

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 11, 2014
MINUTES**

Chairman Corbin called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. All Board Members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, Finance Director, County Attorney, members of the news media and interested citizens were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Corbin noted the passing of Ricky Gregory, a volunteer fireman with Cowee Fire and Rescue.

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING ON CLOSEOUT OF 2010 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT: Chairman Corbin opened the public hearing at 6:06 p.m. and recognized John Fay, director of the county's housing department. Mr. Fay explained that the purpose of the hearing was to receive public comment on the closeout of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Housing Rehabilitation Grant #10-C-2124. Of the \$400,000 available from the grant, Mr. Fay said \$266,899.67 was spent, with \$198,467.15 going to housing rehabilitation with seven homes being repaired. In addition, \$37,456.10 was used for urgent repairs of 21 homes, with the remaining funds going for administration and planning. Mr. Fay noted that Habitat for Humanity and local church groups provided invaluable assistance with these projects. Chairman Corbin pointed out that no one from the public signed up to speak. Commissioner Higdon questioned why all of the grant funds were not used, and Mr. Fay replied that he did not have enough staff members to perform more work, and that one project was

cut at the request of the owner. Following additional comments from other board members, Chairman Corbin closed the public hearing at 6:10 p.m. Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to approve the closeout of the CDBG grant as submitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT: **Benji Johnson**, the president of the Macon County Firemen’s Association, requested \$950 from the county to assist with the cost of a Firefighter Challenge and Family Fun Day for the association’s members, and gave the board a copy of the proposed budget for the event. Commissioner Higdon suggested that Mr. Johnson “pass the hat” to raise the funds, and each of the commissioners and the County Attorney contributed or pledged \$100 each. **Sen. Jim Davis**, after pledging \$101 to the Macon County Firemen’s Association, explained that he was again making appearances at county commission meetings within his district. He congratulated the board on the award of the \$500,000 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant, and explained in role in seeking the assistance of the state auditor’s office in regard to the recent situation at the county’s Board of Elections office. He asked that the board “consider me your liaison in Raleigh.” Chairman Corbin thanked Sen. Davis for his efforts on the behalf of the county related to the PARTF grant. **Brittney Parker** updated the board on the Read 2 Me program, which promotes early literacy, and thanked the board members for the county’s support. **Vic Drummond** discussed the embezzlement situation in the Board of Elections office, and said that finance policies must be proactive, not reactive. In light of recent matters, he said that the public has “lost trust in how tax dollars are being handled.” **Todd Ensley**, speaking on behalf of children and ballfields, requested that the county fully develop the Parker Meadows Recreational Park. **Linda Light** raised questions about the passage of a county resolution honoring former state Sen. Robert (Bob) Carpenter, which was to name a one-mile portion of U.S. 441 South in his honor. Sen. Davis recalled that the issue came up during his time as a county commissioner, but that the resolution was never adopted. Following discussion, the County Attorney agreed to work with Ms. Light on a resolution, which would be presented to the board for its consideration at the March regular meeting. **Butch Jean**, speaking on the Parker Meadows Recreational Park, encouraged the board to “do it right,” adding later that “if it’s not good, people won’t come back.”

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

- To add consideration of an appointment to the Economic Development Commission (EDC) as Item 12F under Appointments, per the County Manager.
- To add a report from the county planning board regarding county-owned properties as Item 10C under New Business, per the County Manager.
- To add discussion of an agreement for tax collection work as Item 10D under New Business, per the County Manager.
- To add consideration of the PARTF agreement under the existing Item 10B under New Business, per the County Manager.
- To add consideration of an interlocal agreement related to veterans transportation under Old Business as Item 9B, per the County Manager.
- To add discussion regarding the removal of trees at the old Cowee School as Item 10E under New Business, per the County Manager.
- To remove the presentations of the audit report and one from the WNC Teen Institute, respectively, (Items 8A and 8C under Reports/Presentations), per the Deputy Clerk.

EVERGREEN FOUNDATION PRESENTATION: Denise Coleman presented the board members with a copy of the Evergreen Foundation's annual report for Fiscal Year 2012-2013. Mrs. Coleman explained that the mission of the Waynesville, NC-based foundation is to improve access to and public awareness of quality prevention, treatment and support services by the provider community to individuals and families with intellectual/developmental disabilities, behavioral health, and/or substance abuse needs in Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain counties. She reviewed the foundation's board of directors list as well as assets, income and expenses and grants issued. Of the 17 grants issued, totaling \$237,412, she noted that seven of those "touched" Macon County. A copy of the annual report is attached (Attachment 1) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Following questions from some of the board members, Commissioner Beale noted that this was the first time the board had received such a report. No action was necessary.

CONTRACT WITH CENTURY LINK: The County Attorney told the board that he had spent the better part of the day ironing out details in a proposed 50-plus-page contract with Century Link, the provider of a critical piece of equipment for the 911 system. After further discussion, and with the contract not in its final form, the board agreed by consensus to table the item until a continuation meeting to be held Tuesday, February 18th. Emergency Services Director David Key gave the board a brief update on two new ambulances that had been awaiting

parts in order to be put into service, explaining that – pending a final inspection – would be on the road the next day (February 12th).

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT AND CONTRACT FOR VETERANS TRANSPORTATION GRANT: Macon County Transit Director Kim Angel outlined an ongoing effort to provide access to veterans for more transportation options. The Southwestern NC One-Call One Click Center for Veterans Transportation project would be a multi-county project – with Macon County serving as lead agency – and would be 80 percent federally funded. She explained how technology would be deployed to make the system work. Macon, Clay and Cherokee counties would join the State of Franklin to pay 20 percent of the project costs, with the federal share totaling \$459,873. Macon’s share will be \$18,110, she noted, with Clay and Cherokee contributing the same amount and the State of Franklin \$16,500, as there are fewer vehicles in the Swain County system. She pointed out that Jackson and Haywood counties could still choose to join the project, which would alter the final numbers. The board members asked a number of questions, and due to the proposed interlocal agreement, contract and resolution concerning the project having just been made available to the members at the meeting, the board agreed by consensus to table the item until a continuation meeting to be held Tuesday, February 18th. Commissioner Higdon also questioned if the county should wait until the other parties approve the documents before taking action.

Chairman Corbin declared a recess at 7:41 p.m.

Chairman Corbin called the meeting back to order at 7:57 p.m.

AUDIT CONTRACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013-14: The Finance Director explained that the state Local Government Commission (LGC) requires that the county commission annually approve the audit contract, and she requested that the board approve a contract for the 2013-14 Fiscal Year in the amount of \$47,400, plus \$14,000 for the preparation of the annual financial statements. Commissioner Haven made a motion to approve the contract as presented, and it was seconded by Commissioner Beale. Following a discussion regarding internal control structure, the board voted unanimously to approve the “Contract to Audit Accounts” as presented, a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 2)** and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

PARKER MEADOWS RECREATIONAL PARK: After a brief recap of the Parker Meadows Recreational Park project from Chairman Corbin, Recreation Director Seth Adams outlined the impact of the proposed new

facility on his departmental budget. Including the need for 2.5 additional employees, the Parks and Recreation Department budget would grow an estimated \$166,160 in the year the park opens, but would also supply new revenue streams for the county. A copy of the budget projections is attached (Attachment 3) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Following discussion regarding concessions and engineering costs, Commissioner Higdon addressed the need to better maintain the county's existing practice fields, particularly those associated with the school system. Justin Moffitt, the athletic program coordinator for the Parks and Recreation Department, agreed to perform an assessment of the fields and report back to the board at its continuation meeting. The discussion then turned to the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Project Agreement, with the board members agreeing by consensus to review the document and table the matter until the continuation meeting. Chairman Corbin told the board of the need to be prepared to make a decision regarding the direction of the project. No action was taken.

PLANNING BOARD REPORT ON SURPLUS PROPERTIES: County Planner Matt Mason provided the board with a summary of the recommendations developed by the Macon County Planning Board relating to nine surplus properties owned by the county, as well as the old Cullasaja School, which is owned by the Macon County Board of Education. A copy of the memo is attached (Attachment 4) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. The board members, Mr. Mason and the County Attorney discussed possible uses for four of the parcels and the possibility of selling the other five. The County Attorney said that he would provide the board with options at the continuation meeting.

AGREEMENT FOR TAX COLLECTION WORK: The County Manager presented a draft agreement between the county and the law firm of Ridenour & Goss for assistance with tax collections that would involve delinquent taxes and foreclosure work, and recommended approval of the agreement. Following discussion, the board agreed by consensus to table the item until the continuation meeting.

TREE REMOVAL AT COWEE SCHOOL: The County Manager explained that Appalachian Tree was willing to remove the row of large pine trees along the playground at the old Cowee School at no cost to the county. Following discussion, the board agreed by consensus to have the County Attorney draw up an agreement and to consider the matter at the continuation meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the following items on the consent agenda were unanimously approved: **Minutes** – Approved the minutes from the January 21 and January 25, 2014 meetings. **Budget amendments** – Approved the following budget amendments: **#86** for the Sheriff's Office to appropriate \$55,946 in donations and calendar sales revenue and to carry forward funds from the previous fiscal year for the department's special fund expense line item; **#87** for the Health Department to appropriate \$5,949 from an insurance settlement for a claim on spoiled contents due to a refrigerator going out; (Revisions with corresponding numbers attached.) **Tax releases** – Approved tax releases in the amount of \$1,820.72 (A computer printout of releases is on file in the Tax Department and the County Manager's office.) **Monthly ad valorem tax collection report** – No action necessary.

APPOINTMENTS: **(1) Industrial Facilities and Pollution Control Financing Authority** – The board questioned the need for the authority and considered abolishing it, and the County Attorney agreed to check into the history of the authority. No action was taken. **(2) Library Board** – Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to reappoint Dan Kowal to a three-year term on the Library Board, with the term to expire on February 11, 2017. **(3) Watershed Review Board** – The Deputy Clerk explained that in addition to three seats being up for reappointment, there were three others that had yet to be filled on the eight-member board. He advised that the County Planner, Matt Mason, could provide more details as to the specific representation needed for each watershed. The need for this board was also questioned, and the County Attorney agreed to research the matter. **(4) Joint Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care** – Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to appoint June Hawkins to a one-year term on the Joint Community Advisory Committee for Long Term Care, with the term to expire February 11, 2015. **(5) Town of Franklin representative on the Macon County Planning Board** – Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to accept the Town of Franklin's recommendation to appoint Justin Setser as the town's representative on the county planning board. **(6) Highlands Area Chamber of Commerce representative on the Macon County Economic Development Commission (EDC):** Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to accept the Highlands Area Chamber of Commerce's recommendation to appoint Bill Futral as the chamber's representative on the county Economic Development Commission (EDC).

Minutes
02.11.14

CLOSED SESSION: At 9:20 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session for the purpose of consulting with the attorney under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) and to discuss personnel matters under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6). At 10:03 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to come out of closed session and return to open session. No action was taken.

RECESS: At 10:06 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to recess the meeting until Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at 6 p.m. in the commission boardroom on the third floor of the Macon County Courthouse, 5 West Main Street, Franklin, NC.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman