

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

**Assembly**

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

**Members Present**

David N. Walker, Vice-Chair; Brenda Vaughn; Chris Allison

**Members Absent**

Tony Brown; Patrick Ellis

**Others Present**

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

**Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Walker called the meeting to order at 11:30a.m. Commissioner Allison opened the meeting in prayer.

**DSS Update**

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

Ms. Donna Wilson gave information regarding the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP); Crisis Intervention Program (CIP); and the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). An informational report on each program is with the agenda materials.

Ms. Sprouse reported there was only one vacancy in the agency at this time. The vacancy is in Child Support. Discussion was held on the conference room recently being painted and the flooring has been approved for designated areas in the building.

**COVID Update**

Mr. Wooten noted there were approximately 73% of fulltime employees vaccinated, and 50% of the part time employees. He also noted there were approximately five employees that would like to participate in the vaccination incentive, but due to unforeseen circumstances were not able to receive the vaccine by October 1<sup>st</sup>. Discussion was held on extending the deadline due to circumstances beyond their control.

Commissioner Vaughn made a motion to extend courtesy to those with situations that could not meet the vaccination incentive deadline, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Mr. William Kehler gave the following COVID update:

- First up-tick in the last 10 weeks, 9 out of 15 were in the 25-49 years old age group
- Pediatrics age group is stable
- 3.6% 14-day positivity rate
- McDowell is in the code orange range, a change from code red
- Recommendation was for the County employees to safely operate without mask
- if employee is in congregate setting or when social distance can't be obtained to wear a mask

Commissioner Vaughn noted the current mask mandate ends on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Allison made a motion to make mask optional with the exception of state and federal offices that have separate requirement, and revisit this when Emergency Services Director sees a concern effective today; second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker asked about the remaining ARPA funds that had been set aside for vaccinations that had not been used. Staff reported since all the bills had not been submitted they currently didn't have the total. This item would be addressed at next month's meeting.

Commissioner Allison made a motion for Foothills Health to provide minutes and financial statement to the Board of Commissioners, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Discussion was held regarding a separate Health Dept. Mr. Wooten will look at figures and bring back information to the Board.

Ms. Sprouse expressed her appreciation to Mr. Wooten for his understanding and graciousness during her illness.

Commissioner Allison made a motion to adjourn at 12:11pm, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

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Cheryl L. Mitchell  
Clerk to the Board

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David Walker  
Vice Chairman