

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION –FEBRUARY 21, 2022**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, February 21, 2022, at 11:30a.m., at the DSS Conference Room at 145 E Court Street.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Patrick Ellis

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Lisa Sprouse, DSS Director; Lake Silver, Management Asst.; Terry DePoyster, Public Services Director; Maeva Hussani, LEAD Fellow; Jason Hollifield, Transit Director

Call to Order

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

State Budget Funding

Chairman Brown welcomed Rep. Dudley Greene to the meeting, and gave his appreciation on behalf of the Board for his work in Raleigh for our district.

N.C. House Representative Dudley Greene expressed his appreciation for being back in his hometown. He noted the current legislative session was the longest Long Session in NC history, and the budget was passed for the first time in four years. He presented a check in the amount of \$15.5M from the State of North Carolina to McDowell County. The allocations for the funding was for the Recreation Center improvements, various building renovations, and water improvements.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to receive the \$15.5M from the State of North Carolina, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 4-0 the motion passed.

DSS Update

Ms. Sprouse reviewed the data report that had been emailed to the Board. She then distributed the organizational chart for DSS.

DSS Building Update

The main DSS building has approximately 80 employees. There are sixteen offices that have two employees in them. There are limited options for space in the building without

completely eliminating very small and necessary meeting rooms or the large conference room up front. The three units in this main building are Administration, Economic Services, and Child Welfare.

Adult Services is located in half of the Mental Health Building on Spaulding Road. Child Support is located on the second floor of the Services Building.

Terry DePoyster, Public Services Director, discussed the ongoing issues with water and sewer in the main building. An addition can be made, but there would not be enough parking space for employees and the public.

Discussion followed on another location vs adding on to the current facility. Staff has a conference call with DHHS tomorrow, and will get more information on financing options and will report back next month.

Adult Day Care Update

Staff noted that Weyland Prebor, Senior Center Director, had previously researched providing a day care for adults in the county. Most of the area adult day cares are privately funded. The closest county funded is in Jackson County. Staff have a phone call set up in two weeks, and will report back on their findings at a future meeting.

Discussion followed on the recently vacated Dialysis facility.

Transit Update

Mr. Jason Hollifield gave a 2021 Community Impact presentation on the McDowell Transit Public Transportation.

- Anyone who lives in McDowell County qualifies to ride free of charge. Rides are available on a first-come, first-served basis
- 21,157 total rides in 2021, and 412 distinct riders. Rides were for medical, employment, shopping, Senior Center, and COVID vaccinations. There were 1,086 rides for people who use wheelchairs as their primary mode of transportation in 2021.
- There were 2,496 Medicaid rides for 137 individuals through DSS referral.
- McDowell Transit has partnered with McDowell Access to Care and Health (MATCH) and the Foothills Food Hub to deliver 2,999 food boxes to home-bound individuals, representing 279 households.
- All McDowell Transit drivers and staff are certified to recognize several life-threatening emergencies, give high-quality chest compressions, deliver appropriate ventilations and provide early use of an AED.
- Combined Capitol Grant has been approved to receive two-way radios for dispatch, van cameras and office computers.
- ARP Capital Grant for ADA compliant mini-van has been submitted.
- ARP Grant submitted for safety plexiglass shields for the vans
- ARP Grant for operating expenses has been submitted

The Board expressed their appreciation to Mr. Hollifield for the update, and the great work of his drivers and staff.

Staff Update

Mr. Wooten gave an update on the Sugar Hill bridge construction. The contractor had to resume operation by Friday, February 18, and no work has been started. The project has gone to the bonding company, an inspection will take place, and then the state will bid out the project. Hopefully in three months construction will resume.

Recess

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to recess at 12:24pm to Monday, March 7, 2022 at 5:00pm at the Commissioner's Board Room at 69 N Main Street, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 4-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman