

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**March 8, 2022**  
**MINUTES**

Chairman Tate called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All Board Members, County Manager Derek Roland, Deputy Clerk Mike Decker, Finance Director Lori Carpenter and County Attorney Eric Ridenour, members of the news media, county employees and interested citizens were present.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Commissioner Beale requested Mr. Roland to share about the loss of a county employee that we need to remember tonight. Mr. Roland stated that Reggie Perry, a long-time employee in the Maintenance Department, passed away recently and will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Commissioner Shields announced that a Vietnam Veteran's parade and presentation will be held on March 26, 2022, with the parade starting at 10:30 a.m. with a presentation to follow at 11:00 a.m.

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Chairman Tate requested all those in attendance to rise and a moment of silence was observed.

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

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

- (A) **PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE AMENDED AND RESTATED AIRPORT HAZARD ORDINANCE:** At 6:04 p.m., Chairman Tate called the public hearing to order. Mr. Ridenour stated there were no substantive changes made to the ordinance in order to meet the requirements of North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) 160-D. With no one from the public wishing to speak on the ordinance, at 6:07 p.m. Chairman Tate closed the hearing. Upon a motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve "An Ordinance of the Macon County Board of Commissioners for an Amended and Restated Airport Hazard Ordinance of the County of Macon, North Carolina," a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 1)** and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

- (B) **PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE AMENDED AND RESTATED BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT ORDINANCE:** At 6:07 p.m., Chairman Tate called the public hearing to order. Mr. Ridenour stated there were no substantive changes made to the ordinance in order to meet the requirements of NCGS 160-D. At 6:07 p.m., with no one from the public wishing to speak on the ordinance, Chairman Tate closed the hearing. Upon a motion by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to approve “An Ordinance of the Macon County Board of Commissioners for an Amended and Restated Building Code Enforcement Ordinance for the County of Macon, North Carolina,” a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 2)** and is hereby made a part of these minutes.
- (C) **PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE AMENDED AND RESTATED BUILDING HEIGHT ORDINANCE:** At 6:08 p.m., Chairman Tate called the public hearing to order. Mr. Ridenour again stated there were no substantive changes made to the ordinance in order to meet the requirements of NCGS 160-D. At 6:08 p.m., with no one from the public wishing to speak on the ordinance, Chairman Tate closed the hearing. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve “An Ordinance of the Macon County Board of Commissioners for An Amended and Restated Building Height Ordinance of the County of Macon, North Carolina,” a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 3)** and is hereby made a part of these minutes.
- (D) **PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE AMENDED AND RESTATED SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROL ORDINANCE:** At 6:08 p.m., Chairman Tate called the public hearing to order. Mr. Ridenour stated there was one change made due to a request from the state after the previous review. He explained that although the county followed the state model in previously penning changes, the county needed to add a statement indicating a warning regarding a damaged silt fence would be issued prior to a fine being imposed. At 6:08 p.m., with no one from the public wishing to speak on the ordinance, Chairman Tate closed the hearing. Upon a motion by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Chairman Tate, the board voted unanimously to approve an updated version of “An Ordinance of the Macon County Board of Commissioners for An Amended and Restated Macon County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance,” a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 4)** and is hereby made a part of these minutes.
- (E) PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE AMENDED AND RESTATED WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATION FACILITIES ORDINANCE:** At

6:09 p.m., Chairman Tate called the public hearing to order. Mr. Ridenour noted there was a substantive change to the existing ordinance in that appeals will now be made to the Macon County Planning Board rather than the Macon County Board of Commissioners in order to meet the requirements of NCGS 160-D. At 6:09 p.m., with no one from the public wishing to speak on the ordinance, Chairman Tate closed the hearing. Upon a motion by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve “An Ordinance of the Macon County Board of Commissioners for An Amended and Restated Wireless Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance of Macon County,” a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 5)** and is hereby made a portion of these minutes.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Andy Markum** shared his experience with how access to a skate park can provide a social outlet and build self-confidence. He asked the board to consider investing in this project. **Evan Lampkin** reminded the board of his previous presentation and thanked the board for their ongoing support. **John Cisneros** commented that the skate park is going to be a free park and open seven days a week. He said with fewer and fewer activities for youth, this park would be an opportunity for them to build friends and a sense of community. **Daniel Lawton** stated that the community has raised almost \$12,000 in funding and that the projected cost is over \$100,000. He shared that \$35,000 will be needed soon to cover the cost of concrete and rebar. Mr. Lawton commented that this park will provide years of fun in a free park and that the board’s support could help in lighting a fire of importance to other organizations. **Olga Pader** stated she was here because the park is something very dear to her. She said the park would prevent the young people from breaking the law to do what they like and the group needs the support of the board. Ms. Pader emphasized that young people need a place to go, otherwise, they will take a wrong turn. **Mary Ann Ingram** shared about seeing a skate boarder on Walnut Creek Road and on Highlands Road and how unsafe this is for them. She said we cannot afford to lose kids and these kids need somewhere to go that doesn’t take a lot of money.

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

- To add discussion of the proposed skate part under Old Business as Item 10A, per Commissioner Shields.
- To add consideration of a bid for patrol cars for the sheriff’s department under New Business as Item 11E, per Mr. Roland.

**Pre-K for Highlands Area** – Allison Tate, a teacher at the Highlands United Methodist Church Half-day Preschool Program, gave a background review of the preschool needs in Highlands and stated there is a desperate need for childcare with approximately 39 children currently on the waitlist for the two licensed daycare centers in Highlands. Mrs. Tate indicated there are 50 children on the Pre-K waitlist with up to a three-year waiting period. She said there are five Pre-K programs in Macon County, but none of them are in Highlands and the number of children needing the service is not decreasing. Additionally, Mrs. Tate shared that she will be retiring in May and they are not having any luck recruiting a replacement, as applicants prefer the benefits of the public school system. Maci Bears, a fourth-grade teacher at Highlands School, shared some statistical information about children who are able to attend a Pre-K program versus those who were not, including that the need for special education services is reduced by 39 percent for those attending a Pre-K program. Ms. Bears indicated that teachers and children have two years from the time a child enters school to make gains in their learning deficits, especially in reading, and that preschool is crucial to this process. Rich Delaney, the President and Managing Director of Old Edwards Inn Hospitality Group, shared that Old Edwards has over 500 employees and that availability of early childhood education has not increased with their growth. He shared that employees participate in annual surveys and childcare is always one of the top concerns. Mr. Delaney further stated that recruitment is getting more difficult as people look for educational opportunities and childcare options for their children more often than not when looking at job opportunities. Commissioner Beale stated he would get a report that Macon Program for Progress did around 2018/19 about childcare needs in Macon County for Chairman Tate to share with the presenters. He said the report is very alarming and although it is dated is probably still somewhat accurate. Commissioner Beale stated there is not a Head start program in Highlands and it is better to get children in the system at age three. Commissioner Shields shared that this seems to be an issue on a national level as our public school system is based on a K-12 structure, and the state relies on the counties to provide the brick and mortar. He said if these programs were available, some parents could go back to work. Commissioner Young inquired as to whether this was on Dr. Chris Baldwin's budget for Macon County Schools for the next fiscal year. Dr. Baldwin stated it was not on the horizon for the capital outlay plan. He said there are currently around 90 Pre-K slots in the Franklin area, with 51 of those being income based at approximately \$475 per month. Jeff Weller, a member of Advance Highlands Education Committee (AHEC), presented a draft plan completed by NOVUS Architects following a planning study funded by AHEC at a cost of \$35,000. Mr. Weller stated the plan focused on three primary areas: (1) Provide Pre-K services on campus at Highlands School, (2) Integrate Project-based Learning (PBL) curriculum, and (3) Provide enhancements to CTE curriculum career training. He indicated the estimated cost will be around \$5 million, and the plan has been endorsed by the Macon

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County Board of Education. Commissioner Beale said the next step would be for the board of education to include this plan in its capital improvement plan request. Chairman Tate reminded the board that this was one of his budget priorities for the upcoming fiscal year and believes it to be a huge economic driver for the county.

**US Forest Service Plan Update** – District Ranger Troy Waskey was unable to attend and this item will be moved to the April regular meeting agenda.

**No Wrong Door** – No Wrong Door Director Sheila Jenkins gave an overview of the history of No Wrong Door and an update on current services provided. Ms. Jenkins shared that the program is a peer-based approach to help those with mental health or substance abuse challenges. She indicated they provide parenting classes, life skills classes, a food pantry, clothing, pay for hotel rooms for the homeless, provide tents and provide transportation. Derek Jones, a member of the No Wrong Door Board and the Macon County Jail Administrator, shared an update on the services that No Wrong Door has provided to inmates and their families. He said No Wrong Door works with the judicial system to assist with wrap-around services needed both in the jail and upon release. Mr. Jones reported that No Wrong Door has been asked to provide DWI-related services and is in the process of getting approval. Commissioner Beale stated that No Wrong Door is serving more and more homeless folks and is seeing homeless situations where both parents are working, their children are in school, and they cannot find housing. Sheriff Holland voiced his appreciation for No Wrong Door, their board members and those who had been involved since its inception and in its ongoing success.

**Resolution in recognition of Macon County Crawford Senior Center volunteers** – Macon County Senior Services Administrative Officer Jennifer Hollifield shared that the center lost about half of their volunteers during the COVID pandemic, as most of them are elderly and wanted to protect themselves. In spite of this loss, Ms. Hollifield stated volunteers provided 3,200 hours of their time in 2021 which consisted of serving 676 individuals (400 volunteer hours) in the SHIP program, providing 820 hours of activities, delivering 10,000 home meals (1,000 volunteer hours), and serving 26,000 congregate meals. She stated she was passionate about the volunteers and requested the board approve the resolution declaring April 17-23, 2022 as Macon County Volunteer Week. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to approve the resolution as presented, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 6) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Skate Park** – Tim Shaw with SK828 Franklin stated the new skate park would be a 6,000-square-foot concrete park with a cost exceeding \$120,000. He stated there would be opportunities for beginner to expert level skate boarding, and JE Dunn Construction, the company who is building the new hospital, will build the complex. He said the park would also allow bicycles, inline skates and even roller skates. Mr. Shaw shared that the youth involved have raised over \$10,000 and have deposited those funds through the Region A Foundation, who is the fiduciary agent. He said they have applied for a grant and has asked for support from the Franklin Town Council. After some discussion regarding oversight, supervision, liability, budget and lighting, a motion was made by Commissioner Shields, seconded by Commissioner Beale, to allocate \$35,000 from contingency to the Region A Foundation for the skate park. The vote was unanimous. Mr. Shaw was asked by members of the board to request additional funds for next fiscal year by sending a request to the county manager before April 15, 2021.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Business Development Center Lease Renewals** – Economic Development Director Tommy Jenkins presented three renewals for the lease of space in the county's Business Development Center, as follows:

- (1) **AG1, LLC.** Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve a resolution declaring the property (Unit A) as surplus along with a one-year lease that will commence on December 1, 2021 and end on November 30, 2022. The monthly rent is \$1,840, and copies of the resolution and lease are attached **(Attachment 7)** and are hereby made a part of these minutes.
- (2) **TECO SSL, Inc.** Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to approve a resolution declaring the property (Unit B) surplus along with a one-year lease that will commence on November 14, 2021 and end on November 13, 2022. The monthly rent is \$1,218, and copies of the resolution and lease are attached **(Attachment 8)** and are hereby made a part of these minutes.
- (3) **Waterwheel Manufacturing, Inc.** Upon a motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve a resolution declaring the property (Unit C) surplus along with a one-year lease that will commence on July 1, 2021 and end on June 30, 2022. The monthly rent is \$212 a month, and

copies of the resolution and lease are attached (Attachment 9) and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

**Solid Waste** – Solid Waste Director Chris Stahl presented proposed contracts for services related to the closure of Phases I and II of the Macon County Landfill. There are four contracts in total, as follows:

- 1) McGill Associates for construction services
- 2) BLE (Bunnell-Lammons Engineering, Inc.) – design support services for permit application and plan
- 3) BLE (Bunnell-Lammons Engineering, Inc.) – soil stockpile sampling and testing services
- 4) BLE (Bunnell-Lammons Engineering, Inc.) – Construction Quality Assurance (CQA) services

Upon a motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to approve the contracts as presented and the accompanying budget amendment to allocate funds from fund balance to Fund 64.

Mr. Stahl also presented a resolution exempting engineering services for groundwater monitoring reporting, and upon a motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to approve the resolution as presented. A copy of that resolution is attached (Attachment 10) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**Consideration of Change Order #015 on the Macon Middle School renovation project** – Jack Morgan explained the details of the change order, which totals \$27,960, stating that most of the changes were housekeeping items along with a new item to cover a dirt garden near the entrance with concrete. Upon a motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the change order as presented and the accompanying budget amendment. A copy of the change order is attached (Attachment 11) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Ms. Hall noted that this leaves a balance of \$362,136 in the project contingency fund.

**Consideration of resolution regarding referendum on levy of a one-quarter-cent county sales and use tax** – Mr. Roland reminded the board of the discussion regarding this item at the budget kick-off meeting. He read part of the resolution and stated this would help with the Franklin High School project as well as many other projects that had previously been mentioned. Mr. Roland indicated an estimated \$1.7 million in additional revenue would be generated annually and can be used for any expenditure. He noted that item #3 – a question on the ballot - of the resolution has to be worded as presented on the ballot. After some discussion regarding advertising and getting support from the

school board, a motion was made by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Shields, to approve the resolution as presented with the item to be on the general election ballot and this board reviewing the ballot before it is printed. The vote was unanimous and a copy of the resolution is attached (Attachment 12) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

**Patrol car bid discussion** – Mr. Roland stated that the purchase order for four Dodge Durangos for the Macon County Sheriff’s Department in the amount of \$140,720 was cancelled by the dealership with an indication that no more Dodge Durangos were going to be built in 2022. He indicated that Sheriff Holland had contacted a dealership in Kentucky who had nine of them available for purchase, which would cover the four budgeted for this fiscal year, four due for replacement in the next fiscal year, and one from an insurance settlement. Mr. Roland requested to release a Request for Bids on March 16, 2022 to close on March 23, 2022. He indicated the vehicles are being held by the dealership who will respond to the bid, although others may respond as well. Mr. Roland had prepared a budget amendment in the amount of \$243,711 to allocate funds from fund balance to cover the additional cost of the vehicles and equipment purchases. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the request as presented and to delegate approval authority of the bids to Mr. Roland.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented, which includes: (A) Minutes of the February 3, 2022 continued session and the February 8, 2022 regular meeting, (B) Budget Amendments #187-192, (C) Tax releases for February 2022 in the amount of \$2,123.15, (D) Audit contract for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, (E) Approval of sale of property by private sale by the county manager, and (F) the monthly ad valorem tax collection report, for which no action is necessary.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

(A) Airport Authority (2 seats) – Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to reappoint Jack Horton and Richard Rhodes to the Macon County Airport Authority. Term of appointment is for six years.

(B) Library Board (2 seats) – Upon a motion by Commission Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to reappoint Bill Dyar and Debbie Tallent to the Macon County Library Board of Trustees. Term of appointment is for three years.

**CLOSED SESSION** – None.



**ADJOURN:** With no other business, and at 8:40 p.m., upon a motion from Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.

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Derek Roland  
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

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Jim Tate  
Board Chair