

**GRANVILLE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**October 14, 2025**  
**GRANVILLE EXPO AND CONVENTION CENTER**  
**4185 US Highway 15 South, Oxford, North Carolina**  
**Regular Work Session**

**PRESENT:**

Chair Jimmy Gooch  
Vice-Chair Zelodis Jay  
Commissioner Robert Williford  
Commissioner Tony W. Cozart *arrived at 10:59 a.m.*  
Commissioner Russ May  
Commissioner Timothy Karan

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

*Commissioner Mark Griffin was absent.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

At 9:03 a.m. Chair Jimmy Gooch called the work session to order. Commissioner Timothy Karan delivered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Granville County Public Schools Loan Advance for Engineering Services**

Finance Director Jennifer Baird presented a resolution to provide a loan advance to Granville County Public Schools (GCPS) for pre-construction and engineering services related to the school system's critical capital needs. The schools identified approximately \$16 million in projects, including track replacements and roofing at both high schools, but lacked immediate funding for preliminary work. The recommendation was for the County to advance up to \$1 million from the unassigned Capital Reserve Fund. This advance would be fully reimbursed to the County once a larger \$16 million loan, which the County would pursue on behalf of the schools, is secured around March 2026. Finance Director Baird noted that debt service on the new \$16 million loan would be paid from the County's existing \$3.25 million annual capital outlay commitment to the schools, resulting in no additional cost to the County. She also confirmed that the County has ample debt capacity to take on this loan without negatively impacting its own future capital projects.

**Board Discussion Highlights:**

- Commissioner Williford expressed concern about the impact of the additional debt on the County's own Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Finance Director Baird reassured him that the County's debt ratios were well below state-recommended thresholds and that other debt would be dropping off in the coming years. She agreed to provide the Board with a schedule of retiring debt.
- Commissioner May asked for clarification on the reimbursement timeline and sought assurance that the school system would adhere to its project schedule, referencing past delays with other loaned funds.
- County Manager Drew Cummings noted that staff have a mapped-out timeline from the schools. He suggested that the upcoming liaison meeting with the Board of Education would be an appropriate venue to receive a firm commitment on the project timeline.

### **Granville County Courthouse Security Upgrades**

IT Director Chris Brame and Development Services Director Scott Phillips presented a recommendation to upgrade the security camera and access control systems at the Granville County Courthouse. The project's objective is to integrate door access and cameras into a single, unified, cloud-based platform that is scalable for future inclusion of other County buildings. Director Phillips reviewed floor plans detailing the replacement of 34 existing cameras and the addition of access control to 14 new interior doors. The current 15-year-old system is obsolete. Following a Request for Proposals (RFP) process that resulted in 11 submissions, staff recommended awarding the contract to Security 101 of Durham for \$145,460. This amount includes a recurring three-year license and maintenance fee of \$20,400.

#### **Board Discussion Highlights:**

- The Board discussed system monitoring. Director Brame confirmed the system would be monitored at the courthouse security desk and could also be monitored remotely by the Sheriff's Office or other authorized personnel.
- In response to a question, Director Phillips stated that cameras are not placed in courtrooms at the judges' request.
- County Manager Cummings noted the new system is modular, and cameras could be added later if desired.
- The Board questioned the \$20,400 recurring fee. Staff clarified it was likely an annual cost, not a total for three years, and would confirm the exact terms before the next meeting.
- Director Brame explained that the new door access system is robust and can use key cards, fobs, or mobile phones via Bluetooth, resolving the current issue of being unable to create new keys for the old system.

### **Discussion of Recent Fire Commission Recommendations**

Emergency Services Director Jason Reavis and Fire Marshall Ken Reeves presented four (4) recommendations from the Fire Commission for the Board's consideration.

#### **(1) Tim Davidson Memorial Training Facility Support**

Director Reavis presented a Fire Commission recommendation to allocate \$10,000 from the Fire Tax Fund balance to the Tim Davidson Memorial Training Facility, located at the Stovall Volunteer Fire Department. These funds would support ongoing maintenance and future upgrades. The facility is the only one in Granville County that provides certified facilities training, which helps improve departmental Insurance Services Office (ISO) ratings and, in turn, can lower insurance costs for citizens. Fire Marshall Reeves noted that nearly all county Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) have used the facility, which offers a safer and more consistent training environment than acquired structures.

#### **Board Discussion Highlights:**

- The Board discussed the nature of the funding. The request was for an initial \$10,000 to be included as an annual budget item thereafter. It was presented as a lump sum, though some commissioners suggested a reimbursement model might be more appropriate.
- Commissioner May questioned how the \$10,000 figure was determined and advocated for a more formal business model. Reeves clarified that recent repairs cost nearly \$8,000 and that future needs, like replacing a burn box, will be expensive.
- The consensus of the Board was that supporting the county-wide training asset was important, as Stovall VFD should not have to shoulder the entire financial burden for a facility that benefits all departments.

#### **(2) Creedmoor Volunteer Fire Department Grant Request**

Director Reavis presented a recommendation to provide the Creedmoor Volunteer Fire Department with \$40,000 from the Fire Tax Fund balance. In the previous fiscal year, Creedmoor VFD applied for but was denied a state matching grant, reportedly because

the state's grant funds were exhausted. The County's fire funding model includes a \$40,000 matching grant for departments that successfully secure a state grant. This request was to provide the County's portion despite the state grant denial.

**Board Discussion Highlights:**

- The primary concern raised by the Board was the precedent this action would set. If approved, other departments denied state grants in the future would likely expect the same treatment.
- County Attorney Jim Wrenn framed the issue as a potential policy change, shifting the program from one that leverages state funds to one that provides a direct \$40,000 allocation to any department that applies for a state grant, regardless of the outcome.
- Commissioner May reasoned that approving the request would undermine the purpose of a matching grant program and create an expectation that would be difficult to manage in future budget years.

**(3) VFD Part-Time Program Data, Response Times, and Request for Policy Modification**

Director Reavis presented data from the previous fiscal year on the County's part-time firefighter program. He provided charts showing the percentage of weekday daytime hours covered and the amount of the \$50,400 annual allocation expended by each volunteer fire department. The data showed a significant improvement in response times (from dispatch to apparatus rolling) since the program's implementation, with an average reduction of 81%. Reavis attributed this success directly to having paid staff in the stations during weekdays.

Reavis also reviewed a Fire Commission recommendation to modify the part-time firefighter reimbursement policy. The proposed change would lift the 50-hour weekly restriction and the limit on the number of firefighters per shift, allowing departments flexibility to manage their \$50,400 allocation as they see fit. Under the proposed policy, departments that exhaust their funds before the end of the fiscal year would be required to maintain their average staffing level using their own base or enhancement funding.

**Board Discussion Highlights:**

- The Board acknowledged the dramatic improvement in response times shown in the data and commended the departments for their performance.
- It was clarified that staff are now tracking uncovered days more precisely for the current fiscal year to provide more granular data in the future.
- Several commissioners, including Commissioners May and Williford, supported the policy change, citing the need to trust fire chiefs to manage their budgets and staffing effectively. They noted that any shortfall would have to be covered by departmental funds, encouraging fiscal responsibility.
- County Attorney Wrenn questioned how the increased flexibility would be measured against the program's original performance goal of ensuring consistent weekday coverage.
- County Manager Cummings suggested a "trust and verify" approach, stating that the County has the performance data to monitor response times and coverage. If the policy change resulted in negative outcomes, the Board could revisit it. Wrenn agreed to work on language, linking the new flexibility to the program's core performance goal of improving response times.

**(4) Medical Director Pay Increase**

Director Reavis presented a request to increase the contractual pay for the County's EMS Medical Director, Dr. Ryan Bayley. The current rate of \$180 per hour was established in 2020 and has not been increased. The proposal is to align Dr. Bayley's pay with the current WakeMed independent contractor rate of \$225 per hour, effective January 1, 2026. The contract renews automatically each year. The additional cost for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2026 was estimated to be \$5,400 from the EMS budget.

**Board Discussion Highlights:**

- The Board had no objections to the proposed increase.
- County Attorney Wrenn stated he had received a draft contract for review and that it could be placed on a future agenda, as it only needed to be approved before January 1.

**BREAK**

The Board took a break at 11:10 a.m.

**Discussion of Draft Resolution Authorizing Opioid Settlement Spending for Naloxone Dispenser**

Cathy Hazlett of Granville Vance Public Health (GVPH) presented a resolution to authorize spending up to \$4,500 in opioid settlement funds for the installation of a Naloxone Dispenser. The temperature-controlled dispenser, valued at nearly \$10,000, would be donated by Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS). The proposed location is outside the Adult Corrections building in Oxford, a site chosen based on overdose data. The settlement funds would cover the cost of electrical installation and a protective canopy. The County would be responsible for the ongoing electricity costs and for keeping the dispenser stocked with naloxone and potentially wound care kits.

**Board Discussion Highlights:**

- Commissioner May expressed concern about ensuring proper coordination between the County of Granville and City of Oxford law enforcement for patrolling the area, given that the dispenser would be on County property within City limits.
- Hazlett stated that an Oxford Police Department (OPD) officer sits on the Opioid Advisory Committee (OAC) and is aware of the plan, but she agreed to speak directly with the Oxford Police Chief to coordinate.

**Vaya Health Updates**

Elliot Clark, representing Vaya Health, provided the Board with an update on Medicaid changes and local mental health initiatives. Clark reviewed Vaya's service structure and presented Granville County-specific data, noting Vaya serves 1,319 residents through its tailored plan. He discussed the potential impacts of the federal Rural Health Transformation Program and recent state-level Medicaid budget cuts. A major update was provided on the new regional Vance Diversion Center, a 16-bed crisis facility being developed in Henderson. This center, expected to open in early 2027, will provide a critical resource for Granville County residents in crisis, diverting them from hospital emergency departments. Clark also highlighted a new mobile opioid treatment unit serving Granville and Franklin counties, a new supported employment team, and the successful launch of a Faith and Mental Health initiative in partnership with Granville Vance Public Health.

**Board Discussion Highlights:**

- Commissioner Cozart commented on the rising number of autism diagnoses observed in the community, which aligned with Vaya's data on increased service demand.
- County Manager Cummings informed the Board that he and Clark are working on a future presentation that will provide a more detailed, county-specific breakdown of Vaya's budget and funding streams.

**Commissioner and Manager Comments**

- Commissioner Karan noted he has been receiving numerous citizen complaints regarding drainage ditches in subdivisions.

- Commissioner May requested a review of the County’s policy on public use of facilities like the new Stovall Senior Center. He also proposed the formation of a subcommittee, including commissioners and members of the Fire and EMS Commissions, to create a tangible plan for addressing fire service gaps in underserved areas of the county. He also reiterated his opposition to harm reduction messaging that he feels could be misinterpreted, advocating instead for a stronger focus on prevention programs in schools.
- Commissioners Jay and Gooch strongly supported the creation of a subcommittee to address fire service gaps, emphasizing that residents in those areas pay the fire tax and deserve to see a clear plan for improving service.
- Commissioner Cozart asked for an update on the former G.C. Hawley School campus. County Manager Cummings reported that the school system had relocated staff and students due to potential mold issues and was awaiting test results for the gymnasium, which is slated to be used as a voting precinct.
- County Manager Cummings requested and received consensus from the Board to authorize staff to approach adjacent landowners about potentially acquiring property for the future development and expansion of the Hawley site.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motioned by Commissioner Mark Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Rob Williford, and unanimously carried, Board adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Evans  
Clerk to the Board