

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 10, 2016
MINUTES

Chairman Corbin called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and welcomed those in attendance. All Board Members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, Finance Director, County Attorney, members of the news media and interested citizens were present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Those in attendance watched a video from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) that provided an update on recent NCACC activities. Also, County Assembly Day will be held May 18th in Raleigh.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Chairman Corbin asked those in attendance to observe a moment of silence.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT: **Nathan Maddox**, a resident of the Poplar Grove subdivision, told the board that both North and South Skeenah Creek converge at this location and that both streams come into a culvert, which backs up and causes flooding during heavier rainfalls. He said this prevents residents from having access to the subdivision, and he noted that several of the homeowners are in the 60-to-80 year old range and live alone. He added that if he and others know bad weather is coming, they will park outside the subdivision, and that some of his neighbors worry that EMS or firefighters could not respond to their homes when the area is flooded, and that they were asking the board for help. Commissioner Beale responded that it would be up to the homeowners or the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to fix the problem. Chairman Corbin said that he and Commissioner Beale were both aware of the situation and had contacted NCDOT, and that the issue was to be addressed later in the agenda. The County Manager noted that there are a

number of subdivisions in the county with substandard roads. **Claudia Mattheiss**, who lives at 182 Sam McClure Road, also asked the board for help with the culvert situation. She told the board that she had experience in hydraulics and that “it is simply mathematically impossible” for the culvert to handle the water that comes down from the subdivision and the substantial runoff from the parking lot at the visitor center, which is funneled through two large pipes under U.S. 441 that drain to the smaller culvert in question, which becomes clogged with debris. Between Christmas and February of this year, she said flood waters cut her off from her home three times for several days, and since purchasing her home four years ago, there have been seven times she could not access her property. While she and her neighbors have spent thousands of dollars “patching” the situation, she told the board it needs a permanent fix. Chairman Corbin and Commissioner Beale added comments regarding the issue, and Commissioner Shields requested that Agenda Item 11A be moved up on the agenda. Chairman Corbin suggested that the board finish the public comment period before addressing it. **Narelle Kirkland** voiced concerns over traffic issues at the intersection of U.S. 23/441 South and Siler Road, as well as the entrance to the Walmart shopping center off of Dowdle Mountain Road to Berry Blvd. She also requested to have a county commissioner as “a go between” on issues involving permit fees to allow members of the Nantahala Hiking Club to transport hikers from the Appalachian Trail into Franklin. **Brittney Raby** gave the board members an update on the Story Walk program, saying that the first boards went up on the Little Tennessee River Greenway on May 6th, and that another set will go up at the Parker Meadows Recreational Complex later this summer. She added that there are plans to continue the program next year and perhaps extend it to the Highlands area. **Patrick Taylor**, the mayor of the Town of Highlands, told the board members that he was “not here to ask you for anything” but instead to thank the commissioners for their cooperation over the years. Specifically, he voiced his gratitude for the renovations to Highlands School, assistance in renovating the school track, funding for a School Resource Officer (SRO) and recreation items, and to working with Jackson County officials on “equitable arrangement” regarding fire tax issues. Commissioner Tate praised the mayor for organizing an “ambassadors” group in Highlands that provides litter pickup.

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

- To move Item 11A under New Business, Addition of Mountain Breeze Road to the state maintained road system, to the next item on the agenda, per Chairman Corbin.
- To add a new Item regarding Macon County Schools under New Business as Item 11C, per Commissioner Beale.

- To add a Capital Project Ordinance regarding the landfill expansion project under Old Business as Item 10C, per the Finance Director.

RESOLUTION REGARDING MOUNTAIN BREEZE ROAD: Following a brief discussion, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to adopt a “Resolution in Support of Adding a Section of Mountain Breeze Road in Macon County to the State Maintained Road System.” A copy of the resolution is attached (Attachment 1) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

PRESENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED FISCAL YEAR 2016-17 BUDGET:

The County Manager presented a Prezi presentation on his recommended budget for the upcoming fiscal year. A copy of his budget message is attached (Attachment 2) and is hereby made a part of these minutes. Among the highlights from the presentation:

- The budget total for Fiscal Year 2016-17 is \$47,694,248.
- It fulfills many of the goals set by the board of commissioners in January and is focused on service.
- It includes the completion of the pay plan from 2013 at a projected cost of \$621,613 in additional salary and benefits.
- The general fund fund balance exceeds 40 percent, and no money from fund balance was used to balance the proposed 16-17 budget.
- The tax rate will remain at 34.9-cents per \$100 of valuation, believed to be the fourth lowest rate among the state’s 100 counties.
- It includes \$1.7-million in one-time capital expenditures.

The County Manager also reviewed in detail significant budget items in the larger categories such as Public Safety, Education, General Government and Human Services. “I do feel this is a great budget,” he told the board. Following his presentation, the board members agreed to hold a public hearing on the recommended budget at their next regular meeting on June 14th at 6 p.m. In addition, the members agreed to hold a work session on the budget on May 31st beginning at 5:30 p.m. Commissioner Beale told the County Manager that this was the best budget presentation of the 12 that he has heard as a commissioner. Commissioner Tate asked that a representative of the Otto Volunteer Fire Department attend the work session on May 31st, as this was the only fire department requesting a tax increase this year.

Chairman Corbin declared a recess at 8:12 p.m.

Chairman Corbin called the meeting back to order at 8:26 p.m.

UPCOMING TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE: David Hubbs explained that a total eclipse of the sun will occur on August 21, 2017, and that Franklin will be in

the midst of a 43-mile-wide swath that will experience the full effect. The total eclipse will take place in Franklin at 2:30 p.m. and will last for two and a half minutes. He told the board that some communities in the path of the total eclipse are already promoting the event, and pointed out that "when people gather, they buy stuff." Not only will the event pack every motel, restaurant and campground in the area, Mr. Hubbs suggested that the county should invite organizations such as NASA and National Geographic to witness the event here. Mr. Hubbs recommended that the county pursue a coordinated effort with other agencies in terms of planning and promotion, and Chairman Corbin created an ad hoc committee to do so, which will include the County Manager, Mr. Hubbs, Economic Development Director Tommy Jenkins, Recreation Director Seth Adams and Town Manager Summer Woodard. The committee will coordinate efforts with the directors of the chambers of commerce.

SMOKY MOUNTAIN LME/MCO – Shelly Foreman, the senior director of public affairs with Smoky Mountain LME/MCO, gave the board an update on the agency's activities. Smoky Mountain is a local government agency that is referred to as a local management entity/managed care organization or LME/MCO, and it oversees Medicaid state and local funding and offers a health plan for individuals and families in need of mental health, substance abuse or intellectual/developmental disability services. Ms. Foreman provided the board members with handouts regarding talking points for County Assembly Day in Raleigh, and asked for support in stopping state funding cuts. She also handed out copies of the agency's Community and Capital Reinvestment Initiatives and briefly discussed several of those in more detail, including getting more beds for the Balsam Center. Commissioner Beale shared his viewpoints on mental health issues across the state. No action was taken.

CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT FOR SCHOOL RENOVATIONS: Following a brief explanation by the Finance Director, and upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve a Capital Project Ordinance Amendment for Union Academy and Highlands School as presented. A copy of the amendment is attached ([Attachment 3](#)) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

RESCISSON OF CONTRACT WITH SHADE AMERICA: The County Attorney and Recreation Director Seth Adams explained that Shade America, Inc. of Florida is not a licensed general contractor in North Carolina, and therefore, the contract approved by the board with Shade America in March 2016 would have to be cancelled. In addition, the county will now need to take informal bids on the shade structures for the Parker Meadows Recreational Complex. The deposit made to the company will need to be returned. Upon a motion by

Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve a “Rescission of Contract for Shade Structures Between Owner and Contractor” as presented by the County Attorney,” and authorized the County Manager to fill in the amount of the deposit to be returned to the company. A copy of the rescission is attached (Attachment 4) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCE FOR LANDFILL EXPANSION PROJECT:

Following an explanation by the Finance Director, and upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve a Capital Project Ordinance for the Landfill Expansion Project in the amount of \$9,800,000. A copy of the ordinance is attached (Attachment 5) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

LEASE AGREEMENT FOR HIGHLANDS ROAD CONVENIENCE CENTER

SITE: The County Attorney presented a lease agreement between the county and Bonita Hamstra for the use of the Highlands Road Convenience Center site. The agreement calls for a five-year lease at a cost of \$375 per month, with an option for the parties to extend the agreement by two years. The County Attorney noted that one page of the agreement had been inadvertently omitted from the board’s electronic agenda packet and he presented a full document for the board’s consideration. Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted unanimously to approve the lease agreement as presented, a copy of which is attached (Attachment 6) and is hereby made a part of these minutes.

FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL TRACK: Commissioner Beale explained that the track at Franklin High School needs repairs and that it also has some liability issues. He also noted that due to the surface of the track, high school track meets can no longer be held here. The latest bid to repair the track from Competition Athletic Services of Chattanooga, TN is \$58,712.50, and Commissioner Beale said a private donor is willing to fund \$27,500 of the cost. Of the remainder, he said that the school system can do half, or roughly \$15,606, and he made a motion that the county take \$15,606.25 out of contingency to fund the project. Commissioner Shields seconded the motion. The Finance Director asked that the amount to come from contingency be rounded up to \$15,607, to which Commissioners Beale and Shields agreed. Commissioner Shields reminded the board that the track serves as a classroom. Macon County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin said the track is “heavily used by the community.” Following further discussion, the board voted unanimously to take \$15,607 from contingency to help fund the project. Chairman Corbin also asked about the need for a budget meeting with school officials, and several dates were discussed. The board eventually agreed to make this a part of its continuation meeting agenda on May 31st at 4 p.m.

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CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the following items on the consent agenda were approved unanimously: **Minutes** – Approved the minutes from the April 12, 2016 regular meeting and the April 18, 2016 called meeting. **Budget amendments** – Approved the following budget amendments: #196 for the Sheriff's Department to appropriate \$22,935 in federal drug forfeiture funds; #197 for the Sheriff's Department to appropriate revenues, including donations, for the Citizens Academy totaling \$3,007; #198 for the Sheriff's Department to appropriate revenues of \$64,152 for special fund expenses; #199 for the Governor's Highway Safety Program to appropriate \$21,927 received for the final grant payment; #200 for Detention to appropriate \$86,214 in additional revenue received through the State Misdemeanant Program to cover the increase in food service costs due to housing misdemeanants; #201 for the Health Department to allocate \$15,710 from an agreement addendum for funds to pay for June 2016 expenses; #202 for Housing to allocate \$11,612 in additional funding from the Duke Weatherization grant; #203 for Parks and Recreation to carry forward \$10,476 from a grant received from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation for construction costs associated with the Parker Meadows burial site and a kiosk, plaque and other historical educational materials; #204 for Solid Waste to appropriate \$10,000 from a trade-in allowance on a used International Day Cab. (Revisions with corresponding numbers attached). **Tax releases** – Approved tax releases in the amount of \$7.26. (A computer printout of the releases is on file in the Tax Department and the Deputy Clerk's office.)

APPOINTMENTS: **(1) Social Services Board:** Upon the recommendation of the Social Services Board, and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to appoint Darlene Anthony Green to the Social Services Board. **(2) Southwestern Community College (SCC) Board of Trustees:** Upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, the board voted 4-0 (with Commissioner Shields abstaining) to reappoint Gary Shields to the Southwestern Community College (SCC) Board of Trustees for a term of four years, beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2020.

RECESS: With no other business, and at 9:29 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to recess the meeting until Tuesday, May 31, 2016 at 4 p.m. in the commission boardroom on the third floor of the Macon County Courthouse, 5 West Main Street, Franklin, NC.

Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman