

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION – JULY 13, 2020**

**Assembly**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, July 13, 2020, at 5:00 p.m., at the Universal Conference Room, 634 College Drive, Marion, North Carolina.

**Members Present**

David N. Walker, Chair (via phone); Tony Brown, Vice-Chair; Barry McPeters (arrived at 5:09pm); Lynn Greene; Brenda Vaughn;

**Members Absent**

None

**Others Present**

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board

**Call to Order**

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

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Vaughn made a motion, second by Commissioner Greene, to approve the June 1, 2020 Recessed Session; June 4, 2020 Recessed Session; June 8, 2020 Regular Session; June 15, 2020 Recessed Session; and June 30, 2020 Recessed Session minutes. By a vote of 4-0, the motion carried.

**Approval of Agenda**

Vice Chairman Brown called for any additions or deletions to the agenda.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 4-0, the motion carried.

**COVID-19 Update**

Mr. William Kehler, Emergency Services Director, gave an update on the COVID-19 response:

- EOC has been activated for 120 days
- 5,064 tested; 4,545 negative; 236 pending; 283 positive; 2 deaths
- 6% hospitalization rate; 6% positivity rate
- 0-17 years old - 24% positive - twice as much as state average; 25-49 year old- majority of cases
- Two congregate living facilities have outbreaks—(outbreak is defined as two or more cases) none of the patients have tested positive at this time-some of the staff members are positive; plans had been made previously in the event of an outbreak— Geriatrician is providing guidance
- urged the public to wear a mask

- due to the 4<sup>th</sup> holiday the amount of time to get test results back is longer – currently at 5-7 days
- Testing sites this week: Wednesday, Grace Community Church 9am-12noon; Friday, McDowell Health Department 9am-11am

Vice Chairman Brown encouraged the public to wear a mask for respect for others. He also thanked the Health Department for the long hours they and Emergency Services (ES) have worked.

Commissioner McPeters noted it was hard for him to accept shutting down the courthouse for a positive case, but businesses such as Walmart and Lowe's continues to be open.

Commissioner Vaughn was encouraged to see so many wearing masks when she was out shopping. She also expressed her appreciation of the Emergency Services department.

Mr. Kehler said he wore his mask to protect the sick child, the elderly and those most vulnerable. He added there are over 700 people in adult care home and long term care facilities in this county, and wearing a mask helps to protect them.

### **911 Center Update**

Amberlie Buff, 911 Manager, has overseen the Next Generation 911 Project for the last two years at the local 911 Center. It is an IP cloud based system for routing digital information (i.e., cell phone calls, text messages) to the appropriate 911 call center. The equipment is monitored 24 hours, 7 days a week at the state location in Raleigh. It is a statewide program, meaning calls could be answered from any county, and the system has better location capabilities. Ms. Buff noted McDowell County was the first county in the western region to go Vesta I3 in one phase; meaning ESInet and Geo data had to be 98% correct, and the Center quickly achieved that percentage to be able to go live.

Mr. Kehler emphasized this program was implemented during the current COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the regular jobs the employees do every day. The 911 Center answers 120,000 calls a year, EMS runs 10,000 calls a year, and Community Care Paramedics answer 2,000 calls a year.

The Board thanked Ms. Buff and her staff for all their work.

### **EMS Capital Project Update**

The Local Government Commission (LGC) met on July 7<sup>th</sup> and approved the loan for the EMS Capitol Project. Vice Chairman Brown signed the loan documents, and the County Manager signed the construction contracts. Plans will be made for ground breaking at both locations.

### **Board Appointments**

The McDowell Tech Board of Trustees received three applications for the one vacancy, and was presented as a second reading: Pam Forshey; Mark Garrett; and Martha Zimmerman were the applicants.

By a written vote of 4-0 Mark Garrett was appointed. Chairman Walker did not vote.

### **Public Shooting Range**

Mr. Wooten noted there were ten bids received and opened on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The low bidder was England Builders at \$1,989,830, with alternates total at \$2,216,590. The classroom and office building will be part of a second bid.

The following is the list of bidders, base bid, Alt G-1--Pave Portion of Access Road, Alt G-2--Pave Overflow Parking Lot, and Alt G-3--FGM on Slopes in lieu of Coir Mat:

<b>Bidders</b>	<b>Base Bid</b>	<b>Alt G-1</b>	<b>Alt G-2</b>	<b>Alt G-3</b>
England Builders, Inc	\$ 1,989,830	\$ 178,500	\$ 27,560	\$ (20,700)
SIMCON Co, LLC	2,440,200	83,000	14,500	38,500
W.C. Construction Co, LLC	2,462,000	95,000	20,000	No Change
Dane Construction, Inc	2,606,000	187,425	28,945	32,235
Adams Contracting Co, Inc	2,609,722	117,000	20,000	20,000
NHM Constructors, LLC	2,636,334	91,350	21,000	40,491
TP Smith Construction Corp	2,677,961	100,050	21,000	18,405
WNC Paving, Inc.	2,777,000	102,135	16,522	27,000
Matthews Construction Co, Inc	2,848,000	76,000	13,000	169,000
Patton Construction Group, Inc	3,450,700	104,400	19,100	28,800

Vice Chairman Brown noted this had been a vision of his as soon as he joined the Board over five years ago to have a public recreation shooting range. As soon as he suggested the range to the other Board members they were in agreement, and the entire Board had worked very hard over the last five years to see construction begin. He thanked the Board members, Mr. Wooten, Mr. Harmon and staff for all their work also.

Mr. Wooten added the county will handle the bidding and pay project cost up front with 90% of invoices being reimbursed by NC Wildlife.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to enter the bids into the minutes, and award the contract to England Builders, and get the project started, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

**Administrative Items**

Mr. Wooten presented a request from the Town of Old Fort for an inspection fee waiver of \$80 for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion to approve the request. Vice Chairman Brown would like to see the county waive the fee permanently for the Town of Old Fort, since it is a benefit to the entire county. The City of Marion has their own inspector, so they are not charged a fee. Chairman Walker noted since the City of Marion had cancelled their fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the county had given the additional \$500 to Old Fort.

Commissioner McPeters amended his motion to waive the inspection fee permanently, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Mr. Wooten presented a revised position listing to clarify the positions in Inspections, and a new position title requested in Public Services for the person responsible for managing the solid waste functions in that department.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the revised position listing, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Mr. Wooten noted at the June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting the Board approved a 3% increase in water fees for the Nebo Water Department, due to information received that the City of Marion was imposing a 3% increase in their water fees. The City of Marion actually increased their water fee rates 5%, so the request presented at this time was for a 5% increase in water fees effective August 1<sup>st</sup>.

The new fee schedule would be:

Billing fees

Monthly/Bill	\$4.97 per 1,000 gallons plus \$17 base fee	
Bulk Rate:	\$4.97 per 1,000 gallons plus \$25 base fee	
Account deposit:	\$60 Residential	\$150 Commercial
Late fee	\$5	
Delinquent fee	\$55	

Connection Fees

Tap Fees—Domestic and Irrigation Meters:

<u>Size</u>	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Commercial/Industrial/Institutional</u>
3/4"	\$540	\$740
1"	\$630	\$830
2"	\$1,440	\$1,640

Meter Drop Fee

3/4"	\$200	\$400
1"	\$350	\$700
2"	\$1,200	\$1,600

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the increase in the water rates, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Mr. Wooten presented a list of EMS accounts that were non-collectible and requested they be written-off. The accounts totaled \$46,468.08.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion to approve all the EMS write-offs totaling \$46,468.08, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

**Tax Matters**

**Releases**

Releases over \$100	\$ 2,286.63
Discoveries	\$17,962.05
MV tax refunds	\$ 890.97

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the tax matters, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

### **IPDC Housing Grant**

The Isothermal Planning and Development Commission (IPDC) applied on behalf of McDowell County for a housing rehabilitation grant from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. The grant was recently awarded to rehabilitate five homes in fair condition in McDowell County. The beneficiaries must be of low to moderate income and have homes that can be rehabilitated to a certain standard at a cost not to exceed the program parameters.

The agreement would provide for the project administration in exchange for \$20,000 to be paid over three fiscal years (\$7,500, \$7,500 and \$5,000)

Commissioner Vaughn made a motion to approve the grant administration agreement, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

### **Property Sale Update**

Mr. Wooten noted the Forest Lake Heights property had been sold and the closing is in progress.

### **Voting Delegate for NACo and NCACC**

Mr. Wooten presented a request from the NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) and National Association of Counties (NACo) requesting a voting delegate at their respective virtual Annual Conferences.

Commissioner Greene made a motion for Mr. Wooten to be the NCACC Voting Delegate at the NCACC Annual Conference August 6<sup>th</sup>, and NACo delegate for the meeting on July 20<sup>th</sup>, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

### **Citizen Comment**

Vice Chairman Brown opened the meeting for public comment at 5:52pm.

Ann Heard – illegal drug activity and theft at Montford Cove Road would like more police presence in the area

Staff will pass on her concerns to the Sheriff's Dept.

Public comment ended at 5:58pm.

### **Commissioners/Staff Reports and Communications**

Mr. Wooten reported the Animal Services facility would be renovated from Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup> through Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>. All animals would be relocated and the facility will be emptied. The facility would be able to provide emergency housing resources only during this time period until a foster or rescue partner helps out.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner Greene and a second by Commissioner Vaughn, the meeting was adjourned at 6:00pm.

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Cheryl L. Mitchell  
Clerk to the Board

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Tony G. Brown  
Vice Chairman