

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SEPTEMBER 12, 2017
MINUTES**

Chairman Tate called the meeting to order at 6:04 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: Those in attendance watched a video from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) that provided an update on recent NCACC activities. Chairman Tate noted that the Highlands area “took a pretty big hit” the night before from the remnants of Hurricane Irma. Emergency Services Director Warren Cabe and Solid Waste Director Chirs Stahl updated the board members on the status of recovery efforts and the opening of a temporary site for storm-related vegetative debris. Mr. Stahl also invited the board members to attend an upcoming meeting of the state’s chapter of the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) to be held in Raleigh. Commissioner Beale pointed out the Macon County Fair starts on September 13th.

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

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

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: No one signed up to speak.

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

- To add discussion of appointments to the Community Funding Pool task force as the new Item 13(B) under Appointments, per Chairman Tate.
- To add consideration of a Satisfaction of Security Instrument as the new Item 11(E) under New Business, per the County Attorney.

- To remove Item 10(D) under Old Business, “Southwestern Community College (SCC) Burn Building property appraisal,” per the County Manager.
- To remove Budget Amendment #49 from the Consent Agenda (Item 12B) and to add it as the new item 10(B)(1) under Old Business, per the County Manager.
- To add a report on the Tourism Development Committees and the chambers of commerce in both Franklin and Highlands as the new Item 9(A) under Reports and Presentations, per the County Manager.
- The County Attorney requested a closed session under Item 14 in order to preserve the attorney/client privilege.
- To add a presentation by Sarah Thompson, Executive Director of the Southwestern Commission, as the new Item 9(B) under Reports and Presentations, per the County Manager.
- To add an update from a county delegation’s recent trip to Nantahala as the new Item 9(C) under Reports and Presentations, per Commissioner Higdon.

UPDATE ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES: The County Manager reported that he and the County Attorney had visited with representatives of the chambers of commerce of Franklin and Highlands and with members of the Tourism Development Committee (TDC) of each. He said those visits stemmed from questions that were being asked about the function of each one, and that he had asked the County Attorney to evaluate the governing documents of each, adding that the chamber and TDC representatives were asked to operate as close to those regulations and guidelines as possible. No action was taken.

SOUTHWESTERN COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT: Sarah Thompson, the executive director of the Southwestern Commission, also known as Region A, presented the 2016 annual report for the regional council of governments. She reviewed the agency’s primary areas of work and the dues structure that supports the seven-county organization. She also talked about a regional broadband assessment, noting that broadband is “the infrastructure issue of this era.” No action was necessary.

NANTAHALA FACILITIES: Commissioner Higdon explained that he, Commissioner Shields, the County Manager and Mr. Cabe recently spent time in Nantahala visiting the library, school, community building, recreation park and emergency services building. Improvements for these facilities were briefly discussed and Commissioner Higdon asked about including them in the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), which in turn led to a discussion about the CIP process. No action was taken.

BOARD MEETING IN HIGHLANDS: The board members, County Manager and County Attorney briefly discussed the possibility of holding the board's October regular meeting in Highlands. No action was taken.

BUDGET AMENDMENT #49/LANDSCAPING AT THE ROBERT C. CARPENTER COMMUNITY BUILDING: The County Manager began by explaining that he had asked to remove Budget Amendment #49 from the Consent Agenda. That amendment would appropriate \$100,000 in revenue from a grant-in-aid from the State of North Carolina and allocate it for the renovations to the Robert C. Carpenter Community Building. The County Manager said this money came about through state Sen. Jim Davis of Franklin, and is to be used for "community purposes." The County Manager went on to explain that he initially thought the grant would be great for the Community Funding Pool. However, as he went deeper into the conditions of the contract for the grant, he realized that the task force for the funding pool was not a fiduciary body, meaning the county would have to administer each "mini-grant" stemming from the \$100,000. Also, any organization receiving the funding would have to be a 501(C)3, which he said would create some inequities as to which ones could be considered. With these factors in mind, he requested, if the board agreed, to use the money toward the renovations at the community building, since it is used by many residents for a wide variety of uses, and thus fulfills the community purpose intent of the grant. This led to discussion among the board members, which then turned toward landscaping for the community building. The County Manager said that the landscaping plan has been sent out to prospective bidders, and that those bids are due on September 20th. Following discussion about the completion of final punch lists for the building renovations, the board took two separate actions. Upon a motion by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve Budget Amendment #49 as presented, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 1) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Secondly, upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to authorize the County Manager to enter into a landscape contract with the lowest responsible bidder once bids are received.

MACON/JACKSON COUNTY LINE ISSUE: Wes Hall, the county's Geographic Information System (GIS) analyst, gave the board members an update on the ongoing issue of "redrawing" portions of the county line between Macon and Jackson. This project is now in its fifth year and involves state officials as well. Mr. Hall provided the board with a number of maps that show as many as three possibilities under consideration for some locations, and told them he would be preparing a map with a single county line in the near future. This led to discussion and questions from the board members. Mr. Hall pointed out that the best way to accomplish this task would be through actual surveys, but

that is cost prohibitive. Chairman Tate said if both counties can agree on a new line, state officials will “rubber stamp it.” He also noted that the issue primarily involves properties along ridgelines, some of which contain “very, very high dollar residences.” He gave the example of Highlands Falls Country Club, half of which is in Macon and half is in Jackson, but is only accessible from the Macon County side, and thus Macon provides county services such as emergency response, garbage collection and recreation for Jackson County residents. Other situations similar to this one also exist, and he said that once the new line can be determined, the two counties can begin talking about how those services provided by Macon are to be paid for, perhaps resulting in an interlocal agreement between the counties. No action was necessary.

BROADBAND COMMITTEE: The board members discussed the possibility of having the county planning board review the county’s telecommunication tower ordinance with an eye toward providing flexibility to expand broadband services. This included discussion of provisions in Jackson County’s ordinance. The County Attorney said it would be helpful for the planning board if the commissioners would “clearly define what you want them to do.” The board members agreed to ask the planning board to assess the feasibility of revisions to the telecommunications ordinance to further the buildout of wireless internet capacity in the county, and suggested a joint meeting of the planning board, the broadband committee and the state consultant working with the broadband committee. Commissioner Shields made a motion to include the items outlined above, and to make this the planning board’s priority. Commissioner Gillespie seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MOBILITY MANAGER POSITION FOR TRANSIT: Transit Director Kim Angel joined the meeting by video/audio means to request approval of a new position for a mobility manager for her department. She explained that the county was awarded a \$50,968 grant for the position, which requires a 10 percent county match of \$5,098. However, the position will be shared with Swain County, which will reduce Macon’s portion to \$2,549. Ms. Angel told the board that money is already in her departmental budget. She said the job will be posted as a “grant funded position,” and if the funding is not continued, the position will be eliminated. Following her explanation of why the position was needed, Commissioner Beale made a motion to approve the request as presented. It was seconded by Commissioner Shields, and the board unanimously approved. The Finance Director requested that a budget amendment in the amount of \$50,958 be made a part of the motion, and the County Attorney noted that an interlocal agreement with Swain County regarding the shared position would also be required.

TRANSIT FACILITY EXPANSION: Ms. Angel told the board that she became aware of an opportunity to secure federal and/or state funding for the expansion of the Transit Services facility. The department no longer has a conference/training room, as that space was converted to offices. She informed the board that she is seeking \$183,500 for an addition that would replace the conference/training room, plus add a possible second story for storage. Due to a quick turnaround time, the County Manager wrote a letter to state Public Transportation Division officials confirming that the county has the funds for the required 10 percent local match. A copy of that letter is attached (Attachment 2) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. The local match of approximately \$18,000 could come from the sale of surplus transit vehicles. Commissioner Beale asked Ms. Angel if she had any plans for the proposed addition, and she told him only some rough drawings and some cost estimates that were three to four years old. This was followed by discussion of whether this project would be part of the county's CIP. Commissioner Beale made a motion to authorize Chairman Tate to write a letter approving up to a 10 percent match – pending the Transit Department's ability to provide the matching funds. Commissioner Shields seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

REVISED FIRE DISTRICT MAP FOR BURNINGTOWN-IOTLA FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT: Mr. Cabe requested approval of the revised fire district map for the Burningtown-Iotla Fire and Rescue Department. He handed out copies of the map to the board members. With a new substation now open, he said the department meets all of the current stipulations, with the revised map moving 126 structures into a new insurance rating area of an 8B instead of a 9. Mr. Cabe noted that if the board approves the new map, it will be forwarded to the North Carolina Office of the State Fire Marshal to schedule their inspection and grant the department final approval. Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to approve the revised fire district map as presented.

ELECTING COUNTY STATUS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES: Director of Social Services Patrick Betancourt asked the board to vote to continue to have Macon as one of seven counties statewide with the designation of “electing status” for the Work First Program. He said that the county has held this designation since 1998, and it gives the department additional latitude, including the ability to reinvest unspent funds in child protective services. Following additional details from Mr. Betancourt, Commissioner Beale gave a brief history of the program and made a motion to remain an electing county. Commissioner Gillespie seconded the motion, and the board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

CONSTITUTION WEEK PROCLAMATION: Following a brief explanation by the County Manager, and upon a motion by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to proclaim the week of September 17 through 23 as “Constitution Week.” A copy of the proclamation is attached (Attachment 3) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

SATISFACTION OF SECURITY INSTRUMENT: Following brief comments from the County Attorney and upon the recommendation of Housing Director John Fay, upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to approve a Satisfaction of Security Instrument for Wylene Wall, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 4) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve the items on the consent agenda as follows: the minutes of the August 8, 2017 regular meeting; the following budget amendments: #38 for the Health Department to roll \$13,843 in unexpended Cost Settlement Money to the current fiscal year; #39 for the Health Department to carry forward \$1,606 in unexpended money (donations for Animal Control) to the current fiscal year; #40 for the Health Department to roll \$535 in unexpended Tobacco Grant money to the current fiscal year; #41 for the Health Department to roll \$2,978 in unexpended grant revenue to the current fiscal year; #42 for the Health Department to roll \$837 in unexpended Minority Diabetes Prevention Grant money to the current fiscal year; #43 for the Sheriff’s Department to appropriate \$1,067 from fund balance left from an anonymous donation; #44 for Soil Conservation to appropriate \$136,746 for a Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program grant; #45 for the Health Department to reverse Budget Amendment #25 and to carry forward \$5,283 in Zonta money already included in the original budget; #46 for the Health Department to roll \$508 in unexpended School Health-Sharing Center contribution funds to the current fiscal year; #47 for the Department of Social Services to allocate a total of \$183,176 in additional TANF and TEA Foster Care funds; and #48 for Emergency Services to allocate \$3,840 in insurance proceeds to cover the replacement of a garage door. (Copies of the amendments are attached); tax releases for the month of August in the amount of \$11,813.01. (Copies of the releases are on file in the Deputy Clerk’s office.) the write-off of taxes 10 years old or older in the amount of \$82,182.71 (letter from Tax Collections Supervisor attached.) monthly ad valorem tax collections report (no action necessary).

APPOINTMENTS: (1) Board of Health: Upon a motion by Commissioner Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to

appoint Dr. Julie Farrow, a physician from Highlands, to the licensed physician slot on the Board of Health and to appoint Mitchell Bishop, an engineer with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, to the licensed professional engineer slot on the board. Terms of appointment are for three years each. **(2) Community Funding Pool:** The board members and staff held a lengthy discussion regarding the current status of the Community Funding Pool task force. During this time, the County Manager reviewed the membership makeup of the 12-member task force that was originally created in 2000, with two-thirds of those members to represent non-profit organizations. Following further discussion, no formal action was taken.

CLOSED SESSION: At the request of the County Attorney, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 8:34 p.m. in order to preserve the attorney/client privilege. Upon a motion by Commission Gillespie, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to come out of closed session and return to open session at 8:58 p.m. No action was taken.

ADJOURN: With no other business, and at 8:58 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Commissioner Gillespie, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Jim Tate
Board Chairman