



**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JOINT MEETING WITH THE  
MACON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Special Meeting  
December 21, 2022**

Chairman Higdon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. as provided for in the Notice of Special Meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners and the Macon County Board of Education, a copy of which is attached [Attachment 1] and hereby made a part of these minutes. Commissioners Paul Higdon, Josh Young, Gary Shields, Danny Antoine, John Shearl, County Manager Derek Roland, Finance Director Lori Hall, Deputy Clerk Mike Decker, Macon County School Board Members Jim Breedlove, Hilary Wilkes, Stephanie Laseter, Diedre Breeden, Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin, members of the new media and members of the general public were present.

Chairman Higdon welcomed everyone in attendance and asked members of both boards to introduce themselves.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** **Mark Sutton** spoke in support of a new Franklin High School and identified some of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) concerns that he has experienced at the current facility. **John Deville** spoke in support of a new Franklin High School on the current property, continuation of the current faculty and staff committee, and support of Commissioner Shields remaining as the liaison. **John Mira-Knippel** spoke in support of a new Franklin High School with an increase in vocational opportunities for students and improved facilities, which will help in the recruitment of workforce and the working-age population, which will then help to support the local economy and keep businesses operating. **Melissa Faetz** spoke about the challenges her child has navigating the current Franklin High School campus and the safety issues that have been identified. She stated there is a lack of equitable education for those with physical disabilities and said she had contacted disability rights requesting assistance with pursuing any legal avenues necessary to ensure these issues are addressed. **Danny Prince** shared a quote from George Washington and encouraged the boards to be transparent as they make policies. **Richard Lightener** spoke in support of responsible planning and spending. He encouraged board members to maintain what we build, do it correctly, budget accordingly and decrease wasteful spending.

**LS3P FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT UPDATE:** Architect Paul Boney thanked the liaisons and committees that have been involved so far and said there is still a lot of work to be done and the public comments given demonstrate that. He gave an overview of grant opportunities and reasons for applying for a 50 million dollar grant for the Franklin High School project. Mr. Boney provided drawings of the proposed project and indicated he will be sharing estimates on all items in the drawings in January.

**MACON MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM FACILITY UPDATE:** Mr. Roland provided a handout explaining the project cost, funding obligation as of December 21, 2022, last board action taken, and next steps required [Attachment 2], a copy of which is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. He shared that on October 18, 2022, the bid for this project was awarded to Carolina Specialties Construction and that a contract has been executed with total project cost of \$2,519,250 with \$2,640,000 budgeted for the project.

**HIGHLANDS MIDDLE SCHOOL RENOVATIONS UPDATE:** Mr. Roland referred to the aforementioned handout and stated that on December 13, 2022, LS3P was approved as the architectural firm and the county manager was authorized to enter into contract negotiations with them. He stated the total project cost is \$697,730 with \$300,000 received from the N.C. Education Lottery Repair and Renovation Fund as year one funding and that an additional \$500,000 is expected as year two funding. Mr. Roland said he still needs to finalize approval of the contract with LS3P.

**HIGHLANDS PRE-K PROJECT UPDATE:** Mr. Roland referred to the aforementioned handout and stated that on November 8, 2022, LS3P was approved as the architectural firm contingent upon approval of the scope of services by the school board. He indicated that the total project cost is \$4,700,000 and no funding mechanism has been identified for the project at this time. Mr. Roland clarified that the board had approved \$379,255 for LS3P to complete the design. He said determining the funding mechanism for the project needs to be completed and then the project bidding process can be initiated. Ms. Wilkes requested the name of this project be changed to Highlands School Project as it involves more than the Pre-K portion.

#### **OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

- A. Highlands Soccer Field** - Mr. Roland referred to the aforementioned handout and stated that on October 18, 2022, the board authorized the school system to proceed with seeking bids. Dr. Baldwin said the bids are due back by the end of January for a total project cost of \$840,000 with no funding obligated at this time. Mr. Roland said once the bids are received, the school board would need to evaluate them and

prioritize this project along with the other projects being considered.

- B. Macon Middle School Track** - Mr. Roland referred to the aforementioned handout and stated that on October 18, 2022, the board authorized the school system to proceed with seeking bids. Dr. Baldwin said the bids are due back by the end of January for a total project cost ranging between \$644,909 and \$926,500 with no funding obligated at this time. Mr. Roland said once the bids are received, the school board would need to evaluate them and prioritize this project along with the other projects being considered.
- C. Macon Middle School Dislodged Vent Pipes** – Macon County Schools Maintenance Director Tracy Tallent indicated that a recent smoke test had been conducted due to a sewage odor in the building. He indicated that a camera test had also been conducted and that the tests showed several breaches in plumbing in the kitchen, locker rooms, and other areas of the school. Mr. Tallent said some of the breaches had been repaired, but others were not accessible and had not been repaired. Dr. Baldwin said some back flow preventers had been installed in areas that could not be repaired and have improved the odor by 70 percent. He said they are waiting on the estimators at LS3P to determine repair cost.

After a lengthy discussion, Chairman Higdon made a motion that the Highlands Pre-K project as well as A, B, and C under Other Items noted above be sent back to the Board of Education for further discussion and prioritization. Motion failed due to lack of a second. After additional lengthy discussion regarding funding options for projects, attempted clarification of the need to have project prioritized and included in the fiscal year budget, and project planning, at 9:30 p.m. Commissioner Young made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Shearl. Vote 5-0.

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Derek Roland  
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

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Paul Higdon  
Board Chair