

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

Chairman Corbin called the meeting to order at 6:00 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:** There were no announcements.

**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 COMMENT:** **Richard Melvin** addressed the board regarding the county's upcoming property revaluation, offering some ideas and suggestions on the process. Chairman Corbin asked Mr. Melvin to write his suggestions down and send them to the County Attorney.

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

- To add a request from Georgia Raines as Item 10D under New Business, per Commissioner Beale.
- To remove Item 9B, Request from Appalachian Tree, to remove Item 9C, Resolution regarding transfer of playground equipment to Macon Middle School, and to remove Item 9D, Resolution honoring Robert (Bob) Carpenter, per Chairman Corbin.

**UPDATE ON SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER ACTIVITIES:** Shelly Foreman, Senior Director for Planning and Public Affairs for the Smoky Mountain Center, gave the board an update on the regionalization efforts involved in the reorganization of the Local Management Entities (LMEs) and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). She noted that the new Western Regional Partnership is made up of 23 counties, and presented the board with the slate of proposed board member nominations from the Smoky Mountain Center, which includes Commissioner Beale as one of the 21 representatives. She noted that the formation of an advisory board made up solely of county commissioners is being considered. She discussed the agency's administration of the managed care program for Medicaid-related services, and told the board that "we want to be the public manager of behavioral health resources." She closed her presentation with the "take home point" that "we will maintain our local presence." Commissioner Beale told the board members that one of them will be more involved in the future through the advisory board. No action was necessary.

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM IMPACT REPORT:** County Extension Director Alan Durden presented the board with copies of the 2014 Macon County Cooperative Extension Program Impact Report. Mr. Durden began by thanking the board for its support of the program, and described its mission and priorities. He then highlighted some of the programming efforts in Macon County, including: (1) staff members conducted or participated in 381 meetings, workshops, demonstrations, lectures and tours, and 7,149 people attended 1,971 hours of classroom and field instruction; (2) a grant of \$15,000 from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation awarded to Macon County 4-H continues to fund a Youth Council Leadership Development Program and (3) 799 volunteers assisted with programming, giving 4,380 volunteer hours valued at \$96,974, or two full-time positions. He also noted that Cooperative Extension will be celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in May this year. Commissioner Beale, the board's liaison to the program, cited it as the "glue that holds communities together." No action was necessary.

**SURVEY FINDINGS BY MISSION CRITICAL PARTNERS:** Emergency Services Director David Key introduced Tim Hennemann, a project engineer with Mission Critical Partners, who presented the findings of a radio system needs assessment. He began by providing a history of the system, noting that the technology in use is more than 30 years old and that the needs of first responders have surpassed the capabilities the system can provide. He provided an overview of the methodology used for the study, followed by a discussion of the technical and operational baselines of the system. The key issues with the system are coverage, capacity/channel options, security/control and interoperability, and he provided details on each topic. Mr. Hennemann then outlined design recommendations based on those issues. He presented two options, the first identified as a "UHF P25 Trunking," which

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was the firm's recommendation at an anticipated vendor price of \$8 million, and the second as a "UHF Conventional Simulcast" at an anticipated vendor price of \$2.1 million. He then reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of each option. After presenting proposed changes to the Fire/EMS paging system and discussing potential add-ons to the systems, Mr. Hennemann outlined the next steps for the county, which included deciding on a system option and starting the process of frequency acquisition immediately. Commissioner Beale asked Mr. Hennemann his opinion regarding the two options, and he responded by stating that the second option would not improve capacity and the county would have reoccurring issues in the next five to 10 years. Commissioner Higdon noted the need to take all of this information and "digest it." No action was taken.

**N.C. PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND PROJECT AGREEMENT:** The County Manager pointed out that while the board approved the overall development of the Parker Meadows Recreational Park at its' February 18<sup>th</sup> continued session, the need to formally approve the project agreement with the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) still remained. As written, the agreement calls for a \$617,576 local match from the county in order to receive the \$500,000 PARTF grant. The County Attorney agreed to write the appropriate letter notifying PARTF officials that the county planned to proceed with the entire project. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to approve the project agreement as presented and to include the accompanying letter seeking approval of the entire project, and to authorize Chairman Corbin to sign the agreement. A copy of the agreement is attached (**Attachment 1**) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**REQUESTS FROM J&B DISPOSAL:** Bonita Hamstra, president of J&B Disposal, presented three requests for the board's consideration. The first involved a renewal of the lease agreement for the county's Highlands Road convenience center site. The County Attorney noted that the lease had expired and was now continuing on a month-to-month basis. Following discussion, Commissioner Tate suggested that the County Attorney work with Mrs. Hamstra on a new agreement and then present it to the board for consideration. By consensus, the board agreed to revisit the issue at its April regular meeting. No action was taken. The second issue was a proposed increase in the rates for residential trash service. Mrs. Hamstra proposed an increase from \$15.50 to \$17 per month for back door service, an increase from \$12 to \$13.50 for road side service, and to increase rates for the Highlands area to \$18.50 for house service and \$17 for road side service. Mrs. Hamstra told the board that J&B has not had a rate increase since March of 2008, and can no longer operate on the current rates with the cost of fuel and truck maintenance. Following discussion, Commissioner Higdon said, "I think it's a fair request," and made a motion to approve the rate increases as presented,

and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Haven. After further discussion and comments from Solid Waste Director Chris Stahl, the board voted unanimously to approve the rate increases. The third item involved a request for a five-year extension to the franchise agreement between the county and J&B. Mrs. Hamstra said she currently has less than two years left on the current agreement, which prohibits any capital investment in new equipment, adding that she is in need of replacing the roll-off trucks that service the county convenience centers. Commissioner Beale suggested that the County Attorney review the agreement and bring back a recommendation to the board, and to address the question of whether a bid process was necessary due to changes in state law. No action was taken, and the item was to be added to the April regular meeting agenda.

**REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM MACON PROGRAM FOR PROGRESS:**

Chuck Sutton, the executive director for Macon Program for Progress (MPP) and Garry Roper, the organization's HUD Section 8 Program Coordinator, appeared before the board to ask for an additional \$13,000 in support from the county to help pay for administrative costs associated with operating the program. Mr. Sutton acknowledged that the board had supplied \$12,000 last June to assist with the situation, but he also noted that MPP is again experiencing a deficit in federal funding for the administration of the program because pre-2013 federal sequester funding has not been reinstated for 2014. The \$13,000 would help MPP fund the HUD program for the remainder of its fiscal year. Upon a motion by Commissioner Haven, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted 4-1, with Commissioner Higdon opposing, to grant the request and to take the \$13,000 from contingency.

**PROCLAMATION DECLARING MACON COUNTY AS A PURPLE HEART COUNTY:**

Chairman Corbin reviewed the proposed proclamation, requested by Lenny Lazzara, Commander of Chapter 639 Military Order of the Purple Heart, which would designate Macon County as a Purple Heart County. The Military Order of the Purple Heart is attempting to get all 100 North Carolina counties to issue such proclamations, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to approve the proclamation as presented, a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 2)** and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**WNC TEEN INSTITUTE:** Commissioner Beale shared a request from Georgia Raines with Mountain Projects, Inc. seeking \$900 in funding to allow five students and one adult from the Nantahala Community to attend classes as part of the WNC Teen Institute. Citing this as "a good investment," Commissioner Beale made a motion to approve the request as presented, with the funding to come from contingency. Following a discussion about the possible use of the Community Funding Pool, Commissioner Tate seconded the

motion. The motion passed 3-2, with Commissioners Beale, Corbin and Tate approving and Commissioners Haven and Higdon opposing.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the following items on the consent agenda were unanimously approved: **Minutes** – Approved the minutes from the February 11 and February 18, 2014 meetings. **Budget amendments** – Approved the following budget amendments: **#105** for the Department of Social Services to appropriate \$6,125 in additional CRC funds; (Revision with corresponding number attached.) **Tax releases** – Approved tax releases in the amount of \$2,245.76 (A computer printout of releases is on file in the Tax Department and the County Manager’s office.) **Tax refunds** – Approved a tax refund for John Hopkins in the amount of \$761.71, as recommended by Tax Administrator Richard Lightner. Denied a tax refund for the Robert C. Carpenter Estate in the amount of \$470.38, as recommended by Tax Administrator Richard Lightner. **Macon County Public Health Fee Changes** – Approved 11 changes to the Macon County Public Health Fee Schedule, per the attached document. **Monthly ad valorem tax collection report** – No action necessary.

**APPOINTMENTS: (1) Board of Equalization** – Per the recommendation of Tax Administrator Richard Lightner, upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board unanimously approved the appointment of Rich Bankston, Kevin Spivey, Dwight Vinson and Bill Martin to the Board of Equalization for 2014, and included the appointment of Gary Drake as the fifth member, per a recommendation from Commissioner Tate. **(2) Macon County Heritage Center Advisory Board** – The Deputy Clerk explained that Betty Waldroop, the representative of the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee (LTLT) on the Macon County Heritage Center Advisory Board, had resigned her position as chief administrative officer for the LTLT and along with it her seat on the advisory board, effective March 1. Commissioner Beale said that a candidate would be forthcoming by the April meeting.

**CLOSED SESSION:** Prior to the closed session, the County Manager announced plans for a continued session to be held on March 18<sup>th</sup>. At 7:48 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 the acquisition of real property under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5). Solid Waste Director Chris Stahl and Dwight Vinson, a local appraiser, joined the board in the closed session. At 9:10 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, 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 9:11 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to recess the meeting until Tuesday, March 18, 2014 at 6 p.m. in the boardroom of the Cecil L. Groves Center on the Macon County campus of Southwestern Community College, 44 Siler Farm Road, Franklin, NC.

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Derek Roland  
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

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Kevin Corbin  
Board Chairman