

Special Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners Meeting with Town of Franklin & Macon County of September 25, 2018, at the Springhouse at Old Edwards Inn, 461 Spring Street, Highlands, North Carolina

Town Board Present: Commissioner John Dotson, Commissioner Amy Patterson, Commissioner Donnie Calloway, Mayor Pro Tempore Eric Pierson and Mayor Pat Taylor

Town Board Absent: Commissioner Brian Stiehler

Also Present: Town Manager Josh Ward and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

Franklin Town Council Present: Mayor Bob Scott, Council Member Joe Collins, Council Member Barbara McRae, Council Member Dinah Mashburn, Council Member David Culpepper, Council Member Adam Kimsey and Council Member Brandon McMahan.

Also Present: Town Manager Summer Woodard and Town Clerk Travis Tallent

Macon County Board of Commissioners Present: County Commissioner James Tate, County Commissioner Ronnie Beale, County Commissioner Gary Shields, County Commissioner Carl Gillespie

Also Present: County Manager and Ex Officio Clerk Derek Roland and County Attorney Chester Jones.

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:20pm.

2. Adjust and Approve the Agenda

Commissioner Dotson made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, which was seconded by Commissioner Calloway and the vote was unanimous.

3. Guest Speaker: Richard Delany, President/Managing Director of Old Edwards Inn

Richard Delany welcomed everyone to the Springhouse. Delany on behalf of Art and Angela Williams and OEI extended thanks to the County and the Town of Highlands for their energy and dedication in making Highlands a better place to live and grateful for the individual commitments.

Delany gave a presentation of the growth of Old Edwards Hospitality Group, include the increase in the number guests, jobs and spending in the area.

Delany added that affordable work force housing would strengthen the economy in Macon County.

4. Town of Highlands Update

Mayor Taylor gave an update on the development of the fiber optic broadband network construction with Wide Open Network, which would soon be sent out for bid. Mayor Taylor discussed the Town's new water tank construction project underway, which replaces an existing tank with a much larger capacity tank. Mayor Taylor stated we are working on replacing some of our old water infrastructure that is 2 inch galvanized piping. Mayor Taylor continued that the NCDOT would be paving Main Street starting April 2019.

Mayor Taylor stated as part of the NCDOT Advisory Committee and the public meeting held that proposed the plan for NC 106 probably wouldn't survive. Mayor Taylor continued that the committee suggested to take the money from that project and to move it over to West Main Street road repairs in Franklin.

Mayor Taylor asked for support from Franklin and Macon County to address the increased traffic of the big tractor trailers on the Gorge Road. Mayor Taylor stated he would be writing a letter to state legislatures to address the problem with options of

possible radar activated signs, cameras with enforcement fines and possibly the insurance commission to send a warning and message.

Mayor Taylor discussed concerns about the Highlands Cashiers Hospital's acquisition by HCA. The discussions are not about trying to stop the sale, but to guarantee the continued operations of our hospital. Mayor Taylor announced a Special Meeting to discuss these issues with Mission Foundation Board on Thursday, September 27, 2018 at Highlands Recreation Park at 7pm.

5. Town of Franklin Update

Mayor Bob Scott announced that after a year and a half the bridge is open.

Town Manager Summer Woodard stated Phase I of the Water Treatment Plant would be completed by January 2019.

Mayor Bob Scott stated they were working on new parking ideas and had public support, the Town of Franklin has problems with not enough parking and looking into a parking deck.

Town Manager Summer Woodard announced the 22nd Pumpkin Festival. Woodard continued the Festival has 700 pumpkins and about 5,000-6,000 in attendance. Woodard stated they roll the pumpkins down the hill and adding a winter wonderland ice ring this year.

Councilwoman McRae stated she is a member of Mountain Partners with Franklin, Eastern Band of the Cherokee and Macon County and has worked to reconcile with the Eastern Band regarding the care of the Nikwasi Mound, which has been successful. McRae continued that Mountain Partners had installed Kiosk with beautiful panels giving information about Nikwasi Mound and Cowee School.

Mayor Bob Scott thanked the Town Board of Commissioners of Highlands for hosting the joint meeting.

6. Macon County Update

County Commissioner Chair James Tate stated the Macon County Board of Commissioners had been working on where the county needed to go instead of putting out fires and trying to make a plan. Tate continued that the Capital Improvement Plan would include the feasibility of building a new High School, a Senior Service Center, Jail and Health Services.

Tate continued that the Board had budgeted \$300,000 for expert opinion to approach the special needs analysis and had submitted Request for Qualifications and they had received 6 responses. Tate continued the responses would be discussed at the next meeting on October 9th.

Tate stated the renovations at South Macon should be complete by August 1st and would be at an interest rate of 3.35% for 15 years.

Tate stated the county had upgraded the Emergency Tower with the NC Highway Patrol viper system on a site at Hickory Knut Gap.

Tate stated 180,000 lights were replaced with LED's in county facilities and should pay for itself in 3 years.

Tate stated Health Department Director Jim Bruckner decided to retire and the County was going to appoint an interim director while searching for a full time director.

7. Adjournment

As there were no further matters to come before the Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Calloway moved to adjourn which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Pierson and upon a unanimous vote, the Town Board adjourned at 8:15pm.

Patrick Taylor
Mayor

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk