

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 14, 2019
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: Chairman Tate noted that in looking at the agenda for the evening it was “obviously a very busy meeting tonight” and briefly reviewed the board’s rules of procedure, adding that he was looking forward to seeing the County Manager’s recommended budget. Commissioner Beale noted the passing of Bob Litton, a World War II veteran who was heavily involved in establishing the county’s veterans memorial, and announced the time for his funeral services.

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Chairman Tate called the public hearing on revisions to the Macon County Comprehensive Plan to order at 6:01 p.m. Macon County Planning Board Chairman Joe Deal expressed his thanks to the members of the planning board, who worked on this revision for three years. The County Manager said that the county’s comprehensive plan is a requirement for the state transportation plan and helps the county earn “points” for improvement projects. Chairman Tate noted that no one signed up to comment on the plan. Following comments from Commissioner Beale, Commissioner Gillespie, the board’s liaison to the planning board, asked the members of the planning board to stand and be recognized. Following comments from Commissioner Gillespie, Chairman Tate closed the public hearing at 6:05 p.m. Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the Macon County Comprehensive Plan, as revised, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 1) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: **Tamara Zwinak** asked the board for an exact accounting of how library meeting rooms are rented, how fee exemptions are granted, how many exemptions were granted in the last year and to whom on what basis. Commissioner Beale informed her that library employees are not county employees but work for the Fontana Regional Library system. **Donna Majerus** told the board that the county's Nuisance Ordinance is not working and that she has been told by the sheriff's deputies that the ordinance is too vague. She explained that she is having to cope with "the revving of the engines all day and all night." She explained that she has also had problems with the neighbor's dogs and that she and her husband have received threats of physical harm. She asked the board to "reword" the ordinance so that it doesn't tie the hands of the officers from handling the issues at hand. **Rick Green**, who works at the county's recycling convenience center in Otto, addressed the idea of a "reuse" program for certain items discarded at the county's drop-off centers in order to divert them from the landfill and to help residents who might need them.

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

- To add consideration of a recreation agreement with the Upper Cartoogechaye Development Club under Old Business as Item 10A, per the County Attorney.
- To add Budget Amendment #225 to the Consent Agenda under Item 12B, per the Finance Director.
- To add consideration of an application for weatherization funding from Housing Director John Fay under New Business as Item 11C, per the Finance Director.

PRESENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 BUDGET: The County Manager presented his recommended Fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget to the board. A copy of his budget message is attached (Attachment 2) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. The budget as proposed is \$52,834,025, and the County Manager presented highlights of the proposed budget in his Prezi presentation. Among those highlights, he explained that the 2019 reappraisal of real property produced a "revenue neutral" tax rate of 35.61 cents per \$100 valuation, up from the current rate of 34.90. In the new budget, the County Manager recommended a tax rate of 36.94 cents. In his summary, he said that the new budget "will allow us to continue providing high quality services to the citizens of Macon County at one of the lowest tax rates in the state and without compromise to our strong financial position."

SCHEDULING OF BUDGET WORK SESSIONS: Following discussion, the board agreed to hold a budget work session on Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 6 p.m. in the commission boardroom.

PRESENTATION REGARDING TOWN OF HIGHLANDS BROADBAND: Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor provided the board an update on the town's efforts to create a broadband network, and asked the county to consider becoming a partner in the project. Matt Shuler, the town's IT Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the scope of the project, noting that the town is blocked from providing broadband, but will award a contract to JBL Communications, LLC later in the week that will bring fiber to every home in Highlands within a 300-day timeframe. He said the town has borrowed some \$4.6-million to finance the effort. He also noted the system will have customers outside the town limits. Mayor Taylor then invited the county to be a participant in the project and suggested an annual commitment of \$250,000 annually over the next four years to help "move this out into the county." He closed by saying he appreciated the board's consideration of this matter. No action was taken.

PRESENTATION OF COMMUNITY FUNDING POOL RECOMMENDATIONS: Robert Smith presented the Community Funding Pool recommendations for Fiscal Year 2018-19. He said there were 20 grant requests totaling \$133,250, and the funding pool task force selected 11 agencies to split the \$75,000 allocated by the county. A copy of the recommendation is attached (Attachment 3) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Following further discussion, upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the recommendation as presented.

PRESENTATION BY TOWN OF FRANKLIN FIRE DEPARTMENT: Franklin Fire Chief Matt Breedlove presented a PowerPoint presentation to the board. He said the department's proposal to the county is to continue to provide two-person coverage 24 hours per day, as implemented in July 2017. He also asked to allow the department to follow along with its 10-year strategic plan, which outlines acquisition of a substation to provide services to areas of the county which currently have a 9/10 insurance class rating. Areas that could benefit, according to Chief Breedlove, include Holly Springs, Corbin Cove, Piney Grove, Butterfly Subdivision, Sanderstown and Onion Mountain. He said the addition of a substation would allow these areas to have a Class 6 rating, the best rating attainable for those areas, which would save the average homeowner about \$300 annually on homeowners insurance. In closing, he asked the board to allow the town to keep its current tax rate of 5.45 cents per \$100 valuation, its two-person, 24-hour coverage, to plan for land acquisition for the substation, to continue to follow the 10-year strategic plan and to keep

the district “as it currently is.” Following comments from Town Manager Summer Woodard and questions from the board members regarding insurance rates and district boundary lines, no action was taken.

PRESENTATION BY MOUNTAIN VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT: Travis Waldroop with Mountain Valley Fire and Rescue asked the board members to consider a plan whereby Mountain Valley’s service district would be extended into an area presently served by Franklin’s department. He told the board that for homeowners in this area, the change to a tax rate of 12.6 cents per \$100 valuation in Mountain Valley’s district would be offset by a 54 percent savings in homeowners’ insurance premiums. He said the department is also looking to hire its first paid fireman. Mr. Waldroop then answered questions from the board. Following his presentation, Emergency Services Director Warren Cabe recommended that the board not take any action on either Franklin’s or Mountain Valley’s proposal at this time. He explained that changing service districts is a process, with reports that must be prepared and state statutes to follow that include a public hearing process. He told the board there are “a lot of things to think about.” No action was taken.

Chairman Tate declared a recess at 8:37 p.m.

Chairman Tate called the meeting back to order at 8:49 p.m.

UPDATE ON TRANSIT DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS: Transit Director Kim Angel provided an update on the department’s propane fuel and on-vehicle advertising programs. To summarize the propane program, she explained that in the last four years, the county has invested \$47,432 to convert its vehicles to this system, including a fueling station at \$28,820. However, the savings of using propane versus gasoline, combined with a federal alternative fuel credit, has resulted in a \$53,761 savings to the county. Therefore, the fueling station cost plus the cost of all conversion systems was paid for in less than three years, leaving the department at \$6,329 above the cost, with anticipated savings in the future. As for the advertising program approved by the board in late 2018, she said there are now 16 businesses with ad space on Transit vehicles. That has generated \$22,782 in revenue, versus production cost of only \$3,348, resulting in a net profit of \$19,434. No action was necessary.

EMS WEEK PROCLAMATION: Emergency Medical Services Coordinator Todd Doster asked the board to proclaim the week of May 19-25, 2019 as Emergency Medical Services Week. He shared that the county has 69 EMS personnel on the roster, 40 of whom are full-time, and that they answered more than 6,500 calls last year. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to approve the

proclamation as presented, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 4) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

AGREEMENT TO PROVIDE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES: Following an explanation by the County Attorney, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to approve an “Agreement to Provide Recreation Opportunities” with the Upper Cartoogechaye Community Club, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 5) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. The motion also authorizes the County Manager to execute the agreement and to fill in blanks as needed. The county will provide \$18,750 for repairs to the old Gillespie Chapel building in exchange for the club making the building available to the public for recreation opportunities.

RESOLUTION REGARDING RELOCATION OF A PORTION OF AIRPORT ROAD: Commissioner Gillespie, the board’s liaison to the Macon County Airport Authority, explained that the authority had adopted a resolution in favor of relocating a portion of State Road 1434 (Airport Road) in an effort to realign a portion of the road to both straighten out a dangerous curve and to connect existing airport land with another tract of airport property. A copy of that resolution is attached (Attachment 6) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Following discussion, and upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to have the minutes of this meeting to reflect the commission’s support of this resolution.

APPLICATION FOR FUNDING FOR HOUSING DEPARTMENT: Following a brief explanation by the Finance Director, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the Housing Department’s Fiscal Year 2020 application for funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program and the Heating and Air Repair and Replacement Program.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the items on the consent agenda as follows: the following budget amendments: #215 for the Sheriff’s Department to appropriate \$2,000 in donations to cover K-9 operating expenses; #216 for the Department of Social Services to allocate \$8,000 for an additional demand in contract services; #217 for the Department of Social Services to allocate an additional \$2,600 for items and programs at Senior Services; #218 for the Transit Department to allocate \$13,677 in additional revenue from the sale of advertisements on vehicles to cover the cost of printing advertisements and for a potential cost overrun for the department’s parking lot project not covered by grant funds; #219 for the Health Department to distribute \$68,011 in Fiscal Year 2018 Medicaid Cost Settlement Funds;

#225 for the Health Department to allocate \$7,105 in new state revenue for maternal health (copies of the amendments are attached); tax releases for the month of April in the amount of \$95.00; proposed fee changes for Macon County Public Health, as approved by the Macon County Board of Health on April 23, 2019 (list attached); and the monthly ad valorem tax collections report (no action necessary).

APPOINTMENTS: Airport Authority: Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to appoint Jack Horton to the Macon County Airport Authority, replacing Tommy Jenkins.

Transportation Advisory Board: Transit Director Kim Angel was seeking to add some additional agency and individual appointments to the Macon County Transportation Advisory Board. During discussion, the possible need to revise the document establishing the number of members of the board arose, and following further discussion, no action was taken.

CLOSED SESSION: Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 9:19 p.m. for the purpose of discussing potential property acquisition under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5). At 9:27 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to come out of closed session and return to open session. No action was taken.

RECESS: With no other business, at 9:28 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to recess the meeting until Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 6 p.m. in the commission boardroom on the third floor of the Macon County Courthouse at 5 West Main Street, Franklin, NC for the primary purpose of holding a budget work session.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Jim Tate
Board Chairman