

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CONTINUED SESSION
APRIL 23, 2013
MINUTES**

Chairman Corbin convened the joint meeting with the Town of Franklin Board of Aldermen and the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners at 6:11 p.m. at the Boiler Room Steak House in Franklin, as recessed from the April 18, 2013 continued session. All board members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, Finance Director and County Attorney were present. All of the Franklin aldermen, Mayor Joe Collins, Town Manager Warren Cabe and Assistant to the Manager Summer Woodard were present. All of the Highlands commissioners – with the exception of John Dotson and Amy Patterson – Mayor David Wilkes and Town Manager Bob Frye were present. Also present were members of the news media and interested citizens.

Chairman Corbin explained that the county board had some business to conduct and called it to order. He said that bids on the Highlands School renovation project were opened on April 22nd, and that Michael Ward Construction was the low bidder at \$1,338,000. The County Manager added that Michael Watson, the project architect, had submitted a letter of recommendation for the board to enter into a contract with D. Michael Ward for the renovations. However, that contract is subject to a loan closing set for Friday, April 26th and upon acquisition of the proper performance bond by the contractor. The County Attorney pointed out the need for the motion to authorize the chairman to sign the contract, pending the outcome of those items. Commissioner Beale made a motion to approve the contract with Michael Ward Construction on the condition of the loan closing and securing of the performance bond, authorizing the chairman to sign the contract on behalf of the county, and Commissioner Tate seconded the motion. Following further discussion, the board voted unanimously to approve the motion. Work on the project was expected to begin May 1st.

Chairman Corbin pointed out that the term of Karl Gillespie, the current chairman of the county planning board, had expired, and that an appointment would be considered by the board by its June regular meeting at the latest, pending proper advertisement of the opening.

Noting that the meeting would be informal, Chairman Corbin asked for comments from Highlands, and Mayor Wilkes said the town was working on its budget, on repairs to the swimming pool at its recreation facility, and said town officials would like to meet with county officials to discuss building inspection processes. Following a brief discussion regarding tourism, town commissioners Eric Pierson and Gary Drake questioned why construction and demolition materials were not accepted by the county solid waste department in Highlands on Saturdays, and the County Manager said he would follow up with Solid Waste Director Chris Stahl on that matter.

Franklin Mayor Joe Collins, referring to the joint meetings, said he would “love to keep this going.” He noted changes that were taking place in downtown Franklin, and praised county Economic Development Director Tommy Jenkins for his work on the Whitley Products/Franklin Tubular Products matter. After recognizing Warren Cabe as the town’s first full-time manager, he said expansion of the town’s water source was a high priority and would require cooperation with the county. Mr. Cabe later said that the town has a draft water study in hand that shows a cost of \$10 per gallon to expand. He noted that most new requests for service come from outside the town’s limits, and that he wanted to get all of the information on the table. The County Manager expressed his thanks to the town for its cooperation on the Riverbend and Swiss Colony water projects.

In comments from the county side, Chairman Corbin said that the people of the county expect us to work together, adding that, “I’m glad we do this and I hope we’ll continue.” He then went over a list of county projects, starting with the renovations at the recreation park swimming pool. At this point, the meeting was recessed for a meal, and Commissioner Higdon left the meeting. Following the recess, Commissioner Tate said that the board would hold a meeting in Highlands on May 20th that, in addition to normal county business, would address several issues related to Highlands. Chairman Corbin reiterated the board’s commitment to no tax increase in the upcoming fiscal year, but pointed out that requests from the school system could affect that, saying the county would fund the system “at the best level we can.” Other topics of discussion included the new vehicle tax/tag system

that will go into effect July 1st, mental health issues and the reorganization of the Local Management Entities (LMEs), tourism related to hikers of the Appalachian Trail, the county's upcoming BizWeek 2013 events, the property revaluation schedule, the new dialysis center, and possible changes in the state transportation system.

Chairman Corbin announced that the county commissioners would need to hold a closed session, and the joint meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 7:52 p.m. for the purpose of consulting with the attorney and to discuss land acquisition. At 8:28 p.m., and upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to return to open session.

Upon a motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Tate, the board voted unanimously to authorize the County Manager to pursue determining the value of a potential property acquisition and to access services as needed to help make that determination.

With no other business, and upon a motion by Commissioner Tate, seconded by Commissioner Haven, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Jack Horton, County Manager
Clerk to the Board

Kevin Corbin
Board Chairman