

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

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in special session at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, September 29, 2008, at the County Administration Building, the usual meeting location. The Board recessed and resumed the meeting at the Corpening YMCA.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Alison Morgan, Finance Officer; Ashley R. Wooten, Assistant to the County Manager; Dr. Bryan Wilson, President McDowell Technical Community College. Those present at the Corpening YMCA included Ed Rankin, Ed Hannon, Grayson England, John Karas, Hill Evans, Paul Vess, Ray Buchanan, Jed Rankin, Mark Goodson, David Wooten, Dudley Greene, Dwayne Stutzman, Greg Lambert, Mark Burton, Kathy Atkins, Bill Hendley, Sue Glovier, Nancy Clark, Everette Clark, Bob Boyette, Frank Dean, Jewel McNeal, Wayland Preybor, Mary Smith, Gloria Johnson, and Claire McCall.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Webb called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

**PUBLIC HEARING – FINANCING IMPROVEMENTS TO McDOWELL TECH  
BALDWIN AVENUE FACILITY**

At 5:06 PM, Chairman Webb declared the Board to be in Public Hearing to discuss the financing of improvements to Ford Miller facility on Baldwin Avenue. Mr. Webb asked Mr. Abernathy to give an overview of the project. Mr. Abernathy reviewed the budgeted costs for capital improvements and ongoing expenses budgeted by McDowell County as well as partner agencies.

The amount proposed for financing is \$1,055,915. This figure includes a contingency as well as associated fees including payment to the architect. Mr. Abernathy noted that the yearly costs to operate the facility as well as the debt service would be

higher than anticipated. The deficit stands at \$24,715 based on the current low bid and other anticipated costs such as utilities and custodial services.

Mr. Abernathy noted that several issues must be resolved before the project can move forward. The first item of note is that the Local Government Commission (LGC) is now requiring that counties have a completed audit for the most recent fiscal year before they will approve financing. Based on that timeline, the earliest meeting that the proposal could go before the LGC is December 2. Due to that extended timeframe, the county required that banking bids be good for 90 days. Out of the three bids received, only RBC Bank would guarantee a rate for that length of time. Mrs. Morgan noted that RBC would provide the 90 day rate in exchange for a 15 year loan term. The banking bids were:

RBC Bank – 4.19% 15 year term (good for 90 days)

BB&T – 3.93% (good for 45 days and could change after that)

Fifth Third – 3.593% (would not lock in rate; would change on closing date)

Mrs. Morgan and Dr. Wilson concurred with the information presented by Mr. Abernathy.

At this point, Chairman Webb asked for any public comments. There being none, he asked commissioners if they had questions. Mr. Buff asked why the Fifth Third quote was not recommended even though it was the lowest. Mrs. Morgan explained that they would not guarantee their rate past the day the quote was given. She said it could be higher or lower on the date of closing.

Chairman Webb noted that with the volatility in the financial markets, it is understandable that banks are reluctant to provide financing. Mr. Buff asked why the low bid was so much higher the original verbal estimates of less than \$500,000. Dr. Wilson explained some of the reasons for the discrepancy in that original figure and the reality of the bids. Mr. Abernathy reminded the Board that it was the county's responsibility to finance these improvements, carry the insurance as well as pay for the upkeep.

Vice Chairman Walker asked if there were any efforts to locate grant funds to go towards the project. Dr. Wilson indicated that a grant writer did apply to at least 10 to 15 grants for funds to offset the renovation cost. Many of the grant agencies stated that they would not pay for capital costs or they would only pay for projects with guaranteed job creation results. He did note that the Harold Smith Foundation is providing substantial funds and the Wachovia Foundation will provide some funding.

A general discussion of alternatives to using a contractor followed. Dr. Wilson indicated that because of the size and scope of the project, the state required that the project be bid. Mr. Walker asked if the partners in the project would be willing to wait a few more months for occupancy. Mr. Lavender stated that JobLink is in danger of losing

its charter if it does not find a permanent home and ESC is currently on a month to month lease. He said that both agencies were still committed to the project, however.

Mr. McPeters motioned to go out of public hearing with a second by Mr. Walker. The vote was unanimous.

As recommend by the County Manager, Mr. Lavender motioned to place the discussion of the facility improvements (including the certified bid tabulation) on the October agenda and to place the financing bids on the November agenda. Mr. Buff seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

### **PUBLIC HEARING – SCATTERED SITE HOUSING PROJECT**

Mr. Webb declared the Board to be in Public Hearing to discuss the Scattered Site Housing Project. He asked the County Manager to provide information on the grant.

Mr. Abernathy stated that the county was selected to “fill in” for another county and move forward with the Scattered Site Housing CDBG project. The grant amount is for \$400,000 and will go towards the rehabilitation of dilapidated homes owned by persons with low to moderate incomes. He stated that this was the first of two public hearings and that persons interested in applying for the program should contact county staff.

Mr. Webb asked if there were any comments from public. There being none, he asked commissioners for questions. Mr. Buff asked how persons would be selected for the project. Mr. Wooten noted that a meeting with the Town of Old Fort and the City of Marion was scheduled for October 6 to select homes for the project.

With no further comments, Mr. McPeters motioned to go out of public hearing with second by Mr. Walker. The vote was unanimous.

### **RECESS TO CORPENING YMCA FOR TRAIL DISCUSSION**

The County Manager reminded the Board that the meeting would be recessed to the Corpening YMCA to discuss trail options for property in the Spaulding Road area. The joint meeting would also include the McDowell Hospital Board of Trustees as well as the Corpening Center Board.

Mr. Walker motioned to recess to the Corpening YMCA for the trail discussion with a second by Mr. McPeters. The vote to recess was unanimous.

### **TRAIL DISCUSSION WITH YMCA AND MCDOWELL HOSPITAL**

Chairman Webb called the meeting back into session following the Special Meeting held at the County Administration Building. The Board of Commissioners was

joined by the YMCA Corpening Center Board and members of the McDowell Hospital Board. There were also members of the public that joined the meeting.

Chairman Webb welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that the purpose was to receive information on a possible joint project with the Corpening YMCA, the McDowell Hospital and the Board of Commissioners. Chairman Webb recognized the county manager and he asked everyone present to introduce themselves.

The county manager then reviewed the issue at hand. A trail project had been authorized by the three Board's involved in the project to construct approximately 2.7 miles of trails around the YMCA and Senior Center and the County property to include the Health Department, the Mental Health Department, Law Enforcement Center, the Armory and the Hospital. A master plan was produced by the consulting firm of Withers and Ravenel represented by Greg Lambert. The project was designed to accommodate three sets of trails, with ten foot pavement that would be handicapped accessible. The three trails were estimated to cost a total of 1.1 million. The county manager explained that this was presented by the consultant as a "worst case scenario" and that all three loops would not have to be constructed. The intent was to apply for a \$500,000 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) State grant and other grants to off-set the cost. The local cost was proposed to be shared equally. Therefore, the largest number resulting from this project would be \$200,000 for each of the three entities.

Judge Bob Hunter was recognized next. Mr. Hunter provided a historical overview of the purchase of the property by the county, the history of the Corpening YMCA, and the interest of many individuals to provide these trails. The YMCA Trustees and the YMCA Center Board led the initiative with the cooperation of the county by appointing the trails committee and this committee involved all of the property owners, the City of Marion and the Trails Association. The Greenway Trails Master Plan was produced with the cost shared by the three entities. Mr. Hunter reviewed the remaining need to survey the proposed route, contract with Dwayne Stutzman for the necessary grant writing and legal work needed. He also reviewed a variety of issues including the requirement that the easements would be in the name of the county, the grant signed by the county and maintenance provisions primarily by the county.

Judge Hunter introduced Greg Lambert and the consultant reviewed the proposed layout of the trail system. Mr. Lambert reviewed the specifications of the system, the process undertaken by the trail committee, the number private easements to obtain and an overview of the cost.

Next, various members of the public spoke about the proposed trail. All of the comments were positive and expressed appreciation for the undertaking and for the work having been completed.

After hearing these comments, Chairman Webb expressed his appreciation for the work completed and asked if the Board was ready to make a motion regarding the report. Commissioner Lavender moved that the county agree to the recommendations made and

that a Part F grant be submitted to the State in February, 2009 and that the survey and grant writing contract be approved with the cost shared by the three participating entities. It was understood that the motion to continue was contingent on the successful award of the grant and the availability of funds. The motion was seconded by David Walker and the vote passed unanimously.

Chairman Webb thanked everyone for attending and a motion was made by Commissioner Buff and seconded by Commissioner McPeters to adjourn the meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner Lavender and second by Commissioner Buff, the meeting was adjourned.

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ANDREW K. WEBB, CHAIRMAN

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ASHLEY R. WOOTEN  
DEPUTY CLERK TO THE BOARD