

**GREAT Board of Directors meeting
March 16, 2023**

Attendance: Beth Booth, Dick Evans, Brady Cody, Eric Shoemaker, Jim Baker, Angelina Jumper, Karen Taylor, Mary Griffin, Valerie Frapp, Michelle Shippet, Executive Director

Motion to open: Jim, second Pam

Motion to accept agenda:

Motion to accept January meeting minutes: Valerie, second Jim

Motion to accept financial statements: Mary, second Jim

- Meetings (general membership) for remainder of the year: July 20th 5pm Robbinsville High School, September 21st at 11am, November 16th at 11am.

- **GREAT Updates:** Michelle Shippet
- Education in a cup partnership work has begun. By the end of summer/beginning of the school year Main Street coffee shop and printing business to open.
- Building outdoor communities project will be underway shortly.
- Main street revitalization project beginning.
- Equestrian pavilion to see movement soon.
- Strategic marketing plan steering committee will be seeking members soon.
- Financial fair (targeting seniors) still in the works.
- New GREAT website up by the end of April.
- New monthly newsletter coming
- Strategic plan updated - implementation to begin in the coming months.
- Working on a grant for digital inclusion (broadband access).
- Demo the Silos meeting to happen again in May. Brainstorming and collaborative projects to be discussed. Many of the above projects are a result of last year's meeting.
- Resource fair upcoming.

- **GUEST SPEAKER:** Matt Settlemyer ED - South Western Resource conservation Council
- Bridges gap between government and non-profit organizations in grants and funding.
- Worked with Haywood Co for flood mitigation
- Farm to Table work
- Food box services
- Works to leverage funds and resources.
- Specialize in farmers/working class and seeking funds/building business
- Closing of Canton Papermill will affect the Graham County economy
 - State government to put money into career training and job placement.
- Work on environmental/outdoor projects

- **GUEST SPEAKER:** Laura Lauffer - Empowering Mountain Food Systems
- Funding ends March 31st
- Vecinos will be picking up the role

- They will work with farms to buy food for migrant workers
- Community Food Strategies developed Food Councils in counties.
 - Group of people working on food systems
 - Food access, farmers markets, commercial kitchen
 - Commissary kitchen (Jackson County) to assist with food trucks.
 - Value added food processing
 - Farmers market surveys (what do farmers need)
 - Food box delivery (elderly/shut-ins)
 - Meeting in April (tentatively) with Jess to re-organize Graham County Food Council
- Jacob Adams meat packing/processing in Cherokee County (Marble) will become USDA approved.
- Seeking ARC and WNC Bridge Foundation funding to continue this work.

Membership Updates:

- Jenni Irwin with Vaya Health: Resource Coordinator & Peer Support working to close the gaps in youth services
- Mary Griffin: Graham County Library reported on the success of the “Bookworms” program studying vermiculture.
- Mary Griffin: Graham County Farmers’ Market will open on May 13th at the Graham County Library site from 8 am to noon.
- Eddie Hollifield: Boy Scouts of America annual fundraiser underway with the discount card for regional businesses. No troop is currently formed in Graham County.
- Mary Griffin on behalf of Southwest Commission announced that there are funds available for caretakers of senior adults for hiring respite workers.
- Bob Wehr: Graham County Health Advisory Board: a local area health/emergency/informational directory is being created. He asked for help in identifying entities or services that should be included.
- The Robbinsville Community Garden is accepting applications for the 2023 season. Contact Erin Emmons for more information.
- Kim Smith: Wilderness Area: shared about a photography class project being performed in the EBCI. Articles about the “wild” areas of Graham County are some of the expose’ photos shared through this project. Would like to work the other partners to offer this opportunity to more youth.
- Jennifer West: Ex.Dir. SVC announced that their season would kick off on April 15 with a Spring Fest and Bluegrass concert. Season tickets are available.

Valerie Frapp motioned to adjourn; Eric Shoemaker seconded, all in favor.