

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED SESSION –JUNE 15, 2021**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Recessed Session on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, at 5:00p.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; Alison Bell, Finance Director; William Kehler, ES Director

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m.

Overview of Current Rescue Squad Funding

Mr. Wooten reviewed the estimated revenue for the Rescue Squad to be a total of \$611,435. The county operates on a fiscal year and the Squad operates on a calendar year. The estimated total revenue for the year was \$720,000.

Rescue Squad Funding Request

Mr. Brian Gentry, Chief; Donna Muller, Treasurer; Chip Johnson, Board member, represented the non-profit Rescue Squad in submitting a request of \$192,700 of immediate needs plus 5.5% salary increase for employees for \$391,257. There are seven fulltime positions; one transport; contract and part time to fill in and would like to increase staffing with addition of two employees. Mr. Gentry requested a tax increase of two cents. The 5.5% increase in salary for all full-time employees is to match the County pay scale plus \$10,000 per employee to be compatible with surrounding areas for duties and training required. He added the Rescue Squad needs to hire a full time Director.

He added their current fund balance is \$210,000. Their certified staff members include five certified in rescue and medical; one medical EMT certified; three intermediate certifications; two paramedic certifications; and three are dive certified.

Mr. Johnson advised he had applied for four grants, and they did not receive any of them. He added there were not a lot of rescue squad grants available.

Discussion was held on the future expenses and needs list the Rescue Squad submitted.

Mr. Kehler added he would be glad to share any of their planning documents, spreadsheets, maintenance plans, etc. to assist the Squad in planning for future needs.

Vice Chairman Brown thanked the members for meeting with them and would let them know of the Board's decision. The Rescue Squad members left the meeting.

Discussion was held on the concept of Rescue Squad is dying out with the fire departments adding to their certification and equipment; and being located in the different sections of the county.

Emergency Management noted they were not here to take over the Rescue Squad, but to assist with planning but not leading the department. Heavy rescue; water and land rescue trench rescue; high level rescue are elements of the core mission of the Rescue Squad.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion for the County Manager to communicate to the Rescue Squad there would be no additional tax rate increase this year; and the Board recommends supporting Emergency Management staff to assist with planning support of the core values of the Squad, so the Board will have a clear understanding of their financial situation, second by Vice Chairman Walker. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to adjourn at 6:11pm, second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman