

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – JUNE 13, 2016**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, June 13, 2016, at 5:00 p.m., at the County Administration Building, 60 East Court Street, Marion, North Carolina.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David N. Walker, Chair; Barry McPeters, Vice-Chair; Van “Randy” Hollifield; Matthew Crawford, and Tony Brown

OTHERS PRESENT

Ashley Wooten, County Manager, Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Theresa Strickland, Public Information Technician (Filming)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Walker called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Commissioner Crawford, followed by the pledge of allegiance, led by Commissioner Brown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield, to approve the May 9, 2016 Budget; May 9, 2016 Regular Session; May 12, 2016; May 16, 2016; May 18, 2016; May 23, 2016 minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion to approve agenda as presented, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF ROUTE 70 CRUISERS

Chair Walker recognized Mr. Phillip Poe, with the Route 70 Cruisers, a local non-profit group of car enthusiasts. Mr. Poe spoke on the different events the club host, and the various charities the proceeds benefit.

Chair Walker and Vice Chair McPeters presented the Route 70 Cruisers with a Certificate of Appreciation, and thanked them for their many contributions to the less fortunate.

TRAIL FUNDING DONATION/STATE TRAIL DESIGNATION

Chair Walker recognized Mr. Frank Dean, with the McDowell Trails Association, who introduced Mr. Ken Walters. Mr. Walters made a \$5,000 donation to McDowell County toward the construction of a dog park at the Catawba River Greenway.

Chair Walker thanked Mr. Walters for the generous donation.

Chair Walker called for a brief recess at 5:15pm for pictures. Meeting was called back to order at 5:17pm.

Chair Walker recognized Mr. Randall Conley to speak on the Fonta Flora State Trail. Mr. Conley spoke on the benefits of the designation of a state trail.

Mr. Wooten added Burke County had reached out to McDowell County and the City of Marion staff to extend the State Trail to include the Catawba River Greenway. Burke's vision is to connect Asheville to Morganton via the Fonta Flora State Trail. He presented a Resolution in Support of the Fonta Flora State Trail for consideration.

Discussion was held from the public and the Commissioners regarding the trail. It was noted there are only two state trails in NC, the Mountain to Sea Trail, and the Fonta Flora State Trail.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown to approve. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

BILLBOARD VARIANCE

Mr. Ron Harmon, Planning Director, stated he had noticed the construction of a billboard along US 70 W that Mr. Van Boyd had installed. Mr. Harmon stated the sign did not meet the requirements of the county's off-premise sign ordinance in regards to distance from the nearest intersection. Mr. Boyd had contacted the state to make sure he was in state compliance, but did not realize there was a county off-premise sign ordinance. Mr. Boyd asked the Board to grant a variance to allow the billboard to remain.

Mr. Wooten stated the state purview is only on I-40 and US Hwy 221. Commissioner Crawford requested staff contact the State DOT and remind them of the county sign ordinance.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield, to approve. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

The Chairman recognized Mr. Wooten and asked him to review the budget process. Mr. Wooten noted that the budget ordinance was prepared over several months after meeting with department head and several outside agencies. He also noted that the public hearing had been advertised in The McDowell News as required by NC General Statute 159-12 and a draft ordinance had been available for public inspection in the Clerk to the Board's office. Mr. Wooten stated the budget included increased school funding, cost of living adjustments for employees at 2.5%, maintenance of facilities, paving convenience centers, etc. He advised the recommended budget was \$40,848,514.00 a 2.83% increase.

The Chairman then declared the meeting to be in public hearing for the purpose of receiving comments on the proposed FY 2017 budget.

Comments from the public were received, and discussion was held from the Commissioners.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to go out of public hearing, second by Commissioner Crawford. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve FY2017 budget ordinance including the proposed district rates and fee schedule changes as presented, second by Commissioner Hollifield. By unanimous vote the motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Mr. Wooten presented a water release request:

Randy & Darlene Teaster \$69.27 Leak

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford to approve water fee waiver. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Budget Amendments

Mr. Wooten presented the following amendments for approval:

Project Budget Ordinance: Outdoor Environmental Learning Center Shelter

Project Budget Ordinance: Universal Water Line, Amendment 1

Project Budget Ordinance: Harmony Grove Road Water Line Extension

Project Budget Ordinance: Jail and Courthouse Addition/Renovations

Project Closeout Resolution: Project Fund 44

Project Closeout Resolution: Project Fund 46

Project Closeout Resolution: Project Fund 51

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Vice Chair McPeters to approve. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Ms. Alison Morgan presented the following amendments:

GF 55 — Amends numerous line items to balance out deficits.

GF 56 —Amends numerous line items to balance out deficits.

GF 57 —Amends the EMS budget due to grants and revenue received.

GF 58 —Amends the Library budget to account for donated funds.

GF 59 —Amends the Register of Deeds budget to account for additional revenue.

GF 60 —Amends several line items for the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

GF 61 —Increases the revenue in the Transportation Line Item to fund increases in the Fees Tag and Medical Exam line items.

GF 62 —Transfers funds from Courthouse Renovations to Buildings and Grounds.

GF 63 – Makes several adjustments in the Sheriff's Office budget.

GF 64 – Records sales tax expense and revenue.

GF 65 – Appropriates fund balance for the courthouse project.

GF 66 – Appropriates fund balance for the Harmony Grove Road project

GF 67 – Appropriates fund balance for the Universal water line project.

GF 68 – Transfers between line items at DSS.

GF 69 – Transfers occupancy tax funds between line items.

GF 70 – Transfers between line items in the Senior Center budget.

GF 71—Appropriates funds and amends line items to account for health insurance costs.

FD2 –Allocates estimated additional fire tax collections to several departments.

DS1 –Appropriates fund balance for additional interest charges on debt.

SP3 –Appropriates lottery funds for school renovation projects.

KBRCP2 –Amends Community Paramedic fund due to grant received.

S12 –Allocates revenue for the self-insurance fund.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion to approve, second by Commissioner Crawford. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

HAULING AND DISPOSAL CONTRACT RENEWAL

Ms. Tracy Nestor, of Republic Services presented a five year renewal contract for solid waste hauling and disposal. Discussion was held on CPI prices, size of trailers, and five year vs ten year contract.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield, to approve 10 year contract First Amendment to Transportation and Disposal Agreement, with option of a 15 year contract after Ms. Nestor gets back with the board with figures. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Wooten stated Mr. Mike Gladden, Public Works Director, would be retiring the end of the month, and introduced Mr. Randall Thomas, his replacement. Commissioners expressed their appreciation to Mr. Gladden.

PARKWAY FIRE DISTRICT ISSUE/911 BACKUP UPDATE

Mr. William Kehler stated there are properties in the county that are only accessible via the neighboring county. He noted recently a case involved property only accessible from Mitchell County, which is in the Ashford-North Cove Fire Service District. Mr. Wooten stated the fire service district has a .06 cent tax rate. The adjacent Parkway Fire Service District has a .07 cent rate. Mr. Wooten suggested contracting with Parkway now at the .06 rate with an understanding a new service district will be created at a .07 cent rate next year for FY2018.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown to approve agreement contract with Parkway Fire Department for coverage of the area. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Kehler presented a request to proceed with building improvements to the area designated for 911 Backup operations at Universal. He noted the improvements would be done in phases, with a March, 2017 timeline completion.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Vice Chair McPeters, to approve. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL APPROVALS

Ms. Linda Burleson, Administrative Assistant with JCPC gave a presentation that targets at-risk youth. She presented a funding plan for 2016-2017 priority programs. Ms. Burleson stated it was hard to have a quorum for their board meetings, so she asked the Board to remove three of the seven Board of Commissioner's appointees. Ms. Burleson asked for approval of the annual plan, funding plan, and certification.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown to approve all three. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

SMOKEY MOUNTAIN MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

Ms. Shelly Foreman, provided an update on the activities of the county's local management entity for mental health, substance abuse, and developmentally disabled.

Mr. Wooten asked for an update on the consolidation of the eight existing Smokey Health facilities. Ms. Foreman stated discussion from the Department of Health and Human Services was continuing toward having four entities instead of eight. Commissioner Hollifield asked about the room availability at the Caldwell County facility for McDowell County applicants. Ms. Foreman stated the primary users would be McDowell, Alexander, and Caldwell.

Chair Walker thanked Ms. Foreman for the update.

COURTHOUSE UPDATE

Mr. Wooten reported the elevator would be operational very soon. He has spoken with the architect and having surveys done on the administration building and the newly purchased building. Currently work on the third courtroom and HVAC are the main focus.

WATER BID APPROVALS/UPDATE

Mr. Wooten noted that county staff and the county engineer had opened bids for the Universal and Nebo water lines in May.

The following bids were received on the Universal water line extension:

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Steppe Construction | \$ 171,956.00 |
| Davis Grading | 176,154.00 |
| Stillwell Enterprises | 216,950.00 |
| Buckeye Bridge | 218,583.00 |
| Iron Mountain Construction | 298,260.00 |
| Dillard Excavating | 444,415.00 |

Recommendation from staff was for the low bid from Steppe Construction subject to the completion of the environmental review process.

Mr. Wooten noted the Nebo water line bids were higher than anticipated.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford to award to low bid of Steppe Construction. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Chair Walker presented vacancies on the Adult Care/Nursing Home Advisory Board and the MTCC Board of Trustees as a second reading. The Planning Board was presented as a first reading.

The Clerk tabulated votes and read results:

Unanimous votes for Don Ramsey appointed to the Adult Care/Nursing Home Advisory Board.

MTCC Board of Trustees--Commissioner Brown, Vice-Chair McPeters, Commissioner Crawford, and Chair Walker voted for Greg Barksdale. Commissioner Hollifield voted for Pat Faulkner.

SENIOR HOUSING UPDATE

Mr. Wooten stated he had met several times with Ms. Joy Strassel of the WNC Housing Partnership. He noted the discussion had centered around tax credit senior apartments due to the strong need and can be undertaken quickly and easily. Mr. Wooten stated that Ms. Strassel was aware of interest in different types of facilities also identified in the report and is helping to locate partners for those as well.

Discussion was held on eagerness to see action regarding senior housing.

SALES TAX INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT

Mr. Wooten asked to continue the same tax rating arrangement with the City of Marion.

Commissioner Brown left the room.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford to approve recommended interlocal agreement for three years. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

TAX MATTERS

Releases, Refunds, & Write-offs

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Write-offs | \$ 2,208.50 |
| Refunds | \$ 122.64 |
| MV tax refunds | \$ 593.83 |
| Releases under \$100 | \$ 313.60 |
| Releases over \$100 | \$ 1,241.65 |
| Discoveries | \$ 643.45 |

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford to approve tax releases. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Brown returned to the meeting.

FOSTER PARENT LICENSING POLICY DISCUSSION

Mr. Wooten reported he had met with Roger Elliott, the DSS Interim Manager, and DSS staff and would like direction on the licensing of foster parents. DSS staff asked there be no mileage limit placed on foster parent recruitment. Currently there are five out-of-county licensed foster parents. Mr. Wooten noted there were over 130 foster children in McDowell, and 25 DSS licensed foster parents.

Discussion was held on staff shortage in DSS, and hardship on the department of making mandatory visits to parents being in two counties away from McDowell. Mr. Wooten stated there was not a policy, but a general practice among other DSS facilities to have a 100 mile radius of service. He added it was better to keep children close to home for school, doctors, etc. Option was licensing the parents, but having an option on placing child with the family. Commissioner Brown voiced opposition to going outside of our county for licensing. Mr. Wooten noted the staff at DSS stated they have held the training and know the parents taking the class and would hate to see limits set for only this class, due to the difficulty of having enough foster parents.

Consensus was for staff to draft a policy in regards to foster parenting classes and bring back to next board meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Alice Stecker spoke on the crisis of middle income independent senior living options.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Wooten announced an invitation to participate in the 4th of July parade. Chair Walker asked Mr. Wooten to set up a meeting with DSS to follow up with employees.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Vice Chair McPeters, and a second by Commissioner Crawford, the meeting was adjourned.

DAVID N. WALKER
CHAIRMAN

CHERYL L. MITCHELL
CLERK TO THE BOARD