

GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
May 6, 2024
GRANVILLE EXPO AND CONVENTION CENTER
4185 US Highway 15 South, Oxford, North Carolina

PRESENT:

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

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

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:02 p.m. Chair Timothy Karan called the meeting to order. Commissioner Tony W. Cozart had the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Karan noted a correction to the vehicle listed on the surplus agenda item.

A. Approved the following surplus vehicle:

VIN	Year	Department	Make	Model	Mileage	Condition
1722	2013	Emergency Management	Chevy	Silverado	27,000+	Inoperable, not worth cost of repair

B. Approved the following tax refunds, releases, and offsets:

- Refunds April 4, 2024 – April 24, 2024: \$ 12,887.63
- Releases April 4, 2024 – April 24, 2024: \$ 1,618.88
- Write-offs (\$2 and less) April 4, 2024 – April 24, 2024: \$ 4.51

C. Approved a property tax adjustment as a partial refund for Terrence Smith due to a structure fire deeming his home unlivable.

D. Approved Clerks to the Board of Commissioner Week Proclamation.

Proclamation Recognizing May 5 through May 11, 2024 as Clerks to the Board of County Commissioners Week

WHEREAS, the role of the clerk to the board of county commissioners (clerk) is crucial for maintaining an informed community and facilitating effective local governance through communication among citizens, governing bodies, and administrative departments; and

WHEREAS, the position of clerk, one of the oldest in local government, continues to be essential as the official recordkeepers of their counties, with responsibilities that are deeply rooted in history; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute 153A-111 requires every board of county commissioners to appoint or designate a clerk to the board to perform any duties that may be required by law or the board of commissioners including, but not limited to, the preparation, filing, and protection of local government records, which are vital for accountability and transparency; and

WHEREAS, clerks enhance their professional skills through active participation in the North Carolina Association of County Clerks to Boards of Commissioners, which in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Government and the International Institute of Municipal Clerks, offers nationally recognized certification programs and continuous professional education; and

WHEREAS, clerks, through their dedication to professional development, not only improve the efficacy of their offices but also bring positive recognition to their counties by participating in advanced education and obtaining profession-related certifications.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Granville County Board of Commissioners that May 5 through May 11, 2024, will be recognized as "Clerks to the Boards of County Commissioners Week" in Granville County and extends its appreciation to Clerk to the Board Debra Weary and Deputy Clerk to the Board Karen Evans, and to all county clerks for the vital services they perform and their exemplary dedication to the county they represent.

This 6th day of May 2024.

E. Approved minutes:

- March 18, 2024 Regular Meeting
- April 1, 2024 Regular Meeting

INTRODUCTIONS, RECOGNITIONS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Board Introduced Finance Director Jennifer Baird

Deputy County Manager Korena Weichel introduced Jennifer Baird as the new Granville County Finance Director. Jennifer Baird, sworn in on April 16, 2024, brings 19 years of experience in state and local government finance. She joined from the City of Durham, where she served as Senior Fiscal Analyst and Accounting Operations Supervisor. Mrs. Baird also held finance roles at Granville-Vance Public Health and within various state government departments. She has degrees in Accounting and Human Services and is completing the North Carolina Finance Officer Certification Course at the UNC School of Government. She will lead the Finance Office as Steve McNally transitions to retirement at the end of the fiscal year.

Board Updated on Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)

Before beginning his Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) update, Reverend Tolokun Omokunde recognized Ms. Iesha Landis for her contributions as the Granville County Youth Leadership Council (YLC) JCPC member. He highlighted that Granville County Teen Court won first place in the state, with Ms. Landis serving as the clerk, and presented her with an envelope in recognition of this achievement.

Chair Karan noted that Ms. Landis would be continuing her education at the North Carolina School of Science and Math Morganton campus.

Reverend Omokunde, chair of the JCPC updated the Board on the JCPC. He discussed the challenges and successes, highlighting their need-to-risk assessments. He appreciated the support from the local JCPC monitor and emphasized his dedication to youth and risk management. He invited everyone to their meetings held every second Friday at 10:00 a.m. and stressed the importance of keeping children out of the juvenile system. He highlighted that they can now provide psychiatric care for juveniles in their homes and have a two-year funding program for continuity. He acknowledged the monitoring committee's work and shared a success story from the Trails for Success program.

Eddie Crews, Central Area Consultant for the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, provided an update based on the PowerPoint presentation included in the agenda packet. Mr. Crews presented an overview of the current programs funded by the County, noting they were in the middle of a two-year funding cycle, with plans to continue funding for 2024-2025. He highlighted several key programs:

- Community Connections by Youth Villages: Provides intensive wraparound services for at-risk youth, including family counseling.
- YV Lead Assessment: Offers comprehensive clinical assessments, especially beneficial for referrals from schools and part of juvenile law requirements.
- Community Service Restitution: A traditional court-sanctioned program for adjudicated youth to complete community service hours.
- Positive Action by Boys and Girls Club: An evidence-based skill-building program located in downtown Oxford.
- Teen Court: A restorative justice program under 4-H, beneficial for youth pursuing legal careers and diverting minor offenses from traditional juvenile court.
- Trails to Success: An equine skill-building program that has seen increased referrals from juvenile court.

Mr. Crews concluded by noting all programs were on track to meet their service projections and expressed gratitude for the stability and effectiveness of these programs in Granville County.

Commissioner Williford asked Mr. Crews to explain the referral sources for their programs. Mr. Crews stated that most referrals came from schools, followed by juvenile court counselors, SROs (School Resource Officers), DSS (Department of Social Services), and some mental health agencies.

Commissioner Hinman commented on the positive impact of community service on young people volunteering at Area Congregation In Ministry (ACIM).

Commissioner Cozart commended Mr. Crews for his leadership and highlighted the importance of their services, especially early childhood development and clinical assessment support.

Commissioner May inquired about the discrepancy between the number of juveniles in intake and those assessed. Mr. Crews explained that court counselors could close minor cases, and there were two different cohorts of juveniles with varying levels of risk assessments.

Commissioner May also expressed concern over the high percentage of Granville County youth using weapons compared to the state average. Mr. Crews noted that some statistics might be elevated due to the exclusion of low-risk cases.

Board Approved JCPC County Plan for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, the Board Approved the JCPC County Funding Plan for fiscal year 2024-2025

in the amount of \$180,837 and a county match of \$37,772, an in-kind match of \$28,060, and other funds in the amount of \$2,347 for a total of \$249,016.

Board Approved JCPC Membership List for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the JCPC membership roster for fiscal year 2024-2025 as follows:

Troy Wheless	Chief of Police	Chief of Police of Creedmoor
Arneisha Crossen	System of Care Coordinator	Director, Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO) or Designee
LaJuana Norfleet	Director of Student & Support Services	School Superintendent or Designee
Benji Laws	School Resource Officer	Local Sheriff or Designee
Nicole Grant	Chief Court Counselor	Chief Court Counselor or Designee
Dana Mustian-Lyles	Child Protective Services Supervisor	Director DSS or Designee
Alvin Downing	Pastor	Member of Faith Community
Rob Williford	County Commissioner	
Samantha Branch	Guardian Ad Litem	GAL Supervisor
Gina Reyman	Legal Aid Attorney	Juvenile Defense Attorney
Katherine Burnette	District Court Judge	Chief District Judge or Designee
Tina Cheek	Oxford Parks & Recreation	Rep. Parks and Recreation
Leroy Anderson	County Commissioner Appointee	District 1
Alex Fonvielle	County Commissioner Appointee	District 2
Elliott Carver	County Commissioner Appointee	District 3
Tolokun Omokunde	County Commissioner Appointee	District 4
Jessica Laws	County Commissioner Appointee	District 5
Eduardo Sosa	County Commissioner Appointee	District 6
Hope Pittman	County Commissioner Appointee	District 7
Yolando Oxendine	Substance Abuse Professional	Substance Abuse Professional
Jenelle Brizendine	Families Living Violence Free	Families Living Violence Free
Terry Jones	Social Worker	Local Health Director or Designee
Vacant	Two Persons under age 18	
Vacant	Two Persons under age 18	
Vacant	District Attorney	
Eddie Crews	Eddie Crews	
Drew Cummings	Drew Cummings	
Melissa Averett	Melissa Averett	

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Laura Ucik, 106 Grace Street, Oxford, NC, a primary care provider from Oxford and a Down Home North Carolina member, presented on behalf of the "Be Smart, Expand KARTS" campaign. She explained that Down Home’s Granville chapter developed the campaign from a year-long survey and canvassing of county residents. Ms. Ucik said that Kerr Area Regional Transit System (KARTS) faces several issues, including underpaid drivers, understaffing, and infrequent service. She noted that some wait times extend up to a week. To address these problems, she urged the Granville County Commissioners to invest an additional \$250,000 in KARTS, saying this funding would enable the service to hire and retain more drivers, invest in modern technology, and plan additional routes. Ms. Ucik emphasized that transportation is a significant barrier to healthcare,

sharing personal experiences of patients missing appointments or facing long waits due to KARTS' limitations. She stressed the transformative potential of increased funding for KARTS, noting its importance for the community's economic, social, and physical well-being.

Chair Karan asked her to briefly explain what Down Home North Carolina is and why they are advocating for a tax increase.

Ms. Ucik clarified that they were not advocating for a tax increase but rather for reallocating budget funding toward public transit. She described Down Home North Carolina as a statewide community organization composed of poor and working-class individuals and their allies, focusing on economic justice, education, housing, and healthcare.

Chair Karan mentioned efforts to improve town shuttles and highlighted the challenges within the KARTS area.

Rakesh Patel, 107 Winrock Place, Durham, NC, an internist and pediatrician who lives in Durham but works in Granville County, expressed his support for the KARTS expansion initiative. He said that having worked at Central Regional Hospital in Butner for 15 years he developed a fondness for the area. He emphasized the transportation needs of hospital employees, many of whom reside in Granville County. Mr. Patel recounted conversations with residents at a recent festival in Oxford, noting their enthusiasm for improved KARTS services. He highlighted that some hospital transportation staff, when asked by Down Home, expressed interest in working a second job for KARTS but were deterred by the low pay rate of \$12 an hour. Mr. Patel stressed the critical role of transportation in accessing primary care, preventing emergencies, and supporting the local economy by enabling people to reach jobs, grocery stores, and pharmacies. He concluded by urging support for the proposal to expand and improve KARTS.

Alexandra Fox, 311 12th Street, Butner, NC, a licensed clinical social worker, voiced her support for Down Home's "Be Smart, Expand KARTS" campaign. She highlighted substance abuse issues in Granville County, emphasizing the importance of accessible treatment for recovery. Ms. Fox noted that, unlike urban areas, transportation in Granville County is a significant barrier to reaching treatment facilities, such as AA meetings. She underscored the concept that overcoming addiction often requires accessing new environments and building new routines, which reliable transportation could facilitate. She argued that additional funding for KARTS could improve access to treatment and enhance the utilization of existing resources, ultimately protecting and sustaining the community's most valuable resource: its people.

Jason Dunkin, 1217 Enon Road, Oxford, NC, a resident of Oxford and member of Down Home North Carolina's Granville chapter, expressed his support for the "Be Smart, Expand KARTS" campaign. He highlighted Down Home's previous efforts, including advocating for the renovation of Granville Street Park and supporting the election of the current sheriff and Oxford mayor. Mr. Duncan said that insufficient funding for KARTS leads to a lack of drivers, resulting in inadequate transportation services. He shared personal anecdotes, such as his mother's struggle to reach Vance-Granville Community College. Mr. Duncan urged the commissioners to fully fund the KARTS service, stressing its importance for the community's well-being.

Jesse Davi, 1100 Lake Ridge Drive, Creedmoor, NC, expressed concerns about the 2024 property appraisal process. He cited excerpts from the Granville appraisal manual, emphasizing the importance of fair and equitable appraisals across the county as mandated by the North Carolina Constitution. Mr. Davi shared that his group, the South Granville Community Alliance, met with County officials to discuss appraisal rules and standards. He provided specific examples of discrepancies noted by his group in property appraisals, highlighting significant valuation differences between similar properties, including modular homes, single-family homes, and land, and he provided a pamphlet to the Board that highlighted said discrepancies. Mr. Davi pointed

out inconsistencies that he said violated the principles of uniform and fair taxation. He referenced North Carolina General Statute 105-317(c), which requires appraisal standards to be reviewed and approved by the Board of County Commissioners, underscoring the need for adherence to these statutory requirements to ensure equitable property assessments.

Alaina Wilson, 1019 Bluebell Lane, Wake Forest, NC, requested that the Granville County Commissioners reconsider the 2024 property appraisals conducted by Pearson Appraisal. She highlighted concerns from citizens about the appraisals, which she said were similar to issues faced by Franklin County, which also relied on Pearson. Ms. Wilson stated that many homes were appraised far above market value, which would lead to over-taxation amid inflation and financial struggles. She said there were significant discrepancies in appraisal values for nearly identical properties and criticized the lack of acknowledgment or action on appeals filed by homeowners. Ms. Wilson urged the commissioners to hold Pearson accountable, as she said Franklin County did, and to reevaluate all parcels in Granville County to ensure accurate and fair property assessments.

Sue Hinman, 515 Goshen Street, Oxford, NC, spoke as Executive Director of Area Congregation In Ministry (ACIM), and expressed gratitude for the assistance received during a recent incident. She recounted how Carolina Sunrock donated two dump trucks of gravel to fill potholes in their driveway. However, during unloading, one truck accidentally damaged the internet and phone lines, spilling gravel onto the road. Despite the mishap, quick action was taken with a deputy calling 911, followed by the Granville Rural Fire Department arriving within seven minutes. She said they ensured safety, blocking traffic and assessing for live wires until the Oxford Fire Department arrived to handle the situation. Ms. Hinman praised their efficiency and thanked all involved, including Sunrock, for their assistance and the kindness of the firetruck drivers who later returned to help clear the gravel from the driveway, that had blocked her car in. She extended appreciation to everyone involved, including the Sheriff's Office, fire departments, and Spectrum Internet, for their prompt response and assistance.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

After Holding a Public Hearing, Board Approved Amendment to Nugget Comfort Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Project

Chair Karan announced a public hearing regarding an amendment to the Nugget Comfort CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) project. He read the purpose of the hearing which was to discuss the amendment involving Nugget Comfort's plan to create 43 new jobs expected to have an average annual wage of \$40,930 with 51% of them going to individuals residing in low to moderate-income households. Nugget Comfort will maintain its original expansion plans and investment commitment of \$4,320,000. Economic Development Director Joe Stallings was called forward to provide further information on the matter.

Chair Karan declared the public hearing open.

Economic Development Director Stallings provided an overview of the Nugget Comfort CDBG project, stating that the purpose of the amendment is to change the number of jobs from 46 to 43, with no other modifications. He said the change aligns with the requirements under the North Carolina General Statute. Mr. Stallings was accompanied by David Hartigan, the Grants Administrator, to provide further details on the matter.

Chair Karan asked that anyone wishing to speak to come forward and no one came forward for comments.

Chair Karan asked if the Board had questions. Commissioner May asked for further clarification.

Mr. Hartigan clarified that there were three fewer jobs than originally planned. He noted that the company initially created 95 jobs and that these jobs did not meet the requirement of having 51% of them filled by individuals from low to moderate-income households, which is necessary for federal funding. Mr. Hartigan explained that he worked with the company manager to rectify the situation by identifying specific production jobs from the original application that met the income requirement. By eliminating three jobs from the count, they achieved the necessary percentage. He emphasized that this adjustment was an administrative action with no additional funding involved, and he ensured that no funds were lost in the process.

Chair Karan then declared the public hearing closed.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board approved authorizing Economic Development Department staff to submit paperwork, including the following resolution and application, to amend the CDBG grant for Nugget Comfort LLC and make conforming changes to all related loan/grant documents.

**RESOLUTION FOR GRANVILLE COUNTY'S AMENDMENT OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK GRANT PROJECT FOR THE NUGGET COMFORT CDBG BUILDING REUSE PROJECT**

WHEREAS, Granville County has previously received funding from the NC Department of Commerce for the Nugget Comfort Building Reuse project within the County; and,

WHEREAS, the Granville County Board of Commissioners wishes to amend that Community Development Block Grant project to benefit Nugget Comfort, and

WHEREAS, the Granville County Board of Commissioners certifies it will meet all federal regulatory and statutory requirements of the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Granville County Board of Commissioners that Granville County is authorized to amend its Community Development Block Grant project for Economic Development. Nugget Comfort has or will invest at least \$460,000 to renovate the building. The company now plans to hire 43 new employees at an average wage of \$40,930 with at least 51% going to persons of low and moderate income. Additional renovations and machinery and equipment are anticipated to reach \$4,320,000.

BUDGET MATTERS

After the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Presentation, Board Approved Scheduling the Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget for May 20, 2024

Mr. Cummings outlined the agenda for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Presentation, starting with a recap of the current year's budget and the major initiatives undertaken by the staff. He reviewed the timeline for the budget's development and approval, discussed the financial backdrop, and identified the key needs and issues driving the proposed budget. He also highlighted the main aspects of the budget and concluded by summarizing the essential components of the proposal.

In the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget Recap, County Manager Drew Cummings highlighted several key points:

- The tax rate in 2023-2024 remained steady, unchanged since 2018.
- Due to unforeseen circumstances, more fund balance had to be used to balance the budget, which could have led to tax increases or harmful cuts to operations.
- The Fire Tax was maintained at 6 cents.

- Nearly \$1 million in additional operating funds was allocated to Granville County Public Schools, with a portion passed on to charter schools.
- Significant improvements were made to public safety salaries to address fierce competition for new recruits and retention, particularly at the lower end of the salary scale.

In the 2023-2024 Year in Review, County Manager Drew Cummings highlighted several key points:

- Employee pay and benefits remained a primary focus, aiming to reduce turnover and fill vacancies.
- Sales tax revenue growth was lower than expected, impacting budget plans for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.
- Successful completion of the transition to Enterprise Fleet Management resulted in operational and financial benefits, including significant savings.
- The landfill operations contract was re-bid, contributing to putting the solid waste enterprise fund in the black for the first time.
- Critical department head transitions were managed effectively.
- Efforts were made to draft a development agreement for land within the Triangle North Business Park, with significant progress made.
- Broadband expansion work continued, benefiting hundreds to thousands of homes with high-speed internet connections.
- Development of a draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was near completion, representing improved planning for future facilities.

The development of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 budget took a full 5-6 months' worth of work. Each department's budget was reviewed with Finance and Administration, all revenue trends were revisited, and a recommended budget began to take shape in March and April. In April, meetings were held with each commissioner to ensure their preferences were heard clearly by County Administration. Although implementing the budget would require significant new investment by the County and its residents, it was believed to be the budget the County needed, reflecting the desires of the Commissioners.

The importance of the property tax revaluation was stressed as an opportunity to address stagnant tax values against rising costs. The presentation outlined the challenge of maintaining competitive salaries, particularly in fields like emergency services and social services, where neighboring counties offered higher compensation. Despite efforts to compete, the county still operated with lean staff and faced challenges in employee retention.

The proposed budget aimed to address these issues but did not fully restore the proportion of the budget covered by property taxes to pre-revaluation levels. Furthermore, population growth was accelerating, indicating a need for infrastructure planning to accommodate the projected increase in residents.

The presentation outlined various funding areas and budget drivers for the fiscal year 2024-2025:

- **Critical Services and Functions:** The budget prioritizes stable county operations, including maintaining sufficient staff and facilities for mandated programs and services.
- **Employee Pay and Benefits:** Recommendations include increasing the 401(k) match from 2% to 3% and offering merit raises up to 4% for exemplary work.
- **Health Plan Costs:** Despite no change in coverage, there were significant increases in employee health insurance costs.
- **Fire Protection Budget:** Proposed maintaining the fire district tax rate at 6 cents to enhance fire protection across the county.
- **EMS Funding:** Significant investments in EMS services, including additional ambulance and staffing, to improve response times and meet population growth demands.

- Educational Funding: Increased funding for K-12 schools and Vance Granville Community College, including operational and capital expenses to maintain and enhance educational facilities.
- School Resource Officers: Discussions ongoing regarding SRO funding, with hopes for additional state funding and municipal support.
- Capital Improvement Plan (CIP): Proposed 10-year plan includes funding for various critical projects such as senior centers, landfill expansion, fire stations, and courthouse renovations, funded by maintaining current capital funding levels and dedicating additional revenue.

The presentation delves into other key aspects of the county budget:

- Limited Expansions: The budget primarily focuses on addressing critical needs without proposing significant expansions, with only a few new positions and departmental expansions.
- Fee Increases: Small fee increases are proposed for solid waste and stormwater services to ensure self-sustainability and cover the costs of providing these essential services.
- Department Operating Expenses: Minor expansions include funding for a seasonal 4-H position, safety supplies for county buildings, and investments in IT security measures.
- Outside Agency Funding: While most outside agency funding remains flat, Granville Vance Public Health receives an additional \$25,000 per multi-year agreement. Area Congregations in Ministry (ACIM) receives an extra \$15,000 to support its food aid program.
- Kerr Area Regional Transit System (KARTS): Funding for KARTS returns to historic levels, primarily covering administrative costs and bus replacements.
- CAMPO Study: Granville County allocates \$40,000 to leverage funding from CAMPO for a study focusing on traffic and growth in the southeastern part of the county, addressing concerns about road capacity and dangerous intersections.

The presentation outlines several areas where funding is not being recommended:

- Cost of Living Adjustment and Employee Benefits: There's no recommendation for a cost of living adjustment or reducing employee insurance costs for their families.
- Teacher Supplements: There's no recommendation for an increase in local teacher supplements.
- Sheriff's Office Requests: Funding isn't recommended for approximately \$2 million in additional staffing and other enhancements requested by the Sheriff's Office, nor for the majority of new position requests from county departments.
- Local Non-profits: There's no recommendation for more generous funding for most local non-profits, despite their important services to the community.
- Operational Improvements: Many sensible proposals for operational improvements and service enhancements submitted by county departments are also not recommended for funding.

The final section of the presentation emphasized the rationale behind the proposed budget and addressed potential concerns. It emphasized the responsibility of decision-makers to consider the consequences of cutting expenditures rather than increasing local revenues in the face of declining outside revenues. Additionally, it stressed the importance of investing in a robust Capital Improvement Plan for the benefit of future generations of Granville residents, particularly children and grandchildren. The presentation acknowledged the needs of the community and the importance of planning and funding to address those needs, even if it meant facing financial and political challenges.

In terms of tax rates, the presentation provided context for the proposed fire tax rate of \$0.06 per \$100 of valuation and the proposed county property tax rate of \$.631 per \$100, comparing them

to neighboring counties and emphasizing the relatively low rates in Granville County. It discussed the need for sustainable taxation to support community growth and infrastructure development, highlighting the challenges faced by both county and municipal governments in balancing revenue and expenditure. The presentation concluded by acknowledging the magnitude of the proposed budget and inviting criticism and feedback from the public, emphasizing the seriousness with which the county government approached its responsibilities.

Finally, it expressed gratitude to the audience, the departments involved, and the individuals who contributed to the budget process, outlining the next steps in the budget adoption process. It concluded with the acknowledgment of the efforts made by all involved and the scheduled budget work sessions and public hearing to facilitate further discussion and decision-making.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board approved scheduling the public hearing on the proposed budget for May 20, 2024.

SHERIFF MATTERS

Board Approved Sheriff's Office Accreditation Manager Contract

Sheriff Robert Fountain began by requesting prayers for law enforcement officers nationwide and informed the commissioners of upcoming memorials for fallen officers. He then outlined the Granville County Sheriff's Office's pursuit of accreditation, seeking approval for grant funding to support the process. Sheriff Fountain explained that the office aimed to obtain CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) and ACA (American Correctional Association) certification by 2025, highlighting efforts to secure grant funding without using county resources. Chief Lynette Clements had undergone accreditation training, and the office was considering hiring a part-time accreditation manager.

Commissioner Williford sought clarification on the grant's scope and duration, to which Sheriff Fountain confirmed that the \$20,000 grant would cover five months.

Commissioner May sought an update on the progress made on the accreditation process. Sheriff Fountain explained the challenges in updating policies inherited from the previous administration and assured ongoing efforts to align with best practices.

Commissioner May requested a copy of the Sheriff's Office vehicle policy, emphasizing the Board's financial oversight role, as the board was now engaged in the budget process. Sheriff Fountain offered to provide access to it and invited Commissioner May to the Sheriff's Office to review it.

Chair Karan underscored the importance of transparent policies for oversight and budgetary considerations. Sheriff Fountain acknowledged the Board's oversight role and reiterated his commitment to transparency. Chair Karan and Commissioner May emphasized the need for collaboration and mutual understanding on policy matters so the board could fulfill their role.

Sheriff Fountain agreed to provide a copy of the vehicle policy. Chair Karan restated the recommendation for a contract with a temporary accreditation policy writer, utilizing grant funds to hire Belinda L. Pounds for the accreditation process.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, the Board approved a contract for Belinda L. Pounds as a temporary accreditation policy writer in the amount of \$19,999.81 with funding from a grant awarded by the N.C. Governor's Crime Commission and authorized the County Manager to execute the contract once finalized by the County Attorney.

Sheriff's Office Quarterly Update

At this point, Sheriff Fountain provided an update. He discussed the recent visit from Justice Newby, the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts, and superior court judges to the county's facilities, aiming to transition to electronic court appearances to save on transportation and manpower costs. The Sheriff highlighted the successful move towards using E-courts, noting the facility designed for electronic court appearances had been activated, reducing the need to transport inmates to the courthouse.

Sheriff Fountain mentioned that the School Resource Officers (SROs) program, with seven officers on board, is progressing well. The Special Response Team (SRT) is now fully operational, with a SWAT crew scheduled to join in July and also reported the execution of their first search warrant.

Sheriff Fountain provided crime report breakdowns, covering the period from January to the end of the previous month. He updated on the Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, stating that the program's proposal had been submitted and they are on track, with the Sheriff's Office writing checks to the county for \$25,000 to \$30,000 monthly.

Commissioner Gooch inquired about the electronic court system, to which Sheriff Fountain clarified it was part of a statewide transition. The system now processes 25 to 30 people daily, aiming to handle up to 600-700 people eventually. A meeting with judges is planned to discuss further implementation of virtual court proceedings, reducing inmate transportation and associated costs.

Sheriff Fountain highlighted the potential of using the e-court system for initial hearings, reducing the need for court appearances downtown, saying that this move toward virtual court proceedings would decrease courthouse traffic and improve efficiency.

Commissioner Jay asked that this change would eliminate long lines at the courthouse. Sheriff Fountain confirmed, explaining the new system and the gradual shift to WebEx for first appearances, aiming to eventually conduct trials without moving inmates.

Commissioner May said he appreciated the detailed information provided by the Sheriff.

Commissioner Williford inquired about the accreditation process, to which Sheriff Fountain responded that accreditation is granted for two years, helping to reduce risk liability. Sheriff Fountain also mentioned efforts at the Detention Center to provide better medical staff performance and compliance with certifications from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which now audits the facilities annually.

APPOINTMENTS

Board Approved Reappointment to the ABC Board

Motioned by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board reappointed Michael Smith to the Granville County ABC Board.

Board Approved Appointments to the Granville County Tourism Development Authority

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, and unanimously carried, the Board appointed Joe Stallings to the Granville County Tourism Development Authority Economic Development Board Director seat.

Board Approved Appointments to the Kerr-Tar Regional Economic Development Commission – Triangle North Board

Motioned by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, Board appointed Adam McConnell, Granville Health System CEO, to the Kerr-Tar Regional Economic Development Commissioner -Triangle North Board to the County Director seat.

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT

Board Approved Emergency Communications Consulting Contract

County Manager Drew Cummings proposed a contract approval for a short-term consulting agreement with Ms. Tonya Evans, retired Deputy Director of Emergency Communications, Durham 911. Ms. Evans has agreed to assist Interim Director Stacy Hicks in managing the transition of the directorship for Granville County's 911 Emergency Communications Department. The contract has a not-to-exceed amount of \$30,000, which is expected to be covered by lapsed salary funds within the department.

Motioned by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board approved an Emergency Communications Consulting Contract with Tonya Evans for an amount not to exceed \$30,000 and authorized the County Manager and County Attorney to finalize and execute the contract.

Board Approved Leases for 204 Williamsboro Street with Watson Building, Rental and Investment Co., Inc.

County Manager Cummings presented a lease agreement for the entire building at 204 Williamsboro Street, which includes both the second floor previously approved short-term lease and the rest of the building, formerly occupied by Mr. John Watson's law offices. The agreement covers a long-term lease of up to 15 years, with three five-year terms. Cummings expressed satisfaction with the negotiations and highlighted the favorable lease rate.

When asked, County Attorney Wrenn clarified that while the lease includes the whole building, there's a separate short-term lease for just the top floor for up to six months, allowing time for Mr. Watson to vacate the space before the long-term lease for the entire building takes effect.

Motioned by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, the Board approved a short and longer-term lease of 204 Williamsboro Street, Oxford with Watson Building, Rental and Investment Co., Inc., to provide additional space for the Granville County Human Resources and Finance Departments.

County Manager’s Report

County Manager Cummings did not have any further items to report.

COUNTY ATTORNEY’S REPORT

Board Held Amending Opioid Litigation Complaint

County Attorney Jim Wrenn presented a request to amend a complaint in the national opioid litigation to include Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) as defendants. Attorney Wrenn explained that PBMs play a role in administering prescription drug plans and negotiating drug prices. The amendment would involve adding claims against two major PBMs, Express Scripts and Optum Rx, for their alleged role in fueling the opioid crisis. He noted that the National Litigation Counsel and local Counsel Jake Daniel recommended that the Board vote to amend the complaint, he expressed no opinion on the matter. The commissioners discussed the potential

benefits and uncertainties surrounding the amendment and agreed to seek more information before making a decision, including reaching out to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) for guidance.

Board Approved Interlocal Agreement with Granville-Vance District Health for Opioid Community Development Specialist Services.

County Attorney Wrenn presented an interlocal agreement between Granville County and the Granville-Vance District Health Department for the funding of an Opioid Community Development Specialist Position. This agreement outlined the terms and conditions for funding the position for the remainder of the fiscal year, with plans to include it in the upcoming year's budget as well. The attorney clarified that the position would be funded by Granville County and would serve Granville County's needs primarily, with potential future involvement from Vance County.

The commissioners discussed the agreement, noting that the position would help drive efforts to address opioid-related issues in the community. They also mentioned the possibility of Vance County contributing to the funding in the future. They noted the importance of having a specialist dedicated to addressing opioid challenges in Granville County.

Motioned by Commissioner Jimmy Gooch, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board approved the Interlocal Agreement Between Granville County and Granville Vance District Health Department for Opioid Community Development Specialist Services.

County Attorney's Report

County Attorney Wrenn had one economic development matter for closed session.

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioner Sue Hinman stated that she made her comments earlier during public comments.

Commissioner Cozart shared his experiences attending the "Year Of" celebratory event at Mary Potter Center for Education, where various employees were recognized for their achievements. He mentioned an upcoming childcare forum hosted by Representative Frank Sossaman on March 23, 2024, highlighting the importance of community involvement. He shared positive feedback he has heard about the director of Kerr Area Regional Transit System (KARTS) and suggested that the director may be a valuable resource for future discussions.

County Manager Cummings highlighted his discussions with Mr. Cantor, the Executive Director of KARTS, commending his efforts in managing the transportation system efficiently. He mentioned the need last year for additional appropriations to sustain KARTS and expressed his intention to invite Mr. Cantor to address the Board directly in the coming months.

Commissioner Jay explained KARTS funding and functions noting that KARTS provides 80-90 rides per day and that you must call ahead to schedule an appointment. He talked about their dedicated drivers, the history of their buses and replacements, their improved financial position, as well as being funded by four counties.

Commissioner May mentioned that Granville County is 532 square miles and that there are misconceptions about how KARTS operates. He again expressed a desire to extend KARTS services in the Butner-Creedmoor area.

Commissioner May also raised concerns about the revaluation company's diligence in addressing issues that may impact a larger population, urging the county manager and county attorney to ensure thorough investigation and communication of findings. Additionally, Commissioner May inquired about the progress of appeals before the Board of Equalization, seeking assurance that issues are being addressed transparently and efficiently. Overall, he emphasized the importance of ensuring fairness and thoroughness in addressing community concerns and needs.

Commissioner Gooch mentioned the impact of taxes on elderly individuals with fixed incomes. He said he is in favor of State updates to tax deferment programs for senior citizens, disabled veterans, and the elderly disabled. He also highlighted the constraints of the county budget, stressing the importance of balancing competing needs and desires within limited financial resources. He acknowledged the difficulty of making tough decisions during budget discussions and expressed his commitment to finding solutions that best serve the community as a whole.

Commissioner Jay provided more information about KARTS services. He then announced that the Virgilina Summerfest event and parade will be on Saturday, May 25th. He reported that the next Environmental Affairs Committee (EAC) meeting will have a presentation on solar farms and invited those interested in the matter to attend. He also asked if anyone had any matter that they would like for the EAC to look at, to please let them know.

Chair Karan expressed appreciation for the successful Spirit Week event organized by County staff. He also thanked Public Information Officer Terry Hobgood for providing drone footage of the Granville County folks standing on the dots in the shape of "G C" representing Granville County, which was a fun idea. He mentioned Commissioner Jay who serves as a District 8 Director for the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and the recent District meeting held in Granville County. He talked about interactions with representatives from other counties at the meeting. He then mentioned a typo on the first page of a pamphlet from the South Granville Community Alliance and a misrepresentation in the pamphlet that referenced Franklin County "commissioners" in the plural. He clarified that it was a single commissioner who brought it forward and requested a full audit to ensure fair taxation. He compared these errors to those in the 2024 Property Appraisal Manual, noting that while typographical errors do occur, the manual had been corrected accordingly. He expressed disappointment that the alliance seemed not to understand this and expressed a desire for constructive dialogue with them. He also noted the low attendance staying until the end of the meeting and expressed a wish to engage in meaningful conversations with community members, including the president of the South Granville Community Alliance.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters for open session.

CLOSED SESSION

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, the Board went into closed session as allowed by North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4) for economic development matters at 10:17 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Motioned by Commissioner Sue Hinman seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, the Board returned to open session at 10:39 p.m.

**BOARD TOOK ACTION REGARDING THE PORTMAN INDUSTRIAL LLC ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT TRIANGLE NORTH GRANVILLE**

Motioned by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board approved authorizing the County Manager and County Attorney to execute the option of a second amendment with non-substantive changes with Portman Industrial LLC to extend the terms of the agreement for the project at Triangle North Granville.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

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