

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF McDOWELL  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
SPECIAL SESSION – MAY 19, 2008**

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in special session at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 2008, in the Commissioners' Board Room, the usual meeting location.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Alison Morgan, Finance Officer; Ashley R. Wooten, Assistant to the County Manager; Keith Renfro, Tax Assessor; William Kehler, EMS Director; Terry Young, Emergency Management Director; Michael Conley, Reporter for the McDowell News.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Webb called the meeting to order and stated the Board's appreciation to county staff for the work that went into the budget recommendation. Chairman Webb recognized the county manager for the overview that would be provided for the 2008-09 budget year.

**PRESENTATION OF BUDGET**

The county manager began his overview of the budget recommendation by briefly reviewing the information provided to the Board in the form of three packets, overviewing the county organization, the services provided by county departments and the budget calendar.

The county manager next reviewed the accomplishments that had occurred in the 2007-08 fiscal year. These accomplishments included securing funding for water line expansions, economic development projects, implementing GIS, initiating construction of the nutrition center, holding a wellness fair, improving the government channel and the website, various construction and renovation projects, improving courthouse security, supporting various trail initiatives and many other items.

The budget recommendation was in the amount of \$37,063,738 representing a \$780,727 (2.15%) increase. The budget recommendation was largely affected by the reduction in Medicaid and the corresponding decrease in the Article 44 Sales Tax. The county manager explained that the increase was the smallest in six years and represented a cautious approach to county spending due to the economy.

The tax rate was recommended to remain at 0.5500 cents. The county manager reviewed information comparing McDowell County to similar size counties in North Carolina. The information demonstrated that McDowell County had fewer employees, a smaller budget and lower taxes than most similar size counties. The county manager reviewed various revenue changes, the tax base, fund balance and major expenditure changes. In particular, he noted the impact of a state mandated \$2.00 per ton tipping fee that counties would have to collect and the effect of fuel increases to the county budget.

Various spending increases were reviewed with the Board including a recommended 4% increase to the public school system, a 10% increase to the Community College, and a five percent salary adjustment for county employees. There was a significant impact on fuel costs, insurance, workmen's compensation and the purchase of equipment including an ambulance, three sheriff's cars and a container truck. There were new positions recommended in the EMS department and part-time funds for the animal shelter, emergency communications and planning.

To conclude, the manager reviewed several unresolved items in the budget including the construction of Ashworth Road, funds needed for the Nebo Base Station and the possibility that sufficient funding was not in place for the Forest Service move.

Chairman Webb stated his appreciation to staff and asked the Board of Commissioners to review their schedules to determine a date for the next budget meeting. Commissioner Lavender suggested an all day meeting. Commissioner Walker stated he could not dedicate an entire day. Chairman Webb stated the Board could communicate and decide on a date.

### **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