

**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
JOINT MEETING WITH THE  
MACON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Continued Session  
July 26, 2022  
MINUTES**

Chairman Tate reconvened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. as recessed from the July 12, 2022 regular meeting. The meeting was held in the Fine Arts Center on the campus of Franklin High School. All Board Members, County Manager Derek Roland, Finance Director Lori Carpenter, County Attorney Eric Ridenour, Tammy Keezer (sitting in for Deputy Clerk Mike Decker), members of the Macon County Board of Education and members of the news media were present, as were a number of citizens. Deputy Clerk Mike Decker was not in attendance.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Chairman Tate asked members of the Macon County Board of Commissions and Macon County Board of Education to introduce themselves, following his welcome of everyone in attendance, their interest in learning more about the plans for Franklin High School and an overview of the history of discussions on this important topic during his time as a member of the Macon County Board of Commissioners.

**REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

**(A) Update on Franklin High School (FHS) architecture contract:** Mr. Roland gave an overview of the process that has taken place to this point and provided a PowerPoint presentation for illustration. His presentation showed that the Board of Commissioners and Board of Education entered into a joint contract with LS3P for \$605,000, to provide a comprehensive facility plan that will tell both boards what we currently have to start with and answer questions before the project is started. Mr. Roland stated the work on that plan is now complete and decisions can be made together on how to move forward. He stated, "Tonight is the ground level of discussion for the future of Franklin High School."

**(B) Presentation of Comprehensive Facility Plan findings and architect's recommendation for the FHS campus:** Senior Vice President/K-12 Practice Leader/Principle Paul Boney with LS3P informed the board that the Comprehensive Facility Plan will highlight the capital investment needs to bring all existing structures on the FHS campus to a 50-year standard. He said that

upon completion of the Comprehensive Facility Plan, the cost and benefits of renovation will be evaluated alongside the cost and benefits of new construction at the existing location. Mr. Boney stated this study has been completed with assistance from a project committee made up of members of the community, board members, faculty and a student representative over the course of six meetings beginning on January 12, 2022. FHS senior and project committee member Callie Roper gave her perspective as a member of the project team and shared that the environment and access to readily available resources is important and necessary to student education. Mr. Boney presented a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed the goals of the project, which included: 1) a driver of economic development, 2) safe and inviting for students and faculty, 3) center of the community, 4) energy savings and 5) community pride. LS3P Senior Project Manager Emily Kite explained the findings regarding the existing facilities, condition of buildings, and academic programming. Included were: 1) traffic and parking, 2) pedestrian circulation, 3) site security (100+ exterior doors), 4) site settlement issues, 5) drainage, 6) accessible routes, 7) multiple utility meters and 8) separate fire alarm systems. She said seven main buildings were evaluated to include the year built, completed renovations, size, age, age at the 50-year mark (from now) and priority and urgency of repairs. Ms. Kite shared the three main categories of note to be building and campus safety and security, ADA accessibility of the site and buildings and long-term maintenance of system infrastructure (plumbing, mechanical, electrical, intercom and fire alarm systems). She indicated that team input as well as a department-by-department analysis using the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) recommendations, facility guidelines and how the current facilities measure up and what is needed to meet the needs beyond the DPI guide were considered. Ms. Kite stated that using a 1,200 student enrollment base, which is probably not enough, the current facilities have a shortfall of 88,805 square feet. LS3P K12 Sector Leader/Architect/ Associate Principle Jamie Henderson shared details of the new building concept including using the existing practice field as the main building site with one building and all programming to be completed in three phases: 1) raising the elevation of the current football field five feet and moving it 30 feet north of its current location, 2) new facility and 3) demolish current buildings. Mr. Boney summarized the project stating the estimated cost of an energy efficient facility built for the future growth to be \$118,420,233 for new construction versus \$111,059,378 to renovate the current facilities. He indicated that LS3P recommends a new facility and stadium with Phase 1 to be completed in 2024, which would require the football team to play elsewhere for one year, and Phase 2 and Phase 3 to be completed in 2026.

**(C) Financial update and discussion of potential funding options for FHS project:** Mitch Brigulio with Davenport and Associates utilized a PowerPoint presentation to review the county credit scores, status and rating. He stated

that from 2016-2021 the County had maintained a structurally balanced budget and is currently repaying debt on an above average ratio. Mr. Brigulio shared that the current budget assumes future growth and there is a property revaluation scheduled for 2024. He said the county has debt capacity to fund this Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

**NEXT STEPS:** Mr. Roland summarized the path moving forward restating that in December 2021 both boards entered into a mutual contract with LS3P and that the schematic design is due in October 2022 as well as the design element for the stadium. He reminded the board that \$811,283 had been budgeted in Fiscal Year 2022-23 for the FHS planning budget with \$476,176 of that amount needed to move forward at this time. Mr. Roland emphasized that we can continue moving forward based on the timeline he provided, and this also gives time to apply for the next round of needs-based capital school funding, to determine the outcome of the sales tax referendum and the impact of the upcoming revaluation.

**Discussion, questions and public comment:** **Molly Phillips** commented in favor of a new school and said if it is built, Macon County will be able to recruit quality teachers because recruits will be able to see the investment in kids. **Bobby Koppers** spoke in favor of a new facility stating that the kids deserve better. He congratulated the commissioners on building a strong financial position and said no one likes tax increases, but it is what it is. **Mark Sutton** spoke in favor of a new facility identifying several of the limitations for physically challenged individuals in navigating the bleachers in the gym that have no handrails, and bleachers at the football field that are not handicap accessible. He also shared that the track is dangerous, the campus is not secure, and the wrestling team and cheerleaders do not have a place to practice. He requested that the board not cut corners on this project. **W.H. Derrick** shared a concern about the new bleachers in relation to his home across from the FHS football field. He stated he wants assurance that the project would not de-value his home. **Coley Tyler** spoke in support of a new facility. He shared that he was an alumni, parent and a coach and that FHS has not changed since he was a student. He said it is time, it is worth it, and it is the right thing to do. **Jim Gaston** spoke in opposition of a new facility. He said if the project did not raise taxes, he would support it. He raised the question of how a new facility was going to improve academics. **Dr. Chris Baldwin** responded to Mr. Gaston's question and stated that having technology will improve instruction as will having one building with school security. **Commissioner Shields** commented that he believes this project aligns with the three A's: 1) academics – quality brings quality, 2) athletics – with a liability present in the condition of the facilities, and 3) ADA with the facilities not being ADA compliant and students who cannot maneuver easily. **Stephanie Laseter** stated she wants to see

vocational opportunities and to be sure that teachers and students have what they need. **Maggie Jennings** stated she wants to be sure arts and vocational programs are considered and to make sure the new facility represents the needs of the entire community.

Chairman Tate asked Board of Education Chairman Jim Breedlove if the school board members had any comments. Chairman Breedlove stated the Board of Education was ready to take a vote. He further stated that the Board of Education was not in support of disruption in instruction for renovations. Upon receiving a unanimous vote by the Board of Education to enter into contract negotiations with LS3P, Commissioner Shields made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Young, to enter into contract negotiation with LS3P and the vote was unanimous.

**ADJOURN:** With no other business, at 8:36 p.m., upon a motion from Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Higdon, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.

---

Derek Roland  
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board

---

Jim Tate  
Board Chair