

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CONTINUED SESSION
NOVEMBER 16, 2015
MINUTES**

The Macon County Board of Commissioners held a joint meeting with the Town of Franklin Board of Aldermen and the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners at the Highlands Biological Station in Highlands, NC at 6 p.m. All of the board members (with the exception of Commissioner Higdon), the County Manager, Deputy Clerk and Finance Director were present. Representing the Town of Franklin were Mayor Bob Scott, Aldermen Joyce Handley, Farrell Jamison and Barbara McRae, and Town Clerk/Human Resources Officer Chad Simons. Representing the Town of Highlands were Mayor Patrick Taylor, Commissioners Donnie Calloway, John Dotson, Amy Patterson and Eric Pierson, and Town Manager Bob Frye and Town Clerk Rebecca Shuler. Members of the media were also present.

Mayor Taylor welcomed those in attendance, Commissioner Calloway gave the invocation, and the group shared a meal together. Mayor Taylor then called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and explained that after a report from each governing unit, there would be a presentation on the Highlands Biological Station.

Going first, Franklin Mayor Bob Scott gave a report on the success of the town's Pumpkin Fest event and the recent Veterans' Day parade, and noted that Winter Wonderland events were scheduled for November 28th and December 5th. Town officials are surveying residents regarding a bicycle and pedestrian plan, and Mayor Scott said the town board had voted to go back into the National Flood Insurance Program. He also reported that the town is looking for a space for a possible toy museum, and that Franklin was voted the best small town for outdoor activities by Blue Ridge magazine. Mayor Scott will be filling an unexpired term on the North Carolina League of Municipalities Board of Directors. He recognized the other Franklin officials at the meeting.

Next, Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor reviewed a number of recreation improvements in the town, including an enclosed swimming pool, a new

community park and a soon-to-be-opened ice skating rink. Following the completion of the water intake project and repairs to the dam at Lake Sequoyah, he said the town's next big initiative is to provide broadband internet connectivity to the entire town, and this matter was discussed at some length. Mayor Taylor also recognized the other Highlands officials at the meeting.

Chairman Corbin gave an update on the Parker Meadows Recreational Complex, pointing out that officials from Haywood and Clay counties were planning to visit the park in the near future. The County Manager commented on the complex as well and noted the county was beginning construction of a new landfill cell that could last as long as 60 years. He also said that the county had just renewed its solid waste franchise agreement with J&B Disposal for an eight-year term, and that renovations to Union Academy and Highlands School would be wrapped up by the end of year. Other items from the county's update included personnel improvements in emergency services, the upcoming switch to a new phone system, more data storage for information technology, an anticipated higher tax collection rate and a promising start to the new employee health insurance plan. "It's been a very good year," the County Manager concluded. The county commissioners also discussed the status of proposed legislation that would assist the county financially with its K-12 schools in Highlands and Nantahala, which are two of only three such schools in the entire state. Chairman Corbin also recognized the other county officials at the meeting.

Highlands Commissioner John Dotson then introduced Jim Costa, the executive director of the Highlands Biological Station, who presented a PowerPoint presentation on the facility, noting that the Highlands area is a "biodiversity hotspot."

Chairman Corbin announced that the Region A Council of Governments meeting would be held in Franklin on November 23rd with the primary topic of discussion to be the upcoming bond issue. Commissioner Beale expressed his appreciation to Franklin Aldermen Joyce Handley and Farrell Jamison, as this would be their last time at one of the joint meetings.

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman