

**OXFORD, NORTH CAROLINA**  
**May 2, 2022**

The Members of the Honorable Board of Commissioners of Granville County, North Carolina met in a regular meeting on Monday, May 2, 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 gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA APPROVED**

Upon a motion by Commissioner David T. Smith, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, 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 Tax Refunds, Releases and Write-Offs for March 2022 as follows:

Refunds	\$2,770.68
Releases	\$1,676.06
Write-offs (\$2 and less)	\$ 19.45

- (C) Approved refund of excise stamp tax in the amount of \$1061 to Cross & Brummitt, LLP for the deed that was recorded in Granville County instead of Warren County Refund of Excise Stamp Tax as follows:

**FUNDING:**

10-3240-110 - \$551.72

10-3240-113 - \$509.28

- (D) Approved Minutes of the November 1, 2021 Regular Meeting.

**BOARD RECOGNIZED VERNELL ANDERSON – GRANVILLE HEALTH SYSTEM BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Chairman Cozart stated that this recognition was a special recognition and one that had great significance to him personally and one that allowed the Board to recognize someone who has given so much service to Granville County. He stated that for those who did not know, Mrs. Anderson was one of his teachers at J. F. Webb High School. He stated that he could reflect on so many things that Mrs. Anderson has done, but that the official recognition was for her 18 years of outstanding service she has given while on the Granville Health System Board of Trustees. He stated further that during that time, Mrs. Anderson also served very faithfully on the Finance Committee at the hospital. He noted that she has been so dutiful and dependable, always with such a supporting spirit of our hospital and she has been a great ambassador for the hospital all these many years. Chairman Cozart also noted that this recognition was also special because with this recognition, he had an opportunity to serve with one of his heroes and that it is not often that you get to serve on a board or committee with someone you have looked up to your entire life, but that Mrs. Anderson was one of those people. In closing, Chair Cozart stated that he just wanted to thank her for all that she has done and for all her encouragement and then presented Mrs. Anderson with a certificate and expressed that this was just a token of the Board's love and appreciation.

Mrs. Anderson made comments and thanked the Board and told them to continue doing the work that they are doing for this county.

**AFTER HOLDING PUBLIC HEARING, BOARD APPROVED AUTHORIZING THE CLOSEOUT OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK**

Chairman Cozart stated the purpose of the next item was to hold a public hearing to close out the Community Development Block Grant for Strong Arm Baking. He declared the public hearing open and recognized Harry Mills, Economic Director, for a brief overview.

**Harry Mills, Economic Development Director, 310 Williamsboro Street, Oxford, NC**, stated that this project was called Project Cookie initially and later known as Strong Arm Baking. They applied for a Building Reuse Grant and received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$300,000. He noted that North Carolina General Statute 158-7.1 requires a public notice that was completed prior to the public hearing. He explained that in 2019, Granville County sought and received a CDGB grant from the North Carolina Department of Commerce in the amount of \$300,000. These funds were loaned to Strong Arm

Baking to assist in the renovations of a 9,000-square-foot building located at 117 Main Street in downtown Oxford in order to bring the building to the standards needed to operate Strong Arm Baking. The extensive renovations were necessary and renovations included electrical, plumbing, HVAC, sprinklers, painting, exhaust doors, ceiling, flooring, tile, countertops, stairs, framing and connected exteriors such as canopies and stairs totaling approximately \$605,000. Strong Arm Baking contributed \$305,000 towards the renovations. The CDBG project required 23 new, full-time jobs to be created and 65% percent of those jobs were to be held by persons residing in households of low to moderate income. He noted that there are 46 employees working at Strong Arm Baking now. Mr. Mills requested the formal closeout of the grant by the County.

Chairman Cozart announced those wishing to speak to come to the podium and give their name and address for the record.

**Thomas Blaine, 3192 Cannady Mill Road, Oxford, NC,** stated that he and his wife own Strong Arm Baking and that he wanted to thank the County Commissioners for supporting them through this process. He stated that he was aware that many of them had been purchasing bread from them for many years. He stated that he and his wife started passing bread out their window into a brick oven in the backyard. He stated that most of it was inedible in the beginning, but that it was Granville County and its support that really got them going and that is why they chose to stay here. He stated that he really appreciated the County's support.

Chairman Cozart thanked him and asked if there were any other comments and there were none. He asked if the Board had any questions. There were none and he then declared the public hearing closed.

Chairman Cozart stated to Mr. Blaine that this was how a grant works that makes everyone proud and thanked him for all his efforts and investments in Granville County.

Upon a motion by Commissioner David T. Smith, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved authorizing the closeout of the Community Development Block Grant for Strong Arm Baking.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Mike Wood, 1145 Will Suitt Road, Creedmoor, NC,** thanked the Board for allowing him to speak. He stated that he was going to try not to get emotional. He continued that this would be a little different emotion from the usual fired-up emotion as this was a thank you to

the Sheriff's Office. He continued that he had received a call from 911 at 10:30 a.m. this morning that his 3-year-old grandson who has autism and is non-verbal was missing. He stated that his grandson had gone out the back door and was lost. He went on to thank the Granville County Sheriff's Department and the K-9 and said that his grandson was found safe and from his understanding, his grandson was approximately 100 yards from a fishing pond. He stated that his grandson loves water, and he knew where the fishing pond was. Mr. Wood stated that if anyone ever comes before the Board and tells them to defund the police, that they can, in their manner, politely remove them or if the Board would like for him to come up here and unpolitely tell them to get the hell out (excuse his French). In closing, Mr. Wood asked that when the Commissioners did their next budget to give the guys (Sheriff's Department) a good raise because they really need it.

Chairman Cozart stated that he was glad things worked out so well for Mr. Wood.

**BOARD APPROVED FY 2022 AUDIT CONTRACT AND ENGAGEMENT LETTER – THOMPSON, PRICE, SCOTT, ADAMS & CO., PA**

Chairman Cozart stated that the purpose of this item was to review and award a contract for the fiscal year 2022 Independent Audit for Granville County. He stated that during their regular meeting on April 20, 2020, the Granville County Board of Commissioners approved contracting with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams (TPSA) and Co. to provide financial audit services for Granville County for fiscal years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022. A copy of the audit contract for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022 and the corresponding engagement letter were included in the agenda. The contract amount is in line with the price proposed during the RFP process.

County Manager Mike Felts noted that these were annual audit contracts that are required by General Statutes and that they have to be brought back each year for approval.

Upon motion by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, seconded by Commissioner Russ May, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the contract with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams (TPSA) and Company, as well as the corresponding engagement letter, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2022.

**PROCLAMATIONS, RESOLUTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE MATTERS**

There were no proclamations, resolutions, or legislative matters to be presented at this meeting.

**BUDGET WORK SESSION DATES AND TIMES**

Chairman Cozart stated that the purpose of this item was to select dates and times for the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget work session(s). He stated that the Granville County Administration and Finance anticipate presenting the fiscal year 2022-2023 Manager’s recommended budget during the Granville County Board of Commissioner’s regular board meeting to be held on May 16, 2022. The County Manager will request to hold the required annual public hearing on the fiscal year 2022-23 budget during the Granville County Board meeting on June 6, 2022.

As part of the annual budget process, the Board of Commissioners, holds one or more budget work sessions to review the recommended continuation budget details and to consider possible service expansion items submitted during the budget process. This year, the County Manager is recommending the Board consider holding two 3-hour budget work sessions due to the complexity of the various budget decisions facing the Board of Commissioners. The Granville County Convention and Expo Center is available for possible work sessions on the dates below:

Tuesday, May 31st	Anytime from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday, June 1 <sup>st</sup>	Anytime from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Tuesday, June 7 <sup>th</sup>	Anytime from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Wednesday, June 8 <sup>th</sup>	Anytime from noon to 9:00 p.m.

Chairman Cozart asked the Board if there were any issues with the proposed dates, heard direction from the Board, and asked the County Manager and staff to work on scheduling the sessions.

**BOARD APPROVED SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE LOCATION NAMES**

Chairman Cozart explained that the purpose was to select or provide site location names for marketing and administrative use for the Granville County Department of Social Services as they prepare to occupy the new offices located in Butner. He reviewed the list of recommendations from the Department of Social Services, key stakeholders, and staff, and noted the Social Services Director and County Manager recommendations.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Timothy Karan, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the following names for the Social Services locations:

- ❖ **Granville County Department of Social Services – Oxford Office** for the 410 West Spring Street, Oxford location

- ❖ **Granville County Department of Social Services – Butner-Creedmoor Office** for the 2531 E. Lyon Station Road, Creedmoor location
- ❖ **Granville County Department of Social Services – Child Support Office** for the 122 Williamsboro Street, Oxford location (will be moving to 143 Williamsboro Street, Oxford)

**COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

County Attorney Wrenn stated that he had an attorney-client matter for closed session.

**COUNTY MANAGER MICHAELS S. FELTS ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION**

County Manager Mike Felts stated that he had another item to present. He stated that he began his employment with Granville County in December 1998 and if he calculated that correctly, it would be around 23 years ago. He said that it has been an absolute privilege for him to serve Granville County as its Finance Director for a period of time and for the last nine years as County Manager. He then announced his resignation with the final date of employment with Granville County local government on July 31, 2022. He continued that he has been able to accept a position that will allow him to spend more time with his wife. He stated that as many of the Board members know, he and his wife are providing care for his mother-in-law and that his wife needs him around the house a little more predictable than he is now. He announced that he is taking an opportunity and again he will continue to serve.

Chairman Tony W. Cozart stated that as he mentioned to Mr. Felts when he presented this news to him, it was difficult to receive and that they are grateful for his leadership. He continued that for those who did not know, Mr. Felts began as the Finance Officer, went to work with the Granville County School System, and then returned to the County as Finance Officer. He continued that one of the things they found was that Mr. Felts brought to the table his expertise in Finance which was great in his role as County Manager. He noted that with his work in strategic planning and in developing a team, he had stolen a few things from Mr. Felts to use at his places of employment. He stated that Mr. Felts had developed a lot of people right before his eyes and he has been a real asset to this county in so many ways. Chairman Cozart stated that on several occasions he stated to Mr. Felts that the Board really needed to do something for him, and his comment would always be, "Let's take care of the things that we need to do in the county and look at me later." He wished Mr. Felts all the best and said appreciated everything he has done for the Board and that they are going to miss him greatly.

Chairman Cozart then asked Commissioners Hinman, Smith, and Jay if they would work to plan a special community celebration of appreciation for Mr. Felts sometime in July

before his last day so that the entire community could come and celebrate and thank him for the work he has done. He said that for him, this resignation was accepted with a lot of mixed emotions, but he wished the very best for his family and him.

Commissioner David T. Smith stated that he, Chairman Cozart, and the late Dave Currin were on the interview committee when they called Mr. Felts to be the Granville County Manager. He said they knew that he would do a great job however, he has done an outstanding job. He thanked Mr. Felts for all of his hard work, dedication, sleepless nights, and many hours away from home and wished him and his family the best.

Commissioner Zelodis Jay stated that he remembered County Manager Felts' interview and he came in with a smile and calmness and he just had a glow about him. He stated that Mr. Felts has truly been an asset to Granville County—not only to the Board of Commissioners but to every citizen in this county. He stated that Mr. Felts has done a lot of things on behalf of this county to help this Board and helped people that did not realize that they were even getting help. He continued that the Board will truly miss him and that it was very hard to see him go. In closing, he thanked Mr. Felts for everything he has done and for everything he has done for him personally.

Commissioner Sue Hinman stated that Mr. Felts had taught her so much and that she did not know that she could have learned as much as she has learned from him. She stated that it is fantastic and that she understands what he is doing for his family and she is so very proud of him for doing it. She thanked him for all he had done for everyone here.

Commissioner Timothy Karan stated that it was bittersweet, noting that the Board and Mr. Felts have grown together as they continue to grow Granville County. He stated that they know that he is not leaving Granville County and they are tickled to death for his next chapter. He stated that he also knows that they can call on him anytime as an informed citizen to get input from him and he that he appreciated him.

Commissioner Jimmy Gooch thanked Mr. Felts for what he has done for him personally. He stated that Mr. Felts brought him along and taught him a lot and had given him all the information he needed and then some on every subject he has ever asked him about. He continued that even though he has not worked with Mr. Felts very long here, he worked with him when he was the Interim Director for SGWASA (South Granville Water and Sewer). He explained that Mr. Felts would leave his office at the County and drive to Butner and perform

the duties of the executive director, oftentimes at night and on weekends at no charge, and noted that he was eternally grateful to him for that. He continued that Mr. Felt's leadership helped SGWASA select an executive director and he could not thank him enough for all he has done and wished him the best.

Commissioner Russ May thanked Mr. Felts for all the help he provided him as a new commissioner. He said that he had given him a lot of guidance and bookwork and that he appreciated it. He said that he also appreciated the stance that he was taking with his family and the priorities that he has placed on his life as he came to the point where he has decided that the most important thing to him is his family. He continued that he did not believe anyone could be admired any more than when someone comes to the point in life that they realize that the most important thing is not what they do 8 to 5, and not what they are identified as at work, but identified as a husband, father, and son. He stated further that he believed that that is when a person becomes a complete success and thanked him.

Commissioner Hinman stated that on behalf of Commissioners Smith and Jay, they would set up the celebration for County Manager Felts.

#### **BOARD PRESENTATIONS**

Commissioner Smith stated that he wanted to thank Lynn Allred for the idea of a memorial tree dedication ceremony that was held on April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Granville Athletic Park for former County Commissioners. He said it was nice to see the family members come and be a part of the dedication.

Commissioner Hinman stated that she had just come back from a Granville County Public Schools event where they were dedicating the new food trailer purchased for the kids that are working in the culinary departments of the two schools. She stated that they will be able to go out and sell food at different locations, noting that the food trailer was very impressive.

Commissioner May deferred his comments to Commissioner Karan and noted that he may have a comment after his comments.

Commissioner Karan stated that he really enjoyed Litter Sweep for Earth Day noting that about 28 staff members participated. He stated that they picked up quite a bit of trash and that he was with the southern team and got to spend some time with Jason Falls, Environmental Programs Director. He pointed out that at the litter sweep you have an opportunity to have a



one-on-one with staff for an hour or more on the side of the road and to talk about whatever you want to talk about. He said he had some good conversations with Mr. Falls. He continued that the County has some movement on the southern end at the Wilton convenience site and that Mr. Falls and Scott Phillips, Development Services Director, are looking at some options at the turnaround area and the repositioning of some of the dumpsters for better traffic flow and that he looks forward to hearing more about that. He gave a shout-out to Harry Mills, Economic Development Director, as Economic Development closed out another CDGB Grant. He said that a lot of effort goes into those projects to bring business and economic viability to our community and Harry does a fantastic job for us. He also stated that the Board has made the announcement about hiring another team member to work with the Economic Development Department as well. He continued that Cooperative Extension had a meet and greet coffee clutch with the Chamber of Commerce and that he was glad to see some of the commissioners in attendance at that event, noting that it was a good synopsis of what they do.

Commissioner Karan said that back last year the Board's appointees of the Environmental Affairs Committee, which Commissioner Jay is a member of, came to each of the Commissioners and asked if the Board had anything that they would like to have looked at. He asked his appointee at the time of the Environmental Affairs Committee to look at some sustainability of the County's watershed and aquifer. He said he found out that the Environmental Affairs Committee did take a cursory look at it, did some soil-type looking, and found out there are 58 counties that are serviced by aquifer in North Carolina alone and it goes from the mountains all the way into the piedmont where we are. Therefore, the whole entire county is on an aquifer. However, there are some folks on the southern end especially, who have some concerns. He said looking to our south and not wanting to recreate the wheel, that Wake County although they have 1.3 million people, has an aquifer sustainability committee that looks at stakeholders in the community. He continued that he would like to task the Environmental Affairs Committee, to look at that in-depth and partner with some of our federal folks and other state folks such as USGS (United States Geological Survey) to do some well monitoring in the region. He said that he would also like to ask the Planning Board, with Liaison Commissioner May, to be involved in it as well and work with our federal and state partners such as the Department of Interior, USGS, the State Division of Water Quality, noting that the entire county is in that watershed on that aquifer. He continued that he has all the faith

in the world in our Health Department and he just wanted to make sure that everybody is reading from the same page. He continued saying that there are suggestions coming out of USGS as to how far apart community wells need to be or how deep they should be in different regions of the county. He stated that the soil maps do not change, and the soils have been there for eons, and we have a fantastic resource that we really need to tap into to make sure that we inform our citizens. He stated that one of the roles of a County Commissioner is to be not only an advocate for those we represent but also an educator of those we represent as well. Health, life, and safety are what we do, and in that, we need to make sure that people understand exactly what parameters there are and that we have their health, safety, and welfare as our best interest. He restated that he would like to volunteer the previously mentioned committees and move forward on that.

Commissioner May stated that in reference to what Commissioner Karan was talking about, he did reach out to USGS earlier today and that he did receive a follow-up from them and we are on a robust aquifer but there are things to look at. He stated that we will take the concerns that the citizens have, particularly in the areas where we are building a lot of homes in close proximity, and make sure that they have the groundwater resources that are necessary to meet the needs of the community. He stated further that he, along with the Planning Board, are working with Commissioner Jay (noted that Commissioner Jay is on both committees). Therefore, they will work very hard with those committees to get the resources and message those committees to where they are focused on this concern so we can come back to the public with factual, validated, and credible information and full transparency. He stated that all the committee meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome to come as we work on these issues.

Commissioner May continued his presentation comments. He noted that in the follow-up with the fire subcommittee, the consultant has met with Creedmoor and Stem and will be meeting with Stovall soon. He said he had spoken with the County Manager and let him know that they will be meeting with them sometime in June to finalize a template with the text of the strategic plan and hopefully have it completed sometime prior to Mr. Felt's departure for review. He said they will end up with a comprehensive strategic plan for fire services for Granville County that will outline our fire services projection of services and capabilities, expenditures and costs, etc. for the next five years. He continued that this was something that

had never been done by the county and that they are looking forward to getting it done. He added that it will be supported by granular data and factual information which again, is something that we are willing to share at the appropriate time with those that would like to see it.

Commissioner Gooch stated that Commissioner Smith had talked about the memorial dedication that honored our county commissioners who have passed away and he just wanted to expand on it a little bit. He stated that he knew that the families were very appreciative as he had spoken with several different families after the ceremony, and they were most grateful. In fact, he had received a phone call before the meeting tonight again telling me how much they appreciated the ceremony. Mr. Gooch stated that on a lighter note, after a two-year hiatus due to Covid, the Butner Chicken Picking is on for Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> and the festivities start at 9:00 a.m. and last to 4:00 p.m. He announced that the Friday night before, they will have a Chicken Picking Dance from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. with the Castaways Band. He added that this is put on by the Butner Community Association and that they do a lot of activities to support the Town of Butner and we are most appreciative of all that they do for the community.

Commissioner Jay announced that for those who would like to attend the Virgilina Summer Fest, it will be held on May 28<sup>th</sup> with a parade. He noted that there will be barbecue and Brunswick stew, but the crafts will not be set up on the streets as they have done in the past. He invited everyone to come out and have a good day in Virgilina.

Chairman Cozart stated that he would just like to say how excited he is about the plan they have for the Masonic Home for Children. He stated that Mr. Otis, Administrator, had invited a team over, and they are looking to start a Family Resource Center on the campus and will have several different agencies housed there. He said that it will be a good one-stop for families to be able to get services and information for their children and that the Masonic Home for Children Board of Directors, on which he serves, is very excited about this. He stated further that he wanted to commend Mr. Otis on it because, so often, we have parents that if we could send them to one place and they be able to get different services, it would really help. He stated that the Board is looking forward to that with great anticipation.

Chairman Cozart also shared that the Board is very sad to lose Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company in Oxford and wanted to say a word of commendation to them. He stated that Santa Fe has supported our Granville County United Way over the years. He continued

that he attended a dinner at Santa Fe last week and found out that they have gone ahead with plans to support our United Way next year even though they are preparing to close sometime this summer. He noted that they are just good corporate citizens and that we certainly wish all the best for them and their employees.

Chairman Cozart stated that he thoroughly enjoyed the “Night of Kindness” that Granville County Public Schools recently had and expressed thanks to everyone for their service. He noted that he needs to see the food truck that Commissioner Hinman mentioned. He said having a difficult struggle trying to find someone to replace Marshall Floyd on the Environmental Affairs Committee and asked the Board if any of them knew of someone they could suggest, and if so, to please let him know.

**BOARD WENT INTO CLOSED SESSION**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, 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 David T. Smith, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, the Board returned to open session.

**BOARD ADJOURNED**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Timothy Karan, and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned the meeting at 8:29 p.m.

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