

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
CONTINUED SESSION  
MAY 31, 2016  
MINUTES**

Chairman Corbin reconvened the meeting at 4:03 p.m. in the commission boardroom as recessed from the May 10, 2016 regular meeting. All board members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, Finance Director, County Attorney, members of the news media, several county department heads and representatives of Macon County Schools were present. The primary purpose of the continued session was to hold a work session on the recommended Fiscal Year 2016-17 budget.

**SHADE STRUCTURES AT PARKER MEADOWS RECREATIONAL COMPLEX:**

Chairman Corbin explained that the board had some business items to address prior to discussing the budget. He recognized the County Manager, who said that the materials and installation of the safety structures at the Parker Meadows Recreational Complex had to be rebid because the initial low bidder was not authorized to construct in North Carolina. Lindsay Leopard, the county's Purchasing Agent, told the board that the two items had to be bid separately, with Shade America being the low bidder on the materials at \$59,380 and Paragon Homes of Charlotte being the low bidder on the installation of those materials at \$21,500 for a total price of \$80,880. She said this total is about \$4,000 more than the original low bid. Chairman Corbin noted that if the board approved the new bids, the work on the structures could start this week and that they would be in place prior to the next tournament at the park. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to approve the informal bids as presented and to authorize the County Manager to execute the required contracts.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Although there was no agenda item for public comment, Chairman Corbin allowed Narelle Kirkland to address the board, and she asked the board not to raise taxes in the upcoming fiscal year. Chairman Corbin

offered the assurance that no tax increase was forthcoming, and commented that Macon County will likely have the third-lowest ad valorem tax rate among the state's 100 counties once all of those budgets are set.

**CLOSED SESSION:** Chairman Corbin asked that the board hold a brief closed session for the purpose of preserving the attorney-client privilege, and the County Manager also requested time in the closed session to discuss a matter involving potential property acquisition. Chairman Corbin stated that the board would likely take action following the closed session. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 4:11 p.m. as allowed under N.C.G.S 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with the attorney and 143-318.11(a)(5) regarding property acquisition. Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to come out of closed session at 4:27 p.m. and return to open session.

**PROJECT TECH:** After reading the appropriate section of the state statute allowing for the closed session discussion, Chairman Corbin said that the board has been made aware that a company is looking to expand into an empty facility in the county industrial park known locally as the SKF building. In moving to the 72,000-square-foot facility, the company plans to add 35 new jobs over the next five years that would create an additional payroll of \$1,711,000. In addition, the company would be making \$3.2-million in new investment over that time period. The company is seeking a \$120,000 North Carolina Department of Commerce OneNC Grant, which would require a 3-to-1 match from the county of \$30,000. Tommy Jenkins, the county's economic development director, explained that the incentive agreement contains "clawbacks," and if certain benchmarks are not met in terms of new hires or investment, the county can collect its grant match funds from the company. Mr. Jenkins said the opportunity provides good paying jobs, fills the building and gives the county momentum going forward. Board members questioned if the \$30,000 was available in the county's contingency fund, and the Finance Director confirmed it was. Chairman Corbin recommended approving the incentive funds for what is being called "Project Tech," and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to allocate \$30,000 from contingency for the matching grant funds. The County Attorney pointed out that there will be a subsequent agreement related to this matter for the board to consider at its June 14<sup>th</sup> regular meeting.

**MACON COUNTY SCHOOLS PRESENTATION:** Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding the system's budget proposal to the county for Fiscal Year 2016-17, a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 1)** and is hereby made a part of these

minutes. In reviewing the system's current expense and capital outlay needs, Dr. Baldwin asked that the board fund the operating expense level for the schools at the same level as in Fiscal Year 2013-14, at a total amount of \$7,338,330. The County Manager's recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2016-17 includes \$6,995,431 for the system, plus \$500,000 in capital outlay funding. Following Dr. Baldwin's presentation and a lengthy discussion that covered a variety of topics, Commissioner Beale said that he and Commissioner Shields – the liaisons to the school system – had no recommendation at this time, but that one would be forthcoming by the commission's June 14<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, stating that the board's relationship with the school system is "very valuable." Chairman Corbin cited his desire to keep the capital outlay allocation at \$500,000, and Dr. Baldwin reviewed a list of the system's needs. No action was taken.

Chairman Corbin called for a recess at 5:37 p.m.

Chairman Corbin called the meeting back to order at 5:48 p.m.

**NC FOREST SERVICE:** Bobby Mashburn, the Macon County Ranger for the North Carolina Forest Service, made a request for \$22,650 in additional funding to assist the agency in replacing a 2004 truck and to make needed repairs to the county office that was built in 1979. He reminded the board that 40 percent of his budget is funded by the county. No action was taken.

**OTTO VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT PROPOSED TAX INCREASE:** Chief Terry Rholetter with the Otto Volunteer Fire Department outlined his agency's need for an increase in the district's fire tax rate. The department is seeking an increase of 0.67 cents per \$100 valuation, which if approved would increase Otto's rate from 6.14 cents to 6.81 cents and would generate approximately \$32,000 in additional revenue. Chief Rholetter told the commissioners that the proposed rate hike had been discussed at a community development club meeting and was met with no opposition. No action was taken.

**PAY PLAN:** The County Manager presented his video explanation of the 2016 Macon County Pay Plan Recommendations for the board's review. Saying he wanted county employees to know how the recommendations came about, the County Manager was seeking the board's approval of the presentation before releasing it to staff. The video, along with a document outlining the recommendations, will be made available to employees via the county's website. The County Manager again noted that the plan's impact on addressing compression issues was the most important factor. While 181 full-time employees would see a salary increase, he pointed out that bringing everyone to "100 percent compliance" with where they should be in their respective pay range would require a tax increase and would not be "sustainable." Chairman

Corbin spoke to the combined efforts of the pay plan committee, saying “this was hundreds of hours of work,” with the County Manager adding that “this was a better study than you would have gotten from a third-party vendor.” By being on the website, the video will also be available to the public. No action was taken.

**BUDGET REVIEW:** Commissioner Beale handed out copies of the Macon County Public Library Budget Proposal Highlights, a copy of which is attached (**Attachment 2**) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. The proposal outlined a request for an increase in funding of \$120,610 above the \$999,390 contained in the County Manager’s recommended budget. The board members did not discuss the proposal and no action was taken. Other discussion regarding the budget centered on airport maintenance, the Macon County Heritage Center at Cowee School, and funding for improvements to Wesley’s Park and the Robert C. Carpenter Community Building. Commissioner Tate asked some questions related to telephone expense, airport funding and the elections budget, all of which were addressed. The consensus of the board was that there was no need for another work session.

**ADJOURN:** With no other business, upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

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Derek Roland  
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

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Kevin Corbin  
Board Chairman