

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF McDOWELL
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – FEBRUARY 13, 2012**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 13, 2012, in the Commissioners' Board Room, the usual place of meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

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 McPeters, followed by the pledge of allegiance led by Commissioner Lavender.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes of the January 9, 2012 regular session were presented for approval.

Upon motion by Commissioner Webb and a second by Commissioner Dobson, minutes of the January 9, 2012 regular session were unanimously approved as recorded.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Walker stated the County Manager had advised Item D under new business (Discuss Meeting with School Board) could be withdrawn from the agenda since there was no new information at this time. By consensus, this item was withdrawn. Further, for clarification, Mr. Abernathy advised Marsha Carroll would be present at 6:15 p.m. for the Animal Outreach Update, and he might ask that the Board recess briefly to allow her to set up for a power point presentation.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Webb, to approve the agenda as amended. By unanimous approval, the agenda was approved as amended.

THANKS FROM HOSPICE

Chairman Walker welcomed Kit Cosgrove, Executive Director of Hospice of McDowell County, noting that he hears a lot of positive comments from people throughout the County about the care and concern shown by the Hospice staff. He said this is appreciated and, on behalf of the Board, he wanted to say “thank you” for all they do.

Ms. Cosgrove thanked the Board for the generous donation (\$45,000) they had made in support of Hospice’s Center of Hope Campaign for their building. She made mention of her staff for being such a remarkable team, and assured the Board she would convey to them the Board’s appreciation for the work they do.

Ms. Cosgrove commented briefly on the significance of having the Hospice Center of Hope at its present location, pointing out the County and First Baptist Church had housed them for many years before the Center of Hope could be opened in September, 2006. She stated the facility has more space to grow and also enables them to do the additional administrative duties required to support the regulations that Hospice lives under on a daily basis. Their facility serves as a gathering place for other communities and is currently being used by about four groups. It also allows them to invite the community to participate in educational services. She pointed out they do not house patients in their building, but they do provide a full-service home care program and they have access to many facilities throughout the area for those who feel they need to go into a facility.

BUDGET UPDATE, AMENDMENTS, AND FINANCE MATTERS

First, the County Manager noted the Hospice item, pointing out this is an obvious example of how things can be accomplished many times simply by breaking payments out over a period of time.

Mr. Abernathy then proceeded with a summary of budget amendments as follows:

GF 7 – Transfers funds into the revaluation fund to complete this process. A small amount is included above current obligations in case anything does come up. No funds were budgeted this year as a set-aside and this will need to be included next year.

GF 8 – Recognizes economic development activity that the Board has approved. This activity goes through the County’s books and is not local funding. Baldor and Rock Tenn payments are the One NC funding that is received. The large payment (\$480,000) is the Rock Tenn Rural Center grant.

- GF 9 – Relates to Emergency Management grant funds. The large number (\$104,000) concerns the generator.
- GF 10 – Transfers dollars between insurance accounts. Workers Comp is increased and Unemployment Insurance is lowered.
- GF 11 – Allocates loan proceeds the Board has previously approved. The Proceeds include the Sheriff's department server and the Garage lift. Also, a carry-over on Sheriff's vehicles from the previous fiscal year.
- GF 12 – Allocates additional funding received by DSS.
- GF 13 – Transfers funds under \$3,000. The Board allows staff to do this with copies given to the Board.
- GF 14 – Transfers funds within the Elections Department to the travel line item. The Elections Director has suggested that all of her board members must attend a training session because they are new.
- GF 15 – Allocates reserved automated technology funds for scanning and five PC's
- REVF1 – Amendment is the flip-side of the revaluation amendment and allocates General Fund transfer
- FHPP1 – Transfers fund with the Foothills Pilot Plant project budget to pay for the additional cost for the sewer line.
- SP2 – Appropriates ADM funds to the school system.
- Seven Amendments – Close-out grants or projects (by resolution).

A brief discussion followed concerning ADM funds and the Pilot Plant Project. The County Manager advised there will be a ribbon cutting for the Pilot Plant Project in the near future with perhaps a meeting of the MEDA Board in the facility. Chairman Walker made mention of the issue of erosion with Farm Bureau making a donation to make road improvements.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lavender to approve budget amendments GF 7 through GF 15, REVF1, FHPP1 and SP2, and the seven close-out projects as presented. Commissioner Dobson seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Dobson and seconded by Commissioner Lavender to approve the other finance related items (water adjustments in the amount of \$360.00) as presented. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

The County Manager commented briefly on the sales tax report he had received today and the Tax Collections report showing collections running slightly over the rate at the same point last year. The caution is that everything finishes strong in July.

A brief discussion followed on Recreation and how programs have changed the revenue aspects of their budget.

The Finance Officer explained her department had received one RFP in regard to the financing of two 2012 Dodge Journeys and two Dodge Avengers for use in the Department of Social Services. BB&T responded with a rate of 1.87% for a period of four (4) years-semi annual payments in arrears beginning July, 2012.

A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion to authorize the purchase of four vehicles, two (2) 2012 Dodge Journeys and two (2) 2012 Dodge Avengers, for use by DSS, with financing through BB&T at the rate of 1.87%, and to approve the *Resolution Approving Financing Terms*. Commissioner McPeters seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

TAX LIEN ADVERTISEMENTS

Tax Collector Phyllis Ryan came before the Board to present her 2011 Real Property Tax Lien Report, and to ask authorization to advertise the tax lien for all unpaid 2011 real property tax bills. A publication date of Wednesday, May 9, 2012, was suggested. The McDowell News was obviously the only one responding for an estimated 5-page advertisement. Their bid was basically the same as last year at \$6.95 per column inch x 126 inches, (\$876.41 per page) X 5 pages for a total of \$4,382.05.

A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the 2011 Real Property Tax Lien Report as presented, to authorize the process for publication of tax liens, and to approve the bid from The McDowell News for an estimated publication of five (5) pages for a total of \$4,382.05, with a publication date of May 9th, 2012. Commissioner McPeters seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

RESTROOM BIDDING UPDATE

In the absence of Facility Maintenance Director Terry DePoyster, the County Manager provided a brief report on this item, advising there is quite a bit of plumbing work to be done and the City waived the tap fee. He said with a bid opening date of

March 15, 2012, the project is running a month behind on having the bids completed. Therefore, when baseball season begins, the project will be under construction. The item will be placed back on the agenda and Mr. Depoyster will be present for questions.

Discussion followed on the time line for construction/completion, etc.

911 CONSOLIDATION UPDATE

Emergency Management Director Terry Young came before the Board with an update on the 911 consolidation efforts. He advised the Sheriff's Office communications was officially moved to the Emergency Communications Center on Monday, February 6th at 7:00 a.m. He said this was a smooth transition with only minimal problems that were resolved in a short amount of time.

Mr. Abernathy spoke briefly about the cost savings and deferring cost for antiquated equipment. Commissioner Dobson said he appreciates the cost savings, but would be in favor if the cost were more. Chairman Walker thanked Mr. Young and others for the positive relationship with the City and the related agencies.

VOLUNTEER CENTER UPDATE AND HOUSING UPDATE

Gloria Burrow, Volunteer Center Director, thanked the Board for their support of the Volunteer Center's programs over the years. Concerning Keep McDowell Beautiful events, she advised Earth Day on the Greenway will be Saturday, April 21st, at the Joseph McDowell Greenway, and they are partnering with the City of Marion for this event. The Lake James Cleanup day is scheduled for Saturday, May 19th from 7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Also, Burke County will partner with McDowell for this year's Lake James Cleanup.

The Volunteer Awards Ceremony and Reception will be held Thursday, April 19th, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the McDowell Senior Center. Ms. Burrow recognized McDowell County's strong support of volunteerism by promoting community events and service oriented programs, noting the compassion shown for dedicated volunteers by sponsoring local recognition and achievement programs for these exceptional citizens in the County. She pointed out that McDowell County had been extremely honored and privileged to have our outstanding volunteers recognized on the State level to receive the Governor's Medallion for the past five years.

Ms. Burrow explained that each year the McDowell Volunteer Center determines a need in the community and selects a project to help in some way to make a genuine difference in the community. This year they have chosen the McDowell Housing Coalition. She recognized DSS Director Phillip Hardin for his work in coordinating this effort.

Mr. Hardin commented briefly about this project and how pleased they are to assist. Ms. Burrow then read a letter written by Paige Brown, the Volunteer Center

Board President, in which he requested a donation to hire a part-time director or coordinator for the housing program.

In discussion, Mr. Abernathy advised the request had essentially been met because Mr. Hardin had identified 20 hours at a higher rate and, in July, they would try to reapply for Title V funds to get additional hours. He said it seemed to him the greater need now would be office resources to help the employee perform her duties. He suggested they might consider exploring the various granting programs that the County participates in to assist with housing needs in the County, such as Scattered Site Housing or the Community Development Block Grant programs.

Darline Atamanchuk, Program Coordinator for the McDowell Housing Coalition, gave a report of the projects they have completed, the donations made, etc.

Further discussion followed.

McDOWELL COUNTY ANIMAL OUTREACH UPDATE

Marsha Carroll, President of McDowell Animal Outreach, updated the Board on progress they had made since their last meeting here. She was pleased to report that McDowell Animal Outreach is now certified to operate. She reported on the number of animals they had taken in, those adopted, dealt with, the drugs they will use, etc.

Discussion followed on the dual operations, budget allocations, transition issues, etc.

GOVERNMENT CHANNEL UPDATE

The County Manager said he felt the minutes should reflect that Nebo residents can now get the Government Channel through interconnection. He explained other efforts that are underway to assist in making the Board's meetings not only accessible to the public but also of better quality with upgrade cameras, power point capabilities, etc.

Brief discussion followed.

WATER SYSTEM CONTRACTS

The County Manager advised the first item was the contract extension that needs formal extension on the Rural Center Grant for Harmony Grove Road. The extension was needed to close out the grant.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters to approve submission of the Harmony Grove Road water line extension for the closeout of the Rural Center Grant. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Secondly, Mr. Abernathy stated the Board had said to handle this several months ago and not be concerned with a workshop or a lot of detail. However, he felt the need to provide some, especially in relationship to next year's budget. The contract that was approved with the engineering firm will complete the Duke Energy application, which the primary item needed for processing. There is a water management group that extends from Burke down to Mecklenburg, and now extends into McDowell, that has gotten approval for the County to do this as well. An Environmental Assessment, the Surface Water reclassification process and the Preliminary Easement Acquisition process all need to be done. He said this will take two years, or it can be stretched out further if necessary. The amount for these items is \$244,375. The STAG grant that the County has will pay 55% of that amount, and we are finally ready to draw down those funds. He pointed out the federal government's approval is needed in basically every step of the process, which is understood.

Continuing, Mr. Abernathy pointed out we still have \$25,000 in the current year that was budgeted for this project. He suggested that we begin spending these funds to get underway, and next year to double that amount to \$50,000 and carry it into the next year. He said the issue with Hank Higgins and Crescent is the fact that we will have to renew the contract on the property. He had suggested to them that this be done with very little money based on the fact that we have paid already to carry it out two years.

Mr. Abernathy advised the Board could do a workshop and have the engineers come in, noting that he and his Assistant had met with them.

A brief discussion followed.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion to approve execution of the contract as presented. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

UNIVERSAL BUILDING UPDATE

The County Manager advised the LGC application had been turned in and will be on the March agenda for approval. It appears there are no issues as the comments received thus far are favorable. Also, the survey is completed and the acreage ended up being 350 acres instead of 315. The appraisal has been completed and was submitted as well. The appraisal was in the amount \$3.4 million. The phase one environmental audit came in and there was a recommendation that no additional environmental work be done, and basically everything was with no significant findings. Therefore, we are on schedule for a closing in later March. Mr. Abernathy was not sure as to when the Rural Center Board will be meeting and nothing had been said that this will be funded; however, there has been good feedback saying that the Rural Center Grant, based on the \$40,000 that has been applied for off the Tilson Machine jobs, does look favorable.

GOLDEN LEAF PROCESS UPDATE

Mr. Abernathy noted that he understood an ad did appear in the newspaper. The President of Golden Leaf went through the applications and made notes of the strengths and weaknesses of those submitted. The Career Path project did meet the criteria needed. Mr. Abernathy said we look very favorable to receive funding.

A question was raised on taking the amount down. Mr. Abernathy responded as to how this will occur, making mention of having the renovations and other inside work done first and deal with the façade, landscaping, etc. and other work later as it comes and as we are able to do.

WELLNESS UPDATE

The County Manager advised staff had been meeting with employees and there are approximately 135 voluntary employees participating in this program. He pointed out there is real interest in a software package that will do more to assist in this effort. (Commissioner Dobson was out of the meeting during discussion of this item)

TAX MATTERS

The monthly listing of tax releases and refunds were presented for the Board's approval. In summary they were:

Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$2,483.31
Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$7,174.07
Motor Vehicle Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$485.86
Motor Vehicle Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$808.05
Release Refunds	Refunded amount of \$7,019.96

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

REVIEW CONTRACTS FOR SECURITY SERVICE/UNIVERSAL BUILDING

The County Manager advised this item could have waited for placement on the March agenda since the County does not own the Universal Building at this date. However, Blue Ridge Security maintains security on the building and had provided to him a proposal to continue to provide this service 8 hours a day 6 days a week. Mr. Abernathy recommended that they continue with the same schedule.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lavender, to approve the contract retain Blue Ridge Security to provide security services at the Universal Building. Commissioner Lavender seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

ROAD NAME CHANGE IN OLD FORT/ALBERT JOYNER DRIVE

The County Manager stated this item was in recognition of Old Fort resident Albert Joyner who had recently passed away. The road Baptist Side Road would be changed to Albert Joyner Drive. He had asked Old Fort resident Otis Keaton for a document about the road name change showing property owner participation signifying there is no issue with the change. Mr. Abernathy recommended approval of the road name change providing that all property owners agree with the understanding that a revision would be in order.

Commissioner Dobson made a motion to authorize staff to approve the road name change subject to notification to all property owners affected by this change as well as the petition that would be needed (50% of property owners). Commissioner Lavender seconded the motion and by unanimous approval, the motion carried.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The vacancy for an alternate member on the Planning Board was considered on second reading with two applicants. The applicants were Rex A. Wood and Frank G. Kissell.

The Board voted by written ballot on the two applicants with the resulting vote being as follows:

Three votes for Rex A. Wood – Commissioners Lavender, McPeters and Dobson

One vote for Frank G. Kissell – Commissioner Walker

Commissioner Webb abstained from voting

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

There were none given.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner Webb, a second by Commissioner Lavender, and by unanimous approval, the meeting was adjourned.

DAVID N. WALKER, CHAIRMAN

CARRIE PADGETT
CLERK TO THE BOARD