

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CONTINUED SESSION
MAY 31, 2014
MINUTES**

Chairman Corbin reconvened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. in the conference room of the Cecil L. Groves Center on the Macon campus of Southwestern Community College at 44 Siler Farm Road in Franklin as recessed from the May 13, 2014 regular meeting. All board members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, Finance Director, County Attorney, members of the news media and interested citizens were present. The primary purpose of the meeting was to hold a budget work session.

Prior to the budget discussion, the board received a recommendation regarding the award of the bid for the grading at the Parker Meadows Recreational Complex. The County Manager and County Attorney referenced a letter from Larry Lackey of CEtech Associates, which explains that the county received four bids for the sitework construction, with Penland Contracting Co., Inc. of Franklin being the lower bidder with a base bid of \$1,143,794. Mr. Lackey's recommendation was to award the bid to Penland and to include Alternate Bid Item No. 2 for a total of \$1,225,144. The County Attorney recommended that the bid be awarded as outlined, and that he would assist Mr. Lackey in preparing a contract for the board's consideration at its June 10, 2014 regular meeting. The County Manager pointed out that the bid from Penland was in line with the estimated cost for the work. Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to award the bid to Penland Contracting Co., Inc. in the amount of \$1,225,144 as recommended. A copy of the letter from Mr. Lackey and the bid tabulation are attached (**Attachment 1**) and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

In adjusting the agenda, the County Manager asked that the discussion of projected revenue for FY 2014-15 (Item 4) be moved to Item 3 and that the discussion of expenditures by function be moved from Item 3 to Item 4. He also presented the Finance Director's request to have the board consider

Budget Amendments #177 and #178 prior to the close of the meeting. These changes were made without objection.

The County Manager utilized a PowerPoint presentation to highlight revenue projections for the upcoming year, and a copy of that presentation is attached (Attachment 2) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. The discussion then turned to expenditures, which were also highlighted in the presentation. The County Manager noted that the “big three” continue to be education, human services and public safety, and he pointed out notable increases in other departments as well.

During the discussion regarding public safety, the manager pointed out that the line item for medical treatment at the county’s detention center was set to increase \$100,000 in the coming year, with food service going up \$50,000. The possible impact of misdemeanor offenders having to be housed in the county jail would also factor into increased operational costs.

Emergency Management Director Warren Cabe presented the board with a staffing proposal that, among other things, would delay the purchase of an ambulance in order to hire two more full-time EMTs for the so-called “day-shift truck,” which would allow the Franklin base to have three full-time (24-hour) ambulance crews. A copy of Mr. Cabe’s proposal is attached (Attachment 3) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Other items included in the proposal were also discussed, and the general consensus of the board members was to move forward with those plans as outlined.

The discussion turned to the recent escape by inmates at the Macon County Detention Center. Commissioner Beale said that needed repairs to the fence there could be made for \$10,500, and following comments from Sheriff Robert Holland, Commissioner Beale suggested giving the County Manager the discretion to resolve the matter.

Following brief remarks by the County Manager regarding health and human services as well as recreational and cultural items, the discussion turned to education. The first item to be addressed was the County Manager’s decision to remove \$200,000 from the budget that provides funding for the Jackson County campus of Southwestern Community College (SCC). Terry Bell, the chairman of the SCC Board of Directors, and a number of other SCC representatives were present and joined in the discussion. Mr. Bell’s request to the board came in the form of two options, the first to restore full funding (\$481,225) so as to include SCC’s Jackson campus in the budget, or secondly to “increase [the] county manager’s recommendation to include costs coming from Jackson County tax dollars plus increases (\$347,225).” The recommended budget calls for \$231,000 in funding for SCC.

Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin told the board that the budget proposal put forward by the North Carolina Senate would have a \$700,000 impact on Macon County and, if approved, would result in the elimination of 14 teacher assistant positions and other personnel cuts. He noted that the County Manager had recommended approximately \$7.3 million in local funding for the school system, which requested \$7.8 million. Chairman Corbin stated that his biggest concern was the school system's capital outlay budget, saying that delaying needed repairs was really not saving money.

Chairman Corbin declared a recess at 11:05 a.m.

Chairman Corbin called the meeting back to order at 11:21 a.m.

The board then heard from representatives of two volunteer fire departments that were requesting tax increases. Matt Mason, the chief of Clarks Chapel Fire and Rescue, explained that his department needed new air packs and new extrication equipment, in addition to other needs and that they are trying to build a three-month contingency fund. The department is looking to increase the tax rate in its district from 4.2 cents to 5.9 cents per \$100 valuation, and Mr. Mason said the department held a community meeting to seek public input on the increase. Billy Bryson, Vice-President of the Mountain Valley Fire & Rescue Board of Directors, spoke on behalf of his department's request to go from a 7.7 cent tax rate to 8 cents. He noted that the development of the Wildflower subdivision didn't work out as planned, leading to a major impact on his district's anticipated property valuation. Following the presentations, the commissioners discussed the possibility of consolidation of the county's volunteer fire departments.

Other budget items discussed included the request for \$50,000 by REACH of Macon County toward a new shelter, and the need for \$40,000 for the community care clinic. Neither item is currently included in the budget.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve Budget Amendments #177 and #178 as presented. Budget Amendment #177 for the Department of Social Services allocates \$10,771 in additional funds for an increased demand in meals. Budget Amendment #178 for the Health Department allocates \$3,804 in new money received from the state for the WIC program. Copies of the budget amendments are attached (Attachment 4 and Attachment 5) and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

At 12:09 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session for the purpose of consulting with the attorney under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3). At 12:32 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to come out of closed session and return to open session. No action was taken.

At 12:33 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman