

GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 3, 2024
GRANVILLE CONVENTION AND EXPO CENTER
4185 US Highway 15 South, Oxford, North Carolina

PRESENT:

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 7:01 p.m. Vice-Chair Jimmy Gooch called the meeting to order. Commissioner Sue Hinman had the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, 6-0, the Board approved the consent agenda as follows:

- A. Approved Budget Amendment #3 for fiscal year 2024-2025.**

BUDGET AMENDMENT No 3
September 3, 2024
Legal Document

Be it ordained, the FY 2024-2025 Annual Budget Ordinance is hereby amended as follows:

GENERAL FUND

Expenditures	Increase	Decrease	Total
Public Safety			115,000
Emergency Management	\$ 115,000	\$ -	
Community Services			-
Economic Development	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	
Contributions to Other Funds & Contingencies			\$1,398,532
Contributions & Transfers	\$ 1,398,532	\$ -	
	Total Expenditures		1,513,532
Revenues			
Restricted and Intergovernmental	\$ 115,000	\$ -	
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$ 1,398,532	\$ -	
	Total Revenues		\$1,513,532

B. Approved Capital Project Ordinance Budget Amendment #1 (Application of Loan Proceeds) for the Granville Health System Debt Capital Project for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Project Ordinance
Granville Health System
Budget Amendment #1 (during Fiscal Year 2025)
September 3, 2024
LEGAL DOCUMENT

Be it ordained, the Granville Health System Project Ordinance is hereby amended as follows:

Expenditures	Increase	Decrease	Total
Granville Health System Debt - Principal	871,513	\$	871,513
Granville Health System - Interest	50,924	\$	50,924
	Total Expenditures		\$ 922,437
Revenues			
Appropriated Fund Balance	922,437	\$	922,437
	Total Revenues		\$ 922,437

C. Approved Capital Project Ordinance Budget Amendment #2 (Broadband Project) for the ARPA – Roanoke Connect Holdings Project for fiscal year 2024-2025.

- D. **Approved the transfer of inspection fee net revenue in the amount of \$254,998.85 to Restricted Fund Balance in accordance with G.S. §153A-354 and authorized the County Manager to execute all necessary documents to finalize the transfer.**
- E. **Approved the transfer of Child Support Incentive Program funds totaling \$820,219.07 to Restricted Fund Balance, in accordance with 45 CFR 305.35, and authorized the County Manager to execute all necessary documents to finalize the transfer.**
- F. **Approved the contract for street sign installation services with George Wade Woody, Jr., the sole respondent to the revised RFP published from May 31 to July 1, 2024, and authorized the County Manager to execute the contract which stipulates a price of \$35 per sign installation plus \$0.55 per mile driven with an estimated annual cost of \$18,000 based on approximately 360 sign replacements per year.**
- G. **Approved the purchase of 35 Dell desktop computers and 35 Dell LED monitors from SHI, Granville County's state contract vendor, to replace all public-use computers within the Granville County Library System at a total cost of \$39,265.45 in compliance with Granville County's Information Technology Policy requiring equipment replacement every 4 years.**
- H. **Approved the *Resolution Requesting the Services of the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center for the County of Granville* for the North Carolina Department of Commerce Main Street and Rural Planning Center's proposal to conduct a 5-year county-wide economic development strategic plan and authorized the County Manager to execute the *Memorandum of Understanding for the Granville County Economic Development Strategic Plan*.**

**Resolution Requesting the Services of the NC Main Street and Rural Planning
Center for the County of Granville NC**

WHEREAS the Granville County Board of Commissioners wish to have a county-wide Economic Development Strategic Plan; and

WHEREAS the Granville County Board of Commissioners would like assistance with this project from the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center; and

WHEREAS the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center and the Granville County Economic Development Board have reached an agreement on the work to be performed.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Granville County Board of Commissioners hereby request the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center to assist the County with preparation of the Granville County Economic Development Strategic Plan, agree to reimburse the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center for the materials, mileage and meal allowances of the Rural Planning staff who assist the County on this project, are committed to adoption of the plan, and implementation to begin when the plan is completed.

I. Approved the following tax refunds, releases, and write-offs:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| • Refunds | July 25, 2024 – August 21, 2024: | \$ 43,534.65 |
| • Releases | July 25, 2024 – August 21, 2024: | \$ 137,454.32 |
| • Write-offs(\$2 and less) | July 25, 2024 – August 21, 2024: | \$ 34.32 |

J. Approved accepting the settlement with the Tax Collector as required by N.C.G.S. 105-373 and charged the Tax Collector with collecting the 2024 taxes and any prior fiscal years' unpaid taxes.

K. Approved NCDOT Sponsored County Employee Fall 2024 Spring Litter Sweep as an information item only.

L. Approved minutes:

- August 3, 2024 Regular Meeting

CHANGE OF AGENDA LINE-UP

Vice-Chair Gooch announced that the KARTS update would be moved further down the agenda to be addressed when Executive Director Randy Cantor arrives.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one came forward for public comments.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

After Holding a Public Hearing, Board Approved 5310 Transportation Grant: In-Town Oxford Fixed Route

Vice-Chair Gooch declared the public hearing open for the NC DOT 5310 Transportation Grant application, which funds the Oxford Fixed Route through Kerr Area Rural Transit System (KARTS). He noted that Granville County had participated in the 5310 Transportation Grant Program since 2010. The public hearing was held for the fiscal year 2025-2026 grant cycle, and Vice-Chair Gooch explained that if the grant is awarded, the required match and grant award would be included in the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget. He also mentioned that the notice for the public hearing had been published in the August 22, 2024, edition of the Oxford Public Ledger, both in English and Spanish.

Vice-Chair Gooch called for any witnesses to come forward.

Senior Services Director Kathy May provided an update on the County's application to the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NC DOT) for funding the Oxford Loop, a fixed bus route within Oxford's city limits. She highlighted that this marks the 15th consecutive year of applying for this grant, which is supported by federal and state funds. The County's required 10% match is fulfilled through annual Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) funding from DOT. This grant enables the purchase of service from KARTS to operate a fixed bus route with 16 stops per hour, starting daily at 8:00 a.m. from the Granville County Senior Center. The route includes stops at nine senior housing developments, two grocery stores, two pharmacies, the post office, and the local hospital.

Commissioner May emphasized that the fixed bus route is designed to provide convenient access for individuals, allowing them to board near their location and disembark within walking distance of their destination. For example, the hospital stop provides easy access to the health department and multiple doctors' offices. The competitive nature of the grant requires ongoing justification of its necessity each year.

Commissioner Williford asked Senior Services Director May if the County tracked the number of people who ride the Oxford Fixed Route. May confirmed that KARTS tracks the ridership data and provides updates annually. She mentioned that KARTS Executive Director Randy Cantor might elaborate on the specifics but assured the Board that the ridership numbers justify the

continuation of the service each year. She also highlighted that the higher concentration of public and senior housing, lower vehicle ownership, and lower median income in the area drove the decision to establish the route in Oxford.

Commissioner May then asked whether any other municipalities or entities within the county had applied for this competitive grant. May responded that, to her knowledge, no other local entities had applied for the grant, though she clarified that any direct applications would have been submitted to DOT, and she might not be aware of them. He inquired whether the decision to place the fixed route in Oxford was based on the availability of senior services, hospitals, clinics, and public housing developments in the area. Kathy May confirmed that these factors were indeed central to the decision-making process and that Oxford's needs made it an ideal candidate for the grant-funded service.

Commissioner Cozart added a comment, reflecting on an earlier attempt by the nonprofit Oxford Business and Professional Chain to address transportation needs in the community. He noted that their efforts had been insufficient to meet the demand, and he expressed gratitude that the current service had successfully expanded access to reliable transportation for many more citizens.

Vice-Chair Gooch declared the public hearing closed.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board, after holding a public hearing, approved the NC DOT 5310 Transportation Grant application for funding during the fiscal year 2024-2025 and adopted the associated resolution.

INTRODUCTIONS, RECOGNITIONS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Update on KARTS

Executive Director Randy Cantor updated the Board on Kerr Area Regional Transportation System (KARTS). He spoke from the slide deck presentation included in the agenda packet.

KARTS Overview:

- KARTS serves Vance, Granville, Franklin, and Warren counties.
- Funding relies on local matches, state, and federal grants.
- FY24 budget: \$5,754,966 with a local match of \$75,759 already paid by the counties.

Grant and Funding Details:

- Federal grants fund 80% of administrative costs, with state and local matches covering the remainder.

- The Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) provides upfront funding, with strict reporting requirements.
- Any unreported funds are subtracted from the next year's allocation.

Performance Improvements:

- Increased trips by 6,000, reduced hours by 7,800, and decreased miles driven by 105,000.
- Granville County provided 35,128 trips; overall, KARTS provided 143,596 trips in FY24.

System Changes:

- Achieved \$250,000 in cost savings by cutting non-essential expenses.
- Future cost savings expected with new scheduling software funded by a micro-transit grant.
- Adjustments to dialysis transportation to align with service hours and reduce operational costs.

Challenges:

- Staffing difficulties in hiring and retention.
- Rising insurance, fuel, and maintenance costs.
- Reduced service requests from contracted agencies due to their budget constraints.
- Delays in replacing aging fleet vehicles due to supply chain issues.

Future Plans:

- KARTS aims to become the direct recipient of ROAP funds to streamline reporting and ensure all available funds are utilized.
- Continued focus on fleet replacement and improving operational efficiency through in-house maintenance.

Commissioner May asked about the Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) funding. Randy Cantor explained that it is distributed by the state based on population density, with more rural areas receiving more funds, though the growth of the funding has plateaued. Cantor confirmed that Granville County receives more funds than Warren County due to a larger population, but the funding primarily comes from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and hasn't decreased, only leveled off.

Commissioner May inquired about transportation services to workplaces, for which Cantor affirmed that KARTS provides transportation. Cantor could not provide exact usage data but offered to follow up. He noted a rise in requests for work transportation, especially after the local college reopened. Cantor said that new software would improve tracking rider locations, though currently, DOT helps analyze the data. He admitted there is no precise metric for meeting service needs beyond user input, particularly when considering requests for more DOT funding. Cantor clarified that while requests can be made, funding is primarily dependent on federal allocations to the state.

Commissioner May also raised concerns about dialysis patient transportation, citing complaints about long waits for rides after treatment. Cantor assured that these issues would be

investigated as no such problems were reported to him directly. Cantor emphasized that KARTS doesn't refuse rides and confirmed service availability on Saturdays but acknowledged operational cost challenges, including driver retention, particularly due to low pay compared to other jobs.

Commissioner May asked whether any municipalities or counties have received services and not have rendered financial responsibility to it, to which Cantor responded negatively.

Commissioner May noted that KARTS stopped the route in Henderson; Cantor confirmed and said it was due to a lack of financial support. When asked how the Board could support KARTS, Cantor identified operational funding as the main need, especially to increase driver salaries and improve retention. Medicaid riders make up about 30% of the service's users, but Cantor described the challenges of receiving timely reimbursements due to delays in trip approvals.

Commissioner Cozart thanked Cantor for his work supporting Vance-Granville Community College students' transportation needs, which has positively impacted students' ability to attend classes. Cozart also inquired about KARTS' request to become direct recipients of transportation funds in fiscal year 2026, asking if it was for efficiency or cash flow purposes. Cantor confirmed it was for efficiency, explaining that KARTS would benefit from managing the funds directly. He added that their current software is outdated, and the new system they're acquiring will enhance reporting capabilities, allowing for more efficient management of trips and funds.

Commissioner Williford inquired about the funding for buses, noting a delay in receiving the funds. Cantor explained that the funding breakdown is 80% federal, 10% state, and 10% from their own match. He mentioned that they currently have a \$1.2 million order waiting for the vehicles to arrive.

Commissioner Hinman raised concerns about transportation issues with KARTS, noting that some individuals, particularly young people, had difficulty accessing transportation for jobs, medical appointments, and other needs when their cars broke down. She asked how much notice KARTS requires, to which Cantor responded that 24-hour notice is ideal. Commissioner Hinman, as chair of the DSS board, also mentioned that the state has received complaints from clients about not being picked up on time by KARTS and advised against using their services. Cantor expressed surprise, stating he had not received any complaints and asked for specific details to investigate. He provided his contact information, committing to personally follow up on any issues. Commissioner Hinman emphasized the importance of resolving this, given her role with DSS, and Cantor agreed on its significance.

County Manager Cummings expressed appreciation for Cantor's efforts in restoring financial stability to KARTS, which was in dire straits when Cummings first joined the County. He noted that KARTS had previously required significant additional funding from counties to balance the books but has since made great progress. Cummings also commended Cantor for being responsive and

transparent, especially when addressing questions and working to improve service understanding.

Cantor acknowledged the challenges faced but praised Tanya Moore for her role in the financial recovery.

Commissioner Jay added that both Cantor and Moore were instrumental in "patching the bucket" and pulling KARTS out of a difficult situation, ensuring the service's smooth operation. He encouraged anyone with concerns about pickups to communicate directly with Cantor.

SHERIFF MATTERS

Board Approved Retirement and Transfer of Two K9 Assets

Sheriff Fountain proposed retiring two K-9s, Remi and Coal, as they had reached the age of eight, which is typically when their effectiveness begins to decline. He requested the Board's approval to transfer ownership of these K-9s to their current handlers, Lieutenant Greg Williamson and Deputy David Watson. The transfer would involve a nominal fee of \$1 per dog, and the records for the K-9s would be updated to reflect the new owners. Sheriff Fountain indicated that there were no immediate plans to replace these K-9s.

Vice-Chair Gooch then read the Sheriff's recommendation to approve the transfer of K-9 Remi and K-9 Coal from the Granville County Sheriff's Office to their respective handlers for a purchase price of \$1 each.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board approved the transfer of ownership of retired K9s, Remi and Coal, from the Granville County Sheriff's Office to their respective Deputy Handlers for a sale price of \$1.00 per animal.

Sheriff's Announcement

Sheriff Fountain continued by addressing the Board about an additional matter related to the retirement of K-9 Coal. He announced that Deputy David Watson, one of the K-9 handlers, would be sworn in as a U.S. Marshal, marking the first time Granville County would have a U.S. Marshal. This development was expected to enhance the presence and impact of the Granville County Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Fountain explained that due to this new role, Sergeant Watson would be transitioning to the U.S. Marshal Service, which contributed to the decision to retire K-9 Coal. He assured the Board that further details about the swearing-in ceremony would be

provided in the coming weeks, and he extended an invitation to the Board members to attend the event.

Board Approved Consulting Contract with Bailess Group, LLC – Robert Bailess

Sheriff Fountain presented a contract proposal for Robert Bailess of Bailess Group, LLC. He explained that the contract, which would extend until March of the following year, encompassed Bailess's responsibilities, insurance, and licensing through the Private Protective Services Board. The scope of responsibilities had been slightly expanded but otherwise remained consistent. Sheriff Fountain requested the Board's approval to extend the contract for six months, after which it would be reviewed for potential adjustments.

Vice-Chair Gooch read from the agenda item which stated that the contract was in compliance with the relevant policies and that funding was available within the Sheriff's Office budget. He restated the recommendation to approve the contract and allow the Sheriff to proceed with the expenditure from the Sheriff's Office budget.

Commissioner Williford inquired if the County Attorney had reviewed the contract and confirmed that everything was in order. County Attorney Wrenn confirmed that the contract had been reviewed and some adjustments were made to the scope, which was agreed upon by all parties.

Commissioner Hinman recalled that Bailess was initially brought on to address certain issues and assist in training the new Sheriff. She asked how long the support was expected to continue, considering Sheriff Fountain had been in office for 19 months. Sheriff Fountain clarified that Bailess's role was not about training him but ensuring compliance with established laws and protocols, especially related to funding, grant proposals, and asset forfeiture. He explained that Bailess acted as an independent auditor to ensure transparency and proper practices and would continue working closely with the Sheriff's Office staff to maintain compliance.

Commissioner Hinman asked if the contract would be funded from the Sheriff's allocated budget and would not require additional County funds. Sheriff Fountain affirmed and added that no additional funds beyond the allocated budget would be needed.

Commissioner May followed up on Commissioner Hinman's questions, inquiring if the asset forfeiture funding issues had been resolved under the oversight of Robert Bailess, and whether the broader scope of Bailess's work was necessary. He asked when the Sheriff's Office might be self-sufficient in managing these responsibilities without Bailess's oversight. Sheriff Fountain explained that the six-month contract extension would allow for periodic reevaluation. He indicated that while significant progress had been made in addressing past issues, the extended oversight was essential for ensuring continued compliance and transparency. They would review the contract and progress in March to assess future needs. Commissioner May acknowledged

Bailess's contributions and expressed hope that the Sheriff's Office would eventually be able to handle the responsibilities internally. He thanked Bailess for his work and reiterated the goal of efficiently utilizing County funds.

Bailess highlighted that his work extended beyond compliance to include significant law enforcement liaison activities with federal entities and daily consultations with the Sheriff's Office staff. He emphasized his commitment to the success of the Sheriff's Office and the benefit to the County and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to extend the contract.

Commissioner May noted that while Bailess's expertise was valuable, he hoped that the skills and knowledge would be transferred to the Sheriff's Office staff so that they could manage these responsibilities in the future.

Motioned by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board approved the transfer of ownership of retired K9s, Remi and Coal, from the Granville County Sheriff's Office to their respective Deputy Handlers for a sale price of \$1.00 per animal.

Sheriff's Announcement

Sheriff Fountain invited everyone to the swearing-in of Sergeant David Watson as a US marshal, which will mark Granville County's first US marshal, a transition expected within the next three weeks. Further details regarding the swearing-in ceremony were to be provided soon.

APPOINTMENTS

Board Approved Reappointments to the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB)

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board reappointed Charles Noblin, Jr, to the Economic Development Advisory Board District 2 seat.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Russ May, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board reappointed Charles Noblin, Jr, to the Economic Development Advisory Board District 7 seat.

Board Approved Reappointment to the Granville-Vance District Board of Health

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board reappointed, Dr. Bridget Waters to the Granville-Vance District Board of Health Veterinarian seat.

Board held vacant At-Large seat.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

Board Approved Economic Development Position Reclassification

County Manager Cummings discussed a proposed reclassification of a position within the Economic Development Department. Director Joe Stallings has recommended updating job descriptions for two positions to better meet departmental requirements. This agenda item focuses on upgrading one position from Administrative Assistant (Grade 65) to Economic Development Coordinator (Grade 72). The combined reclassifications are budget-neutral, with the second reclassification planned for future consideration.

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Sue Hinman, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board approved Economic Development position reclassification from Administrative Assistant (Grade 65) to Economic Development Coordinator (Grade 72).

Board Approved Granville County Participation in Stop-Gap Solutions (Broadband) Program

County Manager Cummings introduced Deputy County Manager Korena Weichel to provide details on a new funding opportunity for broadband expansion. The North Carolina Department of Information Technology is offering funding through the Stopgap Solutions Program. This program provides counties with a baseline of \$500,000 to use as a matching contribution for new broadband projects, though it does not apply to previously awarded projects. Granville County qualifies for this funding based on its participation in the CAB program and its matching funds for the GREAT grant program. The Board's action is required to authorize the County Manager to submit the County participation form by September 9th. The selection and RFP process will be managed by NCDIT.

Commissioner May inquired about the specific areas targeted by the funding, to which Weichel responded that the funding would make Granville County eligible, but the RFP process would determine project specifics.

Commissioner Williford commended Weichel for her effective work in addressing internet access issues in his district, and Weichel noted that the Department of Information Technology (DIT) keeps track of areas in need, which could influence future funding opportunities.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board approved participation in the Stop-Gap Solutions Program administered by the NC Department of Information Technology (NC DIT) and authorized the County Manager to execute and submit the Stop-Gap Solutions County Participation Form to NC DIT before the submission deadline.

Board Approved Carolina Recording Systems Service and Maintenance Plan Agreement

County Manager Cummings introduced a walk-in item regarding the renewal of the Carolina Recording Systems service and maintenance plan agreement for the 911 Emergency Communications Center.

Emergency Communications Director Stacy Hicks explained that this renewal is crucial for maintaining the system's operational reliability, ensuring continuous support, and covering software updates and necessary repairs. The service plan includes 24/7 telephone support, on-site response, free loan equipment, and periodic system inspections. The renewal agreement costs \$23,879.98 and is funded through the Emergency Telephone System Fund for fiscal year 2025.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, 6-0, Board approved the renewal of the Carolina Recording Systems (CRS) service and maintenance plan agreement in the amount of \$23,879.98 from the fiscal year 2025 budget and authorized the County Manager to execute the contract once finalized by the County Attorney.

Commissioner Williford inquired about the staffing status at the 911 Emergency Communications Center. Hicks responded that while staffing has improved with recent promotions and the filling of some positions, the center is not yet fully staffed. There are currently two open positions, which are newer roles added for a 12-hour shift coverage. The department is progressing toward full staffing but is not there yet.

County Manager's Report

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

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

County Attorney's Report

County Attorney Wrenn reported that he had one matter for closed session for Economic Development.

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioner May reported on ongoing efforts to secure increased funding for the School Safety Act in collaboration with the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Representative Sossamon, and local school officials. The goal is to ensure every school has a School Resource

Officer (SRO) as soon as possible. He encouraged the Board to support these efforts and be prepared to act as needed.

Vice-Chair Gooch briefly reflected on his experience filling in for Chair Karan and expressed hope that he had managed the meeting effectively.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were no other matters for open session.

CLOSED SESSION

Motioned by Commissioner Sue Hinman, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, 6-0, the Board went into closed session as allowed by North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4) for economic development matters and North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6) personnel matters at 8:32 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, 6-0, the Board returned to open session at 11:23 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, 6-0, the Board adjourned at 11:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board