

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF McDOWELL
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SECONDARY ROADS PUBLIC HEARING AND
REGULAR SESSION – APRIL 8, 2013**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, April 8, 2013, with the Department of Transportation for a public hearing on Secondary Roads Improvements and Paving Priorities. At the conclusion of the public hearing and a brief recess, the Board of Commissioners began its regular session at 4:00 p.m. The meetings were held in the Commissioners Board Room, the usual meeting location.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David N. Walker, Chairman; Barry E. McPeters, Vice-Chairman; Michael K. Lavender; Randy Hollifield; and Joe Kaylor

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Carrie Padgett, Clerk to the Board; Ashley Wooten, Assistant to the County Manager (Filming); officials with the Department of Transportation including Ed Greene, Division 13 Maintenance Engineer of the Asheville Office; Doug McNeal, District Engineer; Wade Tate, County Maintenance Engineer; Scott Killough, Assistant District Engineer; Ted Young, Technician for District Office; and Robert Denny, Maintenance Supervisor for McDowell County; and reporter Mike Conley, for THE McDOWELL NEWS.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman David Walker called the meeting to order and immediately called Mr. Ed Greene forward for his presentation.

SECONDARY ROADS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM 2013-2014

Mr. Greene thanked the Board of Commissioners for the opportunity of meeting with them. He then introduced his staff and others who were present.

Mr. Greene advised the public hearing was being held in accordance with General Statute 136-44.8, and they were presenting the proposed expenditures of their estimated Secondary Road Construction Funds for the period July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014. He pointed funds had been reduced from the prior year's funding as the budget was dwindling down; however, the good news is that most of the unpaved roads have been

paved and they are moving toward making improvements to some of the secondary paved roads.

He asked District Engineer Doug McNeal to present the program, after which they would answer questions from the Commissioners or the public.

Mr. McNeal explained the Secondary Road Improvement Program had changed a lot over the years, once being a Secondary Road Construction Program in which secondary roads were paved. Over the last thirty plus years they have systematically gone through all the roads in McDowell County for which they could get right of way to upgrade and pave to a two-lane stretch. After completing those, they have gone back through and paved everything with right of way going at least 1,000 feet to tie into pavement. This past year's project was to widen and strengthen Greenlee Road (SR 1246) from Columbia Carolina Road to Lytle Mountain Road. That project is currently under contract and should be constructed this summer. This year they propose to carry on that project starting at Lytle Mountain (SR 1161) and going out to Parker-Padgett Road (SR 1240), an estimated cost of \$420,000.00. Funds reserved for surveying, right of way acquisitions, road additions, contingencies, overdrafts, and paving entrances to certified fire departments, rescue squads, etc. in the amount of \$20,000 for a total FY 2014 Anticipated Funding of \$440,000.00.

Regarding the McDowell County Backup Program, they are proposing the following paved road improvements:

- SR 1001 Sugar Hill Road – Intersection Improvement Project at SR 1163 Dink Cannon Road (\$80,000.00)
- SR 1776 Pierce Road – Intersection Improvement Project at SR 1777 Landis Lane (\$50,000.00)
- SR 1591 Hankins Road – Curve Improvement Project located approximately 0.30 mile east of SR 1592 River View Drive (\$150,000.00)
- SR 1536 Memorial Pak Road – Curve Improvement Project located east of the intersection of SR 1538 Upton's Landing Road (\$150,000.00)

Various driveway improvements are also proposed for certified Fire Departments, Rescue Squads, EMS Stations and School Bus Driveway Repair and Reconstruction in the amount of \$200,000.00.

Commissioner Hollifield asked whether bridge replacement is covered under the proposed funding. Mr. Greene advised bridge replacement is covered under a statewide program known as the Bridge Management System and they are currently evaluating all the sub-standard bridges, approximately 65 to 70, to get them in a schedule for replacement.

The County Manager asked if the dollar amount for funding was reduced because of the limited number of roads the County has where right of way has been granted, or was there another reason. Mr. McNeal advised the law has been changing over the years,

and the current allocation is based on total funds available to the State for secondary construction and is allocated per secondary roads that we have. Now that has changed and all allocations are based on the total unpaved and paved secondary roads in a county.

Chairman Walker said the County has been working on trail expansions and off of Spaulding Road there is a trail that crosses that road twice. He asked what is the State's procedure regarding a flashing light or something to indicate to traffic that pedestrians are crossing that road as far as safety for the people using that trail. He pointed out the County has erected signs along the trail but what is the possibility of the State's installing a flashing light to warn motor vehicle traffic to slow down because of people crossing the road. He noted the curve and the hill involved with this location. Mr. McNeal pointed out they used to see installation of flashers at single light intersections but they have gotten away from these over the years because research has shown that they are effective for about 60 days until people get used to them and they just become another thing one sees along the road. However, he said he would have their traffic folks take a look at this situation.

In reference to Spaulding Road, Commissioner Hollifield asked whether DOT installs speed bumps. Mr. McNeal advised they are not authorized by legislature to install speed bumps, with exception to residential subdivisions if there is a homeowner's association that is willing to take the liability associated with the speed bumps. The thought behind this is that if an individual is already going too fast coming into where the crossing is and hits a speed bump before actually seeing someone crossing it might do more harm than good. Therefore, as a policy, they do not install them on most of the secondary roads except in very limited circumstances in residential subdivisions.

To follow up with the Spaulding Road being taken over by the City, which does have authority to do speed bumps, Mr. Abernathy asked if they had expressed any interest in taking over this particular road. Mr. McNeal said they had not heard from the City of Marion requesting to take over any additional roads after the last series they did over in the Eastfield Community.

Chairman Walker asked if there was any one from the public who wished to speak at this time. There were none who wished to speak.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion to go out of public hearing. Commissioner Hollifield seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

On behalf of the Board and County residents, Chairman Walker said they appreciate how responsive the State is to the needs of the community.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kaylor, to accept the recommendation on the Secondary Roads Improvement Program for FY 2013-2014, and to approve the related resolution. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

RECESS

Chairman Walker declared a brief recess at this time prior to starting the regular session.

REGULAR SESSION

After the brief recess, Chairman Walker called the regular meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The invocation was given by Commissioner Walker, followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Commissioner Lavender.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

With no changes made to the agenda, upon motion by Commissioner Kaylor and a second by Commissioner Lavender, the agenda was unanimously approved as prepared.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the February 11, 2013 and March 11, 2013 regular sessions were presented for approval. Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kaylor to approve minutes of the February 11, 2013 regular session as presented. By unanimous approval, the minutes were approved.

Minutes of the March 11, 2013 meeting were tabled until the next meeting.

FINANCE MATTERS AND AMENDMENTS

The budget amendments were reviewed by staff as follows:

PARTF2 – Closes out the trail construction project at the YMCA and Senior Center. The project requires the amendment because of the decision to retain 10' width of the trail and the soil issue on the steep section near the Senior Center. A contribution from the Hospital was previously received and amended. This recognizes a contribution from Corpening as part of the match. The amendment is for \$34,375 in county funding and does include \$5,000 for benches, waste cans, signs, and complete Ms. Shaver's project (cell phone arboretum tour).

GF 44 – Recognizes the transfer from the General Fund necessary to accomplish the previous amendment.

GF 45 – Receives additional fees and donations.

GF 46 – Amendment is necessary due to the increase in heating fuel costs for the

Library, Garage, and Facility Maintenance. There is an overrun on each of the areas listed, for a combined total of \$27,200.

GF 47 – Appropriates funds from the Sheriff’s Department reserve fund. The fund balance listed is the restricted fund balance from the previous fiscal year at June 30. The equipment is to continue placing computers in vehicles. The \$15,448 number on the amendment is to undo a previous amendment where the Sheriff changed his mind and wants funds to come from asset forfeiture instead of inmate housing.

GF 48 – Transfers funds from the Water and Sewer line item so that payment can be made to the engineer for the Environmental Study that is being completed. Funds are also matched against a State and Tribal Assistance (STAG) grant on a 55/45 basis.

GF 49 – Transfers under \$3,000.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hollifield, to approve the budget amendments as presented. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Mr. Abernathy then advised there was one adjustment associated with the Nebo Water System (posting error in the amount of \$30.00 for Dollar General) and nine EMS write-off accounts totaling \$2,732.37, considered non-collectible, for the Board’s approval.

A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Kaylor made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hollifield, to approve the Nebo Water System adjustment and the nine EMS write-off accounts. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

SALE OF PROPERTY

The County Manager pointed out this item had been on agenda three times and involves a piece property which the County purchased in the 1980’s and deeded to the Town of Old Fort for a particular use. The reversion clause in the deed kicked in because the Town never used the property for that purpose and the property again became property of the County. The Commissioners agreed to sell the property and indicated the minimal price they wanted to receive was \$6,000. Mr. Abernathy said he believed this was the amount the County had originally paid for the property and that the property would serve no purpose to the County. Mr. Frank Brown is an adjoining property owner, has an interest in the property, and is the individual who submitted the \$6,000 offer. He advised the Board was not obligated at this point to sell the property; however, if the Board agreed to the sale, he would ask that a resolution be approved authorizing staff and

the County Attorney to proceed with the sale to Mr. Brown for \$6,000. Mr. Brown would be responsible for all costs associated with the sale.

A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lavender, to sell the Old Fort property to Mr. Frank Brown for \$6,000, and to approve the resolution along with the attached fees. By unanimous approval, the motion carried and the resolution was adopted as follows:

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF COUNTY OWNED PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the County of McDowell desires to sell property located in Old Fort on Orchard Street; and

WHEREAS, property consists of 0.93 acres with a current tax value of \$11,200.00; and

WHEREAS, the buyer of property will be responsible for all costs associated with the sale, including legal and advertising; and

WHEREAS, the County of McDowell desires to sell the property for the amount of \$6,000.00.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of McDowell County that

The County of McDowell desires to sell property located in Old Fort on Orchard Street to Frank Brown in the amount of \$6,000.00.

This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

ADOPTED this the 8th day of April, 2013.

AMBULANCE BIDS AND RECOGNITION

Chairman Walker stated he understood the ambulance bids were not ready for presentation at this time but he asked EMS Director William Kehler to come forward with other information he had to share. Mr. Kehler advised the ambulance bids would be presented at the May meeting.

Mr. Kehler then presented a mileage summary of four front line ambulance units, showing mileage ranging from 207,532 on a 2008 F450 unit to 26,134 on a 2012 Ford F450, and four reserve units with a mileage range from 202,950 on a 2004 E450 unit to 143,478 on a 2009 Ford F450. Mr. Kehler said for many years they had purchased one ambulance unit each fiscal year and for the past 3-4 years had been requesting the bids

early with delivery being after July 1 to keep that rotation going. He pointed out each ambulance will put an average of 40-45,000 miles on it each year and the mileage tends to increase each year as requirements to transport to special care centers such as Mission has increased.

Discussion followed. The County Manager advised next month they would have ambulance bids as well as financing bids for the Board's consideration.

Next, Mr. Kehler recognized Lt. Steve Wilkerson who will be leaving full time status with McDowell EMS on May 9, 2013 after nearly 7 years of exceptional service to McDowell County citizens. He said Lt. Wilkerson has served tremendously well in leadership and with outstanding patient care, and these skills will be greatly missed. Lt. Wilkerson has been accepted into the Physician Assistant program at Lincoln Memorial University Debusk College of Osteopathic Medicine. He will remain as a reserve employee while he completes the PA program.

Lt. Wilkerson thanked the Board for the opportunity to learn practical medicine here and use the citizens of McDowell County to display that. He said he had worked with a great group of men and women, and could not ask for a better foundation for medical care and this experience had prepared him greatly for what he is getting ready to transition into. He thanked everyone for the opportunity.

Chairman Walker said he appreciated Lt. Wilkerson's service, noting that one of the highlights to him is the therapeutic hypothermia. He commended Lt. Wilkerson for his involvement in the development of that, along with training, in McDowell County. He praised McDowell's EMS for being a leader in the State and the Nation in that regard. The Chairman said we hate to lose good people, but he understood that Lt. Wilkerson will be expanding his skills and hopefully will return to McDowell County at a future date to continue providing more excellent service.

Further, Mr. Kehler pointed out Lt. Wilkerson was the individual behind the fitness program implemented with the EMS employees which has been a tremendous success and as a result they will continue working toward three years without a lost time accident.

RADIO REPEATER DISCUSSION

Emergency Management/911 Communications Director Terry Young advised there had been discussion a couple of times in reference to the Dobson Knob site and this project had been going on there since 2007. It was actually turned on as a Viper Tower with the Highway Patrol in August 7, 2012. This is a 170 foot tower in the north end of the County. What they are proposing to do is put the fire repeater up there and this would require an expenditure of \$6,000. They have \$4,000 available in the budget and will need \$2,000 more for the project.

In discussion, Mr. Young said the vendor thinks the project will take three weeks or less to complete. He advised the repeater can affect parts of Crooked Creek District, Old Fort Mountain, the NC 80 area of Pleasant Gardens, and could affect the whole County.

Mr. Abernathy advised what the Board would be approving is the expenditure of \$6,000 and there would be an amendment brought back next month in the amount of \$2,000 to supplement the \$4,000 that is available.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kaylor and seconded by Commissioner Hollifield to authorize the expenditure of \$6,000 for the fire frequency repeater on Dobson Knob. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

VOLUNTEER CENTER REPORT AND WEBSITE

Gloria Burrows, Director of The McDowell Volunteer Center and Keep McDowell Beautiful, Inc., came before the Board with an update on their activities and to announce the launching of their new website. She pointed out this will merge both departments onto one shared platform as well as generate traffic to the McDowell County Government home page. Ms. Burrows demonstrated how to access their system to “Get Connected” for volunteer opportunities, noting they have had over one dozen agencies sign up within a week along with volunteers.

Their upcoming events include the Volunteer Awards Ceremony on Thursday, April 18th at the McDowell Senior Center, the Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 20th at Big Lots on Highway 70 West, and the Lake James Cleanup on Saturday, May 4th at Black Bear Access. Concerning the Volunteer Awards Ceremony, Ms. Burrows pointed out the five finalists for the 2013 Governor’s Award are Sue Glovier, The Coffee Club of First United Methodist Church, The McDowell Legacy Project Volunteers, Margaret “Ann” Greene, and Helen Shrimp. For the fifth year in a row, McDowell will again be represented at the NC State level for the Medallion Award and the winner will be recognized at the Executive Mansion in Raleigh on April 23rd.

Chairman Walker thanked Ms. Burrows for her work and for coordinating the various activities to make the County a better place for all its citizens. Mr. Abernathy commented on Ms. Burrows efforts, saying this is a big deal for the County. He pointed out it is not just because it is public relations and is going to make more people aware of what the volunteer opportunities are, but from a management organizational standpoint, it will keep everything organized and will provide feedback to the agencies on what kind of volunteer response they have. He said he anticipated this is going to produce major volunteer participation.

TRAIL UPDATE AND OVERVIEW

McDowell County Planner Ron Harmon advised he had received a call from PARTF today and they want to come toward the end of the week to have a final walk on

the Trail and sign off. He said the Trail is basically complete now with exception of a few items which Mr. Abernathy would address. The signage has been ordered, and other items such as benches, trash cans, dog waste stations, etc. will be ordered. They hope to have the kick-off and ribbon cutting on April 26th at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Harmon advised Ms. Shaver and her class planned to go out tomorrow (April 9th) to start their sign process and they hope to have this finished by the end of April. He said he had heard very positive comments about the Trail, noting that everyone loves how the layout transitions.

Mr. Abernathy mentioned the need for some additional hours in part-time work to maintain the Trails being constructed, particularly for Point Lookout. He said in all fairness to the volunteers who are working along with what Maintenance staff can do, he felt the additional hours and funding are needed for Trail maintenance. He said the Utility Committee had talked about this with some discussion of the City and the County sharing the hours, and this had been reason for him not being as ready as he might have been otherwise. He pointed out the City Manager's view of this is that it does not have the value for them that it does for the County, particularly with the large number of employees in Public Works that they already have. Mr. Abernathy said he would be looking at 19 hours and this will be on the May agenda.

Commissioner McPeters again mentioned the Trail crossing the roadway and the idea of a flashing light or something. He asked if there had been any progress made on this. Mr. Abernathy advised DOT had agreed to look into this matter. Also, he noted that if the Board has strong enough feelings about the speed bumps, one thing the Board might consider for the next Utility Committee meeting would be asking them what their thoughts would be about petitioning the State to take over that section of road, and then ask them to put speed bumps in front of the crosswalks to slow traffic in that area.

In discussion, the idea was suggested of using someone who is truly committed within the Trails Association for the part-time work at Point Lookout. Mr. Abernathy advised that thought had already gone through their ranks but the response was that they are basically stretched. Then one of the members called back to say that a person had been found and Mr. Abernathy advised him we would take applications. Other suggestions were to use inmate labor through the Prison or Law Enforcement, although transporting that distance might be a problem.

RELAY FOR LIFE PRESENTATION

Chairman Walker recognized Kendall Waugh, Chairman of Relay for Life, at this time.

Mrs. Waugh stated she hoped the Board would agree with her that Relay for Life is an event that brings an entire community together with civic organizations, our faith-based organizations, our educational system, etc. involved for a common cause. She noted that a gospel singing is planned for April 26th, and also reminded the Board that May 10th is the annual Relay for Life event at Tom Johnson's.

Mrs. Waugh then presented a plaque to the Board of Commissioners for their support last year. Chairman Walker accepted the plaque on behalf of the Board, and assured Mrs. Waugh that they will have \$1,000.00 budgeted for them again this year.

AMENDMENT TO SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE

Ron Harmon came before the Board concerning an issue the Planning Board has encountered with the Subdivision Ordinance. He explained the issue is the wording of the current definition which reads:

Family Subdivision of Real Property. The first conveyance of a portion of real property from an owner to his or her direct lineal ascendants (parents or grandparents) or descendants (children of grandchildren) following the effective date of this Ordinance.

Mr. Harmon advised the Planning Board was suggesting that the word “*first*” be stricken from the definition in order to rectify the problem and that the Board of Commissioners authorize a public hearing prior to this action being taken.

General discussion followed. Mr. Harmon advised the Planning Board wants to clarify the definition for its true intent.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters, to schedule a public hearing for the May meeting on the Subdivision Ordinance. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Chairman Walker reviewed board vacancies for Isothermal Planning and Development Commission’s Board of Directors (2 with Chuck Abernathy and Dean Buff as applicants for reappointment) and the Board of Trustees for McDowell Tech (1 with applicants Chet Effler, James Washburn, and Cecilia Reel).

The Board voted, by written ballot, and the Clerk gave results as follows:

Isothermal Planning and Development – A unanimous vote for Chuck Abernathy and Dean Buff

McDowell Tech – For Chet Effler: Commissioners Lavender, Hollifield, and Kaylor

For James Washburn: Commissioners Walker and McPeters

LGC FINANCING UPDATE

The County Manager advised the Local Government Commission had approved the application submitted by McDowell County for the High School addition financing. The contract between the School System and the contractor had been signed and the project is formally underway.

Commissioner Hollifield addressed the intent of the Board concerning the 15-year option with the lending institution, noting that he felt this should be revisited to clarify the full intent of paying the debt off early (within 10 years perhaps). He said he would like to see this reviewed again in 7-8 years.

Discussion followed, with Mr. Abernathy noting the three options and what some of the discussion was on them. Chairman Walker mentioned some of the discussion at the education committee meeting as well. Commissioner Hollifield noted comments about infrastructure, etc. Mr. Abernathy said he felt it was best to make a motion to clarify what was intended.

As discussion followed, two suggestions were made. The first suggestion was to make this a separate agenda item; the second suggestion was to present this item again to the education committee.

NOISE ORDINANCE PRESENTATION

McDowell County Planner Ron Harmon stated the Planning Board was commissioned by the Board of Commissioners to amend the noise ordinance. The Planning Board had voted unanimously at its March meeting to send a draft Noise Ordinance to the Board of Commissioners. He said over the course of several months the Planning Board worked with the Sheriff and his representatives to draft the document. Mr. Harmon highlighted the major changes to the document as follows:

Page 1 – Wording was added requiring that all complaints will be kept on file for a one-year period.

The penalties section was amended as well. A warning is issued first and after that fines are levied until a fifth violation, which will result in a class three misdemeanor.

Page 2 – N.C.G.S. 14-225 is cited stating that false statements made to law enforcement will result in a class 2 misdemeanor.

All other items on Page two were taken directly from the old document.

Page 3 – These items were taken from the existing document as well and in some cases wording was added to address issues the Sheriff faces today. For example four wheelers, go carts or other vehicles that could be used to create loud or unnecessary noise.

Page 4 – The majority of the changes are contained on this page. The Sheriff stated that his biggest issue with the existing ordinance was no tangible means to enforce the regulations. The Planning Board added wording that reads: noise is audible or can be felt at a distance of three hundred feet (300) or more from the property from which the noise emanates (if on private property), or from the units most outer boundary wall (in the case of a hotel or motel); and particularly but not limited to the hours between 11 pm and 7 am Sunday through Thursday, and between the hours of 12 pm and 7 am Friday and Saturday.

Adding a distance gives the Sheriff's Deputies a tangible enforcement tool to gauge the noise and the intent of the noise. The Sheriff stated that intent of noise was an issue all his deputies looked for when responding to noise complaints.

The Planning Board also added wording that exempted the discharge of a firearm from the regulations of the ordinance as long as the discharge was related to hunting, recreational, training, or target practicing purposes.

Sheriff Dudley Greene addressed the ordinance from his perspective noting they wanted to make it a little more measurable rather than more objectionable. The Sheriff noted their most frequent complaints and concerning the idea of firearm use, made mention of what is noted and not noted in the ordinance. He briefly addressed civil penalties that were considered for inclusion.

Planning Board member Dennis Whitson explained why they did not use the decibel factor, noting that a certified decibel reader would be needed on this issue and the fact that there are frequent calls from people complaining. The Sheriff addressed this section of the ordinance as well.

Further discussion continued. A public hearing will be scheduled on the Noise Ordinance, at which time further discussion can occur.

GOLD FESTIVAL PRESENTATION

Don Markum, who coordinates the Gold Festival, came before the Board to provide information on this event. First, he distributed gold tokens to all Commissioners and staff present around the table, inviting them to the 10th annual North Carolina Gold Festival at Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort on May 31st and June 1st.

Mr. Markum presented information on the availability of license plates with the wording "NC Mining First in Gold" for those interested in purchasing one. He attributed former Representative Mitch Gillespie for getting this passed through the Legislature. He advised everyone needs to spread the word about the importance of gold in North Carolina and more specifically in McDowell County.

Continuing, Mr. Markum gave a general history of gold mining over the years and throughout the area and how it does affect tourism in the state. He noted the Gold

Festival offers activities and enjoyment for all age groups and encouraged those present to have some wall space for advertisement of gold mining and the Festival, and to purchase a license plate.

NEBO WATER INTAKE PROCESS

The County Manager advised the good news is that concern has been raised by City and by himself about the impact of a half acre or less regarding the water intake process and the reclassification of the Lake. He advised additional information had been received regarding a provision that the County can use in the WS-IV that either was not clearly understood or not properly explained previously. The important news is that there is a provision that will allow the County to tie the minimum lot size to a grading permit. The grading permit requirement is one acre, not a half acre. Further, he stated we are in the process of obtaining the amount of impact within the watershed area, which is part of the State's process, and the State would come in and hold a public hearing.

Further, Mr. Abernathy made reference to the letter being sent to Nebo residents concerning a public information meeting to be held on Thursday, April 11th from 4-6 p.m. at Fairview Free Will Baptist Church to discuss the possibility of extending a water line along the Stacey Hill Road corridor. Isothermal Planning and Development will be involved, along with County staff. The meeting is being held similar to how the process was handled on Lonesome Pine.

A general discussion followed on the conditions that exist there.

PUBLIC HEARING – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Chairman Walker declared the Board in public hearing in accordance with G.S. 158-7.1 to receive public comment concerning economic development incentives offered by McDowell County for economic development activities. He then asked Economic Development Director Chuck Abernathy to proceed with additional information.

Mr. Abernathy noted the incentive being offered is equivalent to \$129,000 over three years for machinery, equipment and building improvements for the creation of jobs (43), etc. He pointed out we are competing with two other locations.

Chairman Walker opened the floor for comment from the public. No one present wished to speak.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kaylor to close the public hearing. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Commissioner Lavender then made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters, to authorize the incentive package, making it consistent with other projects. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

TAX MATTERS

The usual monthly listing of tax releases and refunds were presented for the Board's approval. They are summarized as follows:

Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$118.86
Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$5,037.56
Motor Vehicle Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$1,175.38
Motor Vehicle Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$817.31
Release Refunds	Refunded amount of \$6,176.22

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Hollifield, to approve the tax releases and refunds as presented. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

UNIVERSAL SKILL CENTER UPDATE

The County Manager advised work has continued on the EDA grant for the Universal Building in the amount of \$750,000. With reference to additional information received from EDA's regional office and the issue remaining, Mr. Abernathy's thoughts were to have BB&T assume a second position on the 50,000 square foot area of the building.

Discussion followed on having a resolution that would say the County is ready to move forward with this project and perhaps another visit with BB&T urging this on.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion to draft a resolution that endorses having BB&T to release that section (Community College) to satisfy the grant requirements. Commissioner Kaylor seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Continuing, Mr. Abernathy advised the architect says the project should go to bid at the end of the month and he is waiting on information from instructors as the architect is finalizing details. Also, Mr. Abernathy said he did show a section of the Building Morganton Pressure Vessels, and that Baglioni had expressed an interest in leasing the 25,000 square foot old dry kiln area in the Building. They need the area for warehousing and to expand a line in their building in the Industrial Park. He addressed the month to month concept.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lavender to authorize staff to enter into a leasing agreement with Baglioni as discussed. Commissioner Kaylor seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

RESOLUTION REGARDING MOUNTAIN GATEWAY MUSEUM, RURAL CENTER AND GOLDEN LEAF

Concerning his item, Chairman Walker advised the State planned to cut funding for the Mountain Gateway Museum, the Rural Center and the Golden Leaf Foundation. He asked the County Manager to comment on this issue. Mr. Abernathy stated the resolutions would be endorsement to keep the Museum open, to restore funding for the Rural Center, and to retain Golden Leaf funding. He said if the Board agreed, a resolution could be drafted and the item placed back on the agenda with more information.

In discussion, Commissioner Kaylor stated he would prefer going ahead with the resolution rather than waiting until the next meeting; Commissioner Lavender agreed.

Commissioner Kaylor then made a motion authorizing that a resolution be written, executed and sent in regarding Mountain Gateway Museum, the Rural Center and Golden Leaf. Commissioner Hollfield seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

None were given.

CITIZEN COMMENT

Michelle M. Harris spoke at length on the proposed Box Creek Wilderness/ REMC power lines issue. She expressed her concerns about the impact the proposed construction would have on property and its value, wildlife, and the general well being of citizens who live in the area. She gave a general summary of discussions she has had with REMC officials and the confusing information she and others are receiving from them as to the reason for the high voltage lines being proposed. She said they need the Board's help in finding a solution for this problem

Mr. Abernathy suggested that she write a letter spelling out what her concerns are with a copy to the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner McPeters, a second by Commissioner Lavender, and by unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

DAVID N. WALKER, CHAIRMAN

CARRIE PADGETT
CLERK TO THE BOARD