

GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
January 6, 2025
GRANVILLE EXPO AND CONVENTION CENTER
4185 US Highway 15 South, Oxford, North Carolina

PRESENT:

Chair Jimmy Gooch
Vice-Chair Zelodis Jay
Commissioner Robert Williford
Commissioner Mark Griffin
Commissioner Tony W. Cozart
Commissioner Russ May
Commissioner Timothy Karan

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

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:00 p.m. Chair Jimmy Gooch called the meeting to order. Commissioner Mark Griffin had the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Gooch said that item five, recognizing the Campbell Family, winners of ABC’s Great American Light Fight, was pulled from the agenda and will be rescheduled for a later date.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

A. Approved budget amendment #9 for fiscal year 2024-2025.

BUDGET AMENDMENT No 9
January 6, 2025
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			\$75,625
Sheriff’s Office	\$ 55,000	\$ -	
Emergency Management	\$ 20,625	\$ -	
Human Services			\$1,125
Granville-Vance District Health Dept	\$ 1,125	\$ -	
	Total Expenditures		\$76,750
Revenues			
Interest & Operating Transfers In	\$ -	\$ -	
Restricted and Intergovernmental	\$76,750	\$ -	
Appropriated Fund Balance	\$0	\$ -	
	Total Revenues		\$76,750

B. Approved American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project Ordinance Amendment #8 for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

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

- Refunds November 21, 2024 – December 29, 2024: \$4,764.75
- Releases November 21, 2024 – December 29, 2024: \$4,103.10
- Write-offs (\$2 and less) November 21, 2024 – December 29, 2024: \$ 13.10

D. Approved appointments of Board of Commissioners members to advisory boards, committees, commission, and liaison assignments as follows:



**2025 Granville County
Board of Commissioners
Boards/Committees/Liaison
Assignments**

DISTRICT 1 – COMMISSIONER ZELODIS JAY

- Board of Equalization and Review
- Crimestoppers
- Digital Infrastructure Planning Committee
- District Health Board
- Emergency Services Committee
- Environmental Affairs Advisory Committee Liaison
- Franklin-Vance-Warren Opportunity Inc.
- Granville Health System Board of Trustees
- Granville Health System Quality Council
- Human Relations Commission
- K.A.R.T.S.
- Kerr-Tar Regional COG Board
- Orange Street Community Center
- Planning Board Liaison
- Solid Waste Liaison
- Water/Sewer Matters Liaison

DISTRICT 2 – COMMISSIONER ROB WILLIFORD

- ABC Board
- Audit Review Committee
- Board of Equalization and Review
- Emergency Services Committee
- Finance Liaison
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
- Opioid Advisory Committee
- Oxford Downtown EDC Board
- Kerr-Tar Workforce Development Board/Private Industry Council
- Solid Waste Liaison

DISTRICT 3 – COMMISSIONER MARK GRIFFIN

- Animal Control Advisory Committee Liaison
- Board of Equalization and Review
- DOT Issues
- Extension Leadership Advisory Council
- Library Board Liaison
- Parks, Greenways and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Staff Appreciation
- Vaya Region 4 Board of Directors
- Soil & Water Board Liaison

DISTRICT 4 – COMMISSIONER TONY COZART

- Board of Equalization and Review
- Franklin-Vance-Warren Opportunity Inc.
- Granville Health System Board of Trustees
- Granville Health System Finance Committee
- Human Relations Commission
- Public Safety Liaison
- School Administration Liaison
- Social Services Board
- Staff Appreciation

DISTRICT 5 – COMMISSIONER RUSS MAY

- Board of Equalization and Review
- CAMPO- Executive Board
- Granville Fire Commission
- Planning Board Liaison
- Public Safety Liaison
- Kerr Tar RPO- TAC (Rural Planning Organization-Transportation Advisory Committee)
- School Administration Liaison
- Upper Neuse River Basin Committee
- Veteran Affairs Committee Liaison
- Economic Development Advisory Board
- Vance Granville Community College Board of Trustees

DISTRICT 6 – COMMISSIONER TIM KARAN

- Board of Equalization and Review
- Digital Infrastructure Planning Committee
- Emergency Services Committee
- Granville Health System Board of Trustees
- Greenways Advisory Council
- Parks, Greenways, And Recreation Advisory Committee
- Opioid Advisory Committee
- SGWASA
- Triangle North Board

DISTRICT 7 – COMMISSIONER JIMMY GOOCH

- Audit Review Committee
- Board of Equalization and Review
- CAMPO Executive Board, Alternate
- Granville Health System Board of Trustees, Ex-Officio
- Opioid Advisory Committee
- Senior Center Advisory Committee Liaison
- SGWASA
- Transportation Plan Work Group
- Water/Sewer Matters Liaison

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Brittany White, 204 King Street, Oxford, NC, introduced herself as representing the Parental Guardian Foundation, a local nonprofit focused on supporting families and individuals through advocacy and resources. She proposed hosting a Granville County resource fair aimed at connecting residents with essential services, including clothing drives, hot meals, hygiene products, and partnerships with social services, nonprofits, and local churches. White emphasized the initiative's goal of fostering community ties and long-term stability. She sought support from the Board for planning, funding, and promotional efforts to ensure the event's success and sustainability.

SHERIFF MATTERS

Board Approved Request to Surplus Fifty-three (53) Firearms and Exchange for Fair Market Consideration

Sheriff Fountain requested approval to surplus 53 outdated weapons assigned to the Sheriff's Office, following the required legal procedures, including a 10-day public advertisement. He stated that the weapons would be sold at fair market value, generating a store credit of \$11,733.93 with a state-licensed vendor. This credit would be used to purchase new firearms for the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Williford asked if the surplus would be converted into a credit for repurchasing firearms and whether the credit would remain available until fully used. Sheriff Fountain confirmed both points and added that the vendor allowed former users of the weapons to repurchase them.

Motioned by Commissioner Robert Williford, seconded by Commissioner Mark Griffin, and unanimously carried, Board approved the surplus of fifty-three (53) firearms that have exceeded their service life and the exchange of these firearms for fair market consideration (store credit) in the amount of \$11,733.93 with Lawmen's Police Supply, as recommended by Sheriff Robert Fountain, in compliance with the Granville County Purchasing Policy.

PLANNING MATTERS

Board Approved CAMPO/Granville Agreement – Northwest Area Study

Planning Director Barry Baker presented a proposal from the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) for an agreement with Granville County to facilitate the land use component of the Northwest Area Transportation Study. He explained that Granville County had requested the study to establish a long-term vision for development, integrating water resources, land management, and multimodal transportation planning. The study would include parts of Wake and Franklin counties and extend to Oxford and surrounding areas. Granville County allocated \$40,000 for its portion of the study, while CAMPO budgeted up to \$250,000. A consultant had already been selected through a unanimous scoring process, and Baker sought the Board's approval for the agreement.

Commissioner May emphasized that the study would assess water supply, watershed capacity, and other environmental regulations impacting residential development. He noted that it would also address safety, mobility, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure while providing a roadmap for future economic development. As a member of the CAMPO Executive Board, he expressed strong support for the study and commended Baker and his team for their ongoing work.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, and unanimously carried, Board approved the agreement with the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) for the Northwest Area Transportation/Land Use Study and

authorized the County's contribution of \$40,000 for the land use component, as budgeted, to support the study's long-term vision for development, water resource management, and multi-modal transportation planning in Granville County.

PURCHASING

Board Approved Purchase of Additional Portable Radios for Granville County Sheriff's Office

Emergency Communications Director Jason Reavis reported that following the November 18, 2024 regular meeting where approval was granted for the purchase of 30 new radios and (Time Division Multiple Access) TDMA upgrades at a cost not to exceed \$230,000, Motorola informed him that 58 of the radios quoted were no longer capable of being upgraded due to end-of-life status. Therefore, he requested approval for the replacement of these 58 radios. The replacement cost for the 58 radios totals \$325,944.2 for the 58 Motorola APX 6000 portable radios with all needed accessories.

Finance Director Jennifer Baird and Deputy County Manager Korena Weichel provided details on funding sources later in the meeting.

Commissioner May inquired about the shelf life of the Motorola radios, which Reavis estimated to be 10 years. Commissioner May recalled a previous large radio purchase for emergency services and volunteers, which Reavis confirmed included radios for Emergency Management, Fire Departments, Granville Search and Recovery, and Animal Control. Commissioner May then asked if this purchase would bring the Sheriff's Office up to necessary standards, to which Reavis confirmed that it would meet the Sheriff's Office needs and meet the July 1, 2025, TDMA upgrade deadline as effective July 1, 2025, all radios currently active on the Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency Responders (VIPER) system, along with all future additions, must be capable of receiving TDMA programming.

Commissioner May questioned what would be needed after that deadline. Reavis explained that he, the County Manager, and Management Analyst David Schexnayder were working on a comprehensive plan to spread future radio purchases over 10 years, avoiding large one-time purchases. Commissioner May sought clarification on whether this approach would apply to all emergency services, including the Sheriff's Office, Emergency Management, and Animal Control, which Reavis confirmed. When asked concerning the County implementing a rotational purchasing plan to avoid large bulk purchases in the future, Reavis assured that the number of radios purchased each year should not be as high as the current request.

Commissioner Williford asked whether the 10-year shelf life applied to the batteries as well. Reavis clarified that it only applied to the radios, while battery lifespan depended on usage, typically lasting three to six years. When asked if the County kept backup batteries in case of early failures, Reavis stated that they planned to keep spare batteries and other common replacement parts, such as antennas, on hand. He noted that he was scheduled to meet with the Sheriff's Office to discuss budgeting for these replacement items.

Commissioner May inquired about tracking radios on a yearly basis to prevent missing equipment when employees leave service. Reavis confirmed that while the Sheriff's Office would track its radios, similar to how other departments track theirs, overall accountability would still be maintained.

Commissioner May asked County Manager Cummings about measures to ensure proper oversight, noting the significant financial investment in radios. Cummings acknowledged the concern and explained that recent radio purchases had been delayed to allow time for a comprehensive inventory. He stated that the County had now compiled a detailed inventory with serial numbers, which would facilitate annual tracking, though the precise process was still being finalized.

Commissioner May requested that the County Manager develop a structured annual review process to ensure accountability and prevent radios from going missing. Finance Director Baird ,

added that the County had just begun reviewing and updating the Capital Asset and Fixed Asset Policy, which would include tracking all assets valued at \$5,000 and above, as well as other items such as firearms, if deemed necessary by the Board.

Sheriff Fountain explained that his Office had implemented a weekly accountability check. Every Friday, supervisors review deputies' equipment, including radios, as part of a broader inventory process covering all assets in their vehicles. He offered to provide the Board with monthly reports summarizing the results of these checks.

Commissioner Williford asked for clarification on the longevity of the radios and their connectivity across North Carolina. Reavis explained that the radios connect only to other counties using the VIPER network.

Commissioner Williford inquired whether VIPER could mandate future upgrades, similar to how cell phones become obsolete. Reavis confirmed that the current upgrade process was announced in mid-2019, meaning agencies had several years to prepare. While it is uncertain when the next upgrade may occur, Motorola only guarantees support for five years before potentially marking a model as "end-of-life." To mitigate this risk, Reavis explained that the County opted against purchasing the APX 4000 model, which is less expensive but already scheduled for end-of-life within the next five years. This decision ensures longer usability and investment protection for the radios.

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, Board approved the purchase of 58 APX 6000 portable radios for the Granville County Sheriff's Office due to the inability to upgrade existing units, at a total cost of \$325,944.22 (funding referenced in Project Ordinance #8 for fiscal year 2024-2025 and Budget Amendment #10 for fiscal year 2024-2025).

Board Approved American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project Ordinance Amendment #8 for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Finance Director Jennifer Baird explained the funding process for the recently approved radio purchases. Granville County received over \$11 million in ARPA funds over the past couple of years, which have generated interest. This interest is not restricted by the same guidelines as the original ARPA funds and can be used for various purposes, including placing it into the general fund for radios.

In November, the Board approved using \$229,981 of the earned interest for the purchase of radios. However, due to updated pricing, an additional \$286,011 is required. Of this, \$222,360 will come from the earned interest. The total interest earned to date is \$452,341, and all of it is being allocated to the Sheriff's Office for the radio purchase.

After this allocation, approximately \$1.3 million will remain in the ARPA fund, specifically reserved for the broadband project, and will continue to generate interest each month.

Motioned by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Mark Griffin, and unanimously carried, Board approved American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project Ordinance Amendment #8 for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Board Approved Budget Amendment #10 for fiscal year 2024-2025

Finance Director Jennifer Baird presented Budget Amendment #10, which accounts for the \$222,360 transfer from ARPA interest earnings to the General Fund. This amendment increases the overall General Fund budget by \$286,011, with the remaining \$63,651 covered by a General Fund balance appropriation to fully fund the additional \$280,000 needed for radio purchases.

Commissioner May inquired about the remaining \$1.3 million in ARPA funds, asking why additional funds were not taken from ARPA rather than the General Fund. Baird clarified that the \$1.3 million is committed to the broadband project and cannot be reallocated. Deputy County Manager Korena Weichel confirmed that these funds were allocated to Brightspeed for

broadband expansion and will begin to be spent down soon. County Attorney Wrenn emphasized that only the interest earnings from ARPA funds are unrestricted, meaning the principal ARPA funds could not have been used for radio purchases.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, and unanimously carried, Board approved Budget Amendment #10 for fiscal year 2024-2025.

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COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager Commented on the Sheriff's Budget Allocation for Equipment Purchases

County Manager Cummings noted that approximately \$520,000 had been added to the Sheriff's budget this year through appropriations in mid-November. He emphasized the importance of ensuring first responders have functional radios while acknowledging the significant financial commitment required for necessary equipment purchases.

Board Held Southern Health Partners Contract Agreement Amendment

County Manager Cummings walked-in a Sheriff's Office agenda item, amendment number two to the contract with Southern Health Partners, which provides healthcare inside the County's detention facility. The County had been under contract with them since 2020, and following the County Attorney's suggestion, Cummings agreed that the amendment should be presented to the Board for approval.

Sheriff Fountain highlighted sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the Southern Health Partners amendment, emphasizing the impact of HB10, which requires collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the detention of more inmates under immigration holds. Sheriff Fountain noted that the County's inmate population was gradually increasing and explained that adjusting the contract would help avoid higher overage fees for housing additional inmates. The amendment proposed raising the average daily inmate population limit from 120 to 150 to account for this growth. Although the County jail typically houses between 105 and 112 inmates, additional detainees, including juveniles housed outside the County, contributed to the official daily population count. Since juveniles could not be housed in the County facility, their placement elsewhere still factored into the overall inmate population. Sheriff Fountain explained that increasing the daily population limit to 150 was a proactive measure to prevent future overage charges, which could accumulate at a rate of \$1.37 per inmate per day. Sheriff Fountain stated that the projection was based on the expected rise in detainees held due to immigration enforcement.

Discussion ensued on the following topics:

- The current number of immigration holds was reported, with an expectation that enforcement efforts could increase these numbers.
- The potential financial impact of rising inmate populations was discussed, with concerns about budget strain if numbers increase significantly.
- The cost of housing juveniles outside the county and its budget implications were reviewed.
- Clarification was provided on the financial structure of the contract amendment, including an increase in base compensation and per-inmate costs.
- Questions were raised about the projected inmate population and whether estimates justified the contract changes.
- The possibility of offsetting costs by housing federal inmates was explored.
- The jail's total capacity and its ability to manage rising inmate numbers were considered.

- The impact of recent legislative changes on inmate numbers was noted.
- Concerns were expressed about the financial burden of contract amendments and whether unused funds would revert to the general fund.
- The duration of the contract and options for future adjustments were discussed.
- A proposal to delay a decision for further evaluation was suggested, with plans to revisit the matter in an upcoming meeting.
- The urgency of finalizing the contract was weighed against the need for additional financial clarity.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, the Board held the item for a future meeting and approved collaboration between the Sheriff, County Manager, and County Attorney to present a recommendation for approval.

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 did not have any items to report.

PRESENTATIONS BY COUNTY BOARD MEMBERS

Commissioner Williford expressed his gratitude to the first responders from Antioch Fire Department and Granville Rural Fire Department as well as Watkins Fire in Vance County for their swift response to a fire in his neighborhood during the holiday season. While part of the house was lost, their efforts saved the majority of the structure, and he commended them for their dedication and hard work.

Commissioner Griffin reflected on his time since being elected, expressing appreciation for the warm welcome he has received from fellow board members and county staff. He specifically thanked County Manager Cummings for organizing an orientation program that allowed him to meet department heads, understand their budgets, and learn about their responsibilities. He also acknowledged Chair Gooch for serving as a mentor and offering guidance throughout his transition into the role.

Commissioner Cozart the community member Brittany White who speak during Public Comments seeking assistance in organizing events. He highlighted upcoming Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations on January 20th, including one at Oxford Baptist Church hosted by the Human Relations Commission and another at First Baptist Church, where he would be delivering a message. He also noted a separate community breakfast event in Creedmoor and encouraged participation in these commemorations.

Commissioner May acknowledged the recent loss of a Greensboro police officer and expressed his condolences, emphasizing the challenges faced by law enforcement in an increasingly violent world. He reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring the Sheriff's Office receives the necessary resources to perform its duties efficiently. He also reflected on recent tragic events in New Orleans and Las Vegas, stressing the importance of vigilance in protecting the nation. Lastly, he mentioned two items he planned to bring before the Board for discussion.

Board Approved \$1000 Allocation to Veterans Affairs Committee for Annual Veterans Appreciation Event

Commissioner May proposed allocating \$1,000 to the Veterans Affairs Committee to support their annual countywide veterans' dinner, which serves hundreds of attendees. He highlighted

that this committee is unique in actively fundraising. While requesting the immediate allocation for this year, he also suggested that the Board consider making it a recurring budget item in future discussions.

When asked whether pre-clearance from Finance was needed for the funding, County Manager Cummings responded that if the Board was in favor, the county could allocate the \$1,000 without requiring a budget amendment.

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Mark Griffin, and unanimously carried, Board allocated \$1000 for the 2025 Granville County Veterans Affair Committee veterans appreciation event.

Board Presentations Continued

Commissioner May discussed the need for a School Resource Officer (SRO) at a Credle Elementary School in Oxford, referencing a citizen's concern raised at the last Board meeting. He stated that deputies are sometimes reassigned to direct traffic at Cradle Elementary and urged Oxford officials to consider funding an additional SRO, following the example of Creedmoor and Butner. May emphasized the difficulty of hiring and retaining officers and called for collaboration between the Board and the Oxford City Council to ensure every school has an assigned SRO, with further discussions expected during the budget season.

Commissioner Karan raised concerns about (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) PFAS contamination, emphasizing its growing impact on daily life. He noted that the (Environmental Protection Agency) EPA has set new standards for acceptable PFAS levels and highlighted its widespread presence in clothing, furniture, food, and drinking water, including bottled water. Commissioner Karan mentioned that the state is considering legislation requiring health departments to test for PFAS, underscoring the importance of staying informed about emerging environmental health risks.

Commissioner Jay raised a concern about scheduling conflicts between events in the northern and southern parts of the County for Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations, making it difficult for people to attend both. He requested that future events be scheduled in a way that allows people to participate in all of them without missing parts of any.

Chair Gooch acknowledged the challenge of overlapping events for people and agreed with Commissioner Jay's request for better coordination in scheduling.

ANY OTHER MATTERS

There were no additional matters.

CLOSED SESSION

Motioned by Commissioner Russ May, seconded by Commissioner Robert Williford, and unanimously carried, Board went into closed session as allowed by North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4) for economic development matters at 8:21 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Motioned by Commissioner Tony W. Cozart, seconded by Commissioner Mark Griffin, and unanimously carried, the Board returned to open session at 9:57 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Commissioner Zelodis Jay, seconded by Commissioner Mark Griffin and unanimously carried, the Board adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Evans
Clerk to the Board