

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF McDOWELL  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
ADJOURNED SESSION-JUNE 5, 2012**

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in an adjourned session at 11:30 am on June 5, 2012, in the Commissioners' Board Room, the usual place of meeting.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

David N. Walker, Chairman; Michael Lavender, Josh Dobson.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager, Keith Renfro, Tax Assessor, Phyllis Ryan, Tax Collector, Melissa Nealley, Judy Pittman, Tom Cox, with Cox and Company and Perry Brown, Bi-Tek.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order and asked for a brief overview and introduction. The County Manager stated that the Board had previously wanted to hold a work shop to review replacement tax department computer systems. This meeting would include two vendors and a brief overview of the current system. Mr. Renfro overviewed the status of the current system and the fact that the continuation of this package would not be feasible in the near future. The system is over fifteen years old.

**OVERVIEW**

Tom Cox was introduced to the Board and gave an overview of Cox and Company and the One Tax Software system. This system is a fully integrated system. It is called One tax because the systems were divided years ago and was integrated and combined into one management system. The system includes real property, workflow management, addresses, tax payer service, tax collections and the ability to integrate with other non-tax systems.

Cox and Company currently serves 18 Counties in North Carolina. The company is adding about one additional county per year. The principle office is located in Charlotte and the company only does business in North Carolina.

The price for the system would include a \$34,000 annual maintenance fee and no software costs. Mr. Cox stated that his price would include everything to set the system

up including the conversion of the tax data and employee training. Mr. Cox reviewed the ability to build interfaces with other county systems and stated his price included this as well. Mr. Cox stated that the companies to support the system long term was evident based on the length of time they have been in business and that they had dropped the license fees ten years ago. The proposal numbers will remain consistent over the future. The company will host or lease the server. If a server is purchased the price would be \$30,000 and is an IBM. The company does currently have a used server for \$10,000. In sum, the system is a functional system that is flexible.

Mr. Cox reviewed five reasons why Cox and Company would be a solid decision. The reasons include the ability to interface with other agencies, ideas that benefit one member county can be shared by all, the system will increase accuracy, an electronic system for keying in lock box systems was included and user group meetings occurred annually. These benefits go beyond price and functionality. The system also maximizes tax collection functions and will generate more revenue.

Implementation of this system could occur within 6 months of decision. The Board asked a number of questions essentially confirming the price did include all aspects of the implementation and confirming the ability to convert the revaluation system.

The second vendor to present was Perry Brown with Bi-Tek systems. Mr. Brown began his comments by noting the seriousness of the decision and long term implications. Mr. Brown noted that his company knows the current system, knows the data and is familiar with the staff and their needs. The system he proposed is the next level of technology and would involve a move off of the HP 3000 platform. The new system would use Micro-Soft Technology and would be Web based. The system is best described as an Intranet system. The advantage of remaining with the same vendor is that the new system will be able to reproduce current work systems in the new software.

Concern was expressed about changing and converting off of the points based revaluation system currently being used. A general discussion ensued regarding the cost and cost sharing with other counties. Bi-Tek is currently serving 16 NC counties. A question was raised about group county meeting and Mr. Brown responded that it had been 6 years since a group meeting was held. Brunswick County was just added to the list of those counties served by Bi-Tek. The underlying platform used by Bi-Tek is the advantage of this system and the system was described as a long-term move that would take McDowell County well into the future.

The cost for the software system included a one-time license cost for software of \$136,001 and an annual maintenance cost of \$38,760. The Board thanked Mr. Brown for his presentation and the County Manager noted his and staff's appreciation for the many years of good service.

Prior to adjourning, the Board received a brief update from the County Manager on the situation with MCAO and the operation of the County Animal Shelter. A consensus was

expressed that the County needed to quickly open the original shelter back up in light of the likely inspection issues being experienced with the State and this operation.

The Board agreed to adjourn this meeting until Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 am to continue the budget process.

David N. Walker, Chairman

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF McDOWELL  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
ADJOURNED SESSION-June 8, 2012**

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in an adjourned budget meeting at 11:30 am on Friday, June 8, 2012, in the Commissioners Board Room, the usual place of meeting.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

David N. Walker, Chairman; Barry E. McPeters, Vice-Chairman; Michael Lavender and Josh Dobson.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Russell Neighbors, Chairman McDowell County School Board, Mark Cauthen, Vice-Chairman, School Board members Patrick Ellis, Terry Frank, Bob Brackett, Ira Trollinger, School Superintendent, Suzanne Rampey, and Aaron Slutzky. Also in attendance was Mike Conley with the McDowell News.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the budget session. The primary item to be covered at this session was the "One to One" project. Dr. Trollinger, School Superintendent, thanked the Board and made a few introductory comments about the need for this program as project that would engage students, provide the technology needs for the future and assist with drop-out rates. Dr. Tollinger turned the meeting over to Aaron Slutzky, the School System technology manager. He overviewed the program as being a program that would place a lap top in each student's possession. The lap top computer would be taken home and used 7 days a week. The lap top would also become an integral teaching tool used in the classroom. Dr. Trollinger emphasized the importance of training for the teachers. This approach was described as the trend and the importance of technology in the classroom will only continue to increase. Dr. Trollinger also reviewed the importance of the wiring at the various schools and how the school buildings were ready for the wireless network and the implementation of One to One.

The School Superintendent next reviewed steps taken at the staff level to prepare for this step. Facilitators have been hired to work with both students and teachers to begin the process at the two Jr. Highs and a person is in place at the Early College. The State is

moving to "Cloud" technology and McDowell County has participated in Cloud technology training. Dr. Trollinger reviewed 9 items of importance including training, software selection, technology facilitators, establishing external computer connections, installation of adequate wireless connection points, obtaining the needed computers, hiring technicians, establishing the necessary protocols, and training the students.

Dr. Trollinger next described the partnership that was being proposed. Google has provided a less expensive alternative than previous prices provided by Apple. Google is attempting to make in-roads on the Apple system and this will work to the advantage of the lower price. Golden Leaf is also a partner and had encouraged the School System to apply for the One to One funds during the recent Community Collaboration process that awarded \$2,140,000 to McDowell County. The Golden Leaf grant process emphasizes partnerships. The request made by the School System from the County is for \$200,000. ADM funding would provide \$400,000 and the Golden Leaf grant would be in the amount of \$200,000. It is the intent of the program for the computers to be replaced every four years. Suzanne Rampey reviewed the current status of the school system reserve fund including the availability of ADM funds and capital reserve funds.

In sum, the importance of preparing the students and building their self-esteem and capabilities are the primary goal of the program.

Commissioners asked a number of questions including various platforms and software applications and the maintenance and management of the system, how many school systems have the "One to One" and when would the program be implemented. Commissioners also asked if the graduation rates were positively impacted and if this could be verified. A discussion ensued regarding how damaged computers would be assessed. Several Commissioners expressed positive views regarding students have to pay to repair broken lap tops.

School System Chairman Russell Neighbors commented that what was good enough for previous generations was no longer good enough for our young people and is no longer acceptable. Working with computers in the classroom is how to engage children and this step was a critical step.

The Commissioners expressed appreciation to the School Board members and staff for the presentation and information. Chairman Walker explained that the Board would make a decision in less than a month.

Abernathy reviewed changes needed to the recommended budget including an increase to DSS revenue, an increase the EMS salaries, an increase to the Enterprise Fund transfer and the removal of the payment to MCAO. The Board agreed to accept these changes to the recommended budget and a general discussion ensued regarding the "One to One" presentation. The Board members present were supportive of the concept and expressed an interest in partnering with the School System.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the Board adjourned until the Regular session to continue the budget process.

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David N. Walker, Chairman

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Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager