

**MINUTES OF PRE-COMMISSION MEETING
MACON-BIBB COUNTY COMMISSION
January 7, 2014 – 10:00 A.M.
Government Center
(Large Conference Room)**

A pre-commission meeting of the Macon-Bibb County Commission was held on January 7, 2014 at 10:00 A.M. in the Large Conference Room at Government Center.

Commission Members Present

Mayor Robert A.B. Reichert
Mayor Pro Tem Bert Bivins, III
Commissioner Gary Bechtel
Commissioner Elaine Lucas
Commissioner Mallory Jones, III

Commissioner Ed DeFore
Commissioner Scotty Shepherd
Commissioner Virgil Watkins
Commissioner Al Tillman

District 2 Candidates Present

Dr. Henry Ficklin
Rabbi Larry Schlesinger

Staff Present

Dale Walker – County Manager
Julie Moore – Asst. to County Manager for
Strategic Planning & Budget
Steve Layson – Asst. County Manager
Charles Coney – Asst. County Manager
Judd Drake – County Attorney
Stuart Morelli – Asst. County Attorney
Shelia Thurmond – Clerk of Commission
Jean S. Howard – Asst. Clerk of Commission
Janice Ross – Training & Events Coordinator

Tom Buttram – Business Development Services
Dave Fortson - Engineering
Cliff Howard – Public Works
Sam Hugley – Director of Vehicle Maintenance
Wanzina Jackson – Director of ECD
Richard Powell – Director of Public Works
Chris Floore - Asst. to County Manager for
Public Relations

Organizational Representatives Present

David Davis – Sheriff, Macon-Bibb County
Theresa Robinson – Georgia Power
Mike Ford – NewTown Macon
Alison S. Goldey – Macon-Bibb County
Land Bank Authority
Scott Williams – Cranston Engineering & Assoc.
Stephen Adams – Macon-Bibb County
Industrial Authority

Jan Beeland – Macon Arts Alliance
Jonathan Dye – Macon Arts Alliance
Lauren Benedict – Macon Arts Alliance
Atty. Joan Harris – Land Bank Authority
Pat Topping - MEDC
Stephanie Woods-Miller – Superior Court
Clerk's Office

News Media Present

Mike Stucka – The Telegraph
Chase Ambrose – WGXA, Fox 24

Katelyn Heck – 13 WMAZ

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Reichert announced that the Commission was meeting officially as a Committee of the Whole. He gave an overview of the Committee of the Whole purpose which was to allow people from the outside to speak and to take votes to recommend items for approval.

The Mayor called for a motion to convene into a Committee of the Whole.

On motion of Commissioner Ed DeFore, seconded by Commissioner Scotty Shepherd, and carried unanimously, the Commission officially convened into the first official meeting as a Committee of the Whole.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

PRAYER

The prayer was offered by Rev. Wayne Anthony of Liberty United Methodist Church. Rev. Anthony stated that he had served as a City-wide member of the Columbus, Georgia Consolidated Government for eight years and offered his support in every way to help the new government succeed. He thanked all the Commissioners for their willingness to serve the people of the community.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Ed DeFore, seconded by Commissioner Scotty Shepherd and carried unanimously, the Minutes of the organizational meeting held on December 31, 2013 were approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

FRANCHISE ORDINANCE WITH GEORGIA POWER (Theresa Robinson Addressed)

Judd Drake, County Attorney, gave an overview of the new amended franchise agreement with Georgia Power to be acted on and the previous agreement with the City of Macon that was for 99 years with 48 years remaining. This agreement will terminate with the signing of the new agreement.

Theresa Robinson gave an overview of the franchise agreement between Georgia Power and the City of Macon as well as the changes and impact of the new franchise agreement for the Macon-Bibb Consolidated Government. The new agreement will be in effect for 35 years and will include all of Macon-Bibb County whereas previously the agreement was only with the City of Macon. The new agreement will encompass all metered revenue including residential, commercial, and industrial customers. If the Macon-Bibb County Government opts not to enter into less than the 35 year agreement, franchise fees cannot be assessed on industrial customers. Macon-Bibb County will be assessed 2.9 percent on their power bills, these fees are revenue neutral to Georgia Power. Last year, the City of Macon was paid approximately 5.9 million dollars.

On motion of Commissioner Mallory Jones, seconded by Commissioner Elaine Lucas and carried unanimously, the Franchise Ordinance with Georgia Power was approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

APPROVAL OF AMERSON WATER WORKS CONTRACTS (Julie Moore Addressed)

Mayor Reichert gave an overview of the creation of the Amerson Water Works Park which was created after the flood of 1994 which destroyed the old Macon Water Works on this site. The state of Georgia conveyed this property for recreation. Congressman Jim Marshall was able to get earmarked a 6 million dollar grant from the federal government for improvements at the Park. NewTown Macon acted as the Service Provider for the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail along with Nimrod Long and Associates and Cranston Engineering to provide planning and improvements at Amerson Water Works Park.

Julie Moore gave an overview of the grant documents required in order to accept federal dollars. The match for the grant was donation of the land from the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority. Scott Williams of Cranston Engineering and Associates gave an update on Master Park plans to improve Amerson Water Works Park and its 7 1/2 miles of trails including bridge work, the entrance, roads, etc.

On motion of Commissioner Gary Bechtel, seconded by Commissioner Ed DeFore and carried unanimously, the Amerson Water Works contracts were approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

RESOLUTION TO RECONSTITUTE THE LAND BANK AUTHORITY UNDER THE CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT (Joan Harris Addressed)

Attorney Joan Harris explained the Land Bank Authority's Board need to be reconstituted due to the City of Macon and Bibb County becoming a consolidated government and the re-appointment of current members which is mandated by state law. The Board cannot take any action until the Board is reconstituted

On motion of Commissioner Virgil Watkins, Jr., seconded by Commissioner Bert Bivins, III and carried unanimously, the resolution to reconstitute the Land Bank Authority under the consolidated government was approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

RESOLUTION REGARDING AMENDMENT TO AND RESTATED MEDICAL DISPENSARY SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH MACON OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE (Ben Hubbard Addressed)

Report Only – No Action Taken

Attorney Judd Drake advised additional work needed to be done on the agreement as well as, possibly adding additional agencies such as the Macon- Bibb County Sheriff's office and constitutional officers. The City of Macon is locked into the present agreement with Macon Occupational Medicine for another year.

MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS – CONFIRMATION NOT REQUIRED

1. **MACON-BIBB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT APPOINTMENT** (Elaine Lucas)

This item was amended to add Mayor Pro-Tem Bert Bivins as a member in addition to Commissioner Elaine Lucas. Commissioner Bivins currently serves as a member representing Bibb County and Commissioner Lucas has previously served as a member representing the City of Macon.

2. **MATS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS** – 3 (Scotty Shepherd, Al Tillman, Mallory Jones)

3. **MIDDLE GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION COUNCIL** (Mayor Robert A. B. Reichert, Mayor Pro Tem Bert Bivins, III, plus – 3 Chuck O’Neal, Matt Roger, and Lonnie Miley)

Mayor Robert A. B. Reichert will serve as the County Representative; Mayor Pro Tem Bert Bivins, III will serve as the Municipal representative, Chuck O’Neal as the Non-Public Member , and Matt Rogers and Lonnie Miley as Associate Members).

MAYORAL APPOINTMENTS – CONFIRMATION REQUIRED

4. **MACON WATER AUTHORITY APPOINTMENTS** – 2 (Bert Bivins, III and Ed DeFore)

On motion of Commissioner Gary Bechtel, seconded by Commissioner Scotty Shepherd and carried unanimously, the appointments of Commissioners Bivins and DeFore were approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

5. **MACON HOUSING AUTHORITY APPOINTMENT** (Margaret Hobes to fill the unexpired term of Tommy Barnes, who resigned)

The Mayor will submit all Macon Housing Authority appointments to the Commission for approval as part of his settlement with the Macon Housing Authority for appointments to its board.

Commissioner Tillman expressed a need to consider other individuals in the community who would like to serve when making appointments, and possibly look at Leadership Macon participants. Commissioner Lucas asked if the Commission would have input in appointments to be made by offering suggestions. Mayor Reichert stated any suggestions will be taken into consideration.

On motion of Commissioner Ed DeFore, seconded by Commissioner Scotty Shepherd and carried unanimously, the appointment of Margaret Hobes to the Macon Housing Authority was approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

6. **MACON-BIBB COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT** (Ashok Patel to fill the unexpired term of Al Tillman)

Commissioner Watkins expressed a need to meet with Mr. Patel to get his views on gaming machines located in convenience stores and whether this would interfere with his objectivity in decisions pertaining to convenience stores with gaming machines. Commissioner Bivins also expressed concerns.

On motion of Commissioner Gary Bechtel, seconded by Commissioner Mallory Jones and carried by a vote of 6-2 with Commissioners Watkins and Bivins voting no, the appointment of Ashok Patel was approved for official adoption.

Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

7. MACON-BIBB COUNTY INDUSTRIAL AUTHORITY APPOINTMENT (Sam Hart to fill the unexpired term of the late Jimmie Samuel)

On motion of Commissioner Ed DeFore, seconded by Commissioner Gary Bechtel and carried unanimously, the appointment of Sam Hart to the Macon-Bibb County Industrial Authority was approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING MACON ARTS ALLIANCE AS LOCAL ARTS AGENCY FOR MACON-BIBB COUNTY GOVERNMENT (Sponsored by Commissioners Al Tillman and Elaine Lucas)

On motion of Commissioner Mallory Jones, III, seconded by Commissioner Ed DeFore and carried unanimously, the designation of the Macon Arts Alliance as local Arts agency for Macon-Bibb County was approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

RESOLUTION TO ABOLISH THE MACON-BIBB COUNTY TRANSITION TASK FORCE

Commissioner Tillman, along with Mayor Reichert, commended the Task Force for their eighteen months of service for the new Consolidated Macon-Bibb County Government.

On motion of Commissioner Ed DeFore, seconded by Commissioner Elaine Lucas and carried unanimously, the abolishment the Macon-Bibb County Transition Task Force was approved for official adoption.

Unanimous Approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Ed DeFore, Scotty Shepherd, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman.

COUNTY MANAGER UPDATE (Dale Walker)

Dale Walker reported that seven days into the new government everything was going smoothly. He stated the two Assistant County Managers were in place, approximately 70 people including Bibb County Finance staff had relocated to Government Center and Bibb County Human Resources staff was now at the Willie C. Hill Annex. In an effort to “Go Green,” Tablets would soon be provided to all Commissioners, eliminating the need for paper documents. The proposed new Macon-Bibb County Seal

was also presented for review and discussion.

Commissioner Lucas requested a calendar of events for Commissioners. Janice Ross has this information available and will provide to each Commissioner.

DISCUSSION OF CONSENT AGENDA – No Items Noted

DISCUSSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES

On the advice of County Attorney Judd Drake, and to not violate the Open Meetings law, the Committee on Committees, presently consisting of Mayor Reichert and Mayor Pro Tem Bivins, have not met to name the required third member. Mayor Pro Tem Bivins stated the Committee had not been constituted and he would like to have information on what committees the Commissioners would like to see put in place as well as what committees they would like to serve on.

Commissioner Lucas expressed a desire to serve as the third member and also suggested Commissioner DeFore be considered. Commissioner DeFore stated he would prefer serving on the Water Authority. Commissioner Bechtel also expressed a desire to serve as the third member.

Mayor Reichert recommended once committees are established, that they consist of five members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There will be another Pre-Commission meeting today at 5:00 P.M. followed by the Regular Commission meeting at 6:00P.M.

The Macon-Bibb County Commission will hold a Work Session on January 14, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in the small conference room.

Work Sessions will be held the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 5:00 P.M. No official action will be taken at these meetings.

The Commission will host the University of Georgia Public Service and Outreach group at the Hay House January 9th from 6:00-9:00P.M. A tour of Macon-Bibb County will be conducted on Friday morning, January 10th.

A Strategic Planning Retreat is planned for January 31st starting at 3:00 P.M. through February 1st, ending around 4:00 P.M. at the University of Georgia. Additional details will be provided later.

Janice Ross will be setting up one on one meetings within the next six months with each Commissioner and the Mayor in their respective districts for a listening tour and determine the location, how and who to invite as well as setting a time for each one.

Commissioner Lucas would like to take a field trip to County departments in the near future to see all of the changes in the offices that were consolidated

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business and on motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 P.M.

Shelia Thurmond, CCC
Clerk of Commission