

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CONTINUED SESSION
MAY 30, 2013
MINUTES**

Chairman Corbin reconvened the meeting at 5:36 p.m. in the commission boardroom as recessed from the May 28, 2013 continuation meeting. All board members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk and Finance Director were present. Also present were members of the news media and interested citizens.

Chairman Corbin said the Franklin Chamber of Commerce had requested permission to conduct the annual July 4 public fireworks display at the Macon County Veterans Memorial Park on July 4, 2013, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to approve the request.

Prior to hearing from the volunteer fire department representatives, Chairman Corbin asked if there were other items to come before the board. The County Manager and Finance Director asked for consideration of two budget amendments, #185 and #186, and Chuck Sutton with Macon Program for Progress (MPP) asked to discuss the program's Section 8 Rental Assistance Program. The board agreed by consensus to add these items to the agenda.

The Finance Director explained that both budget amendments were related to the old Cowee School, now the Macon County Heritage Center. The first one, #185, was needed to appropriate \$12,900 in grant funds received from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation for Building Partnerships at Cowee School. The second, #186, was needed to appropriate \$13,607 in grant funding received from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership and the Cowee Community Development Organization for the Music Venue at the Macon County Heritage Center at Cowee School. The Finance Director pointed out there

is no county money involved in either amendment. Upon a motion by Commissioner Haven, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve both amendments as presented, copies of which are attached (Attachments 1 and 2) and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

Mr. Sutton then explained that the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 8 Rental Assistance Program provides help to qualified individuals and their families by making payments directly to landlords and property owners, and MPP receives HUD funding in two streams. One supports the rental assistance payments, from which MPP receives \$52,805 per month. The other supports administration of this program, and MPP receives \$5,839 each month. Following the federal sequestration, MPP was notified that rental assistance funds would be cut 5 percent and the administrative funds would be cut 31 percent. Mr. Sutton explained that the majority of the administrative funds go toward salaries for two staff members and that without supplemental funding, the management of the program would be compromised. He asked the board to consider supplementing the administrative portion of the program, and Chairman Corbin said the board would consider the request as part of the overall budget. No action was taken.

Chairman Corbin then asked each of the volunteer fire departments to keep their presentations to 15 minutes in length. Commissioner Tate said that as a 15-year volunteer fireman himself, he was grateful for the service the firemen provided to their communities. After six departments requested tax increases last year, with one funded, this year four departments – Burningtown/Iotla, Clarks Chapel, Cowee and Otto – had submitted requests. Commissioner Tate asked the departments to present in alphabetical order, and the highlights are as follows:

- Burningtown/Iotla – Kenneth McCaskill, the Secretary to the Board of Directors, said the department was requesting a one-cent increase in the current tax rate of 5.9 cents, primarily to fund a full-time firefighter that would reduce the department's response time to calls. A copy of Mr. McCaskill's letter is attached (Attachment 3) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.
- Clarks Chapel – Chuck Sutton, the Chairman of the Board of Directors, asked that the county review the calculations used to generate the revenue expectations from the tax for the district, and to consider the cost of providing a critical illness and injury policy to cover its members. He said the department was requesting a half-cent increase in its rate from 4.2 cents to 4.7

cents to replace the lost revenue from the decrease in property valuation. A copy of Mr. Sutton's letter is attached (Attachment 4) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

- Cowee – Dustin Pendergrass, the Chief and Secretary to the Board of Directors, said the department is focused on implementing a third station on Mason Branch. He said they are seeking a tax increase of four-tenths of a cent, which would move the rate from 8.2 to 8.6 cents, and would cost an individual in the district an extra \$8 to \$12 a year in fire tax. A copy of his letter is also attached (Attachment 5) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.
- Otto – Doug Cabe, the department's Chief, said they are looking to add one more paid member, and would need an increase from 4.2 to 4.9 cents in the tax rate. He explained that this move would allow for split shifts. He also noted that the department held a public meeting on May 16th to discuss the budget. A copy of his letter is also attached (Attachment 6) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

Following the fire department presentations, Chairman Corbin suggested the board take the proposed increases under advisement and discuss them following the June 11th public hearing on the budget.

Chairman Corbin declared a recess at 6:50 p.m.

Chairman Corbin called the meeting back to order at 7:05 p.m.

Following the recess, the board reviewed the recommended Emergency Medical Services (EMS) budget with Director David Key. Topics discussed included personnel and equipment needs, as well as pay for part-time employees.

The board then reviewed the Sheriff's Office budget with Sheriff Robert Holland and Chief Deputy Andy Shields. The primary topics of discussion were increased calls, overtime due to involuntary commitments, the need for new bulletproof vests and helmets for the Special Response Team (partially funded in the recommended budget), and the request for two new School Resource Officers (SROs), which were not included in the recommended budget. Commissioner Haven voiced his opposition to the additional SROs, while Commissioner Beale voiced his support for one additional position. No action was taken.

Following further discussion and with no other business, upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously at 8:32 p.m. to recess until Tuesday, June 4, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the commission boardroom on the third floor of the Macon County Courthouse at 5 West Main Street, Franklin, NC.

Jack Horton, County Manager
Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman