



**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DECEMBER 12, 2023
MINUTES**

Years of Service awards were presented to county employees before the meeting. A reception for those employees was held in the hallway of the fourth floor of the Macon County Courthouse immediately following the presentations.

County Manager Derek Roland called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All Board Members, Deputy Clerk Tammy Keezer, Finance Director Lori Carpenter, and County Attorney Eric Ridenour were present, as were a number of county employees, media, and citizens.

At 6:01 p.m., Mr. Roland called a recess due to the large number in attendance requesting the meeting move upstairs to Courtroom A, on the fourth floor of the Macon County Courthouse, located at 5 West Main Street, Franklin, NC. At 6:07 p.m., Mr. Roland called the meeting back to order.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- (A) Mr. Roland gave a summary of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that was received by Macon County as requested by Commissioner Higdon at the November 14, 2023 meeting [\[Attachment 1\]](#).
- (B) Commissioner Antoine announced that he would need to leave the meeting early due to his recent surgery.

ELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR: Mr. Roland opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair. Commissioner Antoine made a motion nominating Commissioner Young as chairman. The motion died for lack of a second. Commissioner Higdon said he had known Commissioner Shields for many years and it had been an honor to serve with him and it was with great pride to make a motion to nominate Commissioner Shields as chairman. Commissioner Shearl seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR: Commissioner Shields made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Antoine to nominate Commissioner Young as vice chairman. The vote was unanimous.

AFFIRMATION OF THE 2024 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE:

Commissioner Shields requested approval of the 2024 regular meeting schedule indicating that meetings would be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the commission board room on the third floor of the Macon County Courthouse located at 5 West Main Street in Franklin, NC. Commissioner Young made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higdon to approve the meeting schedule as presented. The vote was unanimous. The schedule will be posted on the Macon County website and a copy available in the office of the Clerk to the Board.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Commissioner Shields requested all in attendance rise and a moment of silence was observed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Shearl, the pledge to the flag was recited.

PUBLIC HEARING(S): None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Commissioner Shields reminded those in attendance of the rules of the public comment period. He said the public comment period is limited to a total of 45 minutes, allowing speakers five minutes to comment. Commissioner Shields stated speakers are to address the board as a whole and not address an individual member, and indicated that no interaction between board members and the speaker, or action or decision should be expected. **Narelle Kirkland** spoke about the beauty of Macon County and requested the board save an area off of Highway 28 for a public park as she had requested at a previous meeting. **Hazel Norris** shared her comments and feelings regarding board actions at the November 14, 2023, regular meeting. She said on behalf of a lot of citizens in Macon County, she believes that Commissioner Shearl owes Mr. Roland an apology. Commissioner Shields said board members have agreed to disagree respectfully. Commissioner Shearl shared that his children have told him that it is not what he says but how he says it and that when he is backed into a corner it will be ugly when he comes out. He stated that he did write a statement that he would like to read after the public comment period. **Linda Tyler** spoke in support of the appointment of Ms. Moxley for the library board. She also requested that the board share the draft of the Fontana Regional Library agreement and the proposed changes. **Richard Lightner** spoke about the upcoming elections and requested a public hearing on the resolution proposing the addition of two at-large members passed by the board at the November 14, 2023 meeting. He also shared that he was opposed to partisan affiliation for Board of Education members. **Hilary Wilkes** spoke on behalf of the Board of Education regarding the resolution to make the Board of Education elections partisan. She presented a resolution passed by the Board of Education on November 27, 2023, stating their opposition and read the resolution aloud [Attachment 2]. **Scott Baste** requested the board look at more issues that could be addressed that would bring the community closer together instead of further apart. **Betsy Baste** said she wants to make sure that the board is here to represent everyone in the county, to operate under the rule of unity, and to judge everyone on the merits of the individual. **Bob Scott** spoke against making the Board of Education elections partisan. **Robbie Holland** shared his appreciation for the board members and said he was embarrassed by the actions displayed at the November meeting. He expressed his appreciation to Mr. Roland for standing up for the employees and treating employees with respect. **Sarah Johnson** requested the board allocate funds to mental health, to the art and music programs in the schools, and to other activities for younger children.

Commissioner Shearl stated he would like to address the board and the citizens regarding last month's meeting and read a prepared statement. In his statement he said he does not want conflict to define Macon County; that he had misspoken about the budget increase under the management of Mr. Roland and meant to point out that the fund balance has increased but that

the media twisted the narrative; he is not against any county employees, appreciates their work, but that no one is special because of where they work; he will always be grateful to county employees, but is against over staffing; strongly supports capital improvements when we can afford them; taxpayers are the source of income for Macon County and the county employees; and, will always fight for limited government. Commissioner Shearl said he had suggested that Mr. Roland not bring the ARPA funding to allow bonuses for county employees forward until the board had more opportunity to discuss the issue. He said he just spent five hours on December 4, 2023, with the Maintenance Director looking at properties that ARPA funds could have paid for. Commissioner Shearl ended by sharing that he encourages anyone to reach out to him to discuss any of these topics and said he did not ask for the County Manager's resignation based on ARPA funds.

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

- To add Item 14D under New Business, Discussion of County Property that Needs Immediate Attention, specifically the library, per Commissioner Shearl
- To add Item 14E under New Business, Declaration of Sheriff's Department Service Weapon to be Declared as Surplus Property, per Deputy Clerk Tammy Keezer
- To remove Item 14A under New Business, Discussion and Approval of the Updated Drug and Alcohol Policy for Macon County Transit, per Mr. Roland
- To move Item 12B under Reports and Presentations, Fiscal Year 2023 Audit to the beginning of Reports and Presentations, per Ms. Carpenter
- To add a Closed Session for Discussion Regarding Economic Development Business, per Mr. Roland
- To add Item 12D, Board of Education Resolution Opposing Partisanship of School Board Elections, per Commissioner Shields
- To table Item 16A, Appointment of Macon County Public Library Board of Trustees, per Commissioner Antoine. Library Director Abby Hardison reminded the board that two board members have to come from the Hudson Library Board in Highlands and that Ms. Moxley is currently the chair of that board. Commissioner Antoine requested the Hudson Library Board nominate an additional person for consideration. By consensus, the board tabled the item agreeing that a recommendation for appointment would be presented at the January meeting so this item could be resolved since it had been on the agenda for two months.

ANNUAL OPIOID FUNDING MEETING – Mr. Roland declared this as the annual opioid funding meeting for Macon County and informed board members that no decision has been at this time as to how this funding will be spent. He said that the Southwestern Commission has taken on the task of helping our seven western counties determine how to spend these funds. Mr. Roland shared that the Town of Highlands and the Town of Franklin were both invited to this meeting, but there was no one from either of those municipalities in attendance. Ms. Carpenter reported the anticipated funding amount of \$5,455,133 was to be received over an 18-year period and the amount received to date is \$614,350.99 [Attachment 3]. She said we have

earned interest on the amount received as of November 30, 2023, of \$23,733.46 and currently have \$638,084.45 in special revenue fund. Mr. Roland said these funds cannot be spent until a resolution is passed stating how we plan to spend these funds and gave an overview of option A or B from the agreement on how the funds are to be spent. He said we are in the planning phase and Southwestern Commission is helping to develop a regional plan. Russ Harris with the Southwestern Commission said the seven western counties decided to develop a regional plan with Swain County receiving a grant from the Dogwood Health Trust to pay for the development of the plan. He said the counties in the region decided it was more cost-effective to develop a regional plan as opposed to utilizing the individual county resources to do this county by county. Mr. Harris reported that Omni Institute was chosen to lead the efforts and provided a handout of the data collected by that company [Attachment 4]. He said they have moved into stakeholder input and a survey link has been sent out to board members. Mr. Harris said a draft plan is expected in February with a final product expected to be presented in June. Mr. Roland said we have some of the best programs in the region in addressing the opioid crisis in Macon County and these local providers need to be involved in this plan and make sure they have a seat at the table.

FISCAL YEAR 2023 AUDIT – Jill Vang with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs, PA provided a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is available in the office of the Clerk to the Board. She said the audit has been presented to the Local Government Commission (LGC) and we are awaiting a response from them. Ms. Vang said there were three findings for Fiscal Year 2023 related to compliance: (1) DSS crosscutting enterprise program integrity, (2) Medicaid eligibility requirements, and (3) rural area tribal transit programs, and the details of each can be found in the audit report, a copy of which is in the office of the Clerk to the Board. She indicated the Board will need to provide a written corrective action plan within 60 days.

SCALY MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION - Bill Kirkland president of the Historical Society introduced himself and said the Historical Society owns the building and is responsible for maintaining it. He provided a handout that included a picture, history, and a list of needs. Mr. Kirkland said the maintenance and upkeep is done mostly by volunteers. He acknowledged the \$5,000 contribution that the board makes to them annually and is asking for an increase to \$10,000 per year as well as a request for an immediate \$20,000 in early 2024 to assist with the replacement of the HVAC system. Commissioner Shearl said he has met with this group and is impressed with the programs they have to offer and that it is a well-used space. He said they do not ask for much, they need heat, and made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higdon to grant funds not to exceed \$20,000 from general fund contingency and the budget amendment as requested to help with the HVAC system. Ms. Carpenter asked for an itemized list of repairs and stated that in the past we have reimbursed organizations for repairs instead of allocating a specific amount. Mr. Kirkland said there is a list available and the HVAC would be between \$13,000 and \$14,000. He said they have had a home inspection completed but they do not have access to the underneath of the building to access needs, but that the water heater leaks and needs to be replaced, they want to install stairs and railing outside for safety, parking is an issue, and they want to make some improvements inside to allow privacy for people working remotely. Commissioner Young said he sees this worthy but feels like this fits into the Community Funding Pool process. Ms. Carpenter said we do approve an agreement each year for \$5,000 to cover recreational activities and this agreement renewal has been in place since 2008. She recommended the \$5,000 annual increase be considered at budget time and to modify the agreement if approved at that time. Commissioner Higdon said this is directly benefiting the residents of Scaly Mountain. The vote was 4-1 with Commissioner Shearl, Commissioner Higdon, Commissioner Antoine, and Commissioner Shields voting in favor and Commissioner Young opposed.

BOARD OF EDUCATION RESOLUTION OPPOSING PARTISAN ELECTIONS – Board of Education Chair Jim Breedlove said he is proud of his board for the position they have taken and introduced board member Deidre Breeden to share some thoughts. Ms. Breeden said she has heard both sides of this issue and believes there are good intentions from both sides. She stated the issue of concern is that this item appeared on the November 14, 2023 agenda and none of the real-time issues have appeared on the agenda such as those with the Nantahala sewer or the Macon Middle School track. Ms. Breeden shared that she feels this issue has gotten more discussion between the two boards and none of the issues that she wants addressed have ever gotten that much time. Board of Education member Hilary Wilkes said she feels the bullet points of the resolution she read earlier are a great summation of the Board of Education’s thoughts and feelings. She said she feels that the two boards work very well together and requested removing the proposed resolution from their thoughts. Commissioner Antoine said in the spirit of unity he is a big advocate for getting to talk about things. He said that in the previous meeting, he had said that he felt that the Board of Education needed to be in the conversation and is supporting their position after hearing their resolution. Commissioner Antoine made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Young to squash Item 14C which had been tabled from the November meeting. Commissioner Shearl said it sounds like the Board of Education feels this is a direct attack on the five members of the Macon County Board of Education. He says it sounds like this is a much bigger issue than in Macon County since 53 percent of NC counties have adopted partisan elections for school boards. Commissioner Shearl said policies are handed down from beyond the local level and the Macon County Board of Education has very little control. Mr. Breedlove said he disagrees and said the Board of Education is not concerned about state or national politics; their goal is what is in the best interest of Macon County students period. Mr. Roland clarified that the motion was to terminate Item 14C, Discussion and Consideration of Resolution Supporting the Identification of Party Affiliation for Candidates for Macon County Board of Education, as tabled from the November 14, 2023 meeting. The vote was 4-1 with Commissioner Antoine, Commissioner Higdon, Commissioner Shields, and Commissioner Young voting in favor and Commissioner Shearl opposed.

At 8:27 p.m. Chairman Shields called a five-minute recess. He reconvened the meeting at 8:35 p.m. when Commissioner Higdon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Young to excuse Commissioner Antoine. The vote was 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION AND REVIEW OF THE RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CODE OF ETHICS – Commissioner Shields stated he wanted each board member to review the Code of Ethics adopted by this board in March 2023 and requested a motion to approve this item as discussed and reviewed and put a new date on it [Attachment 5]. Commissioner Young made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shields. The vote was 4-0 with Commissioner Antoine excused.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF VIEWING OF “THE VETERAN’S BATTLEFIELD” FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION – Veterans Service Director Leigh Tabor-Holbrooks provided a flyer with information about the film and read an excerpt from the handout [Attachment 6]. She said she had talked to a couple of board members already by email and requested support in hosting a viewing of this film in Macon County. Commissioner Higdon suggested with a consensus among board members that she move forward with planning a viewing for this important issue as requested.

DISCUSSION OF CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION OF AMENDMENT TO MACON COUNTY SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE – Mr. Ridenour reported that

Plan Reviewer Joe Allen had previously asked if the board was interested in making the proposed change to allow the Planning Board to approve bond releases. Commissioner Higdon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shearl, to approve the amendment as presented [Attachment 7]. The vote was 4-0 with Commissioner Antoine excused.

NEW BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY FOR MACON COUNTY TRANSIT – removed.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION TO EXEMPT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES BELOW \$50,000 – Solid Waste Director Chris Stahl said the Solid Waste Department needs Geotechnical Engineering services for the development of future landfill capacity (Phase III, Cell II). He indicated that these services are required as part of the permitting approval process by the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) for the development of the next landfill Cell. Mr. Stahl reminded board members that the current landfill is reaching capacity ahead of schedule due to the 25 percent growth in our waste stream over the past four years with the board previously approving a project for vertical expansion of Phase II, and Phase III, Cell I, which is ongoing. He said that even with the additional space gained once the expansion is approved, we will still only have 3-4 years of life remaining. Mr. Stahl stated that the hydro-geologic work proposed will allow us to begin the process of designing and permitting of the new cell in the fiscal year 2024-25 budget, allowing sufficient time to receive a permit to construct the new cell before we reach capacity. He said the fee for these services is anticipated to be less than \$50,000.00. Commissioner Higdon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Young to approve the resolution as requested [Attachment 8]. The vote was 4-0 with Commissioner Antoine excused.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE IDENTIFICATION OF PARTY AFFILIATION FOR CANDIDATES FOR MACON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION – removed.

DISCUSSION OF COUNTY PROPERTY THAT NEEDS IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, SPECIFICALLY THE LIBRARY – Commissioner Shearl said he spent approximately five hours with the Macon County Maintenance Director and looked at different county properties in need of repair. He shared that the roof system at the library is leaking, the covered walkway to the entry of the library has separated from the building, the building has sunk approximately five to six inches, the light fixtures are embedded into the beams, and the fire sprinkler system is touching the light fixtures, there is black mold on each side of the center beam inside the building, the wood ceiling is absorbing moisture and turning in to mold, and they have buckets in the children's section collecting water. Commissioner Shearl indicated this is well beyond anything that Macon County Maintenance can do and it is not within their scope. He said he believes hiring a structural engineer may be needed and asked where we go from here. Commissioner Higdon said he had looked at the building and mentioned some of the same concerns and observations as Commissioner Shearl. Commissioner Shields said if we know it and don't address it the liability lies with us and asked Mr. Roland how to proceed. Mr. Roland said this is the first he has heard about it and if we want a structural engineer to come and look at it there will be a cost. Mr. Roland said he would look into this and bring it back in January.

DECLARATION OF SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SERVICE WEAPON TO BE DECLARED SURPLUS PROPERTY – Ms. Keezer stated that Sheriff Holbrooks is requesting permission to award Captain Tony Carver his duty weapon upon his official retirement planned for December 29, 2023, and sale of the same to Captain Carver for \$1.00. Commissioner Higdon made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shearl to approve the request as presented. The vote was 4-0 with Commissioner excused.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted 4-0 with Commissioner Antoine excused, to approve the consent agenda as presented which includes: (A) Minutes of the November 14, 2023 regular meeting, (B) Resolution Examination of Official Bonds for Public Officials of Macon County [Attachment 9], (C) Budget Amendments #85-89, (D) Macon County 2024 Holiday Schedule, (E) Tax releases for the month of November 2023 in the amount of \$1,543.73, and (F) Monthly ad valorem tax collection report for which no action is necessary.

APPOINTMENTS:

MACON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES (1 SEAT) – tabled to the January 9, 2024 regular meeting.

CLOSED SESSION: At 9:15 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session as allowed under NCGS 143-381.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations, 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 9:47 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Shearl, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to come out of the closed session and return to the open session.

ADJOURN: With no other business, at 9:53 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


Gary Shields
Board Chair

COUNTY

ARPA funds - expenditures:

FY22 expenditures - premium pay - salaries	1,534,583.58
FY22 expenditures - premium pay - fringes	307,339.81
FY23 expenditures - premium pay - salaries	1,531,213.90
FY23 expenditures - premium pay - fringes	319,444.43
FY23 expenditures - GREAT grant match	25,000.00
Remaining GREAT grant match obligation	175,000.00
Transfer to general fund for crime prevention salaries/fringes	2,501,217.00
Transfer to housing fund for housing director salaries/fringes	37,270.00
Transfer to solid waste fund for solid waste admin salaries/fringes	237,501.00
Undesignated funds	<u>296,426.28</u>
TOTAL COUNTY	6,964,996.00

HOUSING

NCWAP - ARPA COVID RELATED

SALARY	7,028.93
FRINGES	3,670.57
PROGRAM OPERATIONS	29,940.88
CAPITAL-EQUIPMENT	24,154.65
CAPITAL-VEHICLE	<u>28,442.35</u>
TOTAL	93,237.38

NCWAP - ARPA HARRP

SALARY	4,580.34
FRINGES	2,121.99
PROGRAM OPERATIONS	<u>79,013.00</u>
TOTAL	85,715.33
TOTAL HOUSING	178,952.71

PUBLIC HEALTH

AA546	\$243,147
AA716	\$292,449
AA620	<u>\$11,656</u>

TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH \$547,252

TRANSIT \$164,350

GRAND TOTAL \$7,855,551

RESOLUTION REGARDING PARTISAN BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTIONS
MACON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
November 27, 2023

WHEREAS, recent debate among the Macon County Board of Commissioners, held without notice to or input from the Macon County Board of Education or the general public, has included the question of whether the County should petition the local delegation to the NC General Assembly for a local act enabling or requiring the Macon County Board of Education to be elected on a partisan basis; and

WHEREAS, local interests and concerns have been portrayed as the impetus for supporting such a change, yet recent years demonstrate a widespread political effort, with the number of school boards elected in a partisan manner growing from just 17 of 115 school boards in 2015 to more than 50 after the most recent General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, members of the Macon County Board of Education have been elected on a nonpartisan basis since at least 1968; and

WHEREAS, if the Board were elected on a partisan basis, Macon County citizens who are registered independent or unaffiliated would be required to petition for inclusion on ballots, and pursuant to the Hatch Act, those who are federal employees would be forced to choose between their employment and holding office or even participating in a partisan election for the Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, school board members, unlike other elected officials, must bear sole allegiance to the students and parents they serve and not leaders or platforms of specific political parties; and

WHEREAS, school boards have the primary responsibility for setting school policy and hiring school teachers and administrators, and neither of these responsibilities should be influenced by political party affiliation; and

WHEREAS, educational issues decided by school boards are nonpartisan issues and the boards' judicial and personnel functions must be nonpartisan; and

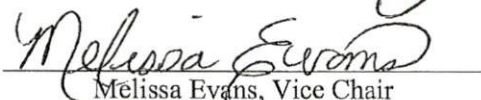
WHEREAS, the undersigned members believe that our Board has functioned well over the past 55 years with nonpartisan elections, affording respectful interaction and appropriate focus on a school board's singular mission, the education of the students of our county; and

WHEREAS, injecting party politics into school board elections would shift the focus away from candidates who are singularly committed to the education of Macon County students; and

WHEREAS, the focused civil discourse and cooperative spirit exercised by all school board members for the greater good of our community would be harmed by partisan school board elections.

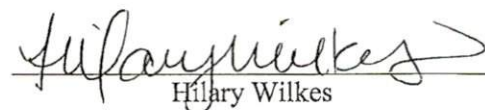
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT in order to best serve the citizens and students of Macon County, the undersigned members of the Macon County Board of Education hereby respectfully and adamantly request that consideration of any measure to make school board elections partisan in Macon County cease, and that the General Assembly refuse to take up any such measure.


Jim Breedlove, Board Chair


Melissa Evans, Vice Chair


Diedre Breeden


Stephanie Laseter


Hilary Wilkes

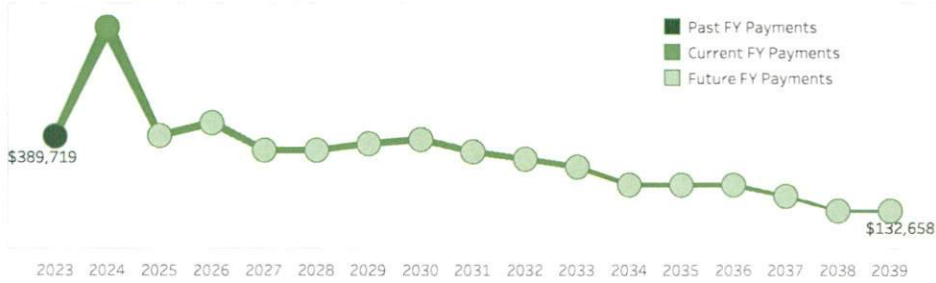
Choose a Place:

Macon

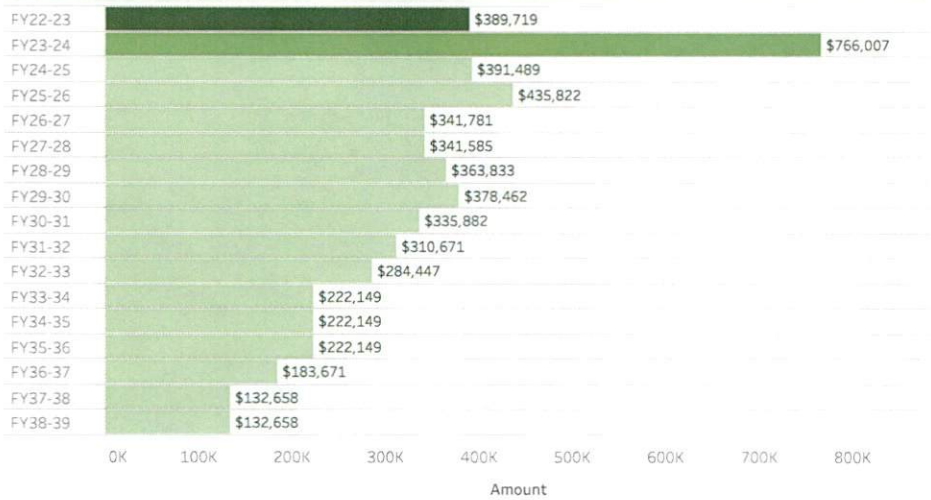
18 Year Payment to Macon during 2022-2038:

\$5,455,133

Payments Over Time - Macon



Payment Table - Macon



Download Local Payout Schedule:

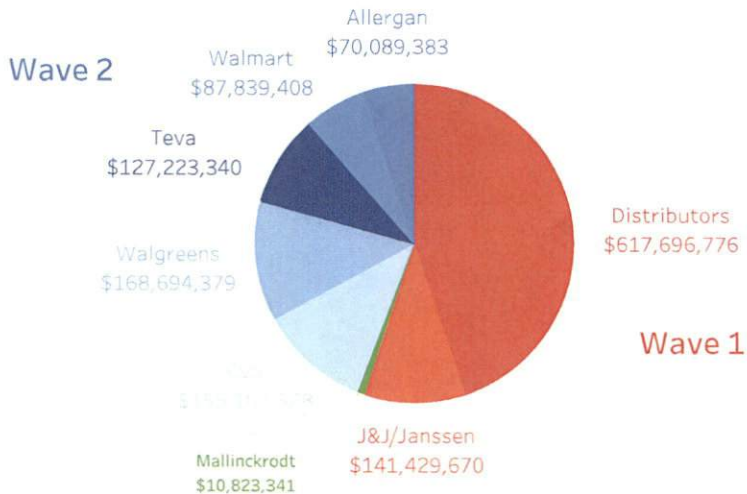


Download Payouts for All Locations:



Last Modified Nov 2023

Total NC Payments by Settlement



Macon County

Region A Opioid Abatement Needs Assessment

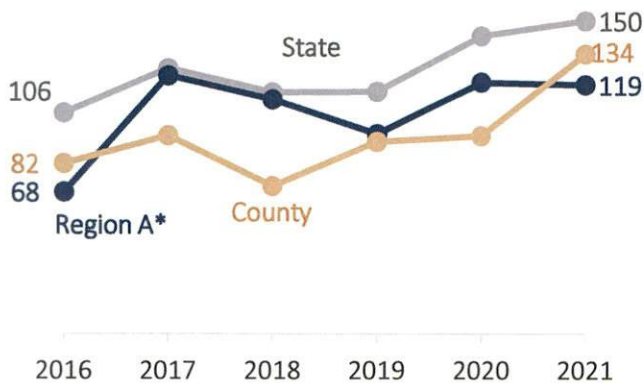


Macon County is the 3rd largest county in Region A by population size (35,172 in 2020).¹ Between 2017-2021, the county's **median household income** was roughly \$12,000 less than the state's median (\$48,169 vs \$60,516). In 2020, the **median age** in the county was 50 years, much greater than in the state (39 years). This page highlights indicators specific to opioids and opioid use disorder (OUD).



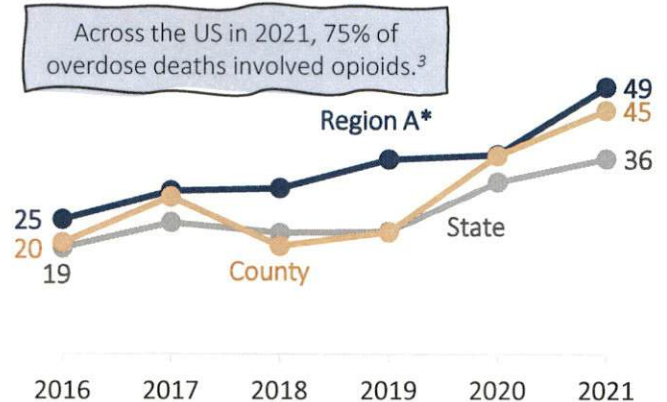
Overdose ED Visits

Rate of emergency department visits with a drug overdose diagnosis, per 100,000 residents (Crude)²



Overdose (OD) Deaths

Rate of unintentional overdose deaths due to any drug, per 100,000 residents (Crude)²



The rate of ED visits due to a drug OD in Macon County has increased over time. The county's rate of unintentional OD deaths has tended to be similar to or below the region's rate.



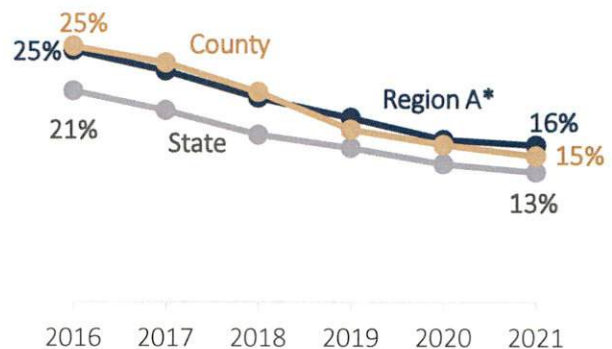
Access to OUD Care

Rate of individuals[†] served by treatment programs for Opioid Use Disorder, per 100,000 residents (Crude, 2021)²



Opioid Prescriptions

Percentage of residents receiving dispensed opioid pills²



In 2021, Macon County had a higher **rate of individuals in treatment programs for OUD** compared to both the region and the state. In addition, the decline in the **percentage of county residents receiving opioid pills** closely mirrored the trends observed in the region and state.

* Region A figures are estimates extrapolated from county-level counts, rates, and/or percentages.

† Among Medicaid beneficiaries and those who are uninsured.

Sources: ¹Census; ²NCCDHS Opioid Action Plan Dashboard; ³CDC

Macon County

Region A Opioid Abatement Needs Assessment



i This page highlights sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics associated with higher risk of unfavorable opioid-related outcomes, as well as indicators related to mental health.



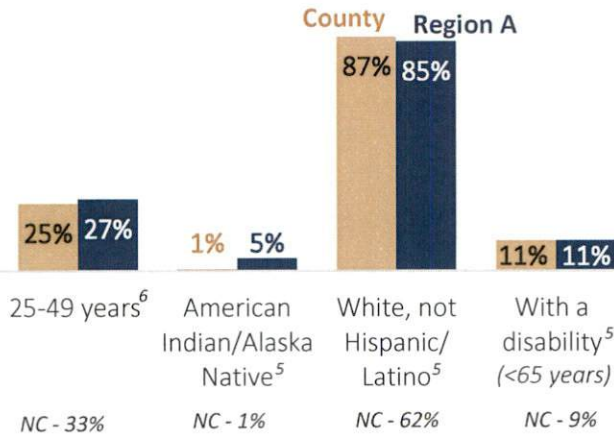
Sociodemographic Risk Factors

81%

of Macon County residents live in a **rural area** (77% in Region A, 34% in NC).⁴

1 in 2

county residents are **male** (same in Region A and NC).⁵



Socioeconomic Risk Factors

Persons in poverty⁵
NC - 13%

15% Region A*
14% County

No health insurance coverage⁵
(<65 years) NC - 12%

16%
17%

Worried about not being able to afford paying rent/mortgage⁷
NC - N/R

26%
32%

Not in civilian labor force⁵
(16 years+) NC - 39%

47%
48%



There are **54 senior adults per 100 working-age people** in Macon County (46 per 100 in Region A*; 26 per 100 in NC).⁶

The large older population is a **driver of lower labor force participation** and likely **increases household financial stress**. It may also **increase the supply of prescription opioid pills** in the county due to the higher prevalence of chronic pain issues among older adults.



Mental Health



of Macon County residents **always** or **usually** received needed **social/emotional support** (72% in Region A*, N/R for NC).⁷



of county residents reported **8+ days of poor mental health in past month** (23% in Region A*, N/R for NC).⁷

Percentage of residents unable to obtain needed mental health services in the past year⁷



A lower proportion of Macon County residents received needed social and emotional support compared to the region, while a larger percentage reported experiencing a **high number of poor mental health days**. Although the percentage of county residents unable to obtain needed mental health services has generally aligned with the regional average over time, in 2021, Macon County had the **2nd highest rate** among all counties in Region A. **This highlights the need for an increase in various types of support.**

* Region A figures are estimates extrapolated from county population data and county rates/percentages.

Sources: ⁴Census (2020); ⁵Census (2017-2021); ⁶Census (2016-2020); ⁷WNC Health Network (2021)



Resolution adopting the Code of Ethics for the Macon County Board of County Commissioners

WHEREAS, Section 160A-86 of the North Carolina General Statutes requires local governing boards to adopt a code of ethics, and

NOW THEREFORE, in recognition of our blessings and obligations as citizens of the State of North Carolina and as public officials representing the citizens of the County of Macon, and acting pursuant to the requirements of Section 160A-86 of the North Carolina General Statutes, we, the Macon County Board of Commissioners, do hereby adopt the following General Principles and Code of Ethics to guide the Board of Commissioners in its lawful decision- making.

The Macon County Board of Commissioners shall:

- 1) Obey all applicable laws regarding official actions taken as a board member and comply with the ethics education program required under Section 160A-87 of the North Carolina General Statutes;
- 2) Uphold the integrity and independence of the board member's office;
- 3) Avoid impropriety in the exercise of the board member's official duties, to include:
 - a. A board member shall not use his/her position or County's facilities or resources for private gain, nor shall he/she appear before or represent any private person, group or interest before any department, agency, commissioner or board of the County except in matters of purely civic or public concerns.
 - b. A board member shall not directly or indirectly solicit, accept or receive any gift having a value of \$50 or more, whether in the form of money, services, loan, travel, entertainment, hospitality, thing or promise, or any other form, under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him/her, or could reasonably be expected to influence him/her, in the performance of their duties, or was intended as a reward for any official taken by the board. Legitimate political contributions shall not be considered as gifts under this subsection.
 - c. A board member who has, or whose immediate family member has, an interest in any official act or action before the board shall publicly disclose on the record in open meeting the nature and extent of such interest and shall withdraw from any

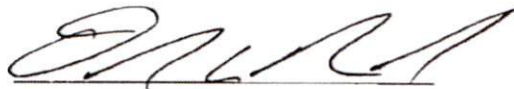
consideration in the matter if excused by the council.

- d. When any private interest of a board member or member's immediate family may potentially conflict with their responsibility as a board member, the board member may present his/her interpretation of the facts at issue to the County Attorney for an advisory opinion.

- 4) Faithfully perform the duties of the office;
- 5) Conduct the affairs of the governing board in an open and public manner, including complying with all applicable laws governing open meetings and public records.

Nothing in this policy shall be considered a substitute for the law or for a board member's best judgment.

Adopted this 14th day of March, 2023.



Derek Roland, Manager
Macon County



Paul Higdon, Chairman
Macon County Board of Commissioners

Re-adopted on December 12, 2023.



Derek Roland, Manager
Macon County



Gary Shields, Chairman
Macon County Board of Commissioners

The Veteran's Battlefield

A Story of North Carolina's Veterans

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) is proud to partner with our counties in screening 100 Strong Productions' newest documentary, *The Veteran's Battlefield*.

North Carolina is home to around 700,000 veterans — the eighth largest veteran population in the nation. And with the fourth largest active-duty military presence nationwide, it stands to reason that our state needs to pay special attention to issues impacting our service members. After active duty, veterans face wide-ranging challenges that can seem insurmountable. Imagine devoting formative years of your career to one, tireless pursuit and then everything you've known comes to a halt and you must invent a new path for yourself. This is the situation facing our veterans. From starting new careers to navigating a complex process to obtain earned benefits, shifting mindsets and establishing homes, it can be just too much for a person to bear... mental and physical health suffers... unemployment and even homelessness ensue.

Yet, hope and help are alive in our counties. Veteran's service officers in our communities are devoted to doing what they can to make life after the military the best it can be for our veterans. As county residents, we all have a role in helping our valued service members. The question is, exactly how can we collectively turn the tide on the complicated issues facing veterans?

The Veterans Battlefield is the story of our state's veterans who face wide-ranging challenges in their struggle to find purpose and hope acclimating to county life.

The Veteran's Battlefield highlights these challenges and how county Veteran Service Officers and community leaders are working to support them.

**RESOLUTION OF AMENDMENT TO
CHAPTER 159 OF THE MACON COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES,
THE MACON COUNTY SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE.**

WHEREAS, the Macon County Subdivision Ordinance currently provides in section §159.24(G) that “the Macon County Commissioners may release a portion or all of any security posted as the improvements are completed and recommended for approval by the Subdivision Administrator, after he/she has received the required statement from a design professional.”

WHEREAS, the Macon County Board of Commissioners has determined that it is in the best interests of efficiency that the Macon County **Subdivision Administrator** have the authority to release some or all of any security posted as the improvements are completed.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Macon, State of North Carolina, that the Macon County Subdivision Ordinance, §159.24(G) be amended to state as follows:

§159.24(G). Release of Guarantee Security

Pursuant to G.S. 160D-804.1(2), the Subdivision Administrator may release a portion or all of any security posted as the improvements are completed after the Subdivision Administrator has received the required statement from a design professional. The Subdivision Administrator shall return letters of credit or escrowed funds upon acceptance of the required improvements. When required improvements that are secured by a bond are accepted by the County, upon request by the developer, the Subdivision Administrator shall timely provide written acknowledgement that the required improvements have been completed.

Adopted at the December 12, 2023, Regular Meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners.



Gary Shields, Chairman,
Macon County Board of County Commissioners

ATTEST:



Derek Roland, Macon County Manager and Clerk to the Board

(Official Seal)



**RESOLUTION EXEMPTING GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEERING
SERVICES FOR MACON COUNTY SOLID WASTE LANDFILL
CELL DEVELOPMENT IN MACON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA,
FROM THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 3D OF CHAPTER 143 OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTES**

WHEREAS, Article 3D of Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes establishes a general public policy regarding procurement of engineering services; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statutes Section 143-64.32 provides:


"Units of local government or the North Carolina Department of Transportation may in writing exempt particular projects from the provisions of this Article in the case of proposed projects where an estimated professional fee is in an amount less than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)"; and

WHEREAS, Macon County is now in need of geotechnical engineering services for development of future landfill capacity in Macon County, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the estimated professional engineering fees for the required scope of work related to development of future landfill capacity in Macon County, North Carolina is in an amount less than fifty thousand (\$50,000) dollars.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF MACON that the proposed engineering services for development of future landfill capacity in Macon County, North Carolina, is hereby exempted in writing from the provisions of Article 3D of Chapter 143 of North Carolina General Statutes pursuant to the provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. §143-64.32.

Adopted this 12th day of December 2023.



Gary Shields, Chairman
Macon County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Derek Roland, County Manager and Clerk to the Board

(COUNTY SEAL)



**RESOLUTION
EXAMINATION OF OFFICIAL BONDS
FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS OF MACON COUNTY**

WHEREAS, pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes §58-72, the Macon County Board of Commissioners is required each year to examine carefully the bonds of the public officers listed in North Carolina General Statute §58-72-10 and must give bonds with sufficient surety in order for them to qualify for office. The bonds shall be in accordance with varying General Statutes as related to the following positions:

1. **County Finance Officer** – Bond in an amount not less than the greater of the following: (1) \$50,000 or (2) An amount equal to 10% of the unit’s annually budgeted funds, up to \$1,000,000 [N.C.G.S. §159-29(a)]. Current surety is Ohio Casualty Insurance Company, Bond No. 018233608, in the amount of \$1,000,000.
2. **Tax Collector** – Bond must be given for satisfactory collection of taxes; amount at discretion of Board of Commissioners [N.C.G.S. §105-349(c)]. Current surety is Ohio Casualty Insurance Company, Bond No. 3792517, in the amount of \$250,000.
3. **Register of Deeds** – Bond of not less than \$10,000 nor more than \$50,000, approved by the Board of Commissioners, and payable to the State (N.C.G.S §161-4). Current surety is Ohio Casualty Insurance Company, Bond No. 3792517, in the amount of \$50,000.
4. **Sheriff** – Bond shall be in an amount not more than \$25,000 (N.C.G.S §162-8). Current surety is Western Surety Company, Bond No. 72512420, in the amount of \$25,000.

WHEREAS, the Macon County Finance Office has secured official bonds from Ohio Casualty Insurance Company and Western Surety Company for the above referenced public officials for the Macon County Board of Commissioners’ consideration and approval;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Macon County Board of Commissioners that official bonds for the public officials referenced above in the recommended amounts from Ohio Casualty Insurance Company and Western Surety Company are hereby approved.

Adopted this the 12th day of December, 2023.


Chairman, Macon County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:


Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

(Seal)

