

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF McDOWELL
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION – MAY 29, 2008**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioner met in Special Session at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 29, 2008 in the County Manager's Conference Room. The purpose of the meeting was to review budget requests.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Andrew K. Webb, Chairman; David N. Walker, Vice-Chairman; Dean Buff, Michael Lavender and Barry McPeters.

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Thomas Swofford, Chief Ashford North Cove Fire Department; Mark Hall, Rick Acrivos, Debbie Acrivos, Joe Williams and Dru Heldman.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Webb called the meeting to order and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to hear budget requests from agencies and citizens requesting to meet with the Board. There were two agencies scheduled for this meeting including the Ashford North Cove Fire Department and representatives from Davidson's Fort.

ASHFORD-NORTH COVE FIRE DEPARTMENT REQUEST

Chairman Webb recognized Thomas Swofford, the Fire Chief of the North Cove Fire Department. Thomas reviewed the significant needs facing the department including the replacement of two fire vehicles, significant increases in operating expenses and renovations to the building. The Chief explained that the fire tax in the ANC Fire District was the lowest of any district in McDowell County at two cents.

The Board of Directors for the Fire Department was requesting the rate to be increased to four cents. The Commissioners asked several questions specifically related to the needed items and the level of support for the requested increase in the department and the community. The Fire Chief stated that the support was high.

Chairman Webb explained that the Commissioners do not usually take action in the budget sessions regarding the request but that the Board seemed supportive and understanding of the need and he felt would respond favorably.

DAVIDISON'S FORT REQUEST

Representatives from Davidson's Fort gave a detailed overview of the progress and intentions concerning the completion of the replica of Davidson's Fort. The representatives reviewed the potential impact for the county and the town in the area of attracting tourists.

Rick Acrivos reviewed the business plan prepared by the group and stated the immediate need was to service the debt on a loan of \$120,000 being sought by the non-profit group. The debt payment would total slightly over \$12,000 a year and certain members were personally guaranteeing the loan with their own assets. The Board of Commissioner members expressed support for the project and stated that a joint effort by the County, the Town and the TDA would likely cover the debt payment for this next fiscal year. Mark Hall stated that if this could be accomplished the group would hopefully be successful in writing grants and fundraising sufficient funds to sustain the project.

The members present expressed strong appreciation to the Commissioners for their support and the hope that funding would be received.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, upon motion by Michael Lavender and seconded by David Walker, the Board voted to adjourn to another budget meeting to be held at the same location beginning at 11:15 on Friday, May 30, 2008.

ANDREW K. WEBB CHAIRMAN

CHARLES R. ABERNATHY
COUNTY MANAGER