



MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DECEMBER 9, 2025
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Years of Service Awards were presented to county employees before the meeting. A reception for those employees was held in the hallway of the third floor of the Macon County Courthouse immediately following the presentations.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- (A) Ms. Keezer announced that a formal offer for the Consolidated Human Services Director position had been extended and that Miss Kimberly Dills had accepted the offer to begin employment on January 12, 2026.
- (B) Mr. Cabe announced that, based on the Distressed County Tier Ranking System, Macon County will move from a Tier 2 County to a Tier 3 County in 2026. The 40 most distressed counties are designated as Tier 1, the next 40 as Tier 2, and the 20 least distressed as Tier 3. Macon County's shift in 2026 is due to improvement in the county's economic distress rank to #81 (from #73 in 2025), improvement of 12 positions in the county median household income, and population growth improving by 8 positions. He said that this will not have any impact on anything for Macon County at this point.
- (C) Mr. Cabe introduced Travis Higdon as the Town of Franklin's board liaison.
- (D) Commissioner Antoine announced that he will not be seeking re-election and shared a few words about his time in service.
- (E) Commissioner Young announced that he has appointed Commissioner Shields as the liaison for the quarter-cent sales tax initiative.
- (F) Commissioner Shields announced that he is going to be working with Ms. Betsy Baste on the education and strategies for the quarter-cent sales tax campaign.

ELECTION OF BOARD CHAIRMAN – County Manager Warren Cabe opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Shields made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Antoine to re-elect Commissioner Young. The vote was unanimous.

ELECTION OF BOARD VICE CHAIRMAN – Commissioner Young opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Shearl made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Breeden, to re-elect Commissioner Shields. The vote was unanimous.

AFFIRMATION OF THE 2026 REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE –

Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shields, to approve the schedule as presented. The vote was unanimous.

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING(S): None

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

- To add Item 13C under Old Business, Resolution in support of revising the Commissioners Election System, per Commissioner Shearl

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: **Scott Baste** spoke in support of the quarter-cent sales tax referendum. **Mary Ann Ingram** read a statement about expressing and receiving grace and love in 2026 and thanked the board members for their service. **Betsy Baste** thanked Jaimie Picou for her presentation on solid waste at the November meeting and commented about the Macon County Animal Shelter. **Lake Silver** shared updates from Congressman Chuck Edwards' office.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS:

HUDSON LIBRARY FOUNDATION – Andrew Chmar and Philip Curcuru shared plans to renovate and expand the facility using a PowerPoint presentation and indicated that the total cost for the project is \$1,500,000 (exterior is \$590,000, and interior is \$910,000), with a need for \$350,000 from this board. Chairman Young indicated that this is an item that should be considered during the budget planning process. Mr. Cabe stated that he would have conversations with Mr. Chmar during the budget planning process.

UPDATE FROM THE MACON COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION AND REQUEST FOR FUNDING - Macon County Fair Association Co-Chairman Dennis Conley and Fair Director Jamie Brooks discussed the need for a security system at the horse arena, updated lighting for the fairgrounds, as well as Wi-Fi access for vendors and fair operations.

OLD BUSINESS:

UPDATE ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONS' APPROVAL OF THE LANDFILL CONSTRUCTION – Mr. Cabe shared that the financing package had been submitted and approved by the Local Government Commission (LGC), and now we have to decide on how to move forward. He said his recommendation is to move forward with the financing approval of the landfill cell construction of 2A2B, which is phase 3, and adopt the bond order authorizing the issuance of special obligations bonds. Commissioner Shields made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, to follow Mr. Cabe's recommendation and to approve the budget amendment and the project ordinance. After discussion with Mr. Cabe and Interim Solid Waste Director Jaimie Picou, the vote was 4 to 1, with Commissioners Young, Shields, Shearl, and Antoine voting in favor of the motion, and Commissioner Breeden opposing. Ms. Picou shared data comparing Macon County to the surrounding seven counties in regard to their waste management operations. Mr. Cabe

requested approval of the bid and to award the bid to F.M. Kitchens Construction Services for the construction of cell 2A2B in the amount of \$8,411,889, and to allow the County Manager to enter into a contract. Commissioner Shields made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, to approve the request as presented. The vote was unanimous.

UPDATE ON OPIOID GRANT REQUEST – Mr. Cabe reported that the grant application to Dogwood Health Trust had been approved, and Macon County has been awarded \$300,000 to use for the strategic planning process to determine how the opioid funds will be spent. He said the next step is to establish a committee to develop the plan, and to contract with someone to put the plan in writing according to the guidelines. Mr. Cabe said he would bring additional information to the January 13, 2026, meeting.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF REVISING THE MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ELECTION SYSTEM – Attorney Ridenour provided a review of the previous resolution that was adopted by this Board in 2023. He explained that the resolution has been updated and read the resolution into the records. After discussion, Commissioner Shearl made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, to approve the resolution and submit it to the legislature for approval. After discussion, the vote was 4 to 1 with Commissioner Shearl, Commissioner Antoine, Commissioner Breeden, and Commissioner Shields voting in favor of the motion, and Commissioner Young opposed [Attachment 1].

NEW BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION ON THE MACON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD ORDINANCE – Attorney Ridenour said the Planning Board has requested reducing the number of members on the board to assist with better success in getting board members to show up to the meetings and to have a quorum. He indicated that the general statute allows for as few as three members, but feels there would be better input from a membership of five to seven. Attorney Ridenour said the current ordinance is from 1972. Planning, Permitting, and Development Director Joe Allen explained the current board make-up, and the terms of each of the members, indicating that several terms are soon expiring. He said if we do not fill seats now, the membership would be down to six members by February, which would include a member from Franklin and one from Highlands. Commissioner Shearl said that, as the Liaison, he has not attended any of the meetings because of the lack of business to address. He says he understands that the Planning Board is an advisory board, and feels this board could serve as the Planning Board. Commissioner Breeden recommended a five-member board with a commissioner and a representative from the Town of Highlands and one from the Town of Franklin as non-voting members. Commissioner Young commented about the membership of other boards and said he agrees with having liaisons from the Town of Highlands and the Town of Franklin, and with a five-member board. Commissioner Young asked to put a reminder on the March or April meeting to add Planning Board appointments to that agenda. Attorney Ridenour recommended having a public hearing in January 2026. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shearl, to hold a public hearing in January. The vote was 4 to 1, with Commissioners Breeden, Shearl, Shields, and Young voting in favor of the motion, and Commissioner Shields opposed.

APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION GIVING NOTICE TO ALL CANDIDATES FOR THE SHERIFF AND REGISTER OF DEEDS POSITIONS IN MACON COUNTY – Attorney Ridenour explained the resolution and recommended it be approved and sent to the Board of Elections office. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shields, to approve the resolution as presented [Attachment 2]. The vote was unanimous.

NC OFFICE OF STATE BUDGET MANAGEMENT CAPITAL GRANT

APPLICATION – Mr. Cabe explained the grant opportunity as it relates to storms. He said we used the Southwestern Commission to help develop the grant application and identified Cullasaja Park, Parker Meadows, Tassee Park, and the Arthur Drake Boardwalk as the four projects with a total request of \$1,276,768.55 with no local match required. Mr. Cabe requested approval to submit the grant application. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shields, to approve submission of the grant application 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 November 13, 2025, regular meeting, (B) Budget Amendments #142-147 and #150-151, (C) approval of the Macon County 2026 Holiday Schedule, (D) Resolution Examination of Official Bonds for Public Officials of Macon County, (E) Tax releases for the month of November 2025 in the amount of \$5.30, and (F) Monthly ad valorem tax collection report for which no action is necessary.

APPOINTMENTS:

CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD (15 SEATS) -

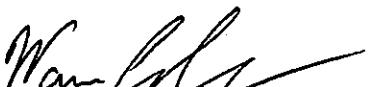
APPOINTMENT OF CURRENT BOARD OF HEALTH MEMBERS TO THE

CONSOLIDATED HUMAN SERVICES BOARD – Mr. Cabe said the process that we discussed was to roll the current Board of Health membership into the Consolidated Human Services Agency (CHSA) Board. Attorney Ridenour said that under NCGS 153A-77 (c), in addition to the current members, we need a psychologist, a social worker, one at-large member who is a consumer of human services, and an optometrist. He recommended moving Commissioner Breeden to the commissioner member, with Commissioner Shearl moving to an at-large member until the vacancies are filled. Attorney Ridenour said after re-appointment of the current members, they will take their new oath at the January CHSA Board meeting and read the names of the current members into the record as Garrett Higdon, Dr. Matt Corbin, Angela Stone, Dr. Courtney Partick, Dr. Nathan Feibelman, Dr. Michael Toedt, Dr. Roy Lenzo, Commissioner Breeden, Ava Ammons, Steve Grissim, and Commissioner Shearl. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shearl, to appoint the members as listed to the CHSA Board. The vote was unanimous.

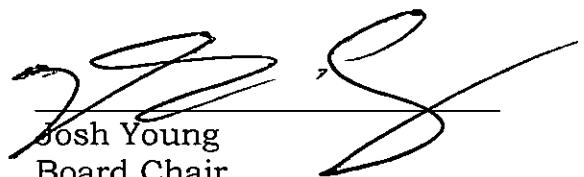
PLANNING BOARD (1 SEAT) – Removed as discussed above under new business.

CLOSED SESSION: None.

ADJOURN: With no other business, at 8:31 p.m., upon a motion from Commissioner Breeden, seconded by Commissioner Shearl, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.



Warren Cabe
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board



Josh Young
Board Chair

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MACON

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF REVISING THE MACON COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS ELECTION SYSTEM

WHEREAS, since 1978, the 5 member Board of the Macon County Board of Commissioners have been elected from 3 Districts with a single member elected from District 1 (Ellijay, Flats, Highlands and Sugarfork) a single member from District 3 (Burntngtown, Cartoogechaye, Cowee and Nantahala) and three members with staggered terms from District 2 (Iotla, Millshoal, North Franklin, East Franklin, South Franklin, Union and Smithbridge); and

WHEREAS, as a result of this structure, potential candidates from District 2 are eligible to file for election every 2 years, while potential candidates from the single member Districts 1 and 3 may only file for election every 4 years.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED by the Macon County Board of Commissioners as follows:

1. The Macon County Board of Commissioners requests that the North Carolina General Assembly grant the board the authority to determine how its voting districts shall be divided, provided the districts are created fairly and in a manner consistent with State Law.
2. Further, that this change begin in the election cycle for members of the Macon County Board of Commissioners beginning in 2028.
3. That this Resolution shall be forwarded to the Senator and Representative who represent Macon County in the North Carolina General Assembly and a copy be retained in the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners.

Adopted this 91 day of December, 2025.


Josh Young, Chairman
Macon County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:


Warren Cabe, Clerk to the Board

NORTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF MACON

A Resolution
Of the Macon County Board of Commissioners
Giving Notice to all Candidates for the
Sheriff and Register of Deeds Positions in Macon County

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is authorized pursuant to North Carolina Statutes 153A-92 to set the starting salaries for a non-incumbent Sheriff of Macon County and for a non-incumbent Register of Deeds of Macon County, which affect the individuals elected to these offices when they take office; and

WHEREAS, the starting salary for the Sheriff position will be the minimum of Salary Grade 40 of the Macon County Classification Pay Plan. The minimum of Salary Grade 40 is \$80,109.42.

WHEREAS, the starting salary for the Register of Deeds position will be the minimum of Salary Grade 32 of the Macon County Classification Pay Plan. The minimum of Salary Grade 32 is \$54,220.39.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Macon County Board of Commissioners that this Resolution will not be altered or amended until after the persons elected Sheriff and Register of Deeds in the 2026 elections and will become effective once those persons take office.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Macon County Board of Commissioners may adjust the starting salary of the candidate elected considering the years of service and performance in related experience of the person elected.

BE IT STILL FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be delivered by Clerk to the Board of Commissioners to the Director of the Macon County Board of Elections.

ADOPTED, this 9th day of December, 2025.

Attest:



Warren Cabe, Clerk to Board

Approved:



Josh Young, Chairman