

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JULY 12, 2016
MINUTES

Chairman Corbin called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. All Board Members (with the exception of Commissioner Tate), the Deputy Clerk, Finance Director, County Attorney, members of the news media and interested citizens were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: There were no announcements.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Chairman Corbin asked those in attendance to observe a moment of silence.

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Led by Commissioner Higdon, the pledge to the flag was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Bob Bourke with Macon New Beginnings gave the board an update on the non-profit organization's activities. Having been in existence for over a year, Mr. Bourke said Macon New Beginnings had served 172 people, more than 70 of whom were homeless at the time. In addition to its backpack program, the group is now serving food in conjunction with a partnership with the Serving Spoon. He said that local churches and business have stepped up to help, and told the board that "Truly, God is at work in the community." He said volunteers have donated 1,100 hours of their time, and the organization is now serving a hot meal on Thursdays at 6 p.m. at Franklin Memorial Park. Commissioner Higdon asked Mr. Bourke how many homeless people were in the Franklin area on any given day, and his answer was 20.

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

- To add as Item #11D under New Business discussion of the “burn building” at Southwestern Community College (SCC), per Commissioner Shields.
- To add as Item #11E consideration of a Technology-Enabled Care Coordination Agreement, per the County Attorney.

RESOLUTION FOR BUILDING REUSE GRANT APPLICATION: The County Attorney handed out copies of a resolution stemming from action the board took at its June 28, 2016 continued session regarding a grant application to the state’s Building Reuse Program in association with “Project Tech.” Following brief comments from Chairman Corbin and the County Attorney, upon a motion by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve a “Resolution of the Macon County Board of County Commissioners Supporting and Authorizing and Ratifying the Submission of an Application to the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division, Rural Grants/Program for a Grant from its Building Reuse Program.” A copy of the resolution is attached (Attachment 1) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

RELEASE OF UNCOLLECTABLE MOTOR VEHICLE TAXES: Tax Administrator Richard Lightner requested that the board release a total of \$98,677.51 in uncollectable motor vehicle taxes, dating back as far as 2008. Mr. Lightner explained in detail his staff’s efforts to collect these taxes, and pointed out that the new state system of “Tax and Tag Together” will eliminate this issue going forward. The County Attorney added that since motor vehicle taxes do not constitute a lien, this can be difficult to recover. Following further discussion, upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to release the taxes as recommended. A copy of the full report is on file in the Deputy Clerk’s Office. In closing, Mr. Lightner said that the collection rate on real estate taxes for 2015 is 98.18 percent.

GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – Following a brief explanation by the Finance Director, upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve a Grant Project Ordinance for Weatherization Assistance Program Contract #6940 in the amount of \$171,357. A copy of the ordinance is attached (Attachment 2) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE/2016 URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM – Following a brief explanation by the Finance Director, upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve a Grant Project Ordinance for the 2016 Urgent Repair

Program in the amount of \$100,000. A copy of the ordinance is attached (Attachment 3) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

SCC “BURN BUILDING”: Commissioner Shields addressed the board on the subject of replacing the “burn building” at Southwestern Community College (SCC). He said that he met recently with SCC officials at the site. Under the current scenario, it would cost \$1.9-million to replace the facility, \$475,000 of which would be in the form of a match from the county. However, Commissioner Shields voiced concerns that when flood waters went through the building earlier in the year, one-fifth of the building was under water, noting that the water line mark was a foot above his head. He said the problem is that the site is not appropriate for this facility. However, he also stated that you can’t take this program out of the picture, as it is essential for hundreds of volunteer firefighters to train in to keep their certifications and “would destroy volunteer fire departments in the county.” He said this led to discussion of moving the public safety training center to the Macon County SCC campus off Siler Road, and noted he had invited college representatives to come to the meeting to address the issue. Curtis Dowdle, the Dean of Public Safety Training, said a number of factors are of concern, including debris from upstream that causes problems during high water, downtime from training waiting for the building to dry out, blasts from the nearby quarry and the overall increase in the number of hours of burning at the building. Travis Scruggs, SCC’s fire and rescue training coordinator, said there are large cracks in the building and there are concerns of debris falling during training exercises. He said the facility is the only training center west of Asheville and it would take departments as much as 14 months to schedule training there, while there is no expense for any department to use the SCC building. Dr. Don Tomas, SCC’s president, pointed out that the conceptual site plan for SCC’s expansion of the Macon campus includes having the public safety training center relocated there. Chairman Corbin said that the building is nearing the end of its useful life, adding that the \$475,000 match is significant. He suggested having an independent firm come in and look at the structure and determine if it can be fixed and at what cost. Dr. Tomas told the board that the state fire marshal wants to see the building moved out of the floodplain. This was followed by a brief discussion regarding the driving course at the training center. No action was taken.

TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED CARE COORDINATION AGREEMENT: Following brief comments by Chairman Corbin and the County Attorney, upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to approve a Technology-Enabled Care Coordination Agreement with Community Care of North Carolina, and authorized Department of Social Services Director Patrick Betancourt to sign the agreement on behalf of the county.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commission Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the following budget amendments: #1 for Health to account for a decrease of \$4,560 in Tobacco Grant funds associated with expenses for June 2016; #2 to appropriate the fund balance of federal and state forfeiture funds into 2016-17 in the amounts of \$24,363 federal and \$7,481 state; #3 for Senior Services to carry forward \$12,353 in funds from the prior fiscal year for a project that wasn't completed by June 30; and #4 for SCC to carry forward \$6,542 in funds from the prior fiscal year that weren't received by June 30. (Revisions with corresponding numbers attached).

APPOINTMENTS: The board tabled consideration of appointments to the Board of Health until the June 19th meeting.

RECESS: At 6:54 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to recess the meeting until Tuesday, July 19, 2016 at 6 p.m. at Franklin Memorial Park, 480 West Main Street, Franklin, NC for the purpose of holding a joint meeting with the Town of Franklin Board of Aldermen and the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman