

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF McDOWELL
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ADJOURNED SESSION-BUDGET-May 29, 2012**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in adjourned session at 11:30 am on Wednesday, May 29, 2012 in the Commissioners Board Room, the usual place of meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to continue the budget process.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Donnie Tipton, Fire Chief of Glenwood Fire Department, Ron Richardson, Fire Chief of the Old Fort Fire Department and several members of the Old Fort Board of Directors.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order and asked for a brief overview of the process. A brief discussion ensued about the allocation to the McDowell Mission for a heating and air system. The consensus of the members was that an amount would be allocated but the desire was to wait for bid prices prior to determining. It was also communicated that the City of Marion was allocating \$10,000. A brief discussion also took place on the animal shelter. The Board members agreed that the County shelter had to be reopened due to issues ranging from citizen complaints to two failed State inspections. The discussion focused on reopening the shelter and appointing a committee to advise the Board on future direction.

Glenwood Fire Chief Donnie Tipton presented a packet of information to the Board of Commissioners concerning the need to increase the fire tax rate in this community. The Glenwood Board of Directors was unanimous in supporting this request and the minutes of this action was included in the information. The rate increase requested was one and a half cents which would take the rate to 6.5 cents. This increase would generate \$34,000 in new revenue. The funds would be used to pay for one person full-time. The full-time fire man would be responsible for other items in addition to responding to fires. A priority would be to carry out those fire related functions needed to maintain the 6 ISO rating for this district. Again, the new rate would be 6.5 cents.

The Board of Commissioners asked a number of questions related to equipment needs, revenue trends, annexation and other matters.

The Board next heard from Old Fort Fire Chief Ron Richardson. Fire department members Wayne Stafford, Jamie Grindstaff and Bill Nicholson were also present. This department was requesting a two cent increase which would increase the rate to six cents. The Department presented a letter from the Board of Directors endorsing the request. The Fire Chief explained that Old Fort is responsible for 11 miles of I-40 including Old Fort Mountain, a significant railroad presence and responsibility and a number of large manufacturing presence. A concern was raised over reductions in funding from the Town of Old Fort. The two cent increase would generate an additional \$36,000 for the department. The tax rate would increase from four to six cents. The additional funds would be used to hire a full-time employee. The employee would be assigned other responsibilities as well.

The Board raised a number of questions ranging from the ISO rating to the thought of increasing the fire tax rate inside the Town limits if the Town of Old Fort would lower their rate the same amount. Chairman Walker thanked both Chiefs and said that their needs would be taken seriously by the Board. The Commissioner members each expressed support for the idea of “swapping tax rates” with the Town Board if the action was supported by both the Town and the Fire Department. It was agreed that county staff would communicate with the Mayor to determine if there is interest.

A very brief discussion took place regarding a request from the City of Marion and the sales tax distribution. It was agreed that this would be taken up at a later time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the Board of Commissioners adjourned to the next budget meeting scheduled for the 5th of June, 2012.

David N. Walker, Chairman

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager