

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION –SEPTEMBER 20, 2021**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, September 20, 2021, at 11:30 a.m., at the DSS 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; Donna Wilson, Food and Nutrition Supervisor; Dustin Burlson, VAYA Community Relations Regional Director

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 11:30a.m.

DSS Update

Ms. Sprouse gave an update and distributed the agency reports. A copy is with the agenda materials. She also gave an update on the recently passed House Bill 769 recognizing the rights of foster parents. The law gives foster parents more rights including having input in court and being included as a member of the child's team. A copy of the Session Law 2021-144 is also with the agenda materials.

Ms. Donna Wilson, Food and Nutrition Supervisor, gave an update on the economic services changes due to COVID. A copy of her handout is with the agenda materials.

VAYA Update

Dustin Burlson, Community Relations Regional Director, gave an update on VAYA Health. VAYA manages publicly funded behavioral health and intellectual/ developmental disability services in 22 counties, and will be adding 9 counties in January, 2022. He reviewed the Medicaid Transformation Plan, and noted less than 50% of McDowell County Medicaid recipients enrolled themselves into one of the plans. The state average was less than 30% enrollment. A copy of his presentation is with the agenda materials.

Mr. Burlson would like to come back in three months and give the Board another update.

Vice Chairman Walker noted at last meeting's discussion on the salary study, staff had noted there were county employee positions that staff knew were underpaid. He made a motion to take out of the \$63,500 Courthouse Project Fund Close-Out \$32,000 and have Alison Bell, Finance Director; Maria Preswood, HR Director; and Ashley Wooten review positions and determine where they can apply the money to bring up the low salaries. Three areas had been mentioned to him the Tax Department; janitorial/maintenance; and landfill positions, second by Commissioner Allison. Mr. Wooten asked if they would be limited to those three areas, and Vice Chairman Walker replied no wherever they saw positions that needed to be addressed, those were just three areas that had been mentioned. After discussion, Vice Chairman Walker clarified his motion, \$32,000 to be taken out of the Courthouse Project Fund Close-Out and have Alison, Maria, and Ashley review county positions and upon their determination make appropriate changes since Mr. Wooten can go up eight steps on the pay scale without Board approval, and once the three have made their determination copy the Board on their decisions, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to reserve the remainder of the Courthouse Close-Out Project Fund for the Maple Leaf fields. He had several parents mention how hot it is to sit and watch their children play, and an awning and picnic tables would be a nice addition. While grant funding is being pursued, reserve the funds for an awning/picnic shed that is fenced in for parents and younger children to watch in the shade, second by Commissioner Allison. Discussion followed, Commissioner Vaughn noted she would still like to see broadband needs addressed. Commissioner Ellis asked if that would close out the funds from the Courthouse project, and Vice Chairman Walker noted yes reserve all the remaining funds in the Courthouse project.

Brown; Walker; Allison; Ellis – yes
Vaughn – no
By a vote of 4-1 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to adjourn at 12:23pm, second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony Brown
Chairman