

City of Graham

City Council Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2024



The City Council of the City of Graham held a regularly scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m. on June 11, 2024, in the Council Chamber, City Hall Municipal Building at 201 South Main Street, Graham, NC.

Council Members Present:

Mayor Jennifer Talley
Mayor Pro Tem Ricky Hall
Council Member Bobby Chin
Council Member Joey Parsons
Council Member Bonnie Whitaker

Staff Present:

Megan Garner, City Manager
Aaron Holland, Assistant City Manager
Bryan Coleman, City Attorney
Bob Ward, City Attorney
Renee Ward, City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Jennifer Talley

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Parsons gave the invocation and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. To approve the May 14, 2024, Council Meeting and sealed Closed Session minutes and the May 21, 2024, Special Meeting Budget Workshop minutes.
- b. To approve a Budget Project Ordinance in the amount of \$897,066.75 for the Banks and McBride Water and Sewer improvements.

CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE BANKS & MCBRIDE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM, NORTH CAROLINA, that pursuant to Section 13.2, Chapter 159 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, the following Capital Project Ordinance is hereby adopted:

- Section 1. The Project authorized is Banks & McBride Improvements Project.
- Section 2. The officials of the City of Graham are hereby directed to proceed with this project within the terms of the project. Staff is authorized to execute change orders within the budget ordinance.
- Section 3. The following revenues are anticipated to be available to the City to complete the project:
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Proceeds from Retained Earnings – | \$ 897,066.75 |
| Water/Sewer | |

(Expended)	\$ 27,933.25
TOTAL	\$ 925,000

Section 4. The following amounts are appropriated for this project:

Professional Services	\$ 925,000
TOTAL	\$ 925,000

Section 5. The Finance Director shall report on the financial status of this project as directed by the City Council and will inform the Council of any unusual occurrences.

Section 6. Copies of this project ordinance shall be made available to the City Manager and the Finance Director for direction in carrying out this project.

Section 7. This ordinance shall take effect upon passage.

This the 11th day of June 2024.

- c. To approve a Services Agreement between the City of Graham and Ward & Coleman, Attorneys at Law, for legal services effective July 1, 2024.
- d. To approve a budget amendment increasing the Wastewater Capital Outlay by \$55,000 from \$45,000 to \$100,000 for the additional removal of solids from the plant.

CITY OF GRAHAM					
BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE					
2023-2024					
BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT					
THE 2023 - 2024 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:					
Section 1.					
EXPENDITURES					INCREASE
DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	(DECREASE)
Wastewater - Capital Outlay	45,000.00	100,000.00	55,000.00		55,000.00
	45,000.00	100,000.00	55,000.00	-	55,000.00
Section 2.					
REVENUES					INCREASE
	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	(DECREASE)
Fund Balance Appropriation	\$794,625.00	\$849,625.00	55,000.00		55,000.00
	794,625.00	849,625.00	55,000.00	-	55,000.00
Adopted this 11th day of May 2024.					

- e. To approve an interlocal agreement between the City of Graham and Alamance County for occupancy tax collection.

Mr. Tom Boney, Alamance News inquired about Item c stating, at the last meeting, it was decided the attorneys would be municipal employment and asked if there had been a decision against the attorneys being employees.

City Manager Megan Garner stated the agreement changed them from contract legal services to part-time contract employees.

Mayor Talley asked if any notices went out to those affected by occupancy tax.

City Manager Garner stated she was not certain if TDA had sent information out but her office could notify all affected businesses.

Mayor Talley asked for Airbnbs to be included and asked about the collection process.

City Manager Garner stated the interlocal agreement would allow Alamance County to collect Graham's 3% while collecting the County's 3%. She stated the County would collect the funds and disperse to the TDA who would then disperse to the appropriate municipalities.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall motioned to approve the Consent Agenda items, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING:

ITEM 1: ADOPTION - FY2024-2025 BUDGET

A public hearing has been scheduled to consider the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Ordinance, the 2024-2025 Pay Plan, and the 2024-2025 Rates and Fee Schedule.

Council opened the public hearing and the following spoke:

Tom Boney, Alamance News, asked if anything had changed from what the manager presented last month.

City Manager Garner stated since the Budget Work Session held in May, there was only one change, an increase of \$3,000. She stated \$1,500 would go to the Historical Museum Board and \$1,500 to the Historic Resources Commission. She stated before the funds could be dispersed, the boards would have to come before the Council and present its intended use.

Mayor Talley inquired about the inspection fees.

City Manager Garner stated these fees are generated from inspections in the Public Works Department from developers. She stated this fee was not meant to be a money maker for the City of Graham and staff was not trying to sling fees at developers, but were already going significantly in the hole.

Council Member Whitaker stated she had no problem with how the fees were stated in the schedule as presented.

Mayor Talley suggested passing the fee as stated and asked to revisit it in six months to determine if the fees had curbed the expense of staff going out repeatedly to the same site.

Closed the public hearing:

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to close the public hearing, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

The Council thanked City Manager Garner for all the hard work in delivering a great budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall motioned to approve the FY 2024-25 Budget Ordinance, 2024-25 Pay Plan, and the 2024-25 Rates and Fee Schedule, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed unanimously.

**Budget Ordinance
FY 2024-2025**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM, NORTH CAROLINA:

Section 1. The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the General Fund for the operation of City Government; its activities and capital improvements for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, in accordance with the Chart of Accounts heretofore established for the City:

Department	Recommend
Tourism	\$ 79,000
City Council	\$ 56,350
Administration	\$ 798,270
Information Technology	\$ 560,178
Finance	\$ 450,642
Public Buildings	\$ 172,400
Police	\$ 6,596,342
Fire	\$ 2,074,465
Inspections	\$ 875,126
Traffic Engineering	\$ 28,800
Streets & Highways	\$ 1,859,226
Street Lights	\$ 206,000
City Garage	\$ 1,320,506
Sanitation	\$ 1,653,912
Recreation	\$ 1,094,784
Lake	\$ 394,136
Athletic Facilities	\$ 404,271
Property Maintenance	\$ 935,367
Non-Departmental	\$ 1,091,575
	\$ 20,651,350

Section 2. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the General Fund for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.

Ad Valorem Taxes	\$ 7,030,000
Investment Earnings	\$ 215,000
Miscellaneous	\$ 727,900
Other Taxes/License	\$ 500
Occupancy Tax	\$ 79,000
Permits/Fees	\$ 590,000
Restricted Governmental	\$ 1,026,000
Sales/Services	\$ 2,078,668
Unrestricted Governmental	\$ 7,745,000
Fund Balance	\$ 1,159,282
Grand Total	\$ 20,651,350

Section 3. The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Water and Sewer Fund for its operations, activities, and capital improvements for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025, in accordance with the Chart of Accounts heretofore established for the City:

Water and Sewer Billing	\$ 675,700
Water and Sewer Distribution	\$ 2,819,837
Maintenance and Lift Stations	\$ 314,734
Water Treatment Plant	\$ 3,494,354
Wastewater Treatment Plant	\$ 2,265,103
Non-Departmental	\$ 2,680,172
Fund Total	\$12,249,900

Section 4. It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Water and Sewer Fund for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

Services	\$ 10,739,000
Operating	\$ 765,100
Non-Operating	\$ 403,500
Other	\$ 342,300
Fund Total	\$ 12,249,900

Section 5. The following amounts are hereby anticipated and appropriated for the City's Special Funds:

	Revenues	Expenditures
Federal Drug Monies	100	100
State Drug Monies	100	100
ARPA Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (Revenue Replacement)	4,986,340	4,986,340
ARPA Enabled Projects	4,908,621	4,908,621
Truby Drive Repair Project	200,000	200,000
10" Water Main Replacement	17,250,000	17,250,000
Boyd Creek Pump Station	3,962,000	3,962,000
Old Field Outfall	2,955,000	2,955,000
WWTP Upgrade	84,649,290	84,649,290
Water Line Inventory & Assessment	400,000	400,000
Boyd Creek Watershed Point Repair	500,000	500,000
Long and Albright Improvements Project	904,860	904,860
Banks and McBride Improvements	925,000	925,000
TOTALS:	121,641,311	121,641,311

Section 6. There is hereby levied a tax at the rate of \$.2899 per one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of valuation of property as listed for taxes as of January 1, 2024, for the purpose of raising the Revenue listed as “Ad Valorem Taxes” in Section 2. Such rates are based on an estimated total valuation of property for the purposes of taxation of \$2,255,702,271 (100% valuation) with an anticipated collection rate of 95%.

Section 7. The City of Graham Capital Improvement Plan 2025-2034 for Water and Sewer Fund and 2025-2029 for all other funds is hereby approved and amended per the appropriations for improvements contained herein. For the purpose of tracking capital items, there shall be a threshold of \$5,000.

Section 8. Copies of this Ordinance shall be furnished to the City Manager and the Finance Officer to be kept on file by them for their direction in the disbursement of City Funds.

Adopted this 11th day of June 2024.

OLD BUSINESS:

ITEM 2: DOWNTOWN ENHANCEMENT GRANT POTENTIAL PROJECTS

The City of Graham was recently awarded a Directed Grant through the State for \$600,000. The City Council will consider potential projects for the Downtown Enhancement Grant Scope of Work. (Tabled from the May 14, 2024, City Council Meeting)

City Manager Garner stated this item was continued from the May meeting. She stated there were items in the agenda packet that could be considered as options for the directed grant of \$600,000, that must be spent in the downtown area. She stated City Council received notification that Duke Energy had installed an LED bulb and the before and after pictures were sent to the Council. She stated staff had checked with the State and the scope of work for this funding is preferred to be submitted by the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2024.

Mayor Talley asked staff to research through Duke Energy for any available grants when changing to LED lights.

Public Works Director Robertson stated he would contact Duke Energy but was not sure since the City was increasing the wattage.

Mayor Talley asked the Council if they were okay with selecting new lighting as one of the projects. The council stated yes.

Mayor Talley asked if the Council was okay with the hanging basket project.

Council Member Whitaker asked who would maintain the baskets.

City Manager Garner stated there were two quotes from two landscaping companies to maintain baskets on hangers and the City would need to provide them on the light poles. The quoted time frame would be 20 to 30 weeks per year with low-maintenance flowers and the cost would be between \$43,000 and \$50,000 per year for baskets on the metal poles.

Council Member Whitaker stated that was a lot of money.

After further discussions on the maintenance of flower baskets, Mayor Talley asked the Council about funding pedestrian crosswalk improvements since she specifically asked that a portion of the money be used for crosswalks. Council agreed.

Council Member Parsons inquired about money left over to use towards the repair of the Sesquicentennial Park and inquired about painting the light poles downtown.

Mayor Talley stated that was not what the grant money was intended to be used for and that painting the light poles was too expensive. She stated she would speak with Duke Energy and believed they should maintain its products.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall inquired about project number 4, resurfacing Elm Street downtown.

Mayor Talley asked where was this street on the resurfacing schedule.

Public Works Director Robertson stated it was still three or four years before it was scheduled.

Mayor Talley asked if there were flowers that would not need watering every day. She stated the baskets would have a dramatic appearance in the downtown. She stated the most important was pedestrian crosswalks due to safety. She stated she requested this grant to reinstall the crosswalks before the resurfacing and if additional money was left over the flower baskets could be considered. She stated the lighting was brought up by staff and would improve safety at night.

Council Member Whitaker agreed.

Council Member Parsons stated he was okay with the crosswalks, lighting, and hanging baskets if it was cost-effective. He stated until we hear back from Duken Energy we will not know if we could even have baskets.

Council Member Chin stated if we could not do the hanging baskets why not replace trees?

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall for a downtown street light upgrade, pedestrian crosswalk improvements, and possibly tree replacements and hanging baskets pending permission and funding, seconded by Council Member Parsons. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 3: GRAHAM-MEBANE LAKE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

City Council will consider approving the Graham-Mebane Lake Comprehensive Master Plan to allow for various grants including state-funded Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Accessible Parks grants. (Tabled from the May 14, 2024, City Council Meeting)

Brian Faucette, Recreation and Parks Director, stated on page 12 there should be a correction. Section 14-129 should read “Boating” and not fishing.

Council Member Chin stated it was a well-written plan.

Mayor Talley stated the lake could be a revenue center for the City and over the past several years, improvements had been made at the lake such as the building where you check in and check out, bathrooms are now ADA compliant, and a new kayak launch.

Mr. Faucette stated the kayak launch had dramatically increased revenue. He stated the motor boat launching was the second-highest revenue-producing section on the water. He stated the new extended boat launch with additional docks between the ramps should begin construction in late October or November so operations would be least affected.

Mayor Talley stated the plan was very well written and thanked Mr. Faucette for his feedback.

Motion by Council Member Whitaker to approve the Graham-Mebane Lake Comprehensive Plan, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM 4: BOARDS & COMMISSIONS - APPOINTMENTS

City Council will consider appointments to Graham's Boards and Commissions.

Appearance Commission/Tree Board

Bernadette Konzelmann

Requests Reappointment

Zipporah Clark Baldwin

Requests Reappointment

Vacancies – 2

Applicant: Ally Villiard

Graham Historical Museum Board

John Harrington

Requests Reappointment

Vacancies – 1

No Applications

Graham Housing Authority

Robert Sykes

Requests Reappointment

Applicant: Chris Howe

Historic Resources Commission

Karen Chin

Requests Reappointment

Vacancies – 4

Applicants: Ally Villiard

Planning Board/Board of Adjustment

Vacancies - 1

Applicant: Chris Howe

Recreation Commission

Vacancies - 2

Applicant: Ally Villiard

(Laurie Pickard has requested to be reappointed)

Mayor Talley asked to readvertise all boards to solicit additional applicants.

Council Member Parson asked to consider reducing the HRC from a seven-member board to a five-member board and place it on next month's agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked for the Council to consider moving away from appointing the same person to multiple boards.

Council Member Parsons stated he understood, but when you are spread thin it is hard to fill positions.

Motion by Mayor Talley to appoint the following, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

Appearance Commission/Tree Board

Bernadette Konzelmann	Reappointed
Zipporah Clark Baldwin	Reappointed
Ally Villiard	Appointed
Three-year term expiring June 30, 2027	
One vacancy remains.	

Graham Historical Museum Board

John Harrington	Reappointed
Three-year term expiring June 30, 2027	
One vacancy remains.	

Graham Housing Authority

Robert Sykes	Reappointed
Five-year term expiring June 30, 2029	

Historic Resources Commission

Karen Chin	Reappointed
Four-year term expiring June 30, 2028	
Four vacancies remain.	

Recreation Commission

Laurie Pickard	Reappointed
Three-year term expiring June 30, 2027	
One vacancy remains.	

Mayor Talley asked the City Clerk to readvertise all boards with existing vacancies to get additional applicants.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mr. Griffin McClure, 622 Johnson Avenue, spoke about the Sesquicentennial Park and asked that the Council consider keeping the park green and as a public space. He asked the Council to talk to the businesses not represented on the Council to determine what they want.

Mayor Talley stated that repairing the park would be costly and was now a safety issue.

Tom Boney, Alamance News, spoke about Mayor Talley's statement about going to Raleigh herself and getting a grant and on whose direction and guidelines she acted. He talked about having an issue of committing to certain criteria and a particular way the money could be spent.

Mr. David Bradley, 215 College Street, Graham, asked for assistance in clearing his name stating he was falsely accused of taking an item.

Ms. Renee Russell, downtown business owner, talked about her proposal for downtown wayfinding signs. She also asked that the Sesquicentennial Park stay a green space.

Amy Wilkinson, The Main Line, and Cheryl Rich, Sandy & Company, thanked the Council for moving the Slice of Summer event. They shared that their business did great during the event. Ms. Wilkinson asked the Council to keep the Sesquicentennial Park where it was.

CITY STAFF COMMENTS

No comments

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

No comments

CLOSED SESSION:

City Council will consider going into closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) to discuss personnel and pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) to consider the purchase of 1076, 1100, and 1134 Town Branch Road adjacent to Bill Cooke Park parcel numbers 147644, 147738, and 147739 (owned by Susan Teer Lambert & Cathy Teer Evans) for the intended use of park and recreational facilities.

Motion by Council Member Whitaker to go into closed session, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Council Member Whitaker to come out of closed session, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION:

Motion by Council Member Whitaker to come back to open session, seconded by Council Member Parsons. The motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Talley stated the Council discussed a 6.2% salary increase for the City Attorneys in closed session.

Motion by Mayor Talley to approve a 6.2% salary increase, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURN

Motion by Council Member Whitaker, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Renee M. Ward, CMC
City Clerk