



**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
NOVEMBER 13, 2025
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(A) Mr. Cabe announced that in accordance with N.C.G.C. §153A-39 in even-numbered years, the board was required to meet on the first Monday in December to elect a chair and vice chair; however, since this was an odd-numbered year, the board was not required to meet on the first Monday and could handle their elections at the regular December meeting.

(B) Mr. Cabe reported that the Board of Health approved the early retirement of Health Director Kathy McGaha at their October 28, 2025, regular meeting and shared that HR and Safety Director Tammy Keezer has been appointed as the Interim Health Director.

(C) Mr. Cabe stated that since the federal government shutdown was over, some of the funding concerns from the housing department, DSS, and Health were no longer valid.

(D) Mr. Cabe reported that Parks and Recreation are working on the final details on pickleball courts, and they are still on track for a summer completion date. He said Parks and Recreation is also working on some upgrades to the Nantahala multi-use court.

(E) Mr. Cabe welcomed Lindsay Leopard to her first meeting as Interim Finance Director.

(F) Commissioner Shields expressed thanks to all who participated in the Green Light for Veterans appreciation event.

(G) Commissioner Shearl read a statement declaring his intentions to seek re-election and serve for an additional four years.

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 Breeden, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, the board voted unanimously to approve the agenda, as adjusted, as follows:

- To remove Item 13B under Planning Board Appointments, under Appointments, per Mr. Cabe.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: **Mary Ann Ingram** spoke about Animal Control assisting with horses that could not be taken care of and stated, "Great job" to the staff. **Betsy Baste** spoke about Fontana Regional Library (FRL) and he board's commitment to stay with the FRL. She also spoke about the quarter-cent sales tax and offered to help educate people on how that will help the county financially.

REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS: None.

OLD BUSINESS:

UPDATE AND CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING CONSOLIDATION OF MACON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH – Board of Health Chair Garrett Higdon reported that the Board of Health recommended consolidation at their October 28, 2025, meeting, with the consolidation to include Macon County Public Health and Macon County Animal Services. Mr. Cabe explained the resolution in the packet, and Ms. Keezer talked about the resolution timeline with the recommended date of January 13, 2026, for the effective date of the consolidation. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shearl, to approve the resolution as presented. The vote was unanimous.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING SOLID WASTE OPTIONS AND BID REVIEW – Mr. Cabe stated that Interim Solid Waste Director Jaime Picou had put together a presentation with three options. In her presentation, Ms. Picou explained the bidding process of a new and/or expanded cell, options for hauling and incineration, land values, and options for use of the property. She provided estimates of the cost to operate a new cell, transfer station, closure of Cell 2, post-closure costs, environmental monitoring, and other considerations. Mr. Cabe reviewed the bank loan Request for Proposals (RFP) with the recommendation to move forward with the construction of the cell as planned and in process. He said he was surprised by some of the quotes on the hauling and indicated that consideration of a hybrid option might be a possibility. Mr. Cabe said the urgency in taking action on this item is that the existing cell is going to be full soon, and we need to be ready when that happens. He reported that in June 2025, the RFP was released for financing options, and Webster Bank provided the best terms and has discussed payment plans, etc. with us. Mr. Cabe explained the process to get approval from the Local Government Commission (LGC) and shared two options: (1) a short-term five-year and longer-term ten-year. and recommended approving the request in the packet tonight to go to the LGC to see if they will approve the financing at their December meeting for the ten-year option. He indicated that if the board did not approve the request tonight, the earliest to get approval from the LGC would be May. Commissioner Shields made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shearl, to approve the finding resolution to submit to the LGC not to exceed 10.5 million dollars over ten years. The vote was unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION FOR A REFERENDUM CONCERNING A QUARTER-CENT SALES TAX - Mr. Cabe indicated that the draft resolution was provided at the request of the board and that the board needs to decide on which 2026 ballot the referendum needs to go on and whether to specify what the funds will be used for. Commissioner Shearl made a motion,

seconded by Commissioner Shields, to place the referendum on the November 2026 general election ballot with no earmark of funds. The vote was unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION CONCERNING

POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DOGS – Mr. Cabe explained the purpose of the Dangerous Dog Board to hear appeals when a dog has been deemed dangerous. He said the resolution regarding potentially dangerous dogs required revisions to eliminate the listing of specific members of the Dangerous Dog Board by name and to define other member designations more appropriately. Commissioner Shields made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Breeden to approve the resolution as presented. The vote was unanimous.

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACT FOR THE RECRUITMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR –

DSS Director Patrick Betancourt said he wanted to speak about succession planning for the department as he plans to retire in May 2026. He indicated that the DSS Board voted to utilize Development Associates in the recruitment of a new director, although the previous budget request for the contract was not approved, he would like to go ahead and begin that process with lapse salary funds. Mr. Betancourt stated that he would like to have an overlap with the new director from February 2026 through his retirement in May. He reviewed the major points of the proposal and the recruitment process that Developmental Associates would use. Commissioner Shearl spoke about the process used for the recruitment of a new health director and stated that the health board members and county staff did a phenomenal job in the recruitment process, and he would like the DSS board to go through the same process that the health board did. He stated that he believes that we, as a county, have fantastic staff to go through the recruitment and interview process and can do a great job; therefore, he cannot support the cost of this firm. He further stated that the individuals involved in the recruitment of the health director would have liked to have been paid the amount of money that this firm requires. Commissioner Young suggested we open up this process for 60 days internally and see what we can accomplish. After further discussion, Mr. Betancourt said that ultimately, the DSS Board makes the decision on who is hired. No action was taken.

FONTANA REGIONAL LIBRARY INTER-LOCAL AGREEMENT -

Mr. Cabe reported that he was presented with an amendment to the agreement from the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. He reviewed the proposed changes in regard to the Board of Trustees, the Regional Director not serving a dual role, and any remaining funds at year-end be returned to the counties. Mr. Cabe said that Jackson County will have their meeting next week for consideration of those amendments, and the earliest this board can vote on this would be the December meeting. Commissioner Antoine mentioned the meeting dates and times for the Fontana Regional Library Board meetings and requested a change so the meetings do not conflict with this board's meetings. Mr. Cabe said he will follow up with Jackson County and let them know the feedback from tonight. No action was taken.

CONSENT AGENDA: Upon a motion by Commissioner Breeden, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, the board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented which includes: (A) Minutes of the October 14, 2025, regular meeting, and the October 21, 2025, joint meeting, (B) Budget Amendments #125-134, (C) Resolution Declaring Certain Property Surplus and Authorizing Donation, (D) Resolution Making Donation of Stream Table to Macon County Schools, (E) Tax releases for the month of October 2025 in the amount of \$4,881.72, (F) Monthly ad valorem tax collection report for which no action is necessary.

APPOINTMENTS:

(A) JURY COMMISSION (1 SEAT) – Clerk of Superior Court Shauna Lamb recommended the appointment of Pam Ledford. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shearl, to approve the appointment as requested. The vote was unanimous.

(B) PLANNING BOARD (1 SEAT) – Removed.

(C) COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (2 SEATS) - Regional Long-term Care Ombudsman for Region A Anna Franklin recommended the appointment of Sandra Hooper and Richard Brady. Commissioner Breeden made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, to approve the appointments as requested. The vote was unanimous.

CLOSED SESSION: At 7:48 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Breeden, seconded by Commissioner Shearl, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session as allowed under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract.. At 7:57 p.m., upon a motion by Commissioner Breeden, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, the board voted unanimously to come out of closed session and return to open session.

ADJOURN: With no other business, at 8:00 p.m., upon a motion from Commissioner Breeden, seconded by Commissioner Antoine, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.



Warren Cabe
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board



Josh Young
Board Chair