

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION –AUGUST 30, 2021**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, August 30, 2021, at 11:35 a.m., in the Commissioner’s Board Room, at 60 E. Court Street, Marion, NC.

Members Present

Tony Brown, Chair; David N. Walker, Vice-Chair; Patrick Ellis

Members Absent

Brenda Vaughn; Chris Allison

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Adrienne Jones, ES Deputy Director; Lake Silver, Project Administration Assistant

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 11:35a.m.

COVID Update

Ms. Adrienne Jones, Deputy Director, reported there were 416 positive COVID cases reported last week, the highest number of cases since December, 2020. There is also a record number of positives in the 0-17 and 18-24 age groups. The department has also received a record number of 911 calls with COVID related symptoms, and quite possibly highest number of 911 calls ever. The paramedics are able to test the patients before arriving at the hospital, so the hospital knows if the patient is positive for COVID. There have been four diversions over the last 14 days at McDowell Hospital lasting a few hours at a time.

Emergency Services (ES) is continuing to do COVID tests at the Health Dept. on Mondays, and giving vaccinations on Wednesday and Friday. The state \$100 incentive gift card program for the first vaccine shot will expire September 1st. The county is currently at 42% vaccinated.

Emergency Services personnel are 95% vaccinated. A record number of COVID-19 related calls has placed a burden on all divisions of Emergency Services, including EMS, 911, Emergency Management and the Community Paramedic Program. In an effort to meet system demands, surge ambulances during peak volume, and to maintain adequate staffing across all Emergency Services divisions, a request for crisis pay for essential employees be given to full-time staff and eligible part-time staff was presented. The crisis pay would apply to any full-time employee called back to work additional shifts within a work week, and would compensate full-time employees an extra \$13 per hour on top of the normal rate that is due. Part-time employees would receive crisis pay after their 19 hours during a workweek or when the callback is deemed as crisis pay by an ES administrator. The program

would be evaluated in 45 days to determine the need for an extension or termination of the program after 60 days. Funding would come from the American Rescue Plan Act.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to send an endorsement to the Governor's office to continue the incentive gift card program for first vaccinations, second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Ms. Jones clarified the extra duty demand is due to the 911 call volume and transport volume.

Commissioner Ellis asked Mr. Wooten if staff approved the request and Mr. Wooten noted he agreed with the request and to revisit the premium pay in 45 days.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to accept the recommendation by staff, requested by ES Director for the crisis pay to help assist with the care of our county citizens, second by Vice Chairman Walker. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Mr. Wooten noted two weeks ago the Board issued a mask mandate for county employees, and requested to revisited the mandate at this time. Staff recommended continuing the mandate based on the number of positives.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to continue the mask mandate for 30 days from today, second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to adjourn at 12:06pm, second by Vice Chairman Walker. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman