

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

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, November 21, 2022, at 11:31 a.m., in the Commissioner's Board Room, 69 N Main St., Marion, NC.

Members Present

Tony Brown, Chairman; David Walker, Vice-Chairman; Brenda Vaughn; Chris Allison; Patrick Ellis

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Victoria Craig, Clerk to the Board; Lake Silver, Management Assistant; Alison Bell, Finance Director

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.

Closed Session

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to go into Closed Session at 11:31 a.m. pursuant to N.C. G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3) and (6); second by Vice-Chairman Walker. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Vice-Chairman Walker made a motion to go out of Closed Session at 12:20 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

No action was taken.

DSS Update

Ashley Wooten, County Manager and Interim DSS Director, presented this month's MOU to the Board.

Mr. Wooten informed the Board that there were eight architectural firms that responded to the RFQ for the DSS building renovations. Mr. Wooten asked the Board if they would want the top 3 choices of architects to be presented to the Board. Vice-Chairman Walker stated that he was fine with staff choosing their top choice and presenting it to the Board, rather than the top 3.

Nebo Church

The Nebo United Methodist Church closed in June and is selling its property. The Conference has given selling rights over to Wesley Community Development Corporation. The Corporation is trying to sell the property to gain public use, whether that be a non-profit or public service entity. The property is currently listed at \$435,000, contingent on what the property will be used for.

The Board mentioned that they'd like testing for asbestos and lead paint.

After Board deliberation, Vice-Chairman Walker asked that Mr. Wooten offer \$90,000 to Wesley Community Development Corporation due to possible uncovered issues such as asbestos and lead paint.

Commissioner Statements

Commissioner Ellis brought up the vote from the November 14th Board meeting regarding the School Board Partisan vote. The vote was unanimous to change McDowell County's School Board elections partisan. Commissioner Ellis did not realize that voting for a partisan School Board may inhibit individuals who want to run for candidacy outside of the Democratic or Republican parties. Commissioner Ellis does support the vote in having a partisan School Board but wanted to apologize because he was unaware that the vote would inhibit those candidates that were not labeled as a Democrat or a Republican.

Vice-Chairman Walker stated that for the past two years, the Republican party has approached members of the Board to encourage them to vote for a partisan School Board. During the last election, Vice-Chairman Walker noted that he noticed that the School Board candidates were the only people on the ballot who did not have their affiliated party listed. However, it wasn't until the day after the partisan vote occurred, that he found out that candidates would have to go through the primary process and if the candidate was an independent party then they would need to obtain a certain number of signatures to even run. Vice-Chairman Walker also wanted to clarify that the local newspaper misquoted the situation and it was inaccurate to say that Chairman Terry Frank of the McDowell County School Board made a commitment to be partisan on behalf of their Board.

Chairman Brown, who was absent during the vote, made a statement that he was in agreeance with the unanimous vote of making the School Board a partisan. He felt as though it was necessary for School Board candidates to go through the primary election process just as other ballot candidates do.

Commissioner Ellis mentioned that Doug McCraw was communicating a request for funding for the Old Fort New Years' Celebration. Commissioner Ellis made a motion to give Mr. McCraw \$1,000 for the Celebration, seconded by Commissioner Allison. Ashley Wooten clarified that the money will be going to the Town of Old Fort rather than Doug McCraw himself. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to adjourn at 12:42 p.m., seconded by Vice-Chairman Walker. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Attest:

Victoria Craig
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman