

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JANUARY 12, 2009
MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Beale convened the meeting at 6 p.m. and welcomed everyone present. 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.

INVOCATION: Rev. Rick Ballew, Associate Pastor from Trinity Assembly of God Church gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge to the flag was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: Shirley Ches urged the board to continue review of the proposed junkyard ordinance and expressed appreciation to the Board for always listening to her. Chairman Beale advised Ms. Ches the Board hopes to have the hearing at the second meeting in February.

Jack Accord stated he was not present to complain but to express appreciation to Chairman Beale for coming to their neighborhood on Highway 441 South to observe and hear the noise from the four-wheelers and dirt bikes being ridden there. Mr. Accord stated everyone else in the neighborhood appreciated it too.

Gene Stamey stated he felt the same way Mr. Accord did but he was going to complain and urged the Board to look at a noise ordinance.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Chairman Beale asked that presentation by a local businessman concerning webcasting meetings be added to the agenda as item A1 and that appointments to the Watershed Council and Board liaisons be added to agenda item 12. There were no other additions or adjustments and upon motion by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Commissioner Davis, the Board unanimously voted to approve the agenda with the requested additions.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS -

LARRY BUCHANAN, local business man and operator of Macon Funeral Home, informed the Board that he had purchased equipment to webcast funerals and he would like to propose to the Board webcasting of board meetings at no cost. He explained the broadcast would stream through Macon Funeral Home's web site and could be linked through the county's website. The County Manager was authorized to meet with Mr. Buchanan and County I.T. staff to explore the feasibility of the proposal.

NCDOT: At the request of the Board, DOT staff Brian Burch, Wesley Grindstaff, Josh Deeton and Jim Ashe were present to discuss road maintenance in Macon County especially DOT's snow and ice policy. Mr. Burch stated the snow and ice policy hasn't changed since the 1980's. He explained the policy is a bare pavement system that includes U.S. 64 from the Clay County line to the Jackson County Line, Highway 441 from the Jackson County line to the Rabun County Georgia line, NC 106 from Highlands to the Georgia line and 19/74 in Topton as the number one priorities and are the only roads under the policy to de-ice with salt and chemicals. He added other U.S. and N.C. routes and secondary roads are cleared after that but the system's policy doesn't allow for use of salt and these roads are treated with sand and chat. He explained that in Division 14 they always tried to exceed that policy but with budget cuts of 35% in November they do not have funds to do anything but follow the bare pavement policy. He added that there is a shortage of salt and the cost has tripled since last year. When questioned about general maintenance and graveling of unpaved roads, Mr. Burch stated the policy is usually to add

gravel, etc. when the ruts are six inches deep but often with freezing/thawing conditions in winter you cannot put heavy gravel trucks on the roads without making them impassable. He added DOT tries to treat roads when appropriate and when they will hold the best. Commissioner McClellan stated when roads are icy the curve at the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital is very dangerous and there have been several multiple car accidents there as a result. Mr. Burch stated they would make a note and look at it. Chairman Beale stated he had been approached about the debris that collects under "Town Bridge" and questioned if any consideration has been given to alleviate the situation. Mr. Burch stated NCDOT is aware of the situation and they clear the area periodically but bridge construction is probably the only way to alleviate the problem and the funding isn't available for that. The Board expressed appreciation to Mr. Burch and DOT staff.

CABLEVISION FRANCHISE: Telecommunications consultant John Howell reported he has evaluated the request from Mediacom Communications for transfer of the Franklin area cablevision franchise to Morris Communications Company and recommended adoption of a resolution approving the transfer.

Craig Mitchell, Senior Vice President with Morris Communications and Maggie Blythe from Mediacom were also present to provide updates on the transfer and to answer questions. Upon motion by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, the Board unanimously voted to adopt the attached resolution providing approval for transfer of the franchise to Morris Cable, LLC per attachment #1. The second reading will be on the January 26th agenda.

BOARD WORK SESSION UPDATE: The County Manager gave an update on the work session held on January 10th. He reported that the majority of the session dealt with evaluating the county's financial situation. (Note: See January 10th minutes for more detail.)

ANIMAL SHELTER: County Manager Horton reported the animal shelter bids came in over budget with a low bid of \$497,900 but after negotiating with the low bidder, Western Builders of Sylva, the bid was reduced to \$425,860 by changing certain items noting this was for the building construction only.

Architect Tom Ritter outlined the changes that reduced the cost (attachment #2) and, when questioned, stated with the changes Western Builders would have still been the low bidder. Mr. Horton reported that other costs would be: site preparation, \$17,100; architect/engineering cost, \$21,300; and water/sewer, \$30,000. He recommended award of the construction bid to Western Builders at \$425,860, add \$5,740 contingency to the other items noted above to establish a total project budget of \$500,000.

Mr. Horton noted \$350,000 was appropriated last year for the project and recommended transfer of the \$150,000 shortfall from the animal shelter operating budget. Upon motion by Commissioner Simpson, seconded by Commissioner Koppers, the Board unanimously voted to award the contract to low bidder Western Builders at \$425,860. Commissioner Davis made a motion to authorize transfer of funds as recommended for a \$500,000 project budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Simpson and all favored.

LOCAL BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT: Chairman Beale stated the County is funding several capital projects with one-hundred percent local tax dollars and would like to see as much of that money stay in Macon County as possible. After discussion, the general consensus was that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and County Manager would meet with contractors and request that they give consideration to buying and hiring locally.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon motion by Commissioner Simpson and seconded by Commissioner Koppers the following items on the consent agenda were unanimously approved:

Minutes - Approved the minutes of the December 1st and 8th meetings.

Budget revisions - Approved the following budget revisions:
revision #79, appropriating \$300 donation to EMS;
revision #80, appropriating \$2,500 fire prevention grant in Sheriff's Department;
revision #81, appropriating \$3,250 in the Health Department's Baby Think It Over Program;
revision #82, appropriating \$11,275 for Health Department's BCCCP Program;
revision #83, appropriating \$11,124 for Health Department's BCCCP Program;
revision #84, appropriating \$11,322 increase in WIC funds;
revision #85, appropriating \$49,659 additional DSS energy assistance funds;
revision #86, appropriating \$1,751 additional Haywood Electric energy assistance funds;
revision #87, reducing CJPC funding by \$1,618 due to decrease in state funds;
revision #88, appropriating \$370,400 funds for up front costs on North Macon K-4 School; and
revision #89, appropriating \$67,000 for Early College furniture and equipment.
(Note: revisions with corresponding numbers attached.)

Narcotics Grant/Sheriff's Department - Authorized submission of pre-application for a 2009 narcotics grant of \$59,192 requiring a \$19,731 match.

Southwestern RC& D resolution - Adopted a resolution supporting the efforts of Southwestern RC&D to secure adequate Federal funds for staffing per attachment #3.

Rural Center resolution - Adopted a resolution authorizing filing of an application with the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center for water and wastewater infrastructure improvements per attachment #4.

APPOINTMENTS: NCACC Legislative liaison: Upon motion by Commissioner Kuppers, seconded by Commissioner McClellan, the Board unanimously voted to designate Commissioner Davis as the county's legislative liaison to the NCACC.

Economic Development Commission (EDC) - Upon motion by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, the Board unanimously voted to reappoint Gary Dills to the EDC. Term will expire January 31, 2012.

Watershed Council - Chairman Beale designated Commissioners McClellan and Kuppers as liaisons to the Macon County Watershed Council.

Board Community liaisons - As a follow-up to discussions at the work session Commissioners McClellan and Kuppers were designated as community meetings liaisons to schedule periodic meetings in the various communities preferably on the first and third Mondays.

CLOSED SESSION: Upon motion by Commissioner McClellan, seconded by Commissioner Simpson, the Board unanimously voted to go into closed session to discuss personnel. During closed session the County Manager updated the Board on a personnel issue. No action was necessary. The Manager, the Deputy Clerk and Finance Officer were excused.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned.

Jack Horton, County Manager
Clerk to the Board

Ronnie Beale
Board Chairman

