

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF McDOWELL  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION – OCTOBER 11, 2010**

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, October 11, 2010, at Historic Carson House, 1805 Highway 70 West, Marion, North Carolina. By tradition, the Board was meeting at this location at the invitation of the Carson House Board of Directors.

Previous to the regular meeting (3:00 p.m.), the Board had attended the Open House and dedication of “The Barn” on the Carson House grounds.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Carrie Padgett, Clerk to the Board; Ashley Wooten, Assistant to the County Manager (Filming); and reporter Mike Conley, for THE McDOWELL NEWS.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman David Walker called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Commissioner Buff, followed by the pledge of allegiance, led by Commissioner Webb.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes of the June 30, 2010 adjourned session were presented for approval.

Upon motion by Commissioner Webb and a second by Commissioner McPeters, the minutes were unanimously approved as recorded.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

With no additions to the agenda noted, Commissioner McPeters made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

## **BUDGET UPDATE AND AMENDMENTS**

The County Manager started with a brief audit report in view of the full report that will be presented in December. The report will show the County ended the year in the black. The fund balance at the close of year was around 18%. Mr. Abernathy said the County is about three months behind in its receipt of revenues. The following Sales Tax Comparison for FY 2010 Actual to FY 2011 Budget was provided:

	2010 Actual	2011 Budget	Actual to Budget Difference
One Percent	2,539,509.64	2,574,643.00	(35,139.36)
Article 40	1,661,252.14	1,669,520.00	(8,267.86)
Article 42	379,061.43	230,000.00	149,061.43
Article 44	<u>124,838.14</u>	_____	<u>124,838.14</u>
Total	<u>4,704,661.35</u>	<u>4,474,163.00</u>	<u>230,498.35</u>

Note: Article 44 has been eliminated in FY 2011  
Article 42 FY reflects 12 months of reduction

Mr. Abernathy pointed out the interest income could not be much worse although is had shown some improvement. Cash management does .2% and the two CD's at one-half of a percent. He reported good results with the EMS revenues collected (\$1,964,980.00 with \$229,980.00 actual to budget). Property tax is holding steady and the tax report shows a collection rate of 52%, looking favorable at this point. A full payment was received on the last day according to the Tax Collector's report.

A brief discussion followed.

Budget amendments were presented as follows:

GF1 Miscellaneous – To appropriate sales tax charged on invoices and the revenue for the same.

GF2 Board of Elections – To amend the budget due to a one stop voting grant.

GF3 Public Works – To amend the budget due to the purchase of an Air Conditioning Recycler.

GF4 Emergency Medical – To amend the budget due to donations and a grant.

GF5 Facility Maintenance – To amend the budget due to parking lot and pool repairs.

A motion was made by Commissioner Buff, and seconded by Commissioner Webb, to approve the budget amendments as presented. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

#### **UPDATE FROM McDOWELL HOUSE COMMITTEE**

Anne Swann came before the Board to give an update from the McDowell House Committee. The Committee is a very committed group with all original members except for the high school student who will attend when home and can do so. Phase two of the project is underway and the master plan is completed. This will tell the condition of the house and what repairs or restoration will take place. The Committee's next goal is to try to date the house. Mrs. Swann said they have been fortunate that the National Parks service has funded all of these projects. They are still waiting for word on the Over Mountain Trail situation. They have secured a person who will help with grant writing and the rental situation has been handled. Mrs. Swann reported that the recent youth event had gone very well.

Commissioner Webb gave an update on the reenactment, noting there were people present from Missouri, Tennessee, and north Georgia who are "characters" and did a great job.

Mrs. Swann invited the Commissioners to visit the House any time. She noted some of the artifacts that have been found.

Dysartsville resident Albert Dale made an appearance portraying Joseph McDowell and spoke briefly of the battle, etc. He commented on the recent event for children at the House, noting they are having difficulty getting demonstrators and said they will need funding when the Nation Park Service locates here, if they do.

#### **SUPPORT OUR SCHOOLS – MADE A DIFFERENCE DAY**

Gloria Burrow, Volunteer Center Director, appeared before the Board to update them on the activities of the Volunteer Center and the efforts concerning Make a Difference Day. Make a Difference Day is the nation's largest volunteer organization day. It is recognized across the nation. The date for the event in McDowell County is set for Saturday, October 23, 2010 and will be held at Wal-Mart in the grassy area in front of the store. Ms. Burrows explained that the focus for Make a Difference Day would be to raise funds and supplies for the School System. All of the proceeds made off of the event will directly benefit the School System.

Chairman Walker thanked Ms. Burrows and the Volunteer Center Board and encouraged all citizens to participate in this important event.

### **UPDATE FROM SMOKY MOUNTAIN MENTAL HEALTH**

Chairman Walker next recognized Shelly Foreman and the CEO, Mr. Brian Ingraham from the Smoky Mountain Center. The Smoky Mountain Center provides mental health services on a regional basis and McDowell County is part of the regional organization. McDowell County is part of the Central Region along with Alexander and Caldwell Counties. The Smoky Mountain Center is operating out of Sylva in Jackson County.

The Director began by reviewing the provider updates which includes the New River Center, the McDowell County School System, and the Juvenile Justice Treatment Center. There was considerable interest in the status of the Day Treatment Center with the School System. Director Ingraham explained that support for this service would be withdrawn, based on division rules.

There was continued discussion on the array of services provided by the Smoky Mountain Mental Health agency. The services would be realigned with a new RFP that would be released and these changes were reviewed with the Board. Also, a comprehensive service analysis of the central region was reviewed and changes that will be made to the service area were again discussed.

Director Ingraham thanked Commissioner Michael Lavender for serving on the Board of Directors for the Smoky Mountain Center and noted the substantial effort that was required to serve on this Board. Chairman Walker thanked Mr. Ingraham for the presentation and said the Board looked forward to a continued positive relationship.

### **CITIZEN COMMENT**

Chairman Walker noted that no citizen had signed up for Citizen Comment and that the Board would move on to the next item of business.

### **UPDATE ON HARMONY GROVE ROAD WATER LINE**

Concerning the question of when the project would be ready for bid, the County Manager made reference to emails that his Assistant Ashley Wooten had received concerning this question. In one email to Mr. Wooten from Mr. Arthur O. Buff, Region 4 Project Officer, Infrastructure Section, Mr. Buff states "The categorical exclusion was signed by the EPA Regional Administrator on 9-24-10. That completes the environmental review. We are working on the grant award documents now. Should take approximately 45 days till the grant award is mailed to the County". Mr. Abernathy pointed out this indicates they are not ready to go yet. He noted that a gentleman had

inquired about whether he needs to drill a well or wait and that he was advised to be patient and wait.

Continuing, Mr. Abernathy advised the project can proceed even in cold weather and that he is pushing for tap fees to be covered. He commented on the frustration in waiting for things to happen in a timely manner but stated he does not want to jeopardize the project.

Chairman Walker commended the Board on its efforts to be proactive in this project and noted the importance of continuing the infrastructure work to recruit industry, etc. The Board discussed the length of time this (Countywide water system and a water filtration plant) has been a priority, not only for this current board but for previous boards as well.

### **UPDATE ON FOOTHILLS PILOT PLANT**

In a brief update on the Foothills Pilot Plant project, the County Manager advised grading had started but it had been delayed somewhat due to an issue regarding a sewer line. However, he pointed out the first committee meeting on this project would be at 2:00 p.m. the following Monday that will provide guidance as the project is completed and moves forward. He noted those that will be on the committee to attend the meetings and to stay abreast of what is taking place.

Mr. Wooten addressed the issue of the manhole and what is taking place there to resolve the issue.

Mr. Abernathy invited the Commissioners to attend the committee meeting if they prefer, asking that they allow the committee to meet and see how things go from that point. He said an open house and dedication is scheduled at the Forest Service at 10 a.m. on October 26<sup>th</sup> with the County and State having a very modest service to recognize the accomplishment. Also, he pointed out this would be a time that they would be able to view the grading that is taking place.

### **UPDATE ON PART F TRAIL GRANT**

In a brief update, the County Manager advised the Corpening Foundation Board of Directors had signed an agreement regarding their financial commitment to fund half of the match with the Part F grant. The letter of support read:

To Whom It May Concern:

The Board of Directors of the Maxwell M. Corpening, Jr. Memorial Center, Inc. voted unanimously on September 13, 2010 to support the walking trail project around the YMCA, Senior Center and Medical Park properties. Our portion of the matching Part F Grant will be approximately \$182,500.

Sincerely,

S/Jed Rankin, President

Also, Mr. Abernathy noted the contracts were signed and sent back to the State. Contracts with the consultant were being finalized and he was looking for a December date for an award on construction. He made reference to a support letter for a planning process in Old Fort that Foothills Conservancy is leading that is also trail related.

### **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

Chairman Walker noted the two vacancies for the Library Board with Wanda Brown and John Cross as applicants for reappointment and the vacancy on the Adult Care Community Advisory Committee with Lisa Hanlon as applicant. Both were presented on second reading.

The Board voted on the three vacancies. Results were a unanimous vote for both *Wanda Brown and John Cross for the Library Board* and a unanimous vote for *Lisa Hanlon for the Adult Care Community Advisory Committee*.

### **TAX AND WATER REFUNDS AND RELEASES**

Tax releases and refunds were presented for the Board's approval. In summary, they were:

Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$1,465.99
Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$5,399.53
Motor Vehicle Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$595.99
Motor Vehicle Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$217.92
Release Refunds	Refunded amount of \$760.55

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

Concerning the request for waiver of penalties associated with the late payment of occupancy tax, Commissioner Lavender made a motion to approve the waiver as requested. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion and it carried by a unanimous vote.

### **UPDATE AND WELCOME FROM THE CARSON HOUSE BOARD**

Chairman Walker next recognized the President of the Carson House Board of Directors, Dr. James Haney. Dr. Haney thanked the Board of Commissioners for their long-standing support of the Carson House that they have shown over the years. He expressed appreciation for their attending the unveiling of the Barn as a new attraction on the Carson House grounds. Dr. Haney reviewed the various needs of the Carson House and noted that the sloped floor had been repaired and that the cost was not as significant as originally thought. All in all, the condition of the facility was in good shape. Dr. Haney did review an interest that the Board of Directors have in applying for support funding to construct a "welcome center" in the future.

Dr. Haney also reviewed the programs and the staffing of the Carson House. A great deal of attention has been placed on providing sufficient hours of operation for the public and programming for school children and special events that draw people to the Carson House and to McDowell County.

The Board expressed their appreciation to Dr. Haney and assured him that their support for the maintenance, upgrading and upkeep of the Carson House would continue.

Commissioner Webb commended Sara Bryant for the impact she is making with her enthusiasm in the public school system due to her past educational experience.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner and a second by Commissioner, the meeting was adjourned. The Board and staff then enjoyed a delicious meal provided by the Carson House.

---

DAVID N. WALKER, CHAIRMAN

---

CARRIE PADGETT  
CLERK TO THE BOARD