

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 29, 2020  
MINUTES**

Chairman Tate called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. as provided for in the Notice of Special Meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 1) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. All Board Members with the exception of Commissioner Gillespie, County Manager Derek Roland, Deputy Clerk Mike Decker, Finance Director Lori Carpenter and County Attorney Chester Jones were physically present, and Commissioner Gillespie joined the meeting via telephone. Also present were members of the news media.

Mr. Roland stated that the purpose of the meeting was for the board to go into closed session to discuss personnel and to consult with the attorney. He also noted that Commissioner Gillespie has a family member who is ill, and therefore he would not be attending in person but would join the meeting via telephone.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 6:01 p.m. as allowed under North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11.(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of a prospective officer or employee candidate, and under 143.318.11.(a)(3) in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to come out of closed session at 7:23 p.m. and return to open session.

Commissioner Gillespie was again contacted via telephone, as he was during the closed session, and once the connection was complete, Chairman Tate called the meeting back to order at 7:24 p.m.

Mr. Jones explained the legal nature of Commissioner Gillespie's participation in the meeting, noting that due to the family emergency he could not be present. He asked that Commissioner Gillespie affirmatively identify himself, and Commissioner Gillespie did so.

Commissioner Beale made a motion to give Mr. Roland the authority to enter into negotiations with Franklin attorney Fred Jones to replace Chester Jones as county attorney, to request a roll call vote on the motion, and to request a report from Mr. Roland on the negotiations with Fred Jones at the board's October 13, 2020 regular meeting. Commissioner Shields seconded the motion. Commissioner Gillespie asked for the motion to be repeated, and the motion was repeated. Commissioner Higdon thanked Chester Jones for his years of service to the board and the county, and for his assistance in the search for his replacement. Chairman Tate conducted a roll call vote on the motion, as follows:

- Commissioner Shields – aye.
- Commissioner Beale – aye.
- Commissioner Higdon – nay.
- Commissioner Gillespie – nay.
- Chairman Tate – aye.

The motion was approved by a 3-2 vote.

With no other business, at 7:28 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.

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Derek Roland  
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

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Jim Tate  
Board Chairman