



**MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JOINT MEETING WITH THE
MACON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
OCTOBER 18, 2022
MINUTES**

Chairman Tate called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. All Board Members, County Manager Derek Roland, Tammy Keezer (sitting in for Deputy Clerk Mike Decker), Finance Director Lori Carpenter, County Attorney Eric Ridenour, members of the Macon County Board of Education, and news media were present, as were a number of citizens.

INTRODUCTIONS: Chairman Tate welcomed everyone in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

- (A) **Richard Lightner** spoke in favor of the new Franklin High School stating the current facility is inefficient and outdated. He said the county held the deed to the old drive-in and suggested the deed be transferred to the high school. Mr. Lightner also stated that there are other properties adjacent to the current high school that could be purchased to expand the area needed for the new school.
- (B) **Hazel Norris** spoke in favor of the new high school and encouraged support for the new facility needed to be for the kids and not to win elections. Ms. Norris also suggested inclusion of a trade school facility.

LS3P FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT UPDATE – Architect Paul Boney gave a brief update on the presentation provided at the last joint meeting and the schematic design in a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that a new school of this magnitude would be a driver of economic development, safe and inviting for students and faculty, provide energy savings, and support community pride. Senior Project Manager Emily Kite reviewed the site design presented at the last meeting, and Architect Jaime Henderson reviewed the ADA, circulation, security, and location of functions for the design. Mr. Boney requested authorization for LS3P to present the schematic design package for Franklin High School, including the design development for the stadium, to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and other local and state agencies for review. Commissioner Shields informed those in attendance that an interactive version of the design could be found on the county website at www.maconnc.org, along

with a video about the ADA challenges at the current facility. After viewing the ADA video and a brief question and answer period, the board reached a unanimous consensus for LS3P to submit the plans for review as requested.

Macon Middle School Locker Room Bid Acceptance – County Manager Derek Roland gave a brief review of the project including bids for construction, which were received September 28, 2022, and requested approval to award the bid to Carolina Specialties Construction for the base bid plus alternatives 5 and 6 in the amount of \$2,519,250. He reminded the board that the project had been identified in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for completion in FY '23, that funding appropriated in the FY '23 budget was in the amount of \$2,640,000, and that the liaison committee recommended awarding the bid to Carolina Specialties Construction. Motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Shields, to award the bid to Carolina Specialties Construction for the base bid plus alternates 5 & 6 in the amount of \$2,519,250, and to authorize the County Manager to enter into contract negotiations with Carolina Specialties Construction. Vote was unanimous.

Macon Middle School Track Discussion - Mr. Roland gave a review of the request for this project which was not identified in the CIP, but was identified in the FY '23 School System Capital Outlay Request. He reported that the liaison committee discussed issues with the Franklin High School track including numerous attempts to repair the track, inability to hold track meets at FHS, and the upcoming planned construction at FHS that would further delay holding track meets locally. Mr. Roland stated the school system has acquired a quote which is now over one year old. Board of Education Chair Jim Breedlove stated the track at MMS has been an issue for years as have the funding options. He indicated that the Board of Education will invest grant money they have received as well as contingency funds from the MMS locker room project to construct a regulation field. After discussion, it was decided that the Board of Education will submit a Request for Proposals (RFP) to receive a formal bid.

Highlands Soccer Field Liaison Report - Mr. Roland gave a review of the request for this project, which was not identified in the CIP nor in the FY '23 School System Capital Outlay Request. He indicated that the liaison committee discussed the project on October 13, 2022 after a quote for \$840,000 had been submitted to the Board of Education at its September 26, 2022 meeting. Mr. Breedlove said the project was not included in the Capital Outlay Request because they were not fully aware of the details of the issues. He said the board fully supports the request to resurface the field. Mr. Breedlove said the board was not aware until this meeting that the quote received in March 2022 included a warranty. Commissioner Higdon stated that from the agenda it appears there is a need to prioritize the track, soccer fields, Pre-K program, and the failing septic system at Nantahala School, and

that none of these items were included in the budget request for this fiscal year. Chairman Tate said he sees these items as emergencies for Macon County with students missing track and soccer season due to the condition of the facilities. After further discussion, motion by Commissioner Young, seconded by Commissioner Beale, to request bids for resurfacing the Highlands School soccer field. Vote 4-1 with Commissioner Higdon opposed.

Architect Recommendation – Highlands Pre-K Project – Mr. Roland reminded the board that the project was not identified in the county CIP, but that on March 8, 2022 Advance Highlands Education Committee presented a Novus Planning Study to the board and on May 10, 2022 the board voted unanimously to release a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for architectural services. He said the liaison committee received the RFQ evaluation on October 13, 2022 and selected LS3P, and is requesting authorization and approval to move forward. Board of Education member Hilary Wilkes shared some details of the estimated costs of the project and included renovations to Highlands Middle School. Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin shared information about how staff can be funded through private pay students and eligible funding programs. Commissioner Young read the projects and concerns that the Board of Education had submitted with their Capital Outlay Requests which do not match up with the requests presented tonight. Commissioner Higdon said these requests were not in the CIP and are huge costs and that we must exhibit better planning. After additional discussion, motion by Chairman Tate, seconded by Commissioner Beale, to authorize the county manager to enter into contract negotiations with LS3P for the Highlands Pre-K project. Vote 3-2, with Commissioners Tate, Beale and Shields voting in favor of the project and Commissioners Young and Higdon opposed.

Repair and Renovation Fund application – Mr. Roland provided information on the fund that was established in 2021 by the North Carolina General Assembly as a way to distribute proceeds from the NC Education Lottery to all 100 counties in equal allotments. He said Macon County has received the Year 1 allotment of \$300,546.59 (amount includes interest) and that Year 2 is estimated to be approximately \$500,000. Mr. Roland stated that the funds must be used for repair, renovation, and expansion of classroom facilities and that the Board of Education has identified renovations to Highlands Middle School as the top priority for this funding in FY '23. He indicated that Highlands Middle School renovations have been identified in CIP for FY '27, and that some renovations were included in the Highlands Pre-K project, but did not include a new roof, windows, flooring and HVAC system. After discussion, motion by Commissioner Beale, seconded by Commissioner Shields to submit the Repair and Renovation Fund application to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) for Highlands Middle School renovations. Vote 4-1 with Commissioner Higdon opposed.

Other business as needed - None.

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



Derek Roland
Ex Officio Clerk to the Board



Jim Tate
Board Chair