



**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 13, 2024
MINUTES**

Chairman Shields called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed all in attendance. All Board Members, County Manager Derek Roland, Nina Parrott filling in for Deputy Clerk Tammy Keezer, Finance Director Lori Carpenter, and County Attorney Eric Ridenour were present, as were several county employees, media, and citizens.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- (A) Mr. Roland announced a Special Meeting and Public Hearing dated February 27, 2024, at 5:30 pm, regarding the sale of county property
- (B) Commissioner Shearl congratulated the West Macon Fire Department on their recent Inspection.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Chairman Shields requested all in attendance rise, and a moment of silence was observed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Chairman Shields, the pledge to the flag was recited.

PUBLIC HEARING(S): None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: **Sarah Johnson** commented on the funding of the Macon County Public Library and Macon County Public Schools. She said she would like to see less time spent on the library and more time on public schools due to the safety of the children. **Maryann Ingram** thanked everyone for their efforts regarding receiving the grant to fund the new high school. She said she also wanted the commissioners to understand the importance of the effects insurance rate increases would have on the citizens of Macon County.

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

- To add Item 12(F) under the Consent Agenda, Order Tax Collector to advertise tax liens and collect any unpaid taxes, per Mr. Roland
- To remove Item 9(A) under Reports/Presentations, Update on Nantahala Broadband Project, and the Digital Inclusion Grant, per Mr. Roland
- To remove Item 10(B) under Old Business, Discussion and Consideration of Contract with McGill & Associates for Phase 1A of the Macon County Recreation Park, per Mr. Roland

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS:

UPDATE ON NANTAHALA BROADBAND PROJECT AND THE DIGITAL INCLUSION GRANT - Removed

MACON COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION – Macon County Fair Association Co-Chair Mr. Dennis Conley presented that the Fair Association received a grant for \$250,000.00 for infrastructure and improvements to the Fair Grounds. He said they still need assistance and he is requesting \$50,000.00 from the County.

Mr. Conley said the funds would be for safety and security, including a radio and monitoring system throughout the entire grounds. He stated raising money for the fairgrounds is difficult due to renting to nonprofits, and that the last time the fairgrounds requested funds from the Board of Commissioners was 15 years ago. Mr. Conley also requested recommendations and assistance with a beaver issue in the creek. Commissioner Young stated there is a need to manage the ground's landscaping and suggested that the \$50,000.00 be included in the next budget year. Mr. Conley agreed, saying the need for funds is not immediate and the Fairgrounds could wait to go through the budget process. Commissioner Young also stated he would bring the beaver issue to the attention of Parks and Recreation Director Seth Adams.

OLD BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION REGARDING FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT MACON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY – Project Manager Jack Morgan reported on his assessment of the Macon County Library for issues with the insurance company. Mr. Morgan stated he had reviewed the issues and the job was above what he could do. He requested two separate engineers to review the job and said both have been unable to assist with the project. Mr. Morgan asked for a Resolution exempting architectural services for the Macon County Library and an amendment to the budget. He said this would include three Phases - Phase 1 would be discovery not to exceed \$7,450.00 and \$2,000.00 for testing; Phase 2 would be the design and production of contract documents, and Phase 3 would be bid and construction. Mr. Morgan stated that the project could start next week if approved tonight. Commissioner Higdon requested that Mr. Morgan look at the columns on the Macon County Early College campus while he was at the library; as they were separating and the pads were sinking, Commissioner Shearl confirmed the issues on the campus. Commissioner Shearl made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higdon to approve the resolution as requested. The vote was unanimous. [\[Attachment 1\]](#)

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACT WITH MCGILL & ASSOCIATES FOR PHASE 1A OF THE MACON COUNTY RECREATION PARK - Removed

NEW BUSINESS:

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2024 BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW MEMBERS – Tax Administrator Abby Braswell requested the commissioner's approval of the Board of Equalization and Review Members listed as follows: Dwight Vinson, Gary Drake, Kristine Flaig, Donald Holland, and Richard Lightner. Commissioner Young made a motion, seconded by Chairman Shields seconded to approve the request as submitted. The vote was unanimous.

DISCUSSION REGARDING CAPITAL PROJECTS AT THE SOUTHWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE GROVE CENTER AND PUBLIC SAFETY TRAINING CENTER – Dr. Don Tomas introduced Mr. Curtis Dowdle who presented the need for a new Fire Training Facility. He reviewed that in 2016, the Board of County Commissioners approved the project and the search for a new building started. Mr. Dowdle said that the current facility has one usable room, although it has been suggested by multiple safety representatives that the building not be utilized in its current state. He said that without the Fire Training Facility, Macon County and Jackson County Firefighters would have to train at the closest facility in Cherokee County, and the Macon County Citizens would see a rise in their homeowners' insurance rates. Commissioner Young asked what the lifespan of the new facility would be, and Mr. Dowdle confirmed 35 plus years. Commissioner Shearl stated that safe firefighter training is necessary to keep firefighters safe and aware of situations that may arise during a fire. Dr. Tomas also requested an additional science classroom be included in this project. Ms. Carpenter stated the total cost needed from Macon County for the Fire Training facility and new science classroom would be

\$3,050,000. Commissioner Shearl made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, to approve a budget amendment to move funds from the general fund balance to cover both portions of the project and be at most \$3,050,000. The vote was unanimous.

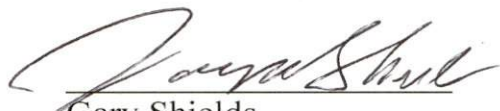
CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION TO THE NC INSURANCE COMMISSIONER ABOUT PROPOSED INSURANCE RATE INCREASE - Commissioner Higdon stated that the drafted resolution was no longer needed as the state did not approve the insurance rate increase.

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 January 9, 2024, Regular Meeting, and the January 23, 2024, Special Meeting, (B) Budget Amendments #124-127, (C) Audit Contract for fiscal year ending on June 30, 2024, (D) Tax releases for the month of January 2024 in the amount of \$2,253.80, (E) Monthly ad valorem tax collection report for which no action is necessary, and (F) Order Tax Collector to advertise tax liens and collect any unpaid 2023 taxes.

ADJOURN: With no other business, at 7:39 p.m., upon a motion from Commissioner Higdon, seconded by Commissioner Young, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.



Derek Roland
EX Officio Clerk to the Board



Gary Shields
Board Chair

**RESOLUTION EXEMPTING ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES FOR MACON
COUNTY LIBRARY FROM THE PROVISIONS OF ARTICLE 3D OF
CHAPTER 143 OF THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL STATUTES**

WHEREAS, Article 3D of Chapter 143 of the North Carolina General Statutes establishes a general public policy regarding procurement of architectural services; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statutes Section 143-64.32 provides:

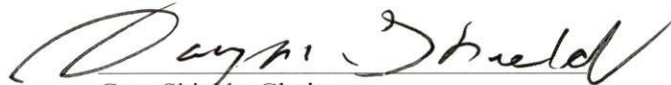
"Units of local government or the North Carolina Department of Transportation may in writing exempt particular projects from the provisions of this Article in the case of proposed projects where an estimated professional fee is in an amount less than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000)"; and

WHEREAS, Macon County is now in need of architectural services for the Macon County Library in Macon County, North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the estimated professional fee for the Macon County Library in Macon County, North Carolina is in an amount less than fifty thousand (\$50,000) dollars.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF MACON that the proposed architectural services for the Macon County Library in Macon County, North Carolina, is hereby exempted in writing from the provisions of Article 3D of Chapter 143 of North Carolina General Statutes pursuant to the provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. §143-64.32.

Adopted this 13th day of February 2024.



Gary Shields, Chairman
Macon County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:



Clerk to the Board

(COUNTY SEAL)

