

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
CONTINUED SESSION  
MARCH 21, 2017  
MINUTES**

Chairman Tate reconvened the meeting at 4:31 p.m. in the commission boardroom as recessed from the March 14, 2017 regular meeting. All board members (with the exception of Commissioner Higdon), the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, Finance Director, County Attorney, and members of the news media were present.

**FIRE PROTECTION STUDY:** Emergency Services Director Warren Cabe presented the board with copies of the Macon County Fire Protection Study, and stressed that he was not asking for any action on the document at this meeting. He pointed out that the county is “not in any imminent crisis” and that he was not trying to start a countywide fire department or eliminate volunteers. However, he said that a different format had been followed, as these types of reports generally involve a paid consultant and require many committee meetings, and that when money is invested in that manner, decision makers can feel obligated to go with the findings. Instead, information was collected through surveys from his department, which included reaching out to each fire department in the county, the general public and the volunteer firemen individually. He said all of the opinions and comments that were collected are in the study. In addition, Mr. Cabe said the process included reviewing historical data and looking at industry “best practices.” He noted that the study contains 18 recommendations “that come from me – things that will improve the fire service in Macon County.” He said some will be easy to accomplish, some will take 18 months while others could take years. “I know you won’t follow all 18,” he told the board. “We have a very healthy system we are operating now,” he continued, but he said this was a good time to open the conversation and “put anything on the table.” Mr. Cabe said there were three things that were “consistent” across the study – (1) the desire for everyone involved to have a unified system, one where everyone is “all in it for one purpose,” (2) his firm belief that the volunteer system is here to stay and (3) that the community-based volunteer departments are here to stay as well. Mr. Cabe said the entire study will be placed on the county’s website. This led to discussion between board members and Mr. Cabe as to volunteers, recruitment

issues, district sizes and ongoing planning issues. Mr. Cabe said he wanted to give all of the stakeholders time to review the information and “then get a forum started.” The County Manager said that he had reviewed the drafts of the study as Mr. Cabe was putting them together and that the study was “very thorough and left no stone unturned.” He added, “You couldn’t spend \$70,000 and get a better report.” With Commissioner Beale noting that not long ago it was difficult to even get consistent budget requests and reports from departments, Mr. Cabe said the county is “worlds above where we were 10 years ago.” No action was taken, and a copy of the study is on file in the Deputy Clerk’s office.

**REPORT OF UNPAID TAXES:** Following a brief explanation, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted 4-0 to approve a request from Tax Collections Supervisor Teresa McDowell “to order the tax office, per state statute, to collect any unpaid taxes owed to Macon County.” Per a memo from Ms. McDowell, the 2016 delinquent county taxes owed as of February 1, 2017 is \$1,745,135.36.

**BIDS FOR RENOVATIONS AT ROBERT C. CARPENTER COMMUNITY BUILDING:** The County Manager reminded the board that, at the commission’s February 14<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, the total amount of the informal bids for renovations at the Robert C. Carpenter Community Building exceeded the \$500,000 threshold for the informal bid process, forcing the county to switch to a formal bid process. The county opened bids under the formal process on March 16<sup>th</sup>, but the County Manager reported that this resulted in four of the five areas placed for bids being non-conforming. With the exception of the bid for windows and doors, bids in the other four areas (general construction, electrical, gym floor and plumbing) would need to be rejected and rebid. The County Manager recommended awarding the bid for windows and doors to Sylva Glass and Mirror at a cost of \$59,706, and for the board to reject the bids in the other four areas and readvertise. He said the board could recess this meeting until April 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> and consider the new bids at that time, since with the second bid under the formal process the county would not be required to have a minimum of three bids for each discipline. Commissioner Beale made a motion to reject the four non-conforming bids and to rebid all, and this was seconded by Commissioner Shields. During discussion, Commissioner Gillespie questioned if the board should wait to award the bid for windows and doors until all of the others had been received. The County Manager said that the lead time for those items was one factor in the need to proceed as soon as possible, adding that the bid was deemed responsible by Tom Ritter, the architect for the project, and would have no impact on the other portions of the project. After further discussion, the board voted 4-0 to approve the motion. Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted 4-0 to approve the bid from Sylva Glass

and Mirror in the amount of \$59,706 as well as the necessary budget amendment as recommended by the Finance Director.

**ELECTED OFFICIALS ACCRUAL OF LEAVE TIME:** The County Attorney explained that the county's elected sheriff and register of deeds do not accrue paid annual leave and sick leave as other regular employees do, and that he had prepared a resolution to address that which amends the county personnel policy to allow them to do so. He distributed copies of the document to the board members, and Commissioner Beale asked for time to review the changes, and suggested that the board take it up at the upcoming continued session. The County Attorney said the accrual of leave for each position will not be retroactive. Sheriff Robert Holland told the board that he had spent years bringing this topic to this point, noting that none of the current board members were responsible for its current status. Following additional discussion, no action was taken.

**MACON COUNTY CLEAN-UP DAY:** Reminding the board members that they had heard a lot about litter at their last board meeting, the County Manager announced that he had planned a countywide clean-up day to be held Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, culminating in a barbeque lunch at the Cowee School Arts and Heritage Center for those who participate. He told the board that he also planned to promote the event among the county's individual departments. He explained that bags of trash collected would be left on roadsides and picked up by state Department of Transportation (DOT) personnel, and that all of the orange bags used in the event would be weighed by the county's Solid Waste Department. Sheriff Holland said his department would provide traffic control and support. The County Manager said he also planned to promote the idea with town officials in Franklin and Highlands, with Macon County Schools and various civic clubs. Chairman Tate suggested the board declare April 29, 2017 as Macon County Clean-Up Day, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, voted 4-0 to do so.

**RECESS:** At 5:22 p.m., with no other business and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted 4-0 to recess the meeting until Tuesday, April 4, 2017 at 5 p.m. in the commission boardroom on the third floor of the Macon County Courthouse, 5 West Main Street, Franklin, NC.

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Derek Roland  
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

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Jim Tate  
Board Chairman