth of property value in its fire district. He said that is almost a third of what the Board is looking at assessing to get the fire service tax. He stated that you have some districts that go from \$55,000,000 to \$250,000,000 and his concern is a person that lives in this district that he is speaking of, we are going to take almost a third, give or take \$55,000,000, the one district having \$1,101,000,000 in it—are we going to throw that all into one pot and each fire department based on the dynamic formula that's mentioned and then the fire commission would be created. There is no fire department more important than anybody else. If you call 9-1-1, we want our fire departments to come. He continued that if you have your big circle and you have all these fire departments around, Department A, Department B, Department C, etc., it is his understanding that you are going to take all this money (a third of it coming from one fire district), you are going to put it in a circle and put it in a pot, so the ones that participate, are going to get a base. He stated that the question was about the municipalities and if we are all going to get a base and it is going to be equal, and we have one service area district that is paying a third of that, he stated he was a little concerned about that. He continued that it is all going into one pot, and so if you take all of these fire departments and you give them equal value and then we are going to form a fire commission in which you will have everybody partake. He talked about the dynamic formulas and how every fire department is important, and concerns with them feeling comfortable with the purchase of new trucks. Mr. Mitchell continued that he made a call earlier because he owns property in another county just down the road and he is very familiar with the fire service. The other county has a fire service district and the tax collected in that fire service district, which may be Department A, B, or C or whatever, goes back into the fire department of the district that the fire tax is collected from. They have a 5-member board that lives in that district that oversees the projects that they want to do then they present it to the Board of Commissioners. You still have control. So, his concerns are that you will have one district that you will collect 30% out of and pour it into one formula and when the fire commission sees this and then you have different fire departments in different stages and needing different things. He expressed

concerns about fire departments making capital commitments for equipment and such if they have to go to the fire commission. He asked the Board to consider the option of keeping the funds in the fire service district based on population and asked if this to be looked at. He thanked the Board for their time and service.

**Ed Gleason, 1973 Bowles Avenue, Creedmoor, NC,** thanked Mr. Mitchell for his remarks because his remarks were similar. He stated that he was a former fire chief in the fire district where he dealt with five commissioners and that he knows what it is like to request and need of the fire service. He continued that the gentleman before him brought something that this thing went from zero at this time last year to a hundred miles an hour today and we are going to get it passed and try to get it in the budget for 2022-2023. He stated that what they are working on, the City of Creedmoor is working on, and the rest of the municipalities that are outside the county are looking at their budgets. He stated that his only concern is that there were no figures given to anybody with some kind of an idea, because the formula was put together maybe by population, by what kind of hazards they have in that district, the City of Creedmoor, and he is very proud to be a City of Creedmoor resident, very proud of the City of Creedmoor Fire Department, and in their budget times last year, he worked very hard to see that they go what they got. He stated that the City of Creedmoor is paying a half of million dollars to taxpayers for a new ladder truck that that department will receive sometime in the next few days, and he will be glad to see it. But that will be a piece of fire apparatus that is going to be used by people outside the incorporated City of Creedmoor, but we are not in group unless we join it but yet the benefit of that piece of apparatus being paid for by the taxpayers of the City of Creedmoor is going to benefit the county and he has no problems with that as mutual aid is mutual aid. So, he stated, you must do what you have to do, but you want to make sure that before you do it you just don't jump into something and then asked how are you going to distribute the money? A formula is a formula and when he looked at the figure, they took it down so fast, that he could not even look at it in time to get his calculator out and see that last year, if he is wrong, this county gave the fire departments somewhere around \$1.2 to \$1.3 million dollar total funding. According to the \$80,000 per department, they are going to give them that much money this year with 4.5%, he could not read it fast enough to see how much that was going to generate; but let's say it was \$2.5 million, that means that, this way, that's \$2.5 million that the county is going to collect, and they are going to dispense to the fire

department. He asked what are you going to do with the \$1.3 million that was in your last year's budget that went to the fire departments that you now do not have to give to the fire departments? He asked are you going to lower the county tax rate by a cent or two or are you going to say, "well we should give that to the fire departments too?"

Mr. Gleason stated that the only other thing he had to say is that a county this size, that has the wonderful jail that it has, that has a magnificent place for the captured animals, which he is all for, but a county this size with the number of volunteer firemen slowly decreasing, should see about spending a little money on maybe building a fire training center in Granville County. Mr. Gleason thanked the Board.

Chairman Cozart stated that concluded all the public comments from those who had signed up. He stated that public had very inciteful questions and that he appreciated the thoughtfulness and the time that they had spent to prepare their questions and the Board looked forward to proceeding along.

Chairman Cozart asked if the Board had any questions. There were none, so he declared the public hearing closed. He then asked if the Board needed any clarification on anything and noted that they did have a resolution for their consideration. If not, he noted again that they did have for the Board a resolution on pages 25 and 26 in the agenda packet and asked for a motion to approve.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Timothy Karan, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the following *RESOLUTION DEFINING AND ESTABLISHING THE GRANVILLE COUNTY FIRE PROTECTION SERVICE DISTRICT TO PROVIDE FIRE PROTECTION AND RESCUE SERVICES* in the unincorporated areas of Granville County:

**RESOLUTION DEFINING AND ESTABLISHING THE GRANVILLE COUNTY FIRE  
PROTECTION SERVICE DISTRICT  
TO PROVIDE FIRE PROTECTION AND RESCUE SERVICES**

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina General Statutes ("NCGS") § 153A-301 and 153A-309.2 authorize Granville County Board of Commissioners to establish and define a service district in order to finance, provide, or maintain for the district certain services in addition to or to a greater extent than those financed, provided, or maintained for the entire county;

**WHEREAS**, in determining whether to establish a unified, countywide service district to provide fire protection and rescue services, the Board considered the population and the population density of the proposed district, the appraised value of property subject to taxation in the proposed district, the present tax rates of the County and any special districts in which the district or

any portion thereof is located, the ability of the proposed district to sustain the additional taxes necessary to provide the services planned for the district, and any other matters that the Commissioners believe to have a bearing on whether the district should be established, pursuant to NCGS § 153A-302(a);

**WHEREAS**, upon the information and evidence it has received, the Board finds there is a demonstrable need and demand by the persons living in the proposed unified service district for providing fire protection and rescue services in the district;

**WHEREAS**, the Board further finds that it is impractical to provide the fire protection and rescue services across the entire county, and it is economically feasible to provide these services within the proposed service district without unreasonable or burdensome annual tax levies;

**WHEREAS**, the Board approved on February 25, 2022, a Resolution “Calling a Public Hearing to Consider the Establishment Of A Fire Protection Service Tax District for All Unincorporated Areas of Granville County and a Rate Cap”, pursuant to NCGS § 153A-309.2;

**WHEREAS**, a report on “2022 Granville County Fire Protection Service District NCGS Report” has been prepared containing a map of the proposed unified countywide service district, showing its proposed boundaries, a statement showing that the proposed service district favorably meets the standards set forth in NCGS § 153A-302(b) and defined in NCGS §153A-309.2(b), and a plan or providing the needed fire protection and rescue services; and a copy of the report has been available for public inspection in the office of the Clerk to the Board for more than two weeks before the date of the required public hearing before adopting a resolution defining a new service district, and the Notice and Report is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference; and

**WHEREAS**, it has been duly certified to the Granville County Board of Commissioners that Notice of Public Hearing on the establishment of the unified, countywide service district for fire protection services was duly published in accordance with the provisions of NCGS § 153A-309.2 and such public hearing was held on April 4, 2022.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**

1. The countywide service district is hereby defined and established, as more fully described in the attached Notice of Public Hearing and Report on “2022 Granville County Fire Protection Service District NCGS Report”, for the purpose of providing needed fire protection and rescue services within said district area. This new service district is to hereby be recognized from here forward as the “Granville County Fire Protection Service District”.
2. The Granville County Tax Assessor/Collector shall levy a special tax in an amount to be determined by the Granville County Board of Commissioners on behalf of Granville County within said service district in addition to those levied throughout the County in order to finance, provide and maintain fire protection and rescue services within the newly defined and established service district in addition to or to a greater extent than those financed, provided, or maintained for the entire County.
3. This resolution defining and establishing the unified, countywide service district to provide fire protection and rescue services shall take effect on July 1, 2022.



Adopted this the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April 2022

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No one signed up for public comments.

**BOARD APPROVED HVAC UNIT FOR DISTRICT COURTROOM**

Chairman Tony Cozart stated that the purpose of this agenda item was to approve the purchase of an HVAC unit for the district courtroom. He stated that the 7.5-ton HVAC unit in the district courtroom needs replacing. He noted that the unit was installed in the 1980s and the compressor has gone bad.

County Manager Mike Felts stated that a copy of the email from Development Services Director Scott Phillips was distributed explaining the three quotes that were received. He recommended the purchase from Wesco due to the immediate availability of the unit.

Upon a motion by Commissioner David T. Smith, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the purchase of a new 7.5-ton package heat pump from Wesco, Inc. in the amount of \$16,700 for the district courtroom.

**BOARD APPROVED THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES BUTNER – CREEDMOOR OFFICE FURNITURE PURCHASE**

Chairman Tony Cozart stated that the purpose of this request was for consideration for approval to purchase furniture and office items for the new satellite Social Services office located at 2531 NC Highway 56, Creedmoor, NC 27522.

Adonica Hampton, Director of Social Services, thanked the Commissioners for considering this purchase as they establish and prepare to open a satellite office in the southern part of the county. She stated that yes, they are excited, and they have multiple staff members who are working hard to plan their move. She stated that the Commissioners had before them quotes that their staff, of which she acknowledged two of the committee members, Ms. Lottie Terry, Administrative Officer, and Ms. Tyesha Hewitt, Adult Protective Services Social Worker Supervisor, who were present and Heather Hayes, Income Maintenance Administrator, who was not in attendance. She stated that they have done the legwork and the quotes presented are quotes that they have looked high and low of what the best options were and were happy to present those to the Board for their approval.

County Manager Mike Felts stated that the Granville County Department of Social Services Director recommends approval of the listed equipment from Uline/Staples/Lowes/Best Buy in the amount of \$82,012.15.

Commissioner May asked if this should be all they need or if they would be coming back later.

Director Hampton stated that they did not look at any kind of pictures for the walls; only what they needed to move in and, in their normal annual budget, if there are other items, they will address them then, but they do not anticipate that.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the purchase of furniture and equipment with funding from fund balance in the amount of \$82,012.15 from Uline/Staples/Lowes/ Best Buy for the new DSS satellite office located at 2531 NC Highway, Creedmoor

**BOARD APPROVED FISCAL YEAR 2022 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CAPACITY BUILDING COMPETITIVE GRANT (CBCG) APPLICATION**

Chair Tony Cozart stated that the purpose of this request was to authorize submitting a no-match, a state-funded competitive grant application for the purchase and installation of an emergency generator at the Expo Center, a contract with a third-party vendor to perform a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment for Granville County, and a multiple event response trailer.

The Emergency Management Director recommended authorizing staff to submit an application for the 2022 Emergency Management CBCG in the amount of \$88,000.00

Upon a motion by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner David T. Smith, and unanimously carried, the Board approved authorizing staff to submit an application for the 2022 Emergency Management CBCG in the amount of \$88,000.00 for the purpose of:

- Purchase and installation of a Generator at the Expo Center
- Contracting with a third-party vendor to perform a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment for Granville County
- Multiple Event Response Trailer

**PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE MATTERS**

Commissioner May reported there are some matters with our Local Management Entity, LME, Vaya Health that the County Manager is dealing with regarding proposed actions by the State for foster care that involve healthcare and Medicaid. He said they hope to get further information and have a meeting with officials from Vaya and Social Services.

County Manager Felts said the plan is to present information at an upcoming meeting.

**BOARD APPROVED AMENDMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP ROSTER**

Chairman Cozart gave the recommendation from the Granville County Veterans Affairs Committee regarding the membership roster.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Timothy Karan, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the amendment of the Veterans Affairs Committee Membership Roster as follows: Approved removing the Hester-Crews American Legion Post 166 designation from the Veterans Affairs Committee membership roster and replacing it with the Hester-Crews American Legion Auxiliary Unit 166, formerly known as the Women's Auxiliary. Sandra Eaton, Unit President of the American Legion Auxiliary Hester-Crews Unit 166., will represent the group at meetings.

**BOARD APPOINTED MICHAEL O. SMITH (DISTRICT 1) AND REAPPOINTED WAYNE OVERTON (DISTRICT 2), JUANITA ROGERS (DISTRICT 4), AND BLAINE HOLMES (DISTRICT 5) TO THE GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Russ May, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the replacement of Larry Downey (District 1) with Michael O. Smith to the Granville County Board of Adjustment.

Upon a motion by David T. Smith, seconded by Commissioner Timothy Karan, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the reappointment of Wayne Overton (District 2) to the Granville County Board of Adjustment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner David T. Smith, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the reappointment of Juanita Rogers (District 4) to the Granville County Board of Adjustment.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the reappointment of Blaine Holmes (District 5) to the Granville County Board of Adjustment.

**COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT**

County Manager did not have anything to report.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

County Attorney Wrenn stated that Sheriff John B. Hardy, III and he needed to present a consulting agreement with Lonnie Lemons Consulting & Services, LLC doing business as Pursuit of Excellence Training and Consulting. This contract would be for a consultant to assist with identifying issues in need of correction and assisting with correcting issues at the Detention Center in preparation for accreditation of the Detention Center. He noted that the Sheriff is asking for an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for the term of this contract through December 2023.

Attorney Wrenn asked that the Board approve this request and allow them to finalize the contract.

Upon a motion by Commissioner David T. Smith, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved contracting with Lonnie Lemons, Pursuit of Excellence Consulting, for consulting services to assist with the Detention Center and accreditation for an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for a term ending December 2023.

#### **BOARD PRESENTATIONS**

Commissioner Jay reported that the Marshal Floyd Memorial Cleanup and Dedication is scheduled for April 30, 2022, at 8:45 a.m. at Tar River and asked those interested to come out and join them on that day. He also stated that he and Commissioner Sue Hinman had an enjoyable week at Vision 2022 in Roxboro, NC and he thanked all the people from Granville County that came out and noted that Granville County was well represented.

Commissioner Smith announced that the Granville County Senior Center achieved designation as a Center of Excellence and has had the designation since 2007. He stated that there is a lot of work that goes into their programs and the designation helps them with funding from the State. He sent a shout-out to the Granville County Senior Center for achieving this prestigious designation.

Commissioner Hinman thanked everyone who came out for the PAWs for a Cause event. She stated that she and Commissioner Timothy Karan went and received bandanas for their animals. She stated further that if anyone has a chance to go next year, please go as it was really a fun time, with good food, and good fellowship. She stated that the event helps to support the animals in Animal Control and the Humane Society.

County Manager Felts stated that the event raised slightly over \$9,000.

Commissioner Hinman stated that they also had a great time at the Vision 2022 event in Roxboro and if they did not get a chance to go, they missed the best hotdogs in Person County. She stated that along with having a great time, they were able to get a lot of information and she was thankful that they were invited to attend that event.

Commissioner May pointed out to the public that the Sheriff's Office is currently involved in an accreditation process for their law enforcement operations. He stated that he would like to see the same thing occur for the Detention Center as Attorney Wrenn and the County Manager work to finalize the contract approved tonight. He said he would like to include the accreditation process for the Detention Center in their strategic plan as it was done for the law enforcement operations for CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) accreditation. He thanked the Sheriff's Office for moving forward and putting this in the strategic plan and budget last year and the Board for having the vision to push that forward last year.

Commissioner Karan thanked the Board for passing the fire service district this evening. He said that one of the public comments was that this came out of nowhere but noted that the Board started this process in 2017 when the Fire Services Committee was established through our own Emergency Management Director. He noted that after two years' worth of meetings and finally a contract with the consultant coming through, that this has been a long time coming. Hopefully now it will fully fund the newly developed entity and noted it is a hard row to hoe because people do not understand, and they have questions and they sometimes wait until the last minute to ask and that is sometimes the problem. The answers are there, we just need to make sure we get folk the answers they want. He stated that he as well as Commissioner May are available to answer any questions and noted that they have been working on this for a long time. He stated that the County Manager also gets emails from some people, but the Fire Commission meeting is the forum for questions or if you have a question, please call him beforehand. He reiterated that this was a long process that they went through to get the Fire Services Committee and he commended all of them for having the vision to say, if not now; then when. He noted that this was something that they were behind the eight ball on that we just absolutely needed to do.

Commissioner Sue Hinman stated that this just does not solve everything, but it is a good start. She expressed concerns that everyone thinks that this is going to be the magic wand and solve every problem in every fire department, but it is a start.

Commissioner Karan said that he hopes the Board receives the *County News* publication, noting that he gets it digitally and in print, and reported that the Board was featured with artwork and a nice interview with Commissioner May. He stated that they all received calendars this year from NACo, National Association of Counties, but it is the second or third time that Commissioners have been featured. He said Commissioner Hinman and Commissioner Jay were featured so Granville County gets national press. He said it is good to see it nationally where Granville County and North Carolina are in these publications. He suggested that the Board receive the *County News* and that he would provide them with the contact information if needed.

Chairman Cozart stated that he appreciated that the fire services matter has been worked on for quite a while and thanked Commissioner Karan for his comments. He said he just wanted to note how much he appreciates the fine comments by staff in reference to the action taken by the Board at the last meeting regarding the bonus and COLA (cost of living adjustment). He stated that he has had numerous calls and comments from people and he just wanted to acknowledge that and acknowledge the work that staff does. Chairman Cozart also noted that last Monday, Mrs. Debra Weary celebrated her birthday and on behalf of the Board, they wanted to wish her a belated “Happy Birthday” and hoped she would enjoy the token of their appreciation for all that she does and noted that the Board really appreciates her.

Commissioner Jay stated that he did walk in the MS Walk this year in Raleigh along with the National Association for NC and he did make one mile. He thanked everyone for their donations and noted they are still taking donations.

**NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING – AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING WORKSHOP**

Chairman Tony Cozart read the following Notice of Special Meeting:

All interested persons please take notice that the Granville County Board of Commissioners will hold a Special Meeting on Wednesday, April 6, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. at the Granville Expo and Convention Center, 4815 Highway 15, Oxford North Carolina. The purpose of the Special Meeting is regarding the American Rescue Plan funding.

**BOARD WENT INTO CLOSED SESSION**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Russ May, and unanimously carried, the Board went into closed session as allowed by G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, the Board returned to open session.

**BOARD ADJOURNED**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Debra A. Weary, NCMCC, CMC  
Clerk to the Board