

**GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**May 15, 2023**  
**GRANVILLE EXPO AND CONVENTION CENTER**  
**4185 US Highway 15 South, Oxford, North Carolina**

**PRESENT:**

Chair Russ May  
Vice Chair Timothy Karan  
Commissioner Tony W. Cozart  
Commissioner Jimmy Gooch  
Commissioner Sue Hinman  
Commissioner Zelodis Jay  
Commissioner Robert Williford

County Manager Drew Cummings  
Assistant County Manager Korena Weichel  
County Attorney James C. Wrenn, Jr.

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 7:00 p.m., Chair Russ May called the meeting to order. Commissioner Tony W. Cozart had the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Motioned by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the consent agenda as follows:

**A. Approved tax refunds, releases, and write-offs:**

- |                             |             |              |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| • Refunds                   | April 2023: | \$ 10,023.77 |
| • Releases                  | April 2023: | \$ 1,114.48  |
| • Write-offs (\$2 and less) | April 2023: | \$ 18.44     |

**B. Approved minutes:**

- August 8, 2022 Regular Meeting
- August 16, 2022 Special Meeting

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**Paul Blalock, 1593 Tally Ho Road, Stem, NC**, made the following comments and presented a copy to the Clerk:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my concerns and to beg you to vote against the Stem ETJ when it is put before you for a vote.

I am a simple person; I have lived my whole life in Granville County. I went to Granville County Public Schools. I graduated from South Granville High School. Every job that I ever had has been in Granville County. I have lived and worked my entire life in the beautiful simple country life of Granville County. Yes, there has been a lot of growth in my 61 years here but the growth in the County has been controlled very well. The County is still for the most part a rural farm sitting appearance and life style. That is the beauty of our County.

Stem's Mayor told us at a meeting at the Stem Fire Dept that the reason for the ETJ is to control growth and protect Butner from overtaking Stem.

It is my belief that Stem does not want to control growth- They want to IN Control of growth. There is a big difference between wanting to create control and being in control.

I ask a favor of each of you. I offer to pay for the gas for your vehicles to do this. Please drive to Stem and drive down Carriage Hill Dr., Coachmans Trail, Gallop Ct, Edinburgh St, Orkney Rd, Dundee Pl, Aberdeen St, Kinloss Way, Glasgow St, Wick RD, Angus Pl, Ardmore Dr, Griffis Dr, Torrence Ct, Richmond Run, School St, Gooch St, & Averly Ct.

This is an example of mostly satellite voluntary annexation that Stem has done. Once you drive through these areas you will see the difference of the rural area that this was and packed together CITY style area that it is now. Nothing wrong with this kind of rapid growth if the area can support it and if we want Granville County overpopulated and lack of resources. This is how Stem controls growth. This is not a what if, this a what has been done.

Imagine the rural areas in the ETJ also growing that fast and that much. Have any of you been to the Emergency Room lately. The wait is always hours and hours. There are already water usage restrictions place in dry times. If too much growth happens too fast in this County the Law enforcement, EMS, Hospitals, Fire Services, Roads, will not keep up you cannot blame Stem's poor planning and judgment if you pass the ETJ and give the ability to move forward. They will annex parts and or all this area.

The Fire dept. in Stem is Volunteer, it is funded mostly by Granville County. There would be no change in Fire service to the ETJ area even if it were annexed. The Police force is not 24 / 7 and still requires Granville County Sheriff's Department to help cover Stem now.

If the County stays in control of the Stem ETJ area's growth it will be controlled growth. If Stem gets this ETJ area they will be IN CONTROL of the growth. Too much growth too fast is not good for Granville County.

Please keep us as free Granville County Citizens to live the rural lifestyle that we are accustomed to.

Farming is more important in our Nation than ever before. More and more people to eat and less and less people to grow and produce the food. Farmers provide the food in our nation, yet across the nation farms are dwindling down every day. Every little County across this great nation does have a say in this. You and every other County Commissioner has the power to vote against issues that can lead to the reduction of farmland in their own area. In order to make more Farmers, there must be more Farms **Not less Farms!**

Everyone must eat. Ask most City Folks where bacon, eggs, sausage, vegetables, steak, chicken, comes from and they say the grocery store. You all know that it comes from Farmers. Vote to keep this County growing new farmers and food every chance that you get.

Our emergency services are already strained with the population that is already here. Vote to keep this a Rural Farm County as much as possible.

I do not trust Stem! They have already demonstrated their growth when they get control of properties. They add people but do not add infrastructure. They turn farmland into many houses packed into small areas. Growth of Food is more important than growing Stem's tax base.

A lot of elderly people on fixed incomes cannot afford more taxes and get nothing for these new taxes. If the ETJ passes, Annexation will surely follow. PLEASE!!!!!!!!!!!! Vote NO to the Stem ETJ when it comes before you.

**Michaela Wilkins, 3145 Tump Wilkins Road, Stem, NC**, said she was present to ask the Board to vote no to Stem ETJ and thanked them for listening to them. She mentioned emotional implications associated with the matter and also financial difficulties she believed would come with ETJ such as paving driveways. She said she had gotten a quote for the top part of her driveway and it was \$37,000. She said everyone should be able to live like they want to without being forced to comply with codes. She mentioned that outbuildings are often taller than one-story houses and that could be a violation. She also mentioned having a chicken coop, duck house, woodworking shed, and a tool shed that could put her at a maximum number of outbuildings. She said her father built these things 30 years ago and it would break their hearts to remove them to comply.

## **BUDGET MATTERS**

### **Public Hearing on Proposed Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget**

Chair May stated that North Carolina General Statute 159-12(b) requires that county governments hold at least one public hearing on the annual budget to receive comments from the public. He then recognized County Manager Drew Cummings for a brief overview.

County Manager Cummings said that there had been a successful and efficient process over the last two weeks since the manager's recommended budget was presented on May 1<sup>st</sup>. He commended Assistant County Manager Korena Weichel, Finance Director Steve McNally, and all the department heads for their work on the budget, noting that two budget work sessions had been held. The first work session reviewed the operating budgets of each department by separating out the personnel items because staff knew that the cost of living adjustment and the merit pay that was going to be higher pretty much across the board. He noted that on the operating budget side, not including personnel, the staff had done a lot to tighten up departmental budgets and that some were actually down. He said he appreciated all the efforts that department heads put towards that endeavor by proposing decreases, even suggesting certain cuts, and being willing to tighten up where historical spending patterns or other changes made that possible. Significant time was spent reviewing all the expansion proposals, including and especially large portions of funding for public safety compensation, other employee pay and health benefit improvements, as well as funding for Granville County Public Schools. Recommendations that staff made for a handful of additional positions that across the board will add important new capacity to several departments, allowing them to continue to meet county and organizational needs have been reviewed. These positions include a deputy fire marshal position that will help keep up with an ever-increasing number of mandated fire inspections; an assistant finance director to help cover the growing complexity of managing the financial operations of a nearly nine-figure budget operation; several new part-time election specialists; a key new IT position to help manage server infrastructure; a senior tax specialist; and several DSS (Department of Social Services) positions, the latter of which received state cost share funds and can help absorb expanding caseloads and reporting requirements.

He added that Commissioners reviewed fee manual changes, including increases to inspection fees that keep up with the market and ensure that the cost of inspecting all the new construction in the county are borne by developers. There were also some increases in solid waste convenience center fees and tipping fees at the landfill that recognize the sharply increasing costs of owning and operating a landfill in Granville County.

County Manager Cummings said that overall, he was really pleased that a more detailed, recommended budget informed by lots of board feedback over the past several months, seems to have largely met the board's needs and required so little additional work at our work sessions, noting that's the way it should be.

At this point, Chair May declared the public hearing open and asked anyone wishing to speak to come forward. No one came forward to speak. He asked if anyone had any questions or comments and there were none. Chair May then declared the public hearing closed.

Commissioner Jimmy Gooch said since there were no comments or discussions about the budget, he would make a motion to approve the budget. Commissioner Tony W. Cozart seconded the motion.

County Manager Cummings noted that there were some possible small changes to the language of the budget ordinance, and he would like to have the final language before voting on the matter.

Commissioners Gooch and Cozart withdrew the motion.

## **SHERIFF MATTERS**

### **Board Approved Use of Grant Funds to Purchase UVC Lighting For Detention Facility Subject to Review and Approval**

Sheriff Fountain requested approval for the purchase of one (1) UVC Light System for the Granville County Detention Center. The Board of Commissioners approved the Sheriff's Office Covid Grant awarded by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCHHS) on April 18, 2022. The purchase of the UVC Light System is an authorized grant expenditure by NCDHHS and funds are available in the grant. It was noted that the lighting system will eliminate or potentially kill bacteria and viruses and also eliminate mold and mildew.

After discussion and clarification about the procurement process and that funds would lapse and go back to the State if not used, the Board took action with stipulations.

Motioned by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the purchase of one (1) UVC Light System for the Detention Center in the amount of \$40,806 utilizing the NCDHHS (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services) grant funds subject to the review and approval of the procurement process by the County Manager, County Attorney, and Consultant Rob Bailess.

Sheriff Fountain invited the Board to an active shooter training at the courthouse on May 16, 2023.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

### **Board Approved Reappointments to the South Granville Memorial Gardens Board of Trustees**

Motioned by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the reappointments of Darlene Beck, Kenneth Bullock, and Lawrence Wade Lunsford to the South Granville Memorial Gardens Board of Trustees.

## **COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **Proposed Revisions to Granville County Personnel Policy**

Chair May said the next item was to review proposed revisions to the Granville County Personnel Policy.

Assistant County Manager Weichel explained that periodic amendments to the Personnel Policy are necessary in order to address the County's growth and changing needs, to provide additional clarification on application of specific policies, and/or to reflect the most current employment law legislation. Throughout the past year as staff consulted the policy for guidance on various personnel matters, county administration and human resources analyzed the current policy to identify where updates or clarification were indicated. In mid-April, a notice regarding proposed revisions was provided to employees along with the draft policy and summary of key changes. Employees were given the opportunity to review the proposed revisions and submit comments. One suggestion to further clarify the definition of family members for bereavement leave purposes was received and incorporated into the final draft. Included in the agenda was a summary of key revisions and a "redline" version of the proposed draft policy utilizing the track changes feature to ensure changes are easily recognizable to the reader.

Assistant County Manager Weichel then reviewed the summary of key revisions to the policy. She said that based on the County Attorney's review, a planned holiday schedule exception for non-shift personnel was removed from draft in the agenda and a requirement was added to the draft for employees requesting voluntary shared leave that they sign a release to have their name disclosed as part of the request.

Commissioner Cozart noted that he loves the change to five days for bereavement leave and mentioned the possibility of having siblings added to the list.

Assistant County Manager Weichel noted that no action was to be taken at this time as this will be on the June 5, 2023 agenda for approval.

**Board Approved a Budget Amendment to Provide Funding for Additional Fiscal Year 2023-2024 KARTS Needs**

Chair May said the next item for consideration was to approve a budget amendment transferring and appropriating \$94,127 in additional funding for KARTS from unassigned fund balance into the fiscal year 22-23 budget.

County Manager Cummings explained that for fiscal year 2022-2023, the Kerr Area Transportation Authority (KARTS) requested \$56,588 from Granville County government. The approved budget for the current year, however, only contained a flat budget of \$37,461. Franklin and Warren Counties paid the larger request up front, and at this point Vance County has also approved the additional funds.

Additionally, KARTS has been suffering some financial challenges and has requested an additional \$75,000 from each of the counties in the current fiscal year. Management has participated in numerous meetings with interim KARTS leadership (and board members) as well as management representatives from the other three counties, and though it has been difficult for KARTS to present crystal-clear documentation of the need, management does believe that critical, short-term needs do exist and need to be met for KARTS to continue providing services in Granville County.

The total requested transfer contained in the budget amendment in the agenda packet combines the additional \$19,127 from the original request and the \$75,000 in additional funds requested for total request of \$94,127.

After questions and clarifications about KARTS' audited financial reports, more documentation coming, the vital service they provide, and that the Board can reevaluate funding if necessary, the Board took action.

Motioned by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved a budget amendment transferring and appropriating \$94,127 of additional funding for fiscal year 2022-2023 from the unassigned fund balance.

**COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

County Attorney Wrenn had no report.

**BOARD PRESENTATIONS**

Commissioner Hinman reported that a meeting was held with 44 people at the Granville Expo Center on May 10<sup>th</sup> with folks who had concerns about Stem's ETJ proposal. She noted that the majority at that meeting were against Stem's ETJ. She said she attended the Culture Fest in Oxford last weekend and that it was a good event.

Commissioner Gooch reported he attended the meeting at the Granville Expo Center regarding Stem's ETJ proposal along with Chair May and Commissioner Hinman. He noted that it was great to hear concerns and complaints. He announced that May is Motorcycle Awareness Month and reminded people to look twice to save a life and be mindful of blowing grass clippings in roadways. He also announced that the Butner Summer Festival, previously known as the Butner Chicken Pickin', will be held June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Commissioner Jay reported that he enjoyed attending the Culture Fest on Saturday with Commissioner Hinman. He announced that Virgilina Summerfest will be held on Saturday, May 27, 2023, with the parade at 11:00 a.m. He said Oak Hill Presbyterian Church will hold its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Sunday, May 28, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. He noted that one of the first soldiers from Camp Oak Hill was buried at the church. He invited everyone to come to Oak Hill.

Chair May asked Assistant County Manager Weichel to give an update on broadband to provide information about what Granville County is doing to address broadband needs. He noted that that underserved means basically no internet, that you must have internet service providers (ISP) that are willing to come, and that additional funding has been set aside for other parts of the county if specific grants become available.

Assistant County Manager Weichel thanked Terry Hobgood, Public Information Officer, for diligently responding to comments on social media. She noted that a press release and a post on social media were done to help answer questions about the county's role regarding broadband. She explained that Granville County's primary role is to partner with providers, noting that those providers are for-profit businesses and are looking at their bottom line. The county's role is to support providers and provide funding to encourage them to expand their services. The GREAT (Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology) Grant had certain parameters that eliminated many homes or areas in Granville County from being eligible. The Granville County project was reduced by about 40% when it went through the process of being reviewed by the State. She noted that there is a second application under review, we do not know when the second round of awards will be announced, and that there is another project that is more mid-county. She reported that other grants will be coming down the pike and that staff are working hard but are limited in their capabilities.

Chair May announced an upcoming Granville County Fire Commission meeting on May 17, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Granville Expo and Convention Center and encouraged citizens to attend. He then called on Commissioner Cozart for comments and noted that the Board loves him and his family and is sorry for what they are going through.

Commissioner Cozart said he is thankful for the Board and the community and noted that when it rains it pours as there had been one thing after another with his family. He added that he is grateful for the outpouring of love. He said he was absent from the last meeting as he was with his wife at their niece's homegoing service in Maryland. He said that today his oldest brother Thomas transitioned from labor to rest. He said that Thomas was like a father figure and was extremely proud of him. He said that the day he became a commissioner, Thomas was like a kid in a candy shop, all excited, and that he always had his love and support. He said when he debated coming here tonight or not, he thought about it and that his brother Thomas was really all about service. He then told a story about Thomas, who was a Mason, asking him to help him and other Masons to help save the tobacco crop for the family of a fellow Mason who died unexpectedly of a heart attack. He noted that on that day he decided he wanted to be a Mason. He said his brother Thomas always had this great love for widows and orphans, and he committed himself to public service. He said that today there is a certain emptiness and a lot of gratitude for what a large family can mean and what it can do. He said he wanted to just take a moment and honor his brother Thomas tonight and noted that he thought he would be happy that he came tonight to fulfill the duties that he assumed. He asked everyone to pray for his family as they go forward.

Chair May called for a moment of silence in memory of Thomas Cozart.

#### **ANY OTHER MATTERS**

#### **Notice of Special Joint Meeting – Workshop On The Recreation Master Plan Update**

Chair May read the following Notice of Special Joint Meeting:

All interested persons please take notice that the Granville County Board of Commissioners will hold a Special Joint Meeting with the Parks, Greenways and

Recreation Advisory Committee on Monday, June 5, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at the Granville Convention & Expo Center, 4185 Highway 15, Oxford, North Carolina. The purpose of the Special Joint Meeting is for the final workshop on the Recreation Master Plan.

**Change of July Meeting Date**

Chair May read the following Notice of Change of Meeting Date:

All interested persons please take notice that the Granville County Board of Commissioners will meet on Monday, July 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the Granville Expo & Convention Center, 4185 Highway 15, Oxford, North Carolina for their regular meeting. This is a change from the previously advertised date of July 3, 2023 due to the holiday.

**Announcement of Surplus Furniture Giveaway and Household Hazardous Waste and Shred Event**

County Manager Cummings announced a surplus furniture giveaway event this Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at the Expo from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. that is the culmination of several months of work. He said there was a lot of excess, old property in county buildings. He said that with the help of Assistant County Manager Weichel, Terry Hobgood, Gary Bowen, and staff, the furniture has been moved behind the Expo Center. Non-profit agencies were able to obtain items last Saturday and this Saturday the public is invited to come and pick up any remaining items. Anything remaining after Saturday's event will be taken to the landfill. He noted that the Spring Clean Household Hazardous Waste and Shred event will also be held on Saturday in conjunction with the giveaway event.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, the Board went into closed session as allowed by N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a) (3) and (4) for attorney-client and economic development matters.

**RETURN TO OPEN SESSION**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

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