

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION –FEBRUARY 15, 2021**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, February 15, 2021, at 11:30 a.m., at the Universal Conference Room.

Members Present

Tony Brown, Chair; David N. Walker, Vice-Chair; Brenda Vaughn; Chris Allison; Patrick Ellis

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Lisa Sprouse, DSS Director; William Kehler, ES Director

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 11:32am.

DSS Update – Child Support

Ms. Sprouse gave an update and distributed the agency reports. A copy is with the agenda materials. She noted she had four employees with COVID out last week and a total of 10 employees at home under quarantine for exposure. Fifteen employees are continuing to telework. With assistance from Steve Hancock, Logistics Officer at ES, the department was able to provide PPE for all employees. The county Facility Maintenance department provides through a private cleaning company for the building to be sterilized bi-monthly.

Ms. Sprouse also noted the supervisors will be giving input on needs in their units as they begin working on the budget for FY2022.

Ms. Janet Hardin, Child Support Supervisor, gave an update on her unit. The Child Support unit locates parents, establishes paternity; establish child support orders; enforce child support action; and works closely with Child Support Attorney, and law enforcement.

The unit has six employees counting the two enforcement agents that are currently carrying 1,479 cases. Also, there are currently 112 cases being established and 104 are in the initial intake.

Vice Chairman Walker asked if it was harder to collect child support since COVID. Ms. Hardin noted the first stimulus checks were intercepted for child support, but the second stimulus checks were not. In the coming months tax refund checks will be intercepted also.

The enforcement process is more difficult now since the burden of proof to pay lies with the DSS employees to prove the parent can pay due to the absent parent not having a good work record.

COVID-19 Update/Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Mr. William Kehler, ES Director, gave the following update:

- Day 337 of EOC activation week #49
- 4,498 positives; 49 positives today; 18.4% positivity rate; 615 tested last week
- Vaccine is limited; pushing out as quickly as received
- 6,000 1st doses have been administered; 1,000 2nd doses given
- Friday vaccinated 1,007 citizens, and 500 citizens on Saturday
- Planning on Group 3 educators and childcare workers; 420 citizens are still on the waiting list for 65+ years old

The Board expressed their appreciation for the hard work of the ES department and their partners.

Commissioner Ellis asked if there was an issue with the Board sitting more than 6 ft apart and removing mask to speak. Mr. Kehler responded due to variants he recommended anyone being indoors to wear a mask at all times in all situations unless eating or drinking.

The base allocation is 400 vaccines every week. Each week the Health Dept along with ES advocates to get more vaccines based on events and equity.

**RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2021 UPDATE OF THE
TOE RIVER REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN**

WHEREAS, McDowell County is vulnerable to an array of hazards that can cause loss of life and damages to public and private property; and

WHEREAS, McDowell County desires to seek ways to mitigate situations that may aggravate such circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the development and implementation of a hazard mitigation plan can result in actions that reduce the long-term risk to life and property from natural hazards; and

WHEREAS, it is the intent of the McDowell County Board of Commissioners to protect its citizens and property from the effects of hazards by preparing and maintaining a local hazard mitigation plan; and

WHEREAS, it is also the intent of the McDowell County Board of Commissioners to fulfill its obligation under North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 166A: North Carolina Emergency Management Act and Section 322: Mitigation Planning, of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to remain eligible to receive state and federal assistance in the event of a declared disaster affecting McDowell County; and

WHEREAS, McDowell County, in coordination with Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties and the participating municipalities within those Counties has prepared a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan with input from the appropriate local and state officials;

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have reviewed the Toe River Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan for legislative compliance and have approved the plan pending the completion of local adoption procedures;

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

1. Adopts the Toe River Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan; and
2. Agrees to take such other official action as may be reasonably necessary to carry out the proposed actions of the Plan.

Adopted on February 15, 2021.

Tony G. Brown, Chair

ATTEST:

Cheryl L. Mitchell, Clerk

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to accept *RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE 2021 UPDATE OF THE TOE RIVER REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN*, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Recreation Property Proposal

Donnie Suttles, co-owner of Big-League Camp, gave a presentation on restructuring the current operating system in the county Recreation Dept. A copy of the presentation is with the agenda materials. He proposed to add turf fields through his company, FieldTurf, at the Maple Leaf Sports Complex, the Hawkins-Waters Field and purchase the Big-League Camp complex. The total cost of the project was between \$8,650,250 to \$9,940,250.

Chairman Brown thanked him for the information.

Administrative Items

Temporary Covid-19 Leave Policy

The Federal government enacted legislation to amend the Federal FMLA law and created an Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act to address absences related to Covid-19. The Federal provisions took effect on April 1, 2020 and expired on December 31, 2020. Mr. Wooten asked the Board if they wanted to allow for the Covid-19 Leave to continue or make changes. Discussion followed on the policy.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to bring the policy back to the next meeting, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Garden St. Pedestrian Crossing

Discussions had been held on improvements to the Garden Street pedestrian crossing between the parking lot and the county building. The lot is City and County owned. The City had located a crossing light to help draw attention to pedestrians in the crosswalk. The City also has two other

crosswalks located on Main Street. The City proposed to the County to split the cost for a demand light at all 3 crosswalks. The cost share on three was \$6,600 per each.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to cost share on the S. Garden Street crosswalk only with the City, second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Closed Session

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) at 12:39pm, second by Commissioner Allison in order to consider and give instructions to an attorney concerning the handling or settlement of a claim. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to go out of Closed Session at 12:41pm, second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

No action was taken.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to adjourn at 12:44pm, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman