

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
NOVEMBER 13, 2012
MINUTES

Chairman Corbin convened the meeting at 6:02 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: The County Manager announced the birth of a new grandchild in the Horton family. Commissioner Beale noted that the “Essentials of County Government” course for newly elected officials would be held in Asheville January 9th and 10th. Chairman Corbin noted that he would have to leave the meeting early in order to drive to Raleigh for a meeting of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) Legislative Goals Committee scheduled for the next morning.

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: **Ken Neitz** told the board that, as a travel team baseball coach and as a Little League umpire, he wanted to give his endorsement of the board’s plans to create a new recreation complex in the county. **Todd Ensley**, who coaches a softball travel team, said the proposed new complex would be a great addition to the county, adding that more space was much needed. He told the board that a family of a travel team player would spend up to \$400 or \$500 per weekend. **Chris Beasley** addressed the board regarding the LeadsOnline program under consideration by the Macon County Sheriff’s Office, and asked that the board not pass a proposed ordinance that would require the transmission of certain information from pawn shop owners and others to the Sheriff’s Office. Chairman Corbin suggested that Sheriff Robert Holland and Brian Welch, the staff attorney for the Sheriff’s Office, meet with Mr. Beasley to discuss the program. **Jamie Stiles** also addressed the issue of more playing fields, saying that while it would provide the prospect of hosting travel ball tournaments, it would also provide more opportunities for local leagues who have limited fields on which to practice. **Billy Vanhook** told the board that at one time, the county was the envy of the region due to its recreation park, but “we’ve got the same park we had 35 years ago,” and it’s time to have more than what we’ve

got. He said finding the right piece of property is the key, and noted efforts in surrounding counties to provide better athletic facilities.

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

- To add a report on the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), per the request of Commissioner Beale, under Reports/Presentations as Item 8D.

READ2ME PROGRAM – Brittney Parker made a presentation to the board on the Read2Me Program, a community-wide initiative to promote early literacy in preschoolers, explaining that it has a three-prong mission to (1) increase public awareness in the community, (2) get books into the hands of all pre-school aged children and (3) provide parent training and involvement. She outlined a new venture with the Highlands Literacy Council, where children in Macon County who register will get a new book every month from birth through the age of five, as provided through Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library. While not asking for a donation from the county, she noted that a gift of \$30 helps provide a year’s worth of books for a child, and that the effort hopes to reach as many as 500 children in the first year.

ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY OF ATHLETIC TOURNAMENTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES: Chairman Corbin stated that the board had been involved in ongoing conversations about the need for additional space for recreation, and, noting the difficulty of finding flat land, an opportunity had come to the board’s attention in the last six months. “We’re not just pulling this out of the air,” he said. He also explained that Commissioner Beale would not be taking part in this discussion, as he is a member of the board of directors of Macon Bank, which has a financial interest in the property under consideration.

Parks and Recreation Director Seth Adams made a PowerPoint presentation entitled “Recreational Facility Expansion and the Economic Impact of Athletic Tournaments” ([Attachment 1](#)), a copy of which is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes. He pointed out that more than 1,100 people play in organized baseball and softball leagues in the county. He explained that a preliminary site layout had been prepared for a 48-acre piece of property off Old Patton Road west of Franklin known as the former Parker Meadows Golf Course. The layout has room for four adult fields and four youth fields in cloverleaf patterns. Tommy Jenkins, the county’s Economic Development Director, joined in

the presentation by outlining the potential economic impact of hosting weekend tournaments at such a facility, adding that this presents “a unique opportunity” for the county.

CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL RECREATION AREAS: Chairman Corbin began the discussion by stating that the county would have to own the property in order to apply for matching grant funds from the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF). He also handed out copies of letters of support for the project from state Sen. Jim Davis and state Rep. Roger West. Commissioner Koppers said that LuAnn Bryan with the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation had also written a letter of support after visiting the site, stating that while she cannot guarantee PARTF funding, she was impressed with the property and views it as an excellent opportunity. Commissioner Koppers said that up to \$500,000 could be available from PARTF to help purchase and develop the site. Copies of the letters from Sen. Davis, Rep. West and Ms. Bryan are attached (Attachments 2, 3 and 4) and are hereby made a part of these minutes. The County Attorney said that the county has an offer from the owner, Willow Creek Motorcoach Estates, to purchase the property for \$550,000, and that it is currently appraised at \$775,000. Pending the receipt of the PARTF money, the net cost to the county would be \$275,000. The said the county has until December 15, 2012 to perform its due diligence, and would need to close on the property by December 31, 2012. The County Manager said the board would need to formally approve the purchase of the 47.94-acre tract, which would not be financed as the money would come from fund balance, requiring a budget amendment. Because the property has already been disturbed, there should be no archaeological issues. Citing this as “a golden opportunity,” Commissioner Haven made a motion to move forward with the offer to purchase at \$550,000, with the money to come from the county’s undesignated fund balance, and Commissioner Koppers seconded the motion, with the board voting 4-0 to approve (Commission Beale abstained). The County Attorney pointed out the need for a \$5,000 “earnest money” check.

NCACC REPORT: Prior to his NCACC report, Commissioner Beale said that construction on the new dialysis center should begin in January. He then explained that more than 2,100 bills were introduced in the General Assembly last year, and that there are now 871 registered lobbyists. He commented that the attitude in Raleigh is to “pass it down to the counties,” and as an example, said that 50 percent of the cost of Health and Human Services programs have been handed down to counties as unfunded mandates, or in the vernacular of the capital – “partnerships.”

Chairman Corbin declared a recess at 7:43 p.m. and left the meeting soon thereafter.

Vice-chairman Koppers called the meeting back to order at 7:59 p.m.

PROCLAMATION FOR PANCREATIC CANCER AWARENESS MONTH:

Commissioner Beale read the proclamation, prepared by the County Manager, into the record. It designates the month of November 2012 as Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month, and more specifically, November 15, 2012 as Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Day in the county. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to adopt the proclamation as presented (Attachment 5), a copy of which is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

RELEASE OF SEWER EASEMENT: The Vice-chairman explained that a sewer easement obtained from William and Carolyn Boatwright was not used due to relocating the sewer line and recommended release of the easement. The County Attorney had prepared a “Resolution Authorizing Quitclaim Deed of Individual Sanitary Sewer Easement” to address this matter, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to waive the reading of the resolution, release the easement and adopt the resolution as presented (Attachment 6), a copy of which is attached and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

ADULT DENTAL CLINIC: (1) Following an explanation from the County Attorney, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to adopt a “Resolution Exempting Architectural Design Project from the Provisions of North Carolina General Statutes Section 143-64.31” as the professional fee for the adult dental clinic is less than \$30,000. A copy of the resolution is attached (Attachment 7) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. (2) The County Attorney also explained the details of a proposed lease agreement between the county and C.J. and Maxine Ramey for space for the dental clinic, which includes 2,000 square feet of commercial space located at 108 Macon Center Drive at a rent of \$1,250 per month beginning December 1, 2012. Following further discussion, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to approve a “Resolution of the Macon County Board of County Commissioners Approving Lease Agreement with C.J. Ramey and Wife, Maxine Ramey” as presented. A copy of the resolution and lease agreement are attached (Attachment 8) and are hereby made a

part of these minutes. (3) Jimmy Villiard with Macon County Public Health told the board that all of the existing equipment at the adult dental clinic would be moved into the new location, and that bids for one new chair had been advertised. Of the two that were received, the low bid was from Henry Schein Dental at \$114,885. Tammy Keezer with Macon County Public Health explained that sufficient Medicaid cost share funds were available to cover the purchase. Upon a motion by Commissioner Haven, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to accept the low bid as presented.

REFINANCING OF LAKE EMORY ROAD PROPERTY BY MACON CITIZENS HABILITIES: Prior to the discussion, Commissioner Koppers disclosed that his wife is an employee of Macon Citizens Habilities (MCH). The County Manager explained that MCH is looking to refinance its property on Lake Emory Road in order to pay off the Webster Group Home located in Jackson County. He said that MCH is looking to consolidate debt and to accelerate the payoff of that debt. The County Attorney reviewed the existing mortgage and MCH's line of credit (on which nothing is owed) and told the board that the refinance is driven by good business practice, allowing MCH to save \$25,000. He explained that if the board agrees to the two subordination agreements under consideration – one for the property and the other for the line of credit – that in the event of default by MCH, the county will be placing its interests behind those of Macon Bank, which holds the mortgage and line of credit. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to approve both of the subordination agreements as presented (Attachments 9 and 10), copies of which are attached and are hereby made a part of these minutes.

REVISED CONTRACT FOR POOL RENOVATIONS: The County Manager explained that a revised contract with Augusta Aquatics, Inc. was necessary to include the required purchase of payment and performance bonds for the swimming pool renovation project at the county recreation park. This would raise the contract amount from \$338,500 – as approved by the board at its October 9, 2012 meeting – to \$346,161. The Finance Office noted that this would require a budget amendment in the amount of \$7,661. Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve the contract as revised as well as the necessary budget amendment. A copy of the agreement is attached (Attachment 11) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

MOBILE REPEATER FOR NANTAHALA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT: The County Manager said that due to the inability to send and receive adequate radio transmissions in the Nantahala area, it appears that the best solution is to purchase a mobile repeater that will be at the site of any emergency. He also noted that this will be much cheaper than constructing additional repeater towers. Commissioner Tate said that the county has a quote of \$1,943.92 for the mobile repeater, which has worked well in tests conducted by the county's emergency service technicians, who feel this is the best option. Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to purchase the mobile repeater for Nantahala, and to approve a budget amendment that will move \$2,000 from contingency to pay for the device.

PURCHASE OF GAS LEAK DETECTION UNITS FOR VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS: The County Manager provided background information on this issue, explaining that several years ago, the county used a Homeland Security grant to purchase and distribute gas monitoring devices to all of the county's volunteer fire departments. However, these older devices are required to be calibrated from time to time, and this has become problematic for the departments, creating a potential safety issue. A newer version that eliminates the need for the calibration is available for \$350, and he recommended that the board allow the county's Emergency Services Department to purchase and distribute new devices to each of the 11 volunteer fire departments at an approximate cost of \$3,850. Upon a motion by Commissioner Haven, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to purchase the new gas monitors as recommended.

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR TRANSFER OF COWEE SCHOOL: The County Manager explained that the interlocal agreement between the county and the Macon County Board of Education transfers ownership of the old Cowee School from the school system to the county as promised once the new Iotla Valley Elementary School was built, allowing the school system to declare the Cowee School property as surplus. By approving the interlocal agreement, the county accepts the transfer. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale (who expressed his appreciation to the school board), seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to approve the interlocal agreement as presented, a copy of which is attached **(Attachment 12)** and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

POLICY FOR VOLUNTARY SHARED LEAVE PROGRAM: The County Manager shared that an ongoing need has arisen that can be resolved to

some extent by adopting an amendment to the county personnel policy that allows for leave time to be voluntarily shared under certain circumstances. He said this is a reasonable and fair approach in assisting an employee who is personally dealing with a major illness or injury, or one involving an immediate family member, and he recommended approval of the policy amendment. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to amend the Macon County Personnel Policy as presented. A copy of the Voluntary Shared Leave Program is attached (Attachment 13) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

SPECIAL CALLED MEETING: Due to a state law that requires the board of commissioners to meet on the first Monday in December of each even-numbered year to elect a chair and a vice-chair, the County Manager said the board would need to call a special meeting for Monday, December 3, 2012 to have the recently-elected commissioners take the oath of office, to elect officers and to consider other organizational matters. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to call a special meeting for Monday, December 3, 2012 at 6 p.m. in the commission boardroom located at 5 West Main Street in Franklin, NC for the purposes stated above.

RECESS: At 9:12 p.m., vice-chairman Koppers recessed the meeting until Tuesday, November 20, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. in the commission boardroom located at 5 West Main in Franklin, NC.

Jack Horton, County Manager
Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman