City of Graham
City Council Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2026

The City Council of the City of Graham held a regularly scheduled meeting on March 10, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, City Hall Municipal Building, 201 South Main Street, Graham, NC.

Council Members Present:
Mayor Chelsea Dickey
Mayor Pro Tem Ricky Hall
Council Member Bobby Chin
Council Member Bonnie Whitaker
Council Member Jim Young

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

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Chelsea Dickey

INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The invocation was given by Pastor Chris Howe, First Baptist Church, and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADD-ON: Council Member Young asked to add a closed session to the agenda.

Motion by Council Member Young to add a closed session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6) to discuss a personnel issue, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

Motion by Council Member Young to adopt the agenda with the add-on, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

PROCLAMATIONS:

- **Denim Day – Sexual Assault Awareness Month – April 29, 2026**

Mayor Dickey presented a proclamation declaring April 29, 2026, as Denim Day in recognition of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Cross Roads employees and volunteers received the proclamation. Mayor Dickey encouraged all residents, employees, and community members to wear denim, support survivors, and participate in activities that promote awareness, prevention, and respect for all.

- **Litter Sweep – April 15 - 25, 2026**

  Mayor Dickey presented a proclamation declaring April 15 – 25, 2026, as Litter Sweep in the City of Graham and urged all residents to support efforts to protect and enhance the appearance of our City by reducing litter.

- **Arbor Day – April 24, 2026**

Mayor Dickey presented a proclamation declaring April 24, 2026, as Arbor Day in the City of Graham. Zipporah Clark-Baldwin received the proclamation on behalf of the Appearance Commission. Mayor Dickey challenged all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands.

RECOGNITION:

- Jay Cook – 2025 Volunteer of the Year

Mayor Dickey recognized Jay Cook as the 2025 Volunteer of the Year by the Graham Recreation and Parks Department for his outstanding efforts and dedication in making Graham a better place to live and play.

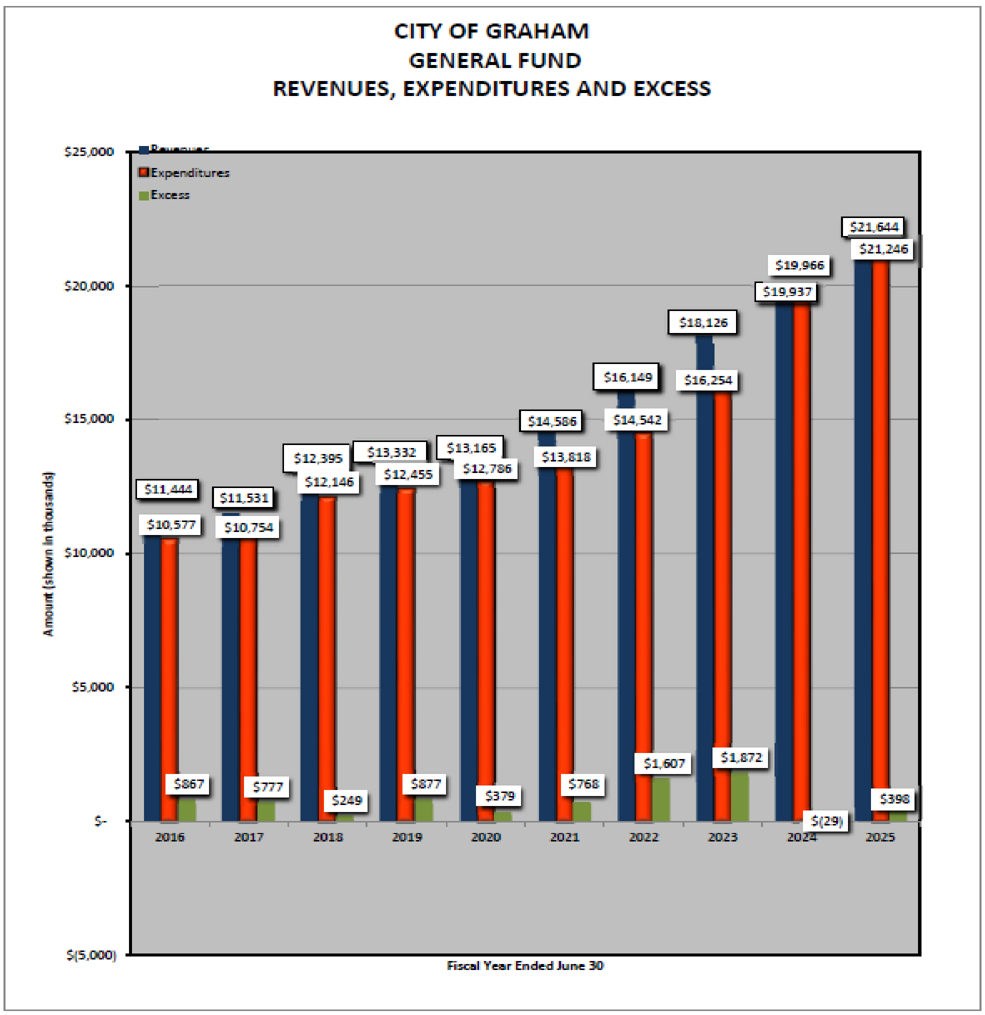
PRESENTATION:

- **2025-2026 Audit - Patricia Rhodes, Stout Stuart McGowen & King**

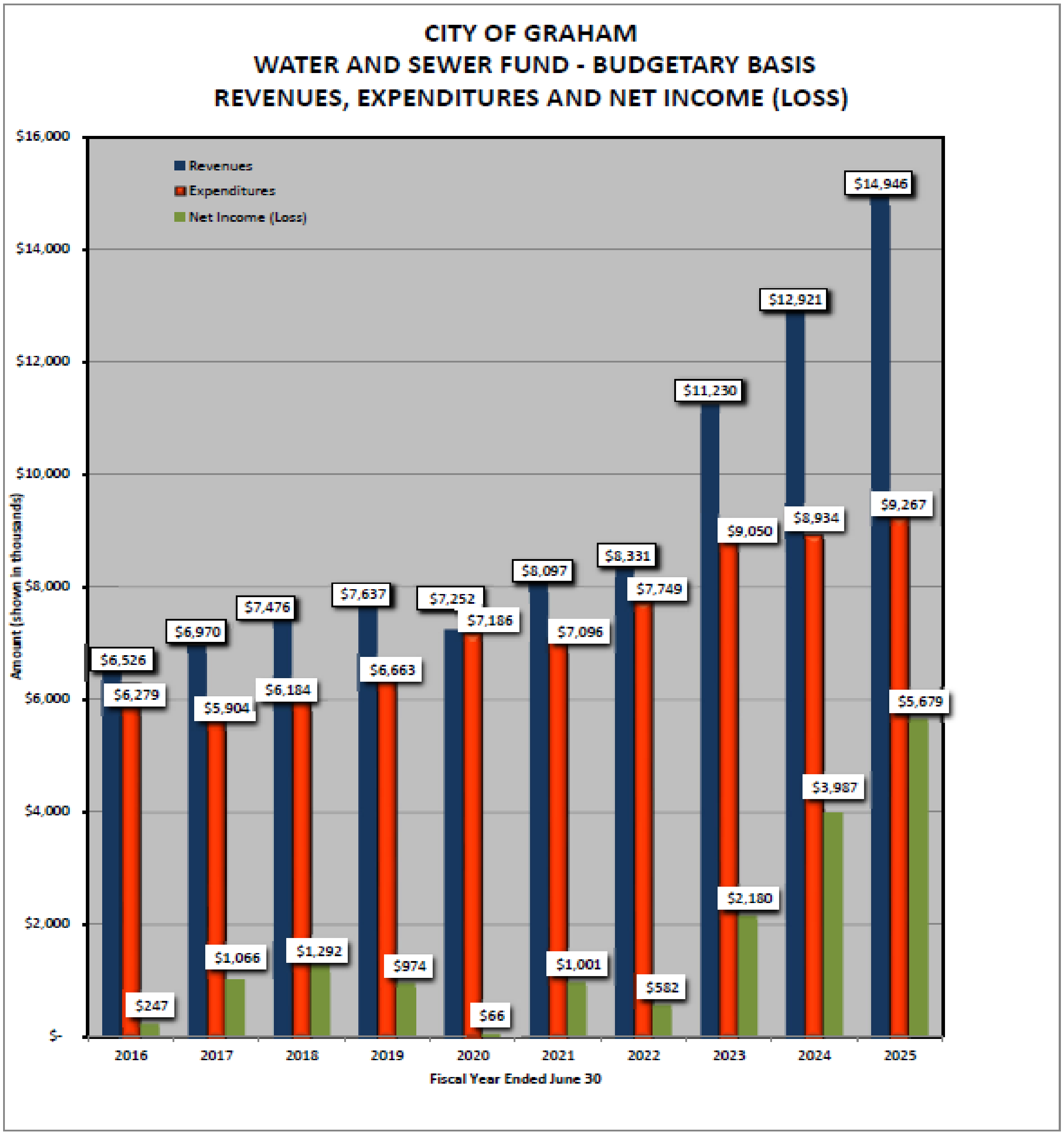
Mayor Dickey introduced Patricia Rhodes, Stout, Stuart, McGowen, and King, LLP. Ms. Rhodes introduced Joey Purgoson, of Stout, Stuart, McGowen, and King, and Becky Loy of Cobb Ezekiel Loy & Company. Ms. Rhodes stated that they were independent auditors for the City of Graham and reminded Council that they work for the Council and work with the staff. She shared Ms. Loy worked with City staff to streamline the year-end processes and financial statement preparations. She stated that Ms. Loy's firm also assisted with accounting matters during the year. Ms. Rhodes stated the audit had been completed for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and that it had submitted it to the Local Government Commission, but had not received approval, so they are unable to officially release the financial statements. She noted the opinion letter stated that the preparation of the financial statements was the responsibility of management. The expression of an opinion on the financial statements based on the audit was the responsibility of the auditor. The financial statements were prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and the audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards.

Ms. Rhodes stated the audit firm was rendering an unmodified opinion on the financial statements, which was the best and cleanest opinion awarded. She stated there were a few changes from the prior year, mainly due to the adoption of Governmental Accounting Standards Board Pronouncement #101, Compensated Absences, and #102, Certain Risk Disclosures. She shared that sick leave was added to the calculations of compensated absences in the accrual, and the City also accrues vacation leave, but added sick leave. She said this addition added to the liability of the Statement of Net Position for the City, which was a required adoption.

Ms. Rhodes noted the Management's Discussion and Analysis was an overall summary of a very detailed report. She stated the net position for the City as of June 30, 2025, was $169,006,297. She shared the City's net position increased during the year by $30,369,000. She noted the available General Fund was $13,240,000, which was 62% of the total General Fund expenditures, which was a healthy percentage compared to similar-sized cities. The City had a fund balance policy where the fund must stay at 30% or more. She also shared that the debt decreased by $638,000.



Ms. Rhodes shared that the General Fund Revenue increased from the prior year of over $1,700,000. The tax revenue increase was a little over $620,000, and sales tax revenue increased a little over $640,000. She shared those expenditures increased by about $1.3 million, and there was an increase in the fund balance of $1,132,000. She noted the tax collection rate remained high at 98.39%.



Ms. Rhodes reported the Water and Sewer Fund's total revenues increased by $2 million, reflected by the rate increase of 9.5%. She noted the expenditures decreased overall by $116,000. The total expenditures increased by $330,000 from the prior year. The revenues exceeded the expenditures by $5.7 million.

CITY OF GRAHAM JUNE 30, 2025	2025	2024	2023	Increase/ Decrease	Percentage (%)
General Fund					
Cash and Investments	14,534	13,656	14,480	878	6%
Accounts Receivable	4,274	3,983	2,713	291	7%
Prepaid Expenses	34	18	-	16	100%
Accounts Payable	1,161	1,012	901	149	15%
Deferred Inflows (Revenues)	294	324	266	(30)	-9%
Unearned Revenue	133	199	220	(66)	-33%
Fund Balance	17,254	16,122	15,806	1,132	7%
Operating Expenses Per Day (Actual)	58,209	54,703	44,531	3,506	6%
Number of Days Available in Cash and Investments Less Current Liabilities	230	231	305	(1)	-1%
Water and Sewer					
Cash and Investments	18,455	6,656	10,158	11,799	177%
Restricted Assets	2,741	1,368	1,103	1,373	100%
Accounts Receivable	1,919	2,089	1,531	(170)	-8%
Fixed Assets	126,362	99,930	58,781	26,432	26%
Liabilities	15,133	10,706	10,577	4,427	41%
Net Position	142,284	111,836	67,357	30,448	27%
Operating Expenses Per Day (Actual)	27,598	25,566	23,927	2,032	8%
Number of Days Available in Cash and Investments Less Current Liabilities	467	183	361	284	155%
Graham Memorial Park					
Cash and Investments	2,959	2,839	2,706	120	4%
Accounts Receivable	4	3	3	1	33%
Fund Balance	2,963	2,842	2,709	121	4%
City-Wide Net Assets - Full Accrual Basis					
Cash and Investments	35,695	23,138	27,329	12,557	54%
Restricted Cash	4,734	5,028	5,903	(294)	-6%
Other Assets and Deferred Outflows	19,121	24,485	17,110	(5,364)	-22%
Capital Assets	153,346	126,250	78,273	27,096	21%
Less - Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows	43,890	34,569	37,937	9,321	27%
Net Position	169,006	144,332	90,678	24,674	17%

Ms. Rhodes shared the City's daily operating expenses are $58,209. The number of days available in cash and investments, minus any current liabilities, is 230 days. For the Water and Sewer Fund, the daily operating expenses are $27,598, and the number of days available cash, minus current liabilities, is 467 days. The overall cash for the City was a little over $40 million, which was cash investments and restricted cash. The net position for the City was a little over $169 million.

Ms. Rhodes concluded the presentation with a letter to the Council, as required by her firm's professional standards, which highlighted key points to the Council. She summarized the letter, informing the Council that the auditors had no issues communicating or performing their duties. She stated they had no difficulties or disagreements with management. She shared that the second letter was a management letter reporting any significant deficiencies. She said the City expended $2,101, $8,272, and $30,113 more than the appropriated annual budget ordinance in three departments. She said that was not a lot of money, and management had already addressed the matter, and the procedures had been put in place to prevent future occurrences. She shared there were no prior year audit findings to be corrected.

Ms. Rhodes stated 2025 had been extremely busy with several water and sewer capital projects that are still in progress, the Waste-Water Treatment Plant upgrade that should be completed this year, winding down was the Boyd Creek Pump Station and the Old Fields Outfall, and lastly getting started on the 10-inch water line replacement. She thanked the Council for allowing them to continue auditing the City of Graham and also thanked City staff for their assistance throughout the audit process.

- **City of Graham Appearance Commission**

  Zipporah Clark-Baldwin, Chair, and Cheryl Ray, Vice Chair of the Appearance Commission/Tree Board gave the following update:

  Ms. Ray shared the Commission's initiatives are aimed at recognizing and supporting beautification efforts across the City. They honor residents and business owners through the Residential and Business Beautification Awards, recognizing those who make meaningful improvements to their properties.

  The Commission administers the Business Beautification Grant Program, which provides matching funds to local businesses for exterior improvements that contribute to the visual appeal of the City.

  Highlights from the Past Year:
  Business Beautification Grants: Over the past year, roughly $14,989.44 in grant funding was approved and distributed to local businesses. These grants match private investment (up to $5,000 per project) to support exterior upgrades.

  Notable improvements included:
  Repainting of the historic "Hotel" mural
  Façade enhancements to downtown buildings
  New and improved awnings

  Holiday Business Window Decoration Contest
  1st Place: Whit's Custard
  2nd Place: Things Above
  3rd Place: Skid's II

  Awarded Residential Beautification Awards
  Downtown Beautification efforts, such as seasonal fall decorations placed throughout downtown.

  Upcoming Goals:
  - Organize a citywide litter clean-up during Fall 2026
  - Initiate partnership discussions with New Leaf Society to expand beautification efforts
  - Start conversations with New Leaf Society for a possible partnership and project opportunities that can continue to support the overall goal of enhancing the City's appearance.
  - Explore designation as a Bee City USA community to support pollinators and native

plant initiatives
- Improve and streamline the Residential Appearance Award nomination process to increase community participation
- Revive the Business Appearance Award program to recognize outstanding commercial properties

Long-Term Goals
- Develop and implement a Wayfinding Signage Project
- Expand city branding through flags and cohesive signage
- Install hanging floral baskets throughout key areas of the city

Arbor Day Celebration at Bill Cooke Park on April 24, 2026 – 10:00 am – 11:00 am.

CONSENT AGENDA:

A. To approve the minutes of the March 10, 2026 City Council meeting and Closed Session.

B. To approve a street closure of the 100 block of E. Elm Street for The Big C Community Christian Concert on Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

C. To adopt a resolution approving the Water Service Utility contract with the Town of Green Level.

RESOLUTION APPROVING WATER SERVICE UTILITY CONTRACT WITH THE TOWN OF GREEN LEVEL

WHEREAS, the City of Graham and the Town of Green Level engaged in a water service utility contract in October 2003;

WHEREAS, the prior contract expired in 2023;

WHEREAS, the Town of Green Level represents one of the largest demand users for the City of Graham and thus a major source of revenue for the Water/Sewer Fund;

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the City of Graham to continue this relationship for an additional term of 10 years.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Graham that:

The City of Graham approves the water service utility contract with the Town of Green Level for the sale of water in accordance with the provisions of the said contract.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Mayor and City Clerk are hereby authorized to execute the contract on behalf of the City.

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

D. To approve a Utility Interlocal Agreement between the Town of Swepsonville and Alamance County in support of the County installing a water line.

E. To approve a resolution authorizing the conveyance of excess asphalt millings to the Alamance County Landfill pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 160A-274 due to the City's recent repaving efforts and generating excess asphalt millings.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF EXCESS ASPHALT MILLINGS TO ALAMANCE COUNTY LANDFILL PURSUANT TO G.S. 160A-274

WHEREAS, the City of Graham has generated excess millings from recent repaving projects, and

WHEREAS, the above-referenced millings have been declared surplus due to lack of usefulness for other purposes, and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute§ 160A-274 authorizes a governmental unit in this state to exchange with, lease to, lease from, sell to, or purchase from any other governmental unit any interest in real or personal property upon such terms and conditions as the governmental unit deems wise, with or without consideration, and

WHEREAS, the City of Graham has determined that it is in the best interest of the city to convey these excess asphalt millings to the Alamance County Landfill and deems it wise to do so for no consideration; and

WHEREAS, the City of Graham has determined that donating these millings to the Alamance County Landfill will continue to provide a public benefit.

THEREFORE, THE GRAHAM CITY COUNCIL RESOLVES THAT:

1. The City of Graham hereby conveys excess asphalt millings to the Alamance County Landfill.

2. The property herein described shall be conveyed for consideration of continued public benefit.

3. The City Manager, Finance Officer, and City Clerk are authorized to execute all documents necessary to convey the property as this Resolution authorizes.

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

F. To approve a resolution for Graham-Mebane Water Treatment Plant Reliability Improvements Construction Project funding application to perform additional improvements.

RESOLUTION BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF APPLICANT

WHEREAS, the City of Graham has need for and intends to perform a Drinking Water Construction Project described as Graham-Mebane WTP Reliability Improvements, and

WHEREAS, the City of Graham has need for and intends to perform a Drinking Water Construction Project described as Graham-Mebane WTP Reliability Improvements, and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM:

That the City of Graham, the **Applicant**, will arrange financing for all remaining costs of the project, if approved for a State loan and/or grant award.

That the **Applicant** will provide for efficient operation and maintenance of the project on completion of construction thereof.

That the **Applicant** will adopt and place into effect on or before completion of the project a schedule of fees and charges and other available funds which will provide adequate funds for proper operation, maintenance, and administration of the system and the repayment of all principal and interest on the debt.

That the governing body of the **Applicant** agrees to include in the loan agreement a provision authorizing the State Treasurer, upon failure of the City of Graham to make a scheduled repayment of the loan, to withhold from the City of Graham any State funds that would otherwise be distributed to the local government unit in an amount sufficient to pay all sums then due and payable to the State as a repayment of the loan.

That Megan Garner, the **Authorized Representative** and successors so titled, is hereby authorized to execute and file an application on behalf of the **Applicant** with the State of North Carolina for a loan and/or grant to aid in the study of or construction of the project described above.

That the **Authorized Representative**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with such application or the project: to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required in connection with the application.

That the **Applicant** has substantially complied or will substantially comply with all Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, and funding conditions applicable to the project and to Federal and State grants and loans pertaining thereto.

Adopted this the 14th day of April 2026 at Graham City Hall, North Carolina.

FORM FOR CERTIFICATION BY THE RECORDING OFFICER

The undersigned duly qualified and acting City Clerk of the City of Graham does hereby certify: That the above/attached resolution is a true and correct copy of the resolution authorizing the filing of an application with the State of North Carolina, as regularly adopted at a legally convened meeting of the City Council of the City of Graham duly held on the 14th day of April 2026; and, further, that such resolution has been fully recorded in the journal of proceedings and records in my office. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of April 2026.

G. To approve a resolution authorizing a request to the State of North Carolina for the City of Graham to convert 3.88 acres at Graham Regional Park from recreational use to be used as a future site for a fire station, and that the City shall purchase 10.2 acres located at 1771 North Jim Minor to replace the acreage taken out of recreational use.

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONVERSION OF A NORTH CAROLINA PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND GRANT SITE

WHEREAS, the CITY of GRAHAM, NC received a N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant in 2011, (#660) from the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) to assist in the acquisition of 115.597 acres for Graham Regional Park; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the grant criteria of PARTF, a declaration of restrictions was recorded in the County of ALAMANCE Registry restricting the use of the 115.597 acres to public recreation; and

WHEREAS, the CITY of GRAHAM, NC has reviewed and considered public comments and subsequently approves the reason(s) for a conversion such that the land will no longer meet the PARTF grant criteria; and

WHEREAS, the governing body of the CITY of GRAHAM, NC hereby determines that it is necessary and in the public interest to convert 3.88 acres of land to non-recreation use and to provide at least equivalent valued replacement land; and

WHEREAS, the CITY of GRAHAM, NC, upon approval by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, has selected 10.2 acres currently owned by Tom and Linda Stewart as replacement property for the PARTF grant, which will include a declaration of restrictions to be recorded in the County of ALAMANCE Registry:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY of GRAHAM, NC, THAT:

1. The CITY of GRAHAM, NC, requests to convert the use of 3.88 acres at 1575 North Jim Minor Road, Haw River, NC, and requests DNCR's approval to release the declaration of restrictions recorded in Deed Book 3102, Page 385-390, County of ALAMANCE Registry.
2. The CITY of GRAHAM, NC shall provide at least equivalent valued replacement property of approximately 10.2 acres, located at 1771 North Jim Minor Road, Haw River, NC and adjacent to Graham Regional Park on the eastern border, having PIN # 152551 and upon approval by DNCR shall record a declaration of restrictions on that approximate 10.2-acre portion of the property restricting its use to public recreation in perpetuity.

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

H. To approve a resolution awarding a police badge and service sidearm to Sergeant Crystal Sharpe O'Neal, who recently retired with 25 years of service.

RESOLUTION AWARDING POLICE BADGE AND SERVICE SIDE ARM TO SERGEANT CRYSTAL SHARPE O'NEAL

WHEREAS, Crystal Sharpe O'Neal was an employee of the City of Graham as a member of the Graham Police Department for 25years;

WHEREAS, N.C.G.S. 20-187.2 permits the awarding of badges and service side arms of deceased or retiring members of State, City, and County Law Enforcement agencies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM, NORTH CAROLINA THAT: The City of Graham does hereby award the service side arm and badge to Crystal Sharpe O'Neal for her many years of service to the City of Graham upon securing the necessary permit(s) according to G.S. 14-402 and receipt of one dollar ($1.00).

Adopted this the 14th day of April, 2026.

I. To approve the intent to purchase a DuraPack Python 28-year body mounted on a 2026 Kenworth L770 Chassis to replace a 2007 sanitation truck.

RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO PURCHASE A DURAPACK PYTHON 28-YARD BODY MOUNTED ON A 2026 KENWORTH L770 CHASSIS

WHEREAS, The City of Graham has a need to purchase a new sanitation truck to continue providing top-quality service to our citizens; and

WHEREAS, the proposed new truck will be replacing a 2007 sanitation truck, which will be sold via an approved surplus method; and

WHEREAS, due to upcoming changes expected regarding emissions, the City will receive significant cost savings if it orders before July 1, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the cost of a new truck is anticipated not to exceed $395,500, assuming the City locks in before July 1, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the City of Graham may purchase the sanitation apparatus in accordance with N.C.G.S. 143-129(e)(6), which authorizes "Purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment when: (i) performance or price competition for a product are not available; (ii) a needed product is available from only one source of supply; or (iii) standardization or compatibility is the overriding consideration.";

WHEREAS, the City of Graham has standardized Peterbilt with the last two sanitation trucks that were purchased; and

WHEREAS, the City of Graham will include payment, either in full or debt service via financing, for the sanitation truck in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Graham City Council approves this intent to purchase a DuraPack Python 28-yard body mounted on a 2026 Kenworth L770 chassis.

Adopted this the 14th day of April 2026.

J. To approve a budget amendment for $60,000 for the Garage Department due to two winter storm events, an unexpected retirement, an increase in fuel prices, and costly repairs.

CITY OF GRAHAM

BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE
2025-2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT
THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. EXPENDITURES DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
		-			-
City Garage - Salaries & Wages	296,000.00	**343,500.00**	**47,500.00**		**47,500.00**
City Garage - FICA	23,500.00	**26,770.00**	**3,270.00**		**3,270.00**
City Garage - Retirement Expense	43,000.00	**51,500.00**	**8,500.00**		**8,500.00**
City Garage - Supplemental Retirement	15,000.00	**15,730.00**	**730.00**		**730.00**
	377,500.00	**437,500.00**	**60,000.00**	**-**	**60,000.00**

Section 2. REVENUES	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Prior Year Taxes	$50,000.00	**$110,000.00**	**60,000.00**		**$60,000.00**
	$50,000.00	**$110,000.00**	**60,000.00**	**-**	**60,000.00**

K. To approve a budget amendment for $38,000 for the Sanitation Department due to an increase in fuel prices, unexpected repairs, and an increase in the cost of recycling/trash carts.

CITY OF GRAHAM

BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE
2025-2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT
THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. EXPENDITURES DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
		-			-
Sanitation - Vehicle & Fuel	65,000.00	**103,000.00**	**38,000.00**		**38,000.00**
	$65,000.00	**$103,000.00**	**$38,000.00**	**$0.00**	**$38,000.00**

Section 2. REVENUES	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Prior Year Taxes	50,000.00	**88,000.00**	**38,000.00**		**38,000.00**
	$50,000.00	**$88,000.00**	**$38,000.00**	**$0.00**	**$38,000.00**

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

L. To approve a budget amendment for $15,279 for the purchase of buoys to be placed on Graham-Mebane Lake.

CITY OF GRAHAM

BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE
2025-2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT
THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. EXPENDITURES DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
		-			-
Graham Mebane Lake - Maintenance & Repair Equipmer	900.00	**16,179.00**	**15,279.00**		**15,279.00**
	900.00	**16,179.00**	**15,279.00**	**-**	**15,279.00**

Section 2. REVENUES	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Mebane Lake Revenue	$65,000.00	**$80,279.00**	**15,279.00**		**$15,279.00**
	$65,000.00	**$80,279.00**	**15,279.00**	**-**	**15,279.00**

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

M. To approve a budget amendment for $82,530, comprised of Non-Departmental Professional Services ($34,430) and Non-Departmental Contracted Services ($48,100).

CITY OF GRAHAM

BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE
2025-2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT
THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1.
EXPENDITURES

DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
		-			-
Non Department - Professional Services	145,000.00	**179,430.00**	**34,430.00**		**34,430.00**
Non Department - Contracted Services	20,000.00	**68,100.00**	**48,100.00**		**48,100.00**
	165,000.00	**247,530.00**	**82,530.00**	-	**82,530.00**

Section 2.

REVENUES	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Current Year Tax	$7,614,050.00	$7,696,580.00	82,530.00		$82,530.00
	$7,614,050.00	**$7,696,580.00**	**82,530.00**	-	**82,530.00**

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

N. To approve a budget amendment for $10,000 for the Land Development Plan Update, Inspections Professional Services.

CITY OF GRAHAM

BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE
2025-2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT
THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1.
EXPENDITURES

DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
		-			-
Inspections - Professional Services	3,000.00	**13,000.00**	**10,000.00**		**10,000.00**
	3,000.00	**13,000.00**	**10,000.00**	-	**10,000.00**

Section 2.

REVENUES	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Current Year Tax	$7,614,050.00	**$7,624,050.00**	**10,000.00**		**$10,000.00**
	$7,614,050.00	**$7,624,050.00**	**10,000.00**	-	**10,000.00**

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

O. To approve a budget amendment for $2,460 for the purchase of sponsor banners to be displayed at Graham Recreation and Park Department facilities and events, and $1,341 for the purchase of marketing materials and archival supplies to store photographs at the Graham Historical Museum.

2025-2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT
THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1.
EXPENDITURES

DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
		-			-
Recreation - Supplies and Materials	8,000.00	**10,460.00**	**2,460.00**		**2,460.00**
Recreation - Miscellaneous Expense	7,000.00	**8,341.00**	**1,341.00**		**1,341.00**
	15,000.00	**18,801.00**	**3,801.00**	-	**3,801.00**

Section 2.

REVENUES	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Recreation Donations	$3,500.00	**$5,960.00**	**2,460.00**		**$2,460.00**
Current Year Tax	$7,614,050.00	**$7,615,391.00**	**1,341.00**		**$1,341.00**
	$7,617,550.00	**$7,621,351.00**	**3,801.00**	-	**3,801.00**

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

P. To approve a budget amendment for $36,612 in surplus vehicles auction proceeds revenue and to increase the Police Department Capital Outlay Equipment budget by $36,612.

CITY OF GRAHAM

BUDGET AMENDMENT ORDINANCE
2025-2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT
THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1.

EXPENDITURES DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
		-			-
Police - Capital Outlay Equipment	125,000.00	**161,612.00**	**36,612.00**		**36,612.00**
	125,000.00	**161,612.00**	**36,612.00**	**-**	**36,612.00**

Section 2.

REVENUES	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
Sales of Surplus Property	$10,000.00	**$46,612.00**	**36,612.00**		**$36,612.00**
	$10,000.00	**$46,612.00**	**36,612.00**	**-**	**36,612.00**

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

Q. To approve a budget amendment for $410,893.36 for FEMA funding reimbursement related to the Tropical Storm to be placed in the Utilities Fund.

2025-2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM THAT
THE 2025 - 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE SHALL BE AND IS HEREBY AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1.

EXPENDITURES DEPARTMENT/ACCOUNT	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
		-			-
Maintenance and Lift Stations - Capital Outlay Equipmer	236,813.00	**271,813.00**	**35,000.00**		**35,000.00**
Water Treatment Plant - Professional Services	125,000.00	**215,000.00**	**90,000.00**		**90,000.00**
Wastewater Treatment Plant - Capital Outlay Equipment	1,363,323.00	**1,599,217.00**	**235,894.00**		**235,894.00**
	1,725,136.00	**2,086,030.00**	**360,894.00**	**-**	**360,894.00**

Section 2.

REVENUES	APPROVED	AMENDED	INCREASE	(DECREASE)	INCREASE (DECREASE)
FEMA Revenue	$86,813.00	**$447,707.00**	**360,894.00**		**$360,894.00**
	$86,813.00	**$447,707.00**	**360,894.00**	**-**	**360,894.00**

Adopted this 14th day of April 2026.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to approve the consent agenda with the correction to the minutes, seconded by Council Member Young. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

ITEM 1: ACTA FUNDING

City Council considered a request of $6,500 from the Alamance County Transportation Authority to help fund the increased ridership.

City Manager Garner stated at last month's meeting Peter Murphy came before the City Council and asked them to consider $6,500 in funding. She asked that Council also consider other funding requests from outside organizations that are similar to ACTA. She stated that LINK Transit had made a budget request in the amount of $22,000, and United Way had requested budget funds from $10,000 to $15,000.

She stated these are organizations that the City had not funded in the past, but would fund anything lawful that the City Council directed.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated that he serves on the ACTA Board and that maybe he should step down from consideration of this item.

Mayor Dickey asked if Mayor Pro Tem Hall had any financial gain by voting.

The consensus of the Council was that he did not need to recuse himself.

Mayor Dickey proposed that we fund ACTA. She stated it was imperative to the community to be able to rely on some sort of transportation.

Council Member Whitaker stated the citizens of Graham would benefit from the services and should be considered.

Motion by Council Member Young to approve the ACTA funding request of $6,500, seconded by Council Member Whitaker. The motion passed unanimously.

City Manager Garner stated the United Way asked that VITA, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, be funded in the amount of $12,000.

Mayor Dickey stated LINK Transit was requesting $22,000 for a pilot project, but did not know the impact it would have on the community.

ITEM 2: NEW DOWNTOWN PARK UPDATE

City Staff updated the Council on the progress of the new downtown park.

Assistant City Manager Holland shared they had received two bids, but because they did not meet the three-bid threshold, they were unable to open them. He stated the request was sent to readvertise for seven days, and next Thursday, April 23, 2026 at 2:00 p.m., the bids would be opened.

Council Member Young asked if this would jeopardize the timeline for the grant money.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated the timeline for staff was to have that money spent, but it does not hurt to wait until next week, because of having the soil test done at the West Elm Street location.

Mayor Dickey stated that we do not know what will be in the bids and that Council was gambling with the grant money, pushing it out, and asked that the grant funds be reallocated for repaving. She stated losing the grant funds would not be a good look to the State.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated that waiting and opening the bids would not hurt us. He stated after the bids were opened, there would need to be a special meeting scheduled to consider the bids.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

ITEM 3: DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

A public hearing had been set to consider approving an amendment to the Development Ordinance for Accessory Dwelling Units.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated a resident had approached the City Council regarding a potential amendment to the City's ordinance that would allow for Accessory Dwelling Units, and currently, it did not speak to allowing these units. He stated Council directed staff to draft language addressing Accessory Dwelling Units and Planning Board recommended approval of the amendment with the revisions of dropping the maximum square footage for attached and detached ADU's from 1,600 to 1,200 square feet, require a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet to allow for and ADU, and allow ADU's to be served off of existing private connections to the primary dwelling if capacity allows it. He stated if the Council allowed dwelling units, there would need to be a fee schedule change to charge a fee for garbage and recycling due to two living quarters.

The public hearing was opened, and there were no comments.

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

Council Member Whitaker stated she had reservations and that several years ago, when it was discussed, ADUs would best be done by special request. She voiced concerns about how this could affect surrounding homes. She stated she was against it but would be fine tabling the item until the person who requested an ADU could be present.

Council Member Chin stated that the legislators were looking at ADUs and would be hesitant to approve one locally, and the state could pass something different than what was proposed.

Council Member Young stated Elon had allowed it and then turned around and stopped. He stated he thought they were great, but would like to table it until we hear what the State decides.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated he was opposed to it and thought it could mess up a lot of subdivisions.

Mayor Dickey stated it would be a great opportunity and would give a more diverse opportunity if done right, and agreed it should be tabled until next month's meeting.

Motion by Mayor Dickey to table this to next month's meeting, May 12, 2026.

City Attorney Ward stated to table the meeting, the public hearing must be reopened.

Motion by Mayor Dickey to reopen the public hearing, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mayor Dickey to table this item to the May 12, 2026, Council meeting, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 4: ADOPTION – FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

A public hearing has been set to consider adopting the Future Land Use Plan.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated Staff recommended this item be tabled to the May 12, 2026, City Council meeting. He stated they reached out to the Council of Government to have a representative who helped work on the plan to assist in presenting it.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to table this item to the May 12, 2026, Council meeting, seconded by Council Member Young. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 5: PERMANENT STREET CLOSING – WILTON DRIVE

A public hearing was scheduled to consider a resolution ordering the permanent closure of Wilton Drive.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated this was a request to approve a resolution to permanently close the unopened section of Wilton Drive. He stated KC Rentals, LLC, was requesting the removal of a proposed roadway that abuts their land on the east and west right-of-way (ROW) of Wilton Drive, as shown and described in the attached plat. This ROW exists only on a plat and has not been constructed.

The public hearing was opened, and the following persons spoke:

Kathy Ward, 214 Aloha Drive, Graham, said they did not understand what road they were talking about closing.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated it was a section of road not on the ground; it was on paper only.

Kristen Foust, KC Rentals, South Hwy 62, Burlington, stated they were asking for the continuation of Wilton Street where the asphalt ends, and there will be a turnaround constructed. She stated that right now, it was a dedicated City right-of-way. She stated they were asking the City to remove the right-of-way so they can construct the turnaround. The street would then be turned over to the City.

Anita Hunter, 215 Wilton Drive, spoke in opposition to closing the right-of-way due to the traffic, and the neighbors have nowhere to park but on the street.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated the request was to abandon the right-of-way.

Chris Foust, 4990 South Hwy 62, stated they would be constructing a turnaround, a new water line for everyone, and a non-existent fire hydrant.

Kathy Ward, 214, Aloha Drive, asked what happens when the water and sewer line is constructed, and the Wilton Road is torn up, what happens to the neighbors on that road. She shared there was nowhere to park but on the street.

Mr. Jim Lautenslager, 215 Wilton Drive, spoke in opposition due to the traffic and cars parking on both sides of the street, no one can get through. He shared that the field floods, and if they build on it, the water will go into his yard.

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

Mayor Dickey stated the houses would be built, and they need a way to connect. She stated there are many other issues to work through, and they need a way for cars to come from the new house onto Wilton. She stated that either the City of Graham pays for it or the developer pays for it, and that made it an easier decision to give them this piece of property to build the turnaround. She said this one piece to move Wilton's right-of-way to be permanently closed would be her recommendation.

Council Member Whitaker stated she knows the neighbors do not want the house, but it was zoned, and it would be built.

Council Member Young stated that those were his people and he was sticking with them.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall to approve the road closure, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed 3-2. Nays were Council Members Whitaker and Young.

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEM 6: STREET CLOSURE – 9/11 COMMEMORATIVE 5K ROUTE

City Council will consider supporting the closure of Maple Street and W. Interstate Service Road for the amended 9/11 Commemorative 5K route on Saturday, September 12, 2026, from 6:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated the 9/11 event was previously approved by City Council, and since then, the organizers have changed the route and asked Council to approve the event so they can make a request to NCDOT for a road closing approval.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to approve the event, seconded by Council Member Young. The motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 7: BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS ORDINANCE UPDATE

City Council considered approving amendments to the Boards and Commissions Ordinance.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated that Council asked Staff to review the Boards and Commission Ordinance that was approved in 2019 by a task force commissioned by the Council. He stated there are changes staff made reflecting board composition changes, background checks for new and re-appointed members, and ethics policy requirements. He asked if Council had any other changes.

Council Member Whitaker asked about changing how long a person could serve due to having issues with getting people to serve.

Mayor Dickey stated that there had been an uptick in applicants.

Council Member Whitaker said that was just this time; the past has not been indicative of the number of applicants.

Council Member Young and Mayor Pro Tem Hall both agreed with Council Member Whitaker.

Mayor Dickey asked about members serving on more than one board. She asked if they wanted to continue having members serve on no more than two boards or just one.

Council Members Whitaker, Young, and Hall served on two boards.

Motion by Council Member Whitaker to approve the amendments to the Boards and Commissions Ordinance with the exception of Section 2, Item C, Members shall be able to serve for not more than three consecutive terms, be stricken, as well as the 12-month hiatus, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM, AMENDING VARIOUS SECTIONS RELATED TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF GRAHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

The City Council of the City of Graham, North Carolina, does ORDAIN:

Sec. 1. That CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE II, DIVISION 3- BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS of the Code of Ordinances of Graham, North Carolina, is hereby amended with the addition of the following sections, to read as follows:

Sec. 2.__ Applicability

The provisions of this division shall apply to each board and commission created and appointed by the City Council. Provisions unique to a specific board or commission may be provided for in this or other ordinance applicable to said board or commission.

Sec. 2. .__Nominations to office; Term.

Except where a specific provision is made for the creation or term of office of a board or commission by ordinance requiring an exception to this section or by laws of the State or the United States:

(a) The city council shall appoint all members and alternates of boards and commissions;
(b) The term of office of such members and alternates shall be three (3) years, with original appointments to provide for the expiration of less than half of the members each year;
(c) Provided applicants are not available to fill the vacancies, then City Council, in its discretion, may extend the term of a current member for a term of one (1) year and such other one (1) year terms until candidates are available for service and are duly appointed by the City Council.
(d) Members must sign ethics guidelines ensuring no use of position for personal gain or suggestion of impropriety.
(e) A background check will be required for all prospective members and those seeking reappointments.

Sec. 2. – Expiration of terms of office of members appointed by the council.

The date of the expiration of the term of office of the members and alternates of all boards and commissions appointed by the City Council shall be June thirtieth. Terms of new members, other than those appointed to fill a vacancy, shall begin July first. All members shall hold office until their successors are appointed and qualified.

Sec. 2. – Removal of Members; Absenteeism.

A member of any board or commission of the city may be removed by the council for just cause. If a member of a board or commission has two (2) unexcused absences in a 12-month period, they shall be considered to be removed from the board. The position may be declared vacant and a successor appointed.

Sec. 2. – Vacancies in membership.
The council shall fill any vacancy in the membership of any board or commission.

Sec. 2. – Concurrent service.
An individual shall be eligible to serve on not more than (2) city boards or commissions at any one time.

Sec 2. – Compensation.
Members of boards and commissions shall serve without pay. Members may be reimbursed for actual expenses incidental to the performance of their duties in accordance with existing City of Graham policies.

Sec. 2. – Organizational Meeting - Officers.
Each city board and commission shall conduct an organizational meeting each July or the next meeting following July to elect a chair and a vice chair, establish a regular meeting schedule, and appoint a secretary to record minutes. Meeting schedules shall be filed in the office of the City Clerk.

Sec. 2. – Sub-Committees.
Boards and commissions may establish any temporary or permanent sub-committees. In addition, boards and commissions may seek advice and assistance from citizens and from professional sources, pending authorization by the City Council if funding is required.

Sec. 2. – Rules and Quorum.
Except as otherwise provided by ordinance, the procedure of each city board and commission shall be governed by the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.
A quorum shall consist of a majority of the actual members of the board or commission, excluding vacant seats. A quorum shall be required for any board or commission to conduct a meeting or take action.

Sec. 2. – Voting, Advocacy, Monetary Interest
No member of a Board or Commission may discuss, advocate or vote on any matter in which he or she has a separate, private or monetary interest, either direct or indirect, and no member may discuss before the city council or its boards or commissions any matter which has been, is or will be considered by the board or commission on which he or she serves, and in which he or she has a separate, private or monetary interest either direct or indirect. Any member who violates this provision may be subject to removal from the board or commission.

Sec. 2. – Place of meetings; meetings public.
All regular and special meetings of boards and commissions shall be published and held in accordance with the North Carolina Open Meetings Laws.

Sec. 2. – Time of regular meetings.
Regular meetings shall be held on such days and at such hours as determined in the organizational meeting.

Sec. 2. – Staff and technical services.
Boards and commissions may request from the City Council the necessary staff or technical services.

Sec. 2. – Records and Reports.
Each city board and commission shall keep a complete and accurate record of all its proceedings, and subsequently submit its minutes to the city clerk. Boards and commissions shall make an annual report to the city council.

Sec. 2. – Fiscal restraint.
Each city board or commission shall make no expenditure or contract any indebtedness for which the city shall be liable without the approval of the city council.

Sec. 5. That this Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval, and publication, as provided by law.

ITEM 8: VOTING DELEGATE – NCLM CITYVISION

City Council considered designating a delegate to vote in the electronic voting process for the North Carolina League of Municipalities Board elections.

City Manager Megan Garner stated each year, the North Carolina League of Municipalities requests that all cities attending CityVision and are members appoint a voting delegate for board elections.

Motion by Council Member Chin to elect Council Member Jim Young, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Ronnie Isley, 510 Mendel Terrace, Graham, spoke in opposition to the new park and asked to give the bricks back to their owners and not go into debt building another. He also asked to have the old banners taken down and replaced with new ones. He asked about the placement of benches downtown.

Eric Chrisman, 208 Albright Avenue, Graham, spoke about how he was disappointed with the board and asked that they go on record to say there were not inconclusion with each other and were not having illegal meetings. He noted they had lost the confidence of the people in Graham and that they should still resign.

Chris Foust, 4990 Hwy 62, spoke about how disappointed he was with two Council Members who voted against his request to close Wilton Drive. He said he was trying to do something nice and was told it was just a formality.

Keith Westbrook, 604 Trokwater, Graham, spoke about speeding on Trollinger Road and the lack of a sidewalk so kids could walk to Graham High School.

Jeff Benes, 1407 East Gilbreth Street, stated that the Council was not listening to the citizens who live on Wilton Street. He asked for clarification of the guidelines for public comments. He specifically asked when public comments were closed and then got reopened. He shared a lady raised her hand after the public comment was closed, and she was told she could not speak, but when the former Mayor raised her hand, the public comment section was reopened. He asked again what the rules were.

CITY STAFF COMMENTS

City Attorney Bob Ward stated the public comment period adopted by Council, stating the rules and asked staff to give him a copy. He said if Council closes the public comment period, it was entirely up to Council to open it up for additional comments.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated staff had received several comments from citizens regarding garbage cans overflowing and the ordinance does speak to appropriate behaviors for cans. House Bill 300 restricted any penalties that could be enforced. He asked to bring back penalties and bring something back to Council to consider. Council agreed.

Mayor Dickey asked that Mr. Holland speak on the placement of benches.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated staff looked at placement from the past locations, and recommended seven locations and would keep a few spares in the event a bench breaks.

Council Member Chin asked if business owners were contacted.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated they were not.

Council Member Whitaker asked if the topic could be placed on the agenda and have a public hearing.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall to place the topic of downtown bench placements on next month's agenda to receive public input. Motion passed 4-1. Mayor Dickey voted no.

Mayor Dickey asked staff to speak about downtown parking.

City Manager Garner stated staff sent an online survey and visited downtown businesses to ascertain if they were interested in two-hour, four-hour, or other options. She shared the methods of responses: 20 responded 4 hours, 14 responded 2 hours, and 1 said 3 hours. Other responses suggested metered parking, QR Code parking, 15 or 30-minute parking spaces in front of certain businesses, and a mix between 2-hour and 4-hour parking. She noted if there was a change, we would have to order new signage at about $1,500 and order new ticket books for the Police Department.

Mayor Dickey stated she had talked to a few business owners and liked the idea of having some spaces at 30 minutes in front of very strategic businesses, and then having the rest at four hours.

Council Member Chin stated four hours was too long, and if he were a business owner, he would want those parking spaces to turn over quickly.

Council Member Young stated it should stay at 2-hour parking.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated it should stay at 2-hour parking.

Council Member Whitaker stated some of the business owners she talked to face-to-face shared that they would not want someone parking in front of their business for four hours. She stated it could be advantageous to some businesses. She shared she was not in favor of changing it to four hours, but would be agreeable if they wanted staff to look into certain areas where we might want to extend the parking hours beyond two hours, but not for all parking spaces.

Council Member Young asked about parking around the courthouse and if those seven spaces could be open after hours.

Mayor Dickey stated it seemed the Council was not ready to make a decision and would keep working on it.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Young responded to Mr. Benes' question about the public comment section, stating he was correct and Council needed to be consistent regardless of who wanted to speak. He also spoke about the speeding on Trollinger Street and that it was a state road, and asked for staff to ask the police to patrol. He stated in reference to trash on Ivey Road, there is an abundance of trash, and asked if fines could be increased for littering, and if the police could catch people littering.

Council Member Young asked that a motion be placed on the next meeting's consent agenda to officially recognize Juneteenth as a holiday for the City of Graham. He shared that Juneteenth symbolizes freedom and the end of slavery, and formally acknowledging it will show our commitment to honoring this important part of our nation's history.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall asked that the Council consider using advertising dollars with The Times News instead of Alamance News. The consensus of the Council was to place this item under new business on the May 12, 2026, agenda.

Council consensus was to add the request as new business.

Council Member Whitaker stated in reference to House Bill 300, which removed all the criminal offenses from North Carolina ordinances, that she had spoken to the Police Chief about a person who was bitten by a dog, and the Police Department could not charge the individual with any criminal charges. She shared those penalties could be added back to City Ordinances for cases such as this. She asked that this be considered at the May 12, 2026, Council meeting.

Council Member Whitaker read the following statement for the record:

Last month, for the first time in four years on this council, I was accused of being disrespectful, of "making faces," and I was lectured about honor.

Let me be clear: I do NOT need a lecture on honor. I spent 25 years in the United States Air Force, living it. I've carried it in uniform, in service, and in how I conduct myself every day. So, if I unintentionally offended anyone, I apologize. That was not my intent. But what we are seeing now goes far beyond a facial expression. And let's be honest about something, this chamber is NOT free of expressions. People react. People talk. People laugh, sigh, and show frustration during meetings. It happens in this room. It happens on this dais. It happens during difficult discussions. What matters is NOT a momentary reaction, but how we conduct ourselves overall.

What we are seeing now is a shift away from facts and toward narratives.

This Park issue did not begin last month. It did not begin last year. It has been discussed since 2016. Warnings were given. Opportunities were missed. And now that action is required, the conversation has been overtaken NOT by facts, but by noise. And much of that noise is coming from social media. A *place where speculation spreads faster than truth. Where assumptions are treated like evidence. Where people attack from behind a screen, and are rewarded for being the loudest, NOT the most accurate.*

That environment does NOT inform, it INFLAMES. And when that same tone begins to show up in media coverage, we have a serious problem. Because the role of media is NOT to amplify outrage. It is NOT to shape narratives through tone, implication, or selective framing. It is to inform the public, fairly and consistently. But when coverage repeatedly singles out one individual… when it leans on implication instead of fact…when it drifts from reporting into storytelling…people notice. And I have been on the receiving end of that pattern. Not just recently, but going back years, when details about my personal life, irrelevant to my service, were made public without my consent. That was NOT necessary. That did NOT serve this community. And it did NOT build trust.

At the same time, public positions shifted and shifted quickly. Jerry Peterman told me he supported relocating the park and even had ideas to expand the original vision, but now criticizes it. Jane Albright told Mr. Compton she supported his idea of moving it, but now she opposes it. Griffin McClure stood in these chambers and asked us to just keep the park downtown, and now criticizes us for doing exactly that. That is their right. But let's not pretend the public conversation has been consistent or grounded in facts.

And I will say this clearly: based on communications that have been seen, it is apparent that our current mayor is NOT acting independently but is relying heavily on input from Griffin McClure.

When I say I have spoken with people on BOTH sides of this issue, I mean it. I've had those conversations face to face. Not everything happens online. Not everything comes in a text message. And the absence of a digital record does NOT make those conversations any less real or factual. But somehow, that turned into an accusation that I was dishonest. That is NOT accountability. That is an attempt to DISCREDIT.

Now, I understand that public service comes with scrutiny. I accept that. But scrutiny must come with FAIRNESS. It must come with CONSISTENCY. And it must be grounded in TRUTH, not driven by narrative. Right now, fairness is being drowned out. Drowned out by headlines. Drowned out by commentary. Drowned out by a cycle that rewards conflict over accuracy. And that is NOT good for this council. It is NOT good for this City. And it is NOT good for the people we serve.

I will continue to do my job as I always have. With integrity and care. I will continue to stand on my record. But I will NOT be defined by narratives that do not reflect reality. We don't have to agree. But we DO have to be honest. And we DO have to be fair.

Respectfully,
Bonnie Whitaker
Graham City Council

Mayor Dickey stated Council had approved the Order of Procedures for City Council, and under Rule 16, Order of the Agenda, she asked to correct the agenda order as follows:

Pledge and Invocation
Adoption of Agenda
Recognitions/Presentations/Proclamations
Approval of Consent Agenda to include minutes
Old Business
Public Hearing

New Business
Public Comments
Staff Reports
Council Reports

Mayor Dickey asked staff to contact DOT to ask that log trucks take a different route than through downtown. The consensus of the Council was to have staff speak with DOT about another truck route.

Mayor Dickey asked staff to review the Skateboard Ordinance, which is very restrictive and does not allow for wagons and strollers on sidewalks. She asked for a consensus for the staff to look into the ordinance. The consensus of the council was to have staff review the ordinance and place it on the May 12, 2026, agenda.

Mayor Dickey stated that Thursdays at Seven was a fun environment, and people were bringing their own alcohol. She suggested having a social district, so people attending could consume in a legal way. The Council consensus was to place this topic on new business to discuss a social district at the Thursdays at Seven concert events.

Council Member Whitaker stated it could be event-driven, such as Arts Around the Square.

After a short discussion, it was decided to place the discussion of a social district for Thursdays at Seven on the May 12, 2026, agenda.

Mayor Dickey mentioned the condition of the downtown banners and if new ones could not be in place by the Arts Around the Square event, the old ones needed to be taken down. She stated that right now, we have City Staff designing banners with the new logo, and there was also GABA designing banners at the same time, and no one knows who is doing what. She stated the City owns the banners and the hardware, and it is a City staff project. She stated that in the past, GABA had contributed funds, but the Council needed to give Staff clear direction on who was in charge and who had the creative liberties to get banners ordered and put up.

Assistant City Manager Holland stated that in the past, it was a partnership between GABA and the City of Graham, and funneled through the Appearance Commission for approval. He stated Staff did not know if they were supposed to be working with GABA on the new creation of the banners, and whether it would still go through the Appearance Commission. He stated the City was putting the money into it and asked if GABA would be funding any part of it.

Mayr Pro Tem Hall said he did not see an issue with the City taking over the project.

Council Member Whitaker stated we should speak to GABA to see if they wanted to help with the cost.

Mayor Pro Tem Hall stated that the City should be the driving partner.

Council decided that the City's Public Relations Specialist would submit designs to go before the Appearance Commission and then come to Council for final approval and funding. They also agreed to ask GABA if they wanted to help with the cost.

Motion by Council Member Young to go into closed session to discuss a personnel issue in accordance with N.C.G.S. Section 143-318.11(a)(6), seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

The closed session was held.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to go out of Closed Session, seconded by Council Member Young. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to return to Open Session, seconded by Council Member Chin. The motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Hall to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Young. The motion passed unanimously. (9:17 p.m.)

Renee M. Ward, CMC
City Clerk