MINUTES OF REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING
MACON-BIBB COUNTY COMMISSION
June 17, 2014 – 6:00 P.M.
Government Center
(Commission Chamber)

The Regular Commission meeting of the Macon-Bibb County Commission was held on June 17, 2014 at 6:00 P.M. in the Commission Chamber at Government Center.

Commission Members Present:
Mayor Robert A.B. Reichert
Mayor Pro Tem Bert Bivins, III
Commissioner Larry Schlesinger
Commissioner Gary Bechtel
Commissioner Elaine Lucas
Commissioner Mallory Jones, III
Commissioner Ed DeFore
Commissioner Scotty Shepherd
Commissioner Virgil Watkins, Jr.
Commissioner Al Tillman

Staff Present:
Judd Drake – County Attorney
Crystal Jones – Sr. Asst. County Attorney
Opie Bowen – Asst. County Attorney
Reggie McClendon – Asst. County Attorney
Sam Henderson – Exec. Asst to Mayor
Trea MCombs – Public Affairs
Kevin Barrere – Public Affairs
Justin Crum, Public Affairs
Chris Floore – Asst. to Co. Mgr. – Public Affairs
Sheila Thurmond – Clerk of Commission
Steve Layson – Asst. Co. Mgr - Infrastructure
Jean S. Howard – Asst. Clerk of Commission
Janice Ross – Training & Events Coordinator
Julie Moore – Asst. to Co. Mgr. – Strategic

Guests in Attendance
Chief Deputy Russell Nelson
Andy Ambrose – Tubman Museum
Andrew Galloway – Medical Center
Susan Welsh – Museum of Arts & Sciences
Erica Woodford – Clerk of Bibb Superior Court
Former Councilman Dr. Henry C. Ficklin
Gwennette Westbrook – President, NAACP
Dr. Ninfa Saunders – Medical Center of Central Georgia

News Media Present
Jim Gaines – The Telegraph
Anita Oh – 13 WMAZ
Katelyn Heck – 13 WMAZ
Malcolm Johnson – WGXA FOX 24
Chace Ambrose – WGXA FOX 24
Shonti Tager – WGXA FOX 24
Sean Franklin – 41 WMGT
Tucker Sargent – 41 WMGT
Ashley Minelli – 41 WMGT
Ron Wildman – 58 WPGA
CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Robert A. B. Reichert.

Mayor Reichert called for a motion to add an item to the Agenda under Old Business (Item P)

ACTION:

On motion of Commissioner Gary Bechtel, seconded by Commissioner Scotty Shepherd, and carried unanimously, Item P was added to the Agenda.


PRAYER

The prayer was rendered by Elder Shane Gottwals of Central Fellowship Baptist Church

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Pre-Commission Meeting on June 3, 2014
B. Regular Commission Meeting on June 3, 2014

ACTION:

On motion of Commissioner Ed DeFore, seconded by Commissioner Larry Schlesinger, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Pre-Commission and Regular Commission meetings held on June 3, 2014 were approved as presented.


INVITED GUESTS

Elder Shane Gottwals of Central Fellowship Baptist Church was invited to render the prayer for tonight’s Regular Commission Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Ninfa Saunders – spoke on the need to reinstate funding in the FY 2015 Budget for Indigent Care to the Medical Center of Central Georgia. She gave an overview of how the funding cut
would affect the patients coming to the hospital requiring the care that these funds assisted with. She stated the budget cut would result in the marginalization of the poor and overall have a negative impact on the community.

Marvella Ivery – spoke on the effect of budget cuts for Indigent Care and Para-Transit and the negative effect these cuts would have on those needing and requiring these services.

Sister Elizabeth Greim – spoke on the need for continued funding to the Medical Center for indigent care and the importance of this service to those served by the Day Break Clinic. She further stated a cut in Indigent Care to the Medical Center would affect those who have no choice as they are either uninsured and/or not insurable.

Gwen Westbrook- NAACP President – spoke of her experience as a former Medical Center employee who worked with those who received Indigent Care and the vital necessity of this program for those who were not able to pay for the services they received. She asked for a re-evaluation of the decision to cut the Indigent Care funding.

Gwendolyn Hudson – spoke on the importance of Para-Transit to dialysis patients who utilize this service for transport. She asked for this service to be further expanded outside of the city limits into the county.

Khalil Williams – spoke on the Macon Transit Authority budget cuts and how this would affect those utilizing the buses for transportation to work, school, shopping, etc. He also spoke on the negative effect of reducing bus routes, hours and days of operation for those who have no other form of transportation.

Diane Kelly – spoke on how cuts for Para-Transit and other bus services would create a hardship for the disabled and other citizens who have to use the bus system for transportation. She was also concerned about the possible cuts in days of service and hours of operation.

Wade Horton – spoke on the need to increase the hours and days of operation for the Macon Transit Authority. He stated Para-Transit service enabled disabled persons to be independent. He requested the Commission go back to the Legislative Delegation and ask for a review of mandated budget cuts.

Richard Elliott – spoke on the budget Ordinance and the Indigent Care cut for the Medical Center and expressed his agreement of the budget cut for Indigent Care.

Dr. Henry Fickin – asked that the FY ’15 budget be fully vetted by Commissioners, and recommended a Resolution be sent to the Governor asking him to accept the Medicaid Expansion program.

Dr. John Swint - spoke on the need to increase the number of days and hours of operation for all Recreation Department swimming pools. He also asked for a policy to be put in place for anyone who carries any type lethal weapon to be provided with sensitivity training and a psychological test at least annually. He further stated the same training and psychological test be required for any citizen in Macon-Bibb County who possesses lethal weapons as a precondition to obtaining or renewing weapon permits.

Isaac Lightfoot – spoke on Freedom Park Gym becoming solely a boxing facility and the lack of swimming, basketball and other recreational activities at the park. He stated improved
recreational activities for the youth of the area would help law enforcement with reductions in crime.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND DEPARTMENTS

Operations and Finance Committee

Committee Chairman Gary Bechtel reported that the Operations and Finance Committee met on Tuesday, June 10, 2014. The Committee discussed and recommended approval of the following items:

- The retirements of Mr. Jonathan Childers of Public Works and Ms. Jacqueline Smith of Superior Court. The Commission would like to thank them for their service.

- The sell of property at 484 Mulberry Street to the Macon-Bibb County School District. This building was on a bond issue and once the bond was paid the building became eligible to be sold to the Board of Education. The Committee authorized the Mayor to sell the property for $10,000.

- The Lease of land located within the Middle Georgia Regional Airport to the current lessee Mr. Charles Stewart for five years. The Committee authorized the Mayor to execute an agreement between Macon-Bibb County and Mr. Stewart for the lease of 179.61 acres of Clear Zone land located within the Middle Georgia Regional Airport to be used as agriculture land on which to farm wheat and soybeans.

- The supplemental budget request of the Coroner's Office for $3,000 from General Funds for contractual services.

- The Ordinance to adopt a budget and appropriate sums for the operation of the Macon-Bibb County Government for Fiscal Year 2015.

- The Millage Rate should be ready to be set in the next 60 days once Mr. Tommy Tedders, Tax Commissioner, has the final Tax Digest, which will be July or early August.

Economic and Community Development Committee

Committee Chairman Larry Schlesinger reported that the Economic and Community Development Committee met on Tuesday, June 10, 2014. The Committee discussed and recommended approval of the following items:

- Bragg Jam, Inc., a non-profit organization, was authorized to hold its 2014 music festival in downtown Macon on Saturday, July 26, 2014 to permit festival-goers to carry and consume alcoholic beverages in and about the designated streets of downtown Macon, under specified conditions, to require Bragg Jam, Inc. to provide for and/or reimburse the city for all expenses incurred for security and clean-up.
• The Macon-Bibb County Five-Year Short Term Work Program was approved to be submitted to the Middle Georgia Regional Commission for compliance review.

Facilities and Engineering Committee

Committee Chairman Al Tillman reported the Facilities and Engineering Committee met on Tuesday, June 10, 2014 and approved the following:

• The 2013 Landfill Gas Purchase Agreement between the City of Macon and Cherokee Brick and Tile Company, Inc.

• The Committee authorized the Mayor to execute a letter of agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the installation of a Roundabout at the intersection of State Route 22 (also known as Eisenhower Parkway) and Fulton Mill Road.

• Approved the request from the Chamber for 100 passes for military families to have access to Lake Tobesokee and encouraged the Chamber to also purchase an additional 100 tickets. The tickets will be given to the Family Support Center at Robins for distribution.

Public Safety Committee

Committee Chairman Scotty Shepherd reported the Public Safety Committee met on June 10, 2014 and discussed and approved the following:

• Approved the Ordinance amending Chapter 18 Personnel of the Macon-Bibb County Code of Ordinances to establish the Fire Civil Service System.

• Approved the Resolution in opposition to Georgia House Bill 60 and a declaration of the Macon-Bibb County Commission to work with state legislators to address concerns associated with Georgia House Bill 60. A letter expressing the Commissioners’ concerns will be sent to the Governor, Attorney General and the local Legislative Delegation.

CONSENT AGENDA

A. New Alcoholic Beverage License for M & H Food Mart located at 5220 Jeffersonville Road

ACTION:

• On motion of Commissioner Larry Schlesinger, seconded by Commissioner Scotty Shepherd, and carried unanimously, the Alcohol Beverage License for M & H Food Mart approved as presented.

• Unanimous approval by Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Gary Bechtel, Larry
OLD BUSINESS

A. Resolution to accept Grant Award to the Mental Health Court in the amount of $105,293.00 for FY '15

- **Clerk read by caption:** A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission authorizing the acceptance of a State of Georgia Accountability Courts Funding Grant in the amount of $105,293.00 from the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council that has been awarded to the Macon Judicial Circuit Mental Health Court; and for other purposes.

**ACTION:**

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

B. Resolution to accept Grant Award to the Adult Drug Court in the amount of $106,920.00 for FY '15

- **Clerk read by caption:** A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission authorizing the acceptance of a State of Georgia Accountability Courts Funding Grant in the amount of $106,920.00 from the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council that has been awarded to the Macon Judicial Circuit Adult Drug Court; and for other purposes.

**ACTION:**

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

C. Resolution to accept Grant Award to the Juvenile Mental Health Court in the amount of $14,849.00 for FY '15

- **Clerk read by caption:** A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission authorizing the acceptance of a State of Georgia Accountability Courts Funding Grant in the amount of $14,849.00 from the Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council that has been awarded to the Macon Judicial Circuit Juvenile Mental Health Court; and for other purposes.

**ACTION:**

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

D. Resolution approving and ratifying the September 2013 Landfill Gas Purchase Agreement between the City of Macon and Cherokee Brick and Tile Company

- Clerk read by caption: A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission approving and ratifying the September 2013 Landfill Gas Purchase Agreement between the City of Macon and Cherokee Brick & Tile Company, Inc.; and for other purposes.

ACTION:


E. Resolution authorizing the letter of agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation for installation of a Roundabout at the intersection of Eisenhower Parkway and Fulton Mill Road

- Clerk read by caption: A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission authorizing the Mayor to execute a Letter of Agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation for the installation of a Roundabout at the intersection of State Route 22 (also known locally as “Eisenhower Parkway”) and Fulton Mill Road in substantially the same form as attached hereto as Exhibit “A”; and for other purposes.

ACTION:


F. Ratification of request from the Chamber of Commerce for 100 passes to Lake Tobesokee for families of Military Troops

ACTION:


G. Resolution to sell property located at 484 Mulberry Street

- Clerk read by caption: A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission authorizing the Mayor to sell 484 Mulberry Street (the Wachovia Building) to
the Macon-Bibb County School District for ($10); authorizing the Mayor to execute a Quit Claim Deed and any other necessary documents to effect the sale of said property; and for other purposes.

Discussion: Commissioner Lucas requested an explanation be given so citizens observing would know they were not actually selling the building for ten dollars. Commissioner Bechtel stated the City was the authorizing authority when the bond was issued for the purchase of the building. The City leased the building to the Macon-Bibb County School District and after the bond indebtedness was paid off, the City agreed to quit claim the building to the school district for ten dollars.

ACTION:


H. Ratification of retirements for Jonathan Childers of Public Works (17 years, 9 months) and Jacqueline Smith of Superior Court (14 years, 4 months)

ACTION:


I. Resolution authorizing an agreement with Charles Stewart for the lease of 179.61 acres of Clear Zone land located within the Middle Georgia Regional Airport

- Clerk read by caption: A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement between Macon-Bibb County and Charles Stewart for the lease of 179.61 acres of Clear Zone land located within the Middle Georgia Regional Airport to be used as agriculture land on which to farm wheat and soybeans, in substantially the same form as attached hereto as Exhibit “A”; and for other purposes.

ACTION:


J. Ratification of Supplemental Budget request from General Fund in the amount of $3,000 for Contractual Services in the Coroner’s budget

- Clerk read by caption: An Ordinance of the Commission of Macon-Bibb County, Georgia to appropriate $3,000 from General Fund Balance to Coroner
for Contractual Services Operating Budget.

ACTION:


K. Resolution authorizing Bragg Jam to hold its 2014 Music Festival in Downtown Macon on July 26, 2014

- Clerk read by caption: A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission authorizing Bragg Jam, Inc., a nonprofit organization, to hold its 2014 Music Festival in Downtown Macon, Georgia, on Saturday, July 26, 2014; to permit festival-goers to carry and consume alcoholic beverages in and about the designated streets of Downtown Macon, under specified conditions; to require Bragg Jam, Inc. to provide for and/or reimburse the City for all expenses incurred for security and clean-up; and for other purposes.

ACTION:


L. Resolution to submit the Five-Year Short Term Work Program to the Middle Georgia Regional Commission

- Clerk read by caption: A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Board of Commissioners to submit the Macon-Bibb County Five-Year Short Term Work Program to the Middle Georgia Regional Commission for compliance review; and for other purposes.

ACTION:


M. Ordinance amending Chapter 18 Personnel to establish the Fire Civil Service System

- Clerk read by caption: An Ordinance of the Macon-Bibb County Commission amending Chapter 18 Personnel of the Macon-Bibb County Code of Ordinances to establish the Fire Civil Service System; to provide penalties; to provide for repeal of conflicting Ordinances; to provide an adoption and effective date; and to provide for other lawful purposes.
ACTION:


N. Resolution opposing Georgia House Bill 60 a/k/a The Safe Carry Protection Act of 2014

- Clerk read by caption: A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission in opposition to Georgia House Bill 60 (also known as the “Safe Carry Protection Act of 2014”) and a declaration of the Macon-Bibb County Commission to work with State Legislators to address concerns associated with Georgia House Bill 60; and for other purposes.

Discussion: Commissioner Tillman, the sponsor of the Resolution, stated he was not opposed to the gun laws in place, but felt it should be known the Commission was opposed to guns being allowed into government facilities effective July 1, 2014. He stated revenues could possibly be lost as well as citizens needed to feel safe when attending events at venues such as the City Auditorium and Centreplex. He wants the Governor and our Legislative Delegation to be aware of the Commission’s concerns and to review the Bill again and make changes as needed. He further stated a Youth Gun and Outreach Forum to discuss this new law will be held on June 26 and will be attended by State Representative Nikki Randall and local agencies.

Commissioner Lucas stated with the approval of the hockey agreement, and trying to encourage families to take part in the sports activities being sponsored, this law could have an adverse affect.

ACTION:


O. Ordinance to adopt a budget and appropriate sums for the operation of the Macon-Bibb County Government for FY ‘15

- Clerk read by caption: An Ordinance of the Macon-Bibb County Commission to adopt a budget and appropriate sums for the operation of the Macon-Bibb County Government for Fiscal Year 2015; to provide for repeal of conflicting Ordinances; and to provide for other lawful purposes.

ACTION:

- Commissioner Lucas motioned to suspend the Rules and refer the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Ordinance back to the Committee of the Whole with a meeting to be held as soon as possible for reconsideration. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watkins.
- Commissioner DeFore requested a Roll Call Vote.
- Commissioners Bert Bivins, III, Elaine Lucas, Mallory Jones, III, Virgil Watkins, Jr., and Al Tillman voted Yes.
- Commissioners Gary Bechtel, Larry Schlesinger, Ed DeFore, and Scotty Shepherd voted No.
- The motion was carried by a 5-4 vote.

P. Resolution authorizing a rental agreement for the Macon Coliseum between Noble Interstate Management and Macon Hockey, LLC

- Clerk read by caption: A Resolution of the Macon-Bibb County Commission authorizing the Mayor to consent and agree to a rental agreement for the Macon Coliseum between Noble-Interstate Management Group, LLC, as agent for Macon-Bibb County

ACTION:


NEW BUSINESS

A. Resolution authorizing an agreement with the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority to transfer a parcel of property at 506 Hawthorne Street

Referred To: Operations and Finance Committee

B. Resolution authorizing acceptance of an Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan

Referred To: Facilities and Engineering Committee

C. Resolution authorizing acceptance of a limited English Proficiency Compliance Plan

Referred To: Economic and Community Development Committee

D. Resolution appointing Commissioner Elaine Lucas to the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority

Referred To: Economic and Community Development Committee
E. Resolution appointing Walt Miller to the Industrial Authority

Referred To: Economic and Community Development Committee

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Anthony Harris – commended Sheriff David Davis on his firing of Officer Clayton Sutton.

Sheila Cook – spoke on the need for neighborhood improvements in the Unionville area. She cited abandoned homes where oftentimes illegal activities take place, overgrown lots, litter, and clogged sewer drains. She urged community clean-up for this area resulting in area residents taking pride in their community.

Donald Richardson, Jr. - asked for assistance in finding resources to help him with network sports marketing and to have his father’s basketball plays registered and trademarked.

Sarah Hunt – stated the Commissioner for the District encompassing Wood Street was requested to view the abandon properties and overgrown lots in the this area. She also stated Overcoming Church of God and Beulah Baptist Church were in the process of major beautification and expansion projects and the general condition of the area was deplorable. She felt Code Enforcement could do a better job in policing this area. Ms. Hunt stated a request was made to rename Third Street to Broadway in honor of Bishop John L. Cotton in April and she had not heard from this request. She cited the closed drains near Overcoming Church of God that needed to be re-opened to allow storm waters to go into the drainage system to eliminate the destruction of the Church’s property.

Patricia Faye Brown – spoke on crime and respecting the rights of others.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, and on motion duly made, seconded, and carried unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M.


Sheila Thurmond, CCC
Clerk of Commission