

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OCTOBER 10, 2017
MINUTES**

Chairman Tate called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. All Board Members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, Finance Director, County Attorney, members of the news media and interested citizens were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Those in attendance watched a video from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) that provided an update on recent NCACC activities. The County Manager raised the issue of a possible joint meeting between the commissioners and the board members of the towns of Franklin and Highlands during November. There was discussion of holding the meeting at the newly renovated Robert C. Carpenter Community Building, as well as discussion of some type of "opening ceremony" for the facility. The County Manager also pointed out that the Southwestern Commission is working parallel to the county's broadband committee and has developed a broadband survey, a link to which will be featured on the county's website. He said this was "an excellent tool" and urged all of the county's residents to take the survey.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: No one signed up to speak.

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

- To add discussion of Veterans Day events and the unveiling of the Charters of Freedom monuments under Reports and Presentations as the new Item 9(B), per Commissioner Shields.
- To add consideration of the 2018 holiday schedule as the new Item 11(C) under New Business, per the Deputy Clerk.

- To add consideration of the reappointment of Brett Murphy to the Economic Development Commission (EDC) as an addition to Item 13(B) under Appointments, per the Deputy Clerk.
- To add discussion of a possible grant for wastewater treatment at Nantahala School as the new Item 11(D) under New Business, per the County Manager.
- To add a brief report stemming from the recent Rural Planning Organization (RPO) meeting as the new Item 9(C) under Reports and Presentations, per Commissioner Beale.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT PROCESS: Sarajane Melton, the Area Agency on Aging Administrator with the Southwestern Commission, told the board there was a new appointment process for individuals serving on the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). She also introduced Larry Reeves, who is the Regional Long Term Care Ombudsman for the Southwestern Commission. She explained that due to legislation known as House Bill (HB) 248, the process for appointing CAC members had become much more involved, noted that no appointments were necessary at this time, and that there are five long-term care facilities in Macon County. Mr. Reeves explained that under the new process, when a vacancy occurs, he will notify the county of it, and the commissioners will then nominate a person to fill it, who will be vetted as to service and possible conflicts of interest and then trained. Once all of that is completed, the county will be asked to “designate” that individual to serve for an initial appointment of one-year. If all goes well, then a three-year appointment can follow. Under the new law, Mr. Reeves noted there is now a way to remove someone from the CAC if needed. He concluded by saying that no action was necessary at this time. Commissioner Beale commented that it was already difficult enough to get people to serve on the CAC now.

VETERANS DAY UPDATE: Commissioner Shields shared details for the upcoming Veterans Day celebration on Saturday, November 11th, including a parade in downtown Franklin at 10:30 a.m., followed by a musical program at 11 a.m. at the gazebo on the town square. He said the program would then “transition” across the street to the courthouse plaza for the unveiling of the Charters of Freedom monuments. No action was necessary.

RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION UPDATE: Commissioner Beale gave a brief report from the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) meeting held recently in Bryson City concerning planned road projects in the county. He pointed out the following items: (1) continued work on the climbing lanes on US 64 going toward Clay County, (2) getting the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to move up the priority on replacing the bridge on Belden Circle behind the new Ingles supermarket, (3) making improvements to

Buck Creek Road a top priority, (4) having planned improvements to US 441 South moved up in the schedule to 2018, and (5) asking for the resurfacing of US 441. He also noted that Brian Burch will become the new NCDOT division engineer after December of this year and that the replacement of the town bridge over the Little Tennessee River is 18 percent complete and the project is on schedule. No action was necessary.

RESOLUTION APPROVING DOCUMENT CHANGES TO ALLOW USE OF BOND PROCEEDS FOR LANDFILL EQUIPMENT:

The Finance Director said she had contacted attorney Bob Jessup with Sanford Holshouser regarding the use of bond proceeds from the new landfill construction project to purchase landfill equipment, and received approval to move forward. Solid Waste Director Chris Stahl then passed out copies of a memo outlining his need for an excavator and one or possibly two steep-slope mowers. (A copy of the memo is attached (Attachment 1) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.) Mr. Stahl explained the need for the excavator to clean out five new sedimentation basins that had been constructed to manage the stormwater from the newly constructed cell, which also created some 20 acres of new slopes that must be maintained. He told the board that in total, there are approximately 50 acres of steep slopes to be mowed. With a total estimated cost of just less than \$304,000, Mr. Stahl said both the state Local Government Commission (LGC) and Entegra Bank, the lender, are okay with this use of the funds. Chairman Tate questioned if it would be better to contract with someone to do this work, and Commissioner Gillespie also mentioned the option to "outsource" the mowing. This led to a lengthy discussion. During this time, Mr. Stahl noted that he was considering autonomous, remote-controlled mowers due to the safety issue, and explained that woody vegetation could not be allowed to grow on those slopes. He told the board members that what they would be approving at this time was the county's ability to buy the equipment, as the actual purchases would have to go through the bid process. This led to further discussion about the timing of the purchases. Commissioner Gillespie asked Mr. Stahl to "go back and look at contracting the mowing." The Finance Director pointed out that any purchase must come back to the board for final approval. Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted 4-1, with Commissioner Gillespie opposing, to approve the "Resolution approving document changes to allow County to use bond proceeds for landfill equipment," a copy of which is attached (Attachment 2) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

SOUTH MACON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Commissioner Beale explained that South Macon Elementary School has exceeded its official student capacity, prompting the need for an addition to the facility. With a tentative need for six new classrooms, or about 9,700 additional square feet of classroom space, and 1,200 square feet of additional cafeteria space, Commissioner Beale said he

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was seeking authorization from the board to allow the Macon County Board of Education to obtain the necessary quotes for architectural services. The County Attorney and Finance Director both pointed out that the school board will need to send out a request from proposals (RFP) for those services. The County Attorney also noted the need for an interlocal agreement with the school board. Following additional discussion, Commissioner Beale made a motion to grant the board of education members the necessary authority, and it was seconded by Commissioner Shields. During discussion, Commissioner Higdon questioned Todd Gibbs, the school system's Auxiliary Services Director, about transferring students to other schools or perhaps changing the district lines. Mr. Gibbs responded that other elementary schools are also at capacity, and adjusting districts would affect all of the others. The board voted unanimously to approve the motion as presented.

2018 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE: Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the 2018 Holiday Schedule for county employees as presented, a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 3)** and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT AT NANTAHALA SCHOOL: The County Manager initiated the discussion by explaining that the wastewater treatment system at Nantahala School was in need of a complete overhaul and that grant funding was available to do so. He said that Macon County Housing Director John Fay had been through this process many times and had been working with Mr. Gibbs from the school system to get the application ready to go. Mr. Gibbs stated that certain Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were aimed at infrastructure for schools, but said the money is awarded to the county, not the school system. Mr. Fay explained that October 31st was the deadline for the application, and that the board needed to officially assign someone to represent the county, and it did not have to be a county employee and could be Mr. Gibbs. The other official action is that a public hearing be held, and Mr. Gibbs said that Macon County Schools Superintendent Chris Baldwin was in Nantahala conducting that hearing tonight and raised the issue of the board of commissioners adopting the minutes of that hearing. He said the county would be applying for \$200,000 with no required county match. The County Attorney had a number of questions regarding the details of the application process. The County Manager suggested that the County Attorney be allowed to review the grant application and the public hearing process, and if needed the board could call another meeting prior to October 31st. Following additional discussion, and upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Gibbs as the county's representative on the project/grant application.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve the items on the consent agenda as follows: the minutes of the September 12, 2017 regular meeting; the following budget amendments: #56 for the Health Department to allocate \$37,500 in additional Tobacco Settlement money received from the state; #57 for the Sheriff's Department to allocate \$2,843 in insurance settlement funds for vehicle repairs; #58 for the Health Department to allocate \$867 where the Macon County Humane Society prepaid for three doses of rabies vaccines; #59 for Senior Services to appropriate an additional Home Community Care Block Grant allocation; #60 for the Health Department to allocate \$11,310 in additional health promotion funds; #61 for the Department of Social Services to appropriate \$279 in additional SHIPP revenue; #62 for Emergency Services to appropriate \$1,000 from a donation. (Copies of the amendments are attached); tax releases for the month of September in the amount of \$3,022.93. (Copies of the releases are on file in the Deputy Clerk's office); monthly ad valorem tax collections report (no action necessary).

APPOINTMENTS: (1) **Community Funding Pool:** The County Manager provided an update on the process of essentially reconstituting the 12-member task force that makes recommendations for distributing money from the Community Funding Pool. He explained that he planned to have applications for all 12 slots to present to the board at the November regular meeting. No action was taken. (2) **Economic Development Commission:** (A) Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to accept the Franklin Town Council's reappointment of Council member Barbara McRae as the town's representative on the Economic Development Commission (EDC). (B) Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to accept the nomination of the Highlands Area Chamber of Commerce to reappoint Bill Futral to serve another term as its representative on the EDC. (C) Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to accept the appointment of the Franklin Chamber Board to have Jim Breedlove serve as the representative of the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce on the EDC. (D) Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to reappoint Brett Murphy to the EDC. All four terms of appointment are for three years each.

ADJOURN: With no other business, and at 7:24 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Jim Tate
Board Chairman