

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
April 12, 2022
MINUTES

Chairman Tate called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All Board Members, County Manager Derek Roland, Deputy Clerk Mike Decker, Finance Director Lori Carpenter, County Attorney Eric Ridenour, members of the news media, county employees and interested citizens were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Commissioner Beale recognized and thanked members of the Daybreak and Noon Rotary Clubs who had completed work on the county-owned pavilion on the Little Tennessee River Greenway located behind the shopping center. The Daybreak Club President, Angela Deal, and the Service Chair of the Noon Club, Amy Manshack, were present to provide information about the project. Commissioner Beale recognized Angela Kinsland for her 30 years of service and congratulated her on her upcoming retirement in May. Chairman Tate announced that the annual Law Enforcement Memorial Tribute will be held on May 13, 2022 at noon at the Town Square Gazebo in Franklin to honor law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Chairman Tate requested that all in attendance rise and a moment of silence was observed.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Led by Mrs. Carpenter, the pledge to the flag was recited.

PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER PROPOSED NAMES FOR NEW ROADS IN MACON COUNTY AND TO ASSIGN A RANGE OF ROAD NUMBERS IN CONNECTION WITH THE SAME, TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR ROAD NAME CHANGES, TO CHANGE THE RANGE OF NUMBERS FOR CERTAIN ROADS, TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR DELETION OF CERTAIN ROADS AND TO CONSIDER A CHANGE OF RANGE OF NUMBERS FOR CERTAIN ROAD:

At 6:05 p.m., Chairman Tate called the public hearing to order. Angela Kinsland, Macon County 911 Addressing Coordinator, stated that road changes had been advertised in accordance with the North Carolina General Statutes and requested they be approved as presented. After a brief discussion, confirming that no telephone calls concerning the changes had been received, and with no one from the public wishing to speak to the changes, Chairman Tate closed the public hearing at 6:06 p.m. Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded

by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to approve the “April 12, 2022 Amendment to Chapter 14 of the Macon County Code of Ordinances, the Macon County Road Naming and Numbering System,” a copy of which is attached (Attachment 1) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Tracy Dogan shared her concerns about the proposed changes to the Animal Control Ordinance. She provided a handout of her concerns to board members and indicated she would bring her concerns back again at the public hearing on the ordinance amendments when it is scheduled.

ADDITIONS, ADJUSTMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the agenda, as adjusted, as follows:

- To add Item 9E, DOT report on road and bridge projects, as requested by Commissioner Beale.

Proposed change to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Consortium

– David Garrett, Southwestern Commission Workforce Director, and Southwestern Commission Executive Director Russ Harris provided information about the recommendation from March 30, 2022 by the NCWorks Commission to realign workforce development board boundaries to reduce the number of these boards from 23 to eight across the 100 counties, which would make Macon County part of a 13-14 county area instead of a seven-member one. Mr. Garrett requested the board approve a resolution requesting that the Southwestern Commission Board remain unchanged and continue to serve the seven far-western counties. Mr. Garrett stated that the Southwestern Commission Board approved a resolution to this effect at their March 1, 2022 meeting. Mr. Harris stated that the regional board has positive and active working relationships with all the agencies and governments in the current seven-county area and does not want to see a negative impact on those relationships that could occur with realignment to a larger area. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Beale made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shields, to approve the resolution as presented. The vote was unanimous.

Discussion regarding Environmental Health staffing issues at Macon County Public Health

– Commissioner Higdon provided a review of the loss of staff in the Environmental Health program at Macon County Public Health over the past couple of years and the challenges of recruitment. A brief discussion including board members, Health Director Kathy McGaha, Environmental Health Supervisor Charles Womack, Environmental Health Program Specialist Jon Fouts, and Personnel Technician Jessica Baucum, along with local realtors Evan Harrell and Teresa Murray, summarized recruitment challenges and the impact the staff shortage is having on the county’s economy and workloads on

the remaining staff. Following the discussion, Commissioner Higdon discussed forming a committee to work with Mr. Ridenour to draft a letter to send to the state requesting a review and change in the educational and experience requirements of these positions. Members of that committee will include Ms. McGaha, Mr. Womack (when available), Ms. Baucum, and Mr. Harrell. Commissioner Beale requested that a septic installer also be asked to participate. The committee will provide a report at the next regular meeting.

Discussion regarding safety concerns and condition of Nantahala EMS building and work on Nantahala library/community building – Commissioner Higdon stated that a meeting is scheduled to discuss the EMS building and a report would follow at a later meeting. Mr. Roland stated that the Macon County Library Board and the Nantahala Community Club had agreed to split the building in half. He said the project is already in the county’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and budgeted for next fiscal year. Commissioner Beale asked Macon County Library Director Karen Wallace to inform the board about an architectural contact for design. Ms. Wallace stated she feels it is imperative that an architect be consulted on design needs specific to a library. She provided Mr. Roland with the contact information of an architect who has considerable experience in library renovation and design and requested he be contacted regarding his availability to work on this project. Mr. Roland said he would contact him and request a quote.

Proposed changes to Animal Control Ordinance – Mr. Roland stated this is the beginning of a process for review and approval of a revised Animal Control Ordinance. He indicated the Macon County Board of Health has reviewed the ordinance and has recommended thirteen changes, a list of which will be attached (Attachment 2) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Ms. McGaha introduced Jimmy Villiard, the Animal Control Section Administrator, who gave an overview of the recommended changes and stated the recommendations were listed in priority order.

DOT Report on Roads and Bridges – Commissioner Beale reviewed the schedule for bridge replacements, the resurfacing of roads, and other projects to be completed in Macon County by the North Carolina Department of Transportation and timelines for each. A copy of that schedule is attached (Attachment 3) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

OLD BUSINESS:

Consideration of change order for Macon Middle School – Jack Morgan reviewed the details of Change Order #016 on the Macon Middle School renovation project in the amount of \$65,954. Upon a motion by Commissioner

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Shields seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to approve the change order as presented, along with the accompanying budget amendment, in the amount of \$65,954. An unexecuted copy of the change order is attached (Attachment 4) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Request for new position – Housing Director John Fay reported that he is confident that grant funding will be received this summer from the American Rescue Plan Act COVID relief fund for improving infrastructure. Although he does not know the amount that will be received, he believes it will be considerable and more than enough to support the salaries of at least two new crewmembers. He requested that in preparation of receipt of those funds, he would like to go ahead and hire one weatherization crewmember, adding that he currently has funds in his budget to cover the addition. Mr. Fay said this would allow him to get the crewmember hired and trained, so they are ready to go when the funding arrives. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve a new weatherization crewmember position for the Macon County Housing Department.

Recommendation from the Community Funding Pool – Karen Wallace presented an overview of the applicants and recommended awards for this fiscal year's distribution of \$75,000 in Community Funding Pool dollars. She explained that 14 applications were received, totaling \$98,000 in fund requests. Ms. Wallace indicated the total amount available for distribution was \$75,000 and that two of the requests (KIDS Place and SK828) were not being recommended because they had already received funding directly from the commissioners. Ms. Wallace provided members with a handout of the requests and recommendations and requested approval of the distributions. Upon a motion by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted 4-1, with Commissioner Young opposing, to approve the distributions as requested, and a copy of the approved recommendations is attached (Attachment 5) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

Proposed Child and Family Specialty Plan Medicaid Waiver – Commissioner Beale requested that Patrick Betancourt, Department of Social Services (DSS) Director, and Shelly Foreman, the Regional Community Relations Director for VAYA, explain the proposed statewide plan for DSS clients to transition from the current Local Management Entity (LME) plan to a new statewide plan. Mr. Betancourt indicated there are more than 80 children in the care of Macon County DSS today that would be negatively impacted in receiving behavioral health services with the implementation of this change. He spoke about the close working relationship that Macon County DSS has with VAYA and how beneficial that relationship is to the children, as well as DSS staff, in meeting the needs of

those children. Ms. Foreman indicated this change would present challenges not only for children in care, but also adults who are caregivers, guardian and other children in the home who are not in DSS care, and those who are involved in the in-home program through DSS, etc. She explained this change would put DSS in the position of having to negotiate the needs of the individuals with a private statewide vendor as opposed to VAYA acting as the LME. Commissioner Beale recommended the board send a letter to North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kody Kinsley opposing the statewide plan. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the letter, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 6) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented, which includes: (A) Minutes of the March 8, 2022 regular meeting and the March 24, 2022 called meeting, (B) Budget Amendments #220-231, (C) Tax releases for March 2022 in the amount of \$5,741.72, (D) a Capital Project Ordinance for Greenway Improvements in the amount of \$250,000, (E) a GPRS contract for underground location services at Franklin High School, and (F) the monthly ad valorem tax collection report, for which no action is necessary.

APPOINTMENTS:

(A) Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to reappoint Janet Greene as the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) representative on the Town of Franklin Planning Board.

(B) Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to appoint John Fay to the newly-created Southwestern NC HOME Consortium Board of Directors.

CLOSED SESSION – At 8:08 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session as allowed under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) in order to preserve the attorney client privilege and NCGS 143-381.11(a)(5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or (ii) the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract. At 8:48 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to come out of closed session and return to open session. No action was taken.

ADJOURN: At 8:49 p.m., upon a motion from Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Jim Tate
Board Chair