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03-11-2025
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MACON COUNTY, NC
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**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DECEMBER 10, 2024
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Chairman Young called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All Board Members, Interim County Manager Warren Cabe, Deputy Clerk Tammy Keezer, Finance Director Lori Carpenter, and County Attorney Eric Ridenour were present, as were a number of county employees, media, and citizens.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- (A) Mr. Cabe expressed his appreciation to Ingles for allowing the county to use the old Ingles building for Hurricane Helene relief efforts.
- (B) Mr. Cabe shared that the Town of Highlands is working on setting up a joint meeting between the Town of Highlands, the Town of Franklin, and this board for February 13, 2025. Once the date is confirmed an official announcement will be made.
- (C) Mr. Cabe announced that Veterans Services recently held the annual Veterans Standdown event with 142 Veterans served from 13 counties.
- (D) Commissioner Breeden expressed his appreciation to the voters of Macon County for electing him to serve as Commissioner.
- (E) Commissioner Young asked those in attendance to keep the Tom James family in their prayers. He shared that Mr. James was a business owner in Macon County and a Veteran who had passed away earlier today.
- (F) Commissioner Shields requested citizens email questions and issues of concern to him or Mr. Cabe before a regularly scheduled meeting so those items can be researched and an answer provided at the meeting.
- (G) Commissioner Shields announced that a flag ceremony would be held at the Crawford Center on December 13, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. and encouraged the public to attend.

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Commissioner Shearl, the pledge to the flag was recited.

PUBLIC HEARING(S): None

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: **MaryAnn Ingram** spoke in opposition to changing the ordinances related to soil and water. She asked why we are looking at changing these if no one has come forward requesting a change.

Melanie McMillian spoke in opposition to changes to the floodplain ordinance. **Matthew Vargas** spoke in opposition to changes to the floodplain ordinance and reflected on some of the presentations and opinions that have been brought forth over the past few months about those ordinances.

ADDITIONS, ADJUSTMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Shearl, seconded by Commissioner Shields, the board voted unanimously to approve the agenda, presented.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS:

(A) PRESENTATION OF THE FY 2024 AUDIT – Jill Vang with Martin Starnes & Associates CPAs, P.A. presented the audit findings using a PowerPoint presentation. She stated that the audit had been submitted and approved by the Local Government Commission. Commissioner Young asked about the Medicaid deficiency. Ms. Vang said the deficiency was related to a clerical error in determining eligibility where some numbers had been transposed, but that the individual was still eligible for Medicaid. Ms. Carpenter reminded board members that in the FY24 audit funds for the Franklin High School project had not yet been moved but due to the school project the fund balance will decline by an estimated 20 million dollars over the next few years.

OLD BUSINESS:

(A) CONSIDERATION OF SURPLUS PROPERTY OFFERS – Attorney Ridenour presented an offer to purchase the two properties located at 88 No Name Road in the amount of \$1,000. He said if the board accepts the offer the county will need to go through an upset bid process. Commissioner Young indicated that the building on the property needs to be demolished and the county previously sought bids for the demolition of that building. He explained the upset bid process and said we hope to get \$25,000 for the property and then it becomes the responsibility of the purchaser to demo the building and the sale puts the property back on the tax rolls. Commissioner Young made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, to accept the offer and enter into the upset bid period. The vote was unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS:

(A) DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION FOR ANIMAL SHELTER STAFF – Health Director Kathy McGaha mentioned recent newspaper articles and posts on social media regarding the needs for the shelter and Board of Health Chair Jerry Hermanson said about 40 volunteers and citizens came to the Board of Health meeting and expressed their concerns and recommendations for the shelter. Mr. Hermanson said the Board of Health asked the staff at the health department to complete a full analysis of the animal shelter. He said they looked at short-term and long-term concerns, comparing us to other counties, listening to volunteers, and developing a plan they hope will carry us well into the future. Mr. Hermanson said the staff at the shelter are doing a great job and he thinks the program fits well with the health department. Ms. McGaha spoke about the planning process with staff and volunteers and said staffing is one of the items that was identified as well as building improvements. She indicated that staff have been working with Macon County Building and Grounds Director Travis Waldroop to get improvements and repairs made. Ms. McGaha stated that the Board of Health is reviewing the possibility of modifying the holding period in the Animal Control Ordinance and implementing a community spay and neuter program. She said she was asked by the Board of Health to come talk to the Board of Commissioners about staffing issues. She said she is requesting one additional full-time position to

help with feeding, cleaning, and taking care of the facility and the animals. Ms. McGaha said the health department has two part-time Environmental Health Technician positions that they have not been able to fill and requested to shift one of those positions over to Animal Control. Commissioner Antoine asked about total staff allocation. Ms. McGaha said the program has three full-time Animal Control Officers with one vacancy, one full-time and one part-time Shelter Attendant, and numerous volunteers. She clarified that she is asking for one additional full-time Animal Shelter Attendant and to shift one of the Environmental Health Technician positions over. Commissioner Shearl asked about the authority the Animal Control Officers have and shared information about a situation he was aware of stating Animal Control did nothing to help with the situation. He asked why we are supporting this program when they do nothing to help the citizens of Macon County and asked if there is a non-profit or another organization that can take over the program and get out of the animal control business. Population Health Section Administrator Jimmy Villiard said he oversees animal control and that if other organizations have the capacity to take over the program they could, but that those organizations are currently at capacity. He spoke about the ordinance and the authority the Animal Control Officers have. Commissioner Shearl asked about the option to lease the facility to another organization. Ms. McGaha said there is a minimal amount of responsibility the health department would have to maintain concerning dangerous dogs and rabies. Commissioner Shearl said he wanted to investigate someone taking over the shelter. Commissioner Young said this conversation is more suited for budget time and to hash out these issues then and if we already have a vacant position and a truck, we need to put a body in that position. After some additional discussion, Ms. McGaha confirmed that she is requesting to shift an Environmental Health Technician position to Animal Control. Commissioner Young said he feels like this needs to wait until budget time and no action was taken.

(B) DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR OFFICE SPACE

LOCATED AT 187 CHURCH STREET, FRANKLIN, NC - Mr. Cabe said the county is required to provide office space for judges and that in 2013 the county entered into a lease arrangement for office space which is now up for renewal. He said the renewal lease is the same as the current one with an increase in rent from \$600 to \$750 per month and the money is already in the budget. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shields, to approve the renewal of the lease as requested. The vote was unanimous.

(C) APPROVAL OF POLICY IN REFERENCE TO NEW LAW PROHIBITING PORNOGRAPHY ON GOVERNMENT NETWORKS AND DEVICES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2025

- Attorney Ridenour explained new legislation that has been passed and said that before this legislation there was no law against allowing this activity on government networks and devices. He said we are mandated to put this into a policy. Attorney Ridenour said we have a current policy titled "Acceptable Use Policy" and that HR Director Tammy Keezer and IT Director Andy Muncey have worked on updating this policy to include the new requirement which appears on page seven of the policy through the first part of page eight. A copy of the policy is available in the office of the Clerk to the board and posted on the county website. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, to approve the policy as presented. The vote was unanimous.

(D) APPROVAL OF SOLID WASTE ORDINANCE REVISION

- Solid Waste Director Chris Stahl said this is an effort to clean up parts of the ordinance and bring it up to date with laws and changes that have been made since the 1990s when the ordinance was originally passed. He said the one substantive change is in the closing hours of the landfill so staff have the opportunity to clean up and

close down before closing. Mr. Stahl said this will require new signage that says they are open until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and until 1:30 on Saturday. A copy of the ordinance is available in the office of the Clerk to the Board and posted on the county website. He said this is no change to what they are currently doing and there is no change in the hours for the convenience centers. Young made a comment about contractors working until 5 p.m. and the landfill being closed so they can't take their waste to the landfill at the end of their work day. Commissioner Antoine made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shields, to approve the revisions to the ordinance as requested. The vote was unanimous.


CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Shearl, seconded by Commissioner Breeden, the board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented which includes: (A) Minutes of the December 2, 2024, special meeting, (B) Budget Amendments #127-135, (C) Fireworks Permit for Parties by Design, (D) Macon County 2025 Holiday Schedule, (E) Franklin Chamber Service Contract for FY24-25, (F) Highlands Chamber Service Contract for FY24-25, (G) Approval of a partial refund of 2023 taxes for Vineyards and Villas, LLC, (H) Tax releases for the month of November 2024 in the amount of \$2,520.12, (I) Monthly ad valorem tax collection report for which no action is necessary.

APPOINTMENTS: None

CLOSED SESSION: None

ADJOURN: With no other business, at 7:15 p.m., upon a motion from Commissioner Shearl, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.


Warren Cabe
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board


Josh Young
Board Chair