

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JANUARY 14, 2012 – 8 A.M.
CONTINUED SESSION
MINUTES

Chairman Corbin convened the continued session at 8:05 a.m. as recessed from the January 10, 2012 regular meeting. The meeting was held in the conference room of the Cecil L. Groves Center on the Macon County Campus of Southwestern Community College at 44 Siler Farm Road in Franklin, NC. All Board Members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, Finance Director, County Attorney, members of the news media and interested citizens were present. The purpose of the reconvened meeting was to hold a mid-year review and planning session.

YEAR IN REVIEW: County Manager Jack Horton reviewed a number of items that took place during 2011, including the following: a year of transition in which three new county commissioners joined the board and several key staff members departed; concerns over the state budget shortfall; capital projects like the Iotla Valley Elementary School, the ongoing Little Tennessee/Cartoogechaye Creek sewer line and the Riverbend water line project. At this point, upon a recommendation from the County Manager and a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Koppers, the board unanimously approved Change Order Number 3 on the Riverbend Road Water System Improvements project in the amount of \$26,532.50, with the funds coming from the project's contingency line item. The change order also added 266 days to the project (Attachment 1), and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

The County Manager continued with the mid-year report, noting the completion of the runway project at the airport, with Commissioner Beale requesting a report of activity at the airport on a quarterly basis. Other highlights included the purchase of the Palmer Street annex, a new elevator for the Barrett Building, as well as the renovation of the dispatch center in the Barrett Building and renovation of the former senior services center building as the new Franklin EMS base. The County Manager said the county remains in good financial shape, has the lowest property tax rate in the state and saw its credit rating improve from an A to an A+. He noted that the commissioners postponed the revaluation, approved a comprehensive plan as well as a transportation plan, and all attended the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) conference, at which Commissioner Beale was elected second vice-president. The joint meetings with the two towns will continue for a fourth consecutive year, and a tough budget year is anticipated for 2012-

13. At this time, the County Manager presented the proposed budget calendar.

MID-YEAR FINANCIAL UPDATE: Finance Director Lori Hall presented a PowerPoint presentation, pointing out that general fund revenue is right on course at the six-month mark, and went on to contrast budgeted amounts with actual figures at mid-year. She also noted growth in the fund balance of \$1.5-million, but reminded the board that \$1.8-million had been appropriated in the current year. Overall, she said that the county's departments had underspent their budgets last year by a total of \$3.5-million. Approximately 79 percent of the ad valorem taxes for the year have been collected, with about 1 percent growth overall in the tax base. Expenditures are at about 45 percent of budget through December 31, 2011. In closing, she outlined the board's existing debt service payments through 2031.

FY 2012-13 BUDGET PRIORITIES AND GOALS: Following discussion, the consensus of the board members and the County Manager was to work to keep the tax rate and the county budget at or below current levels for the upcoming fiscal year.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT: Tommy Jenkins, the county's economic development director, provided a PowerPoint presentation, explaining that his number one goal was to retain and expand existing industries and businesses. Mr. Jenkins discussed the county's position as a regional technology leader (with its manufacturing base featuring global brands and small advanced firms), a regional healthcare provider and banking center as well as a regional sales leader and a travel and tourism destination. He also pointed out the educational opportunities within the county, opportunities for economic development in a changing economy, possible avenues to success and recent activity at the Small Business Development Center (incubator building).

Chairman Corbin declared a recess at 10:19 a.m.

Chairman Corbin called the meeting back to order at 10:47 a.m.

REVOLVING LOAN FUND: Following a brief discussion, the consensus of the board was to ask the County Attorney to investigate the possibility of the county establishing a revolving loan fund for businesses.

PLANNING BOARD: The board held a lengthy and wide-ranging discussion regarding the county planning board, including its direction, what was expected from it, term limits for its members and the size of the board. Upon a motion by Commissioner Haven, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to authorize the County Attorney to review and prepare an amendment to the county's subdivision ordinance for the board's consideration that would remove any references to the slope hazard designation, as well as to prepare the necessary notice for the public hearing on the proposed amendment. Upon a motion by Commissioner Haven, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to authorize the County Attorney to review and prepare an amendment to the county's planning board ordinance for the board's consideration that would limit membership on the planning board to two consecutive, three-year terms with the stipulation that after a member served those two consecutive terms, he or she would be ineligible to serve for a minimum of three years. The County Attorney pointed out that, under the ordinance, seats 1-9 on the planning board are set for three-year terms, while seats 10 and 11 (those representing the towns of Franklin and Highlands) are for four-year terms. There was discussion as to whether all terms should be for three years, and this was followed by a lengthy discussion as to whether time currently served on the planning board by its existing members would count toward the proposed limits, as expressed by Commissioner Haven's intent to have it do so. The County Attorney was instructed to prepare a public notice to cover all of the proposed amendments to the ordinance as discussed. Upon a motion by Commissioner Haven, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to approve a "Code of Conduct" as presented by the County Manager and to make that code a part of the application process, as well as having it apply to the current members of the planning board. The board discussed appointments to the planning board but delayed any action on them until the February regular meeting.

SHERIFF'S REPORT: Sheriff Robert Holland made a PowerPoint presentation to the board that summarized his department's activities for 2011, and presented plans for a new layout of the space in the existing sheriff's office once the new Palmer Street annex is ready for occupancy.

ADJOURN: After discussing a possible joint meeting with the county planning board on January 31, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Koppers, the board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Jack Horton, County Manager
Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman