

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF McDOWELL
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING-MAY 23, 2011**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in special session at 12:00 p.m., on Monday, May 23, 2011, in the Commissioners Board Room, the usual place for meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to continue the budget deliberations for the 2011-2012 fiscal year budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David N. Walker, Chairman; Barry E. McPeters, Vice-Chairman; Andrew K. Webb; Michael Lavender; and Joshua R. Dobson.

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; various members representing the McDowell Mission including Ed Krause, Jewell McNeil, Kathy Evans, Linda Cloherty and others, representatives including the fire chiefs from the McDowell Rescue Squad, the Sugar Hill Volunteer Fire Department, the PG Fire Department and the Woodlawn Volunteer Fire Department.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman David Walker called the meeting to order.

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS McDOWELL MISSION

Ed Krause introduced the Board Members that were in attendance representing the McDowell Mission including staff members. Mr. Krause reviewed statistics from the previous fiscal year including the numbers of individuals staying at the Friendship Home. The point was made that participants were required to either be in school or working. Mr. Krause pointed out that because the Mission is in place the County is required to spend fewer dollars. The Mission is operating on the edge financially and relies on various fund-raisers and donations. Board members asked questions related to donations, grants and State funding. The Board members thanked the Mission members for their volunteer work.

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS-EMERGENCY SERVICES

Chad Robinson with the Rescue Squad reviewed the desire of the Squad to have the Rescue Tax increased to .99 per \$100.00. The funds are needed to add an additional paid staff person. This would be the third full-time paid person that would allow the

service to function on a 24 hour 7 day a week schedule. The need for this increase is due to a twenty percent increase in the call volume and future capital needs.

Brad Ledbetter with the P.G. Fire Department was recognized. Mr. Ledbetter stated that the fire tax was requested to increase from four cents to six cents. One of the pennies would be applied to staff the department with part-time employees during the day hours. 65% of the calls experienced over the previous year were during the Monday through Friday eight hour working day. The second penny is based on the debt level that has been incurred by the department. The debt currently absorbs 40% of the P.G. fire department budget.

Joe Washburn with the Sugar Hill-Montford Cove Department next appeared and also requested the addition of a paid person. The department estimated this cost to be over \$25,000 annually. The increase request was one penny for the district. Mr. Washburn reviewed the need for additional funds that has resulted due to increased call volume and difficulty responding during the day hours. The one cent increase would generate \$20,000 and the additional funds needed would be taken from their existing budget. Mr. Washburn felt that response time would be improved by at least five minutes.

Tony Cook with the Woodlawn Volunteer Fire Department was recognized and reviewed a series of similar problems with staffing and response time. The department is experiencing a situation where individuals are driving from out of the district during the day. The expense and the difficulty of responding have increased substantially. Mr. Cook also pointed out the difficulty created by Coxes Creek.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Walker asked when the next meeting needed to occur to continue the work on the budget. The Board agreed to meet with McDowell Tech officials on June 6th at the community college.

DAVID N. WALKER, CHAIRMAN

CARRIE PADGETT
CLERK TO THE BOARD