

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION –May 16, 2022**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, May 16, 2022, at 11:30a.m., at the Commissioner’s Board Room located at 69 N Main St., Marion, NC.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Brenda Vaughn

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board

Call to Order

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

Economic Development Public Hearing

Chairman Brown declared the Board in Public Hearing setting at 11:34am pursuant to NCGS 158-7.1

Chuck Abernathy, MEDA Director, reviewed the incentive proposed to be offered by McDowell County includes a site of approximately 11 acres of property to be sold for \$10,000 per acre. The property is adjacent to College Drive and Impact Drive. The public benefit to be derived and received include the employment of 150 people within the first three years. The proposed wages by the company will exceed the County average. McDowell County also determined that the value of such public benefit as calculated under Section 158-7.1 of the NCGS would be at least equal to the benefits provided.

Mr. Abernathy added a Golden Leaf Grant would help with the rough grading of the property, and it was an existing company.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to go out of public hearing at 11:39am, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 4-0 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion pending a survey the county sell to the company for \$10,000 an acre just under 11 acres, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 4-0 the motion passed.

Insurance Update

Mr. Wooten reviewed the county health insurance policy up to date. He noted the County had

moved to MedCost replacing Blue Cross Blue Shield, and initiated a \$50 premium with the hope of improving the status of the plan. This has been a challenging year with over 15 members over the \$50,000 level.

The proposed plan will increase employee contributions \$10 a month. In addition, the employee wellness activities will be reactivated, and there will also be small group meetings in each department to discuss the health plan, and suggest cost saving measures the employee can take.

Mr. Wooten advised there is currently an old plan for those who were hired before March, 2009; and the new plan for those hired after that date. The old plan has a \$1,000 single deductible, and a \$2,000 family deductible. The new plan for those after March, 2009 have a \$2,500 single deductible and \$5,000 family deductible.

Brian Flynn, county broker representative of One Digital with Morrow Insurance reviewed plan comparisons, and advised staff to take the Alternate Option 1- Unum MedCost. A typical year the County insurance plan will have 12-15 claimants that will reach 50% of the \$90,000 deductible which would be \$45,000. Three to four claimants will go over the \$90,000 stop loss. So far this year there have been 9 claimants that have already gone over the \$90,000 stop loss.

County and staff will work with employees on health education to assist with their healthcare choices, and questions to ask the healthcare provider.

Chairman Brown would like to leave the deductible at \$1,250 for single deductible, encourage a healthy lifestyle, and look at the figures next year.

Commissioner Ellis would like to leave deductible at \$1,250 for single deductible with clear communication over the next 12 months, and employees manage their healthcare better. If no significant savings will have to look at corrective measures the next year. Incentive is to be better in a year to keep the insurance cost down next year.

Mr. Flynn noted MedCost has several wellness communication ideas, and they can track employee interaction.

Commissioner Allison agreed with Commissioner Ellis's opinion, and reexamine insurance cost in a year.

Discussion was held on keeping co-pays the same or increase of \$10.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to approve the 2022 proposed plan design as presented to the Board, second by Commissioner Allison. Commissioner Ellis asked Mr. Wooten and Ms. Lee if staff would communicate to employees to manage their healthcare better, and both agreed. By a vote of 4-0 the motion passed.

Marion Fire Department Request

Per the agreement the County and City of Marion Area Fire Department agreed upon last year, the Fire Department submitted their budget request for approval.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to accept the fire department proposal as presented, second by Vice Chairman Walker. By a vote of 4-0 the motion passed.

DSS Update

Ms. Sprouse was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Wooten gave an update. He advised in the last meeting Ms. Hardin reported the State is working with Walmart to have child support payments accepted in the Customer Service department.

Adjourn

Mr. Wooten reminded the Board he would be presenting the budget on Monday, May 23, 2022 at 5:00pm in their Board Room.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to adjourn at 12:16pm, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 4-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman