

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION –NOVEMBER 16, 2020**

**Assembly**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, November 16, 2020, at 11:30 a.m., at the Universal Conference Room.

**Members Present**

David N. Walker, Chair; Tony Brown, Vice-Chair; Barry McPeters; Lynn Greene; Brenda Vaughn

**Members Absent**

None

**Others Present**

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Lisa Sprouse, DSS Director; Randall Conley, Transit Director; Tammy Wylie, Tax Assessor; Shannon Lowery, Business Tax Appraiser

**Call to Order**

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order at 11:30am.

**Property Tax Appeal**

Ms. Tammy Wylie, Tax Assessor; and Ms. Shannon Lowery, Business Tax Listing, presented an appeal from Baxter Laboratory. Ms. Lowery had received an email from Ms. Rachelle Eisenmann, Tax Manager for the firm representing Baxter stating they had discovered errors with the 2020 tax listing and requested to file an amended return. After Ms. Lowery contacted the North Carolina Dept. of Revenue (NCDOR) she was told per NCGS there are no amended returns permissible. The next step would be to file a formal appeal request and because it was after the appeal date of notice of value, the Assessor would be required to deny the request. Ms. Eisenmann then requested a formal appeal to the Board of Commissioners. The amount of refund requested was \$142,767.05. A copy of all documentation is with the agenda materials.

Ms. Rachelle Eisenmann was present for the appeal via conference call. She reviewed the CIP and Supplies line items that were reported incorrectly.

Mr. Wooten explained if the Board approved the refund, the majority would come out of the tax property, but it would also affect the fire and rescue tax. The Ashford/North Cove Fire Dept. would be debited \$12,307.00 if the refund was approved.

Vice Chairman Brown stated Baxter Healthcare had always been a valuable asset to the community, providing jobs and revenue for many years. And although the mistake was made by them in their tax listing he believed the county should work with them to resolve the issue.

Vice Chairman Brown made a motion to give the company an opportunity to get the money back over a two to three-year tax credit, second by Commissioner McPeters. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Greene asked Ms. Eisenmann if she understood Vice Chairman Brown's motion and would they be agreeable to the offer. She responded yes if they could resolve in one to two years with half the amount in 2021 and half in 2022.

Commissioner McPeters asked if there had been an appeal for the same request in years past. She noted not to her knowledge, but this was her first year working on their taxes as a property tax expert.

Commissioner Vaughn noted as long as the refund could be resolved in two years she agreed.

Chairman Walker added his appreciation to the company for providing jobs and they are a valuable part of the community. He restated the motion was for a two-year tax credit.

By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

### **Administrative Items**

Mr. Wooten presented two *Resolutions Authorizing Sale of County Owned Property* for approval.

#### **Resolution Authorizing Sale of County Owned Property**

**WHEREAS**, McDowell County desires to donate (2) Wall-Mounted Fans, (1) 20' x 24' Carport and (1) Ladder to McDowell Agricultural Center, Inc.

**WHEREAS**, the listed items are not useful to McDowell County and therefore would be of service to the receiving agency.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of McDowell County that:

The donation of (2) Wall-Mounted Fans, (1) 20' x 24' Carport and (1) Ladder to McDowell Agricultural Center, Inc.

This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

**ADOPTED** this the 16<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2020.

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Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board

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David Walker, Chairman

#### **Resolution Authorizing Sale of County Owned Property**

**WHEREAS**, McDowell County desires to donate (1) Walk-In Cooler and Large Cutting Boards to McDowell Local Food Advisory Council.

**WHEREAS**, the listed items are not useful to McDowell County and therefore would be of service to the receiving agency.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Commissioners of McDowell County that:

The donation (1) Walk-In Cooler and Large Cutting Boards to McDowell Local Food Advisory Council.

This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

**ADOPTED** this the 16<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2020.

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Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board

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David Walker, Chairman

Vice Chairman Brown made a motion to approve both Resolutions, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

**Fee Waiver Request**

Mr. DePoyster, Public Services Director, submitted a request from Glenwood Ruritan Club for recycling tire fee waiver of \$184.00 for cleaning up an illegal dump site on Polly Spout Road. There were approximately 67 car tires and 10 large truck tires.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the fee waiver request, second by Vice Chairman Brown. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

**Christmas Dinner**

Mr. Wooten noted the plans for Christmas party needed to be finalized. The prior decision was to have a drive thru event for employees and retirees to pick up a Christmas dinner with random door prizes.

Commissioner Vaughn suggested an option of giving each employee a gift card this year. The gift card could be inside the Christmas card from the Board of Commissioners to all 500 +/- employees. That way each employee would benefit, not just those that would come to the drive through.

Chairman Walker noted he was in favor of the Christmas drive thru dinner, and felt the event was defensible as well as the door prizes.

Commissioner Greene noted he was in favor of each employee receiving a gift card this year.

Vice Chairman Brown was in favor of polling the employees and see which option was the most favored.

Vice Chairman Brown made a motion for the staff to survey the employees and retirees for their preference of the two options discussed, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

**Transit Update/Public Hearing**

Mr. Conley, Transit Director, presented a resolution for approval to file for a grant through the NC Department of Transportation. The Community Transportation Program provides assistance to coordinate existing transportation programs operating in McDowell County as well as provides transportation options and services for the communities within this service area. These services are currently provided using transit vans. Services are rendered by McDowell Transit. The total estimated amount requested for the period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Total Amount</u>	<u>Local Share</u>
Administrative	\$172, 594	\$34, 519 (20%)
Capitol (Vehicles & Other)	\$240,000	\$48,000 (20%)
<b>TOTAL PROJECT</b>	<b>\$412, 594</b>	<b>\$82,519</b>

Mr. Conley added the department should be receiving three new vans by February, 2021.

Chairman Walker declared the Board in Public Hearing setting at 12noon regarding the grant application.

There were no comments from the public.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion to go out of public hearing at 12:01pm, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the resolution, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0 the motion carried.

Mr. Conley also read a letter of appreciation from NC DOT praising the Transit Dept. and their partners McDowell Access to Care and Health (MATCH) and the Foothills Food Hub for their food distribution to homebound individuals in need of food assistance.

**DSS Update**

Ms. Sprouse gave an update and distributed the agency reports. A copy is with the agenda materials.

She added the active shooter training would be held in January, 2021 for all DSS staff.

Ms. Sprouse noted in the last fiscal year there were 1,540 children in NC adopted, and of that number McDowell County had 26 adopted. The State sets an adoption goal for the agency and the agency strives to reach the goal.

Currently there are 125 children in foster care. The major reason for foster placement was due to drug and alcohol use in the home.

Ms. Jenny Millsaps, Foster Parent Coordinator, gave an update on the program. She reported there are 43 licensed foster homes in the county, and there are three families pending certification.

Ms. Millsaps has increased the social media presence for recruiting foster parents. Of the 43 licensed foster families, 19 have been foster families for two years. For a support system Ms. Millsaps

has paired a veteran foster family with a new foster family. Since the pandemic all training has been virtual for new foster parents. She is also urging relatives to get licensed so they can get the same training as foster parents.

**Closed Session**

Commissioner Greene made a motion to go into closed session at 12:20pm regarding a personnel issue pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6), second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Chairman Walker declared the Board back in Regular Session at 12:57pm. No action was taken.

**Recessed**

Mr. Wooten reminded the Board of the Public Hearing on amending the Lake James Protection Ordinance on Monday, November 23rd, 2020 at 4:30pm at Universal Conference Room.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to recess to Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> at 4:30pm at 12:58pm, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

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Cheryl L. Mitchell  
Clerk to the Board

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David Walker  
Chairman