

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED SESSION – APRIL 20, 2020**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Recessed Session on Monday, April 20, 2020, at 11:30a.m., at the Historic Carson House Jubilee Arbor.

Members Present

David N. Walker, Chair; Tony Brown, Vice-Chair; Barry McPeters; Lynn Greene; Brenda Vaughn

Members Absent

None

Others Present

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

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Kehler gave an update from Emergency Services:

- As of this date McDowell County has 287 people tested; 21 positives; 239 negatives; 27 test pending; 1 death
- 9 people still under quarantine; 11 have been released from quarantine
- 66 congregate living facilities in the state have reported an outbreak of the virus; McDowell County continues to have no outbreaks in their congregate living facilities
- as calls coming into the medical hotline number that are reporting COVID like symptoms are being referred to the health department for testing, as the availability of test kits is increasing
- continuing to assist the health department with tracking of individuals under quarantine
- continuing weekly conference calls
- continuing focus on feeding with local Food Hub taking the lead
- PPE has stabilized
- PIO continues to send out valid information and news
- last couple of positive patients had exhibited GI issues
- current estimated figures for fighting the virus is \$175,000

Chairman Walker noted he knew a person who was coughing and had high fever and went to the ER. He was tested for the flu and strep throat and both were negative. He was told by the hospital staff they were not testing for the COVID virus, and was directed to the health

department for virus testing. The person reported he was told only hospital employees or patients who were admitted into the hospital were tested for the virus.

Mr. Kehler advised if anyone had COVID symptoms would call the medical hotline they would get the individual referred for testing. He added the admission rate for persons with virus symptoms was at 20% and persons admitted with flu symptoms was 2% across the state.

Mr. Wooten noted Ms. Karen Powell, Health Director, was unable to attend today's meeting due to issues in Rutherford County. He added he was establishing an internal task force with Terry DePoyster, Williams Kehler, Maria Preswood and Alison Bell. The task force would address opening up the offices to the public and what is going to be needed to operate for the future.

Commissioner McPeters asked Mr. Kehler where he thought the county was regarding the peak of the virus. Mr. Kehler stated he was unable to know where the peak was but he knew social distancing had helped to flatten the curve. If more testing was available there would be more contact tracing to identify first line contact and second line contacts, which is the strategy of public health. He also commended Ms. Powell on being aggressive very early during this pandemic and testing individuals for the virus.

Commissioner Vaughn asked if the flu was tracked like the virus had been. Mr. Kehler noted on the CDC reports in a low season there will be 20,000-22,000 deaths; and in a high flu season there will be 60,000 deaths in the flu year from early fall to late spring. Within 30 days there had been 40,000 deaths from the COVID virus.

DSS Agency Update

Ms. Sprouse gave the following update:

- currently have 90 employees teleworking
- the number of calls and in person visits to the agency has declined
- agency has seen an increase in food and nutrition applications due to company layoffs in the county
- USDA has extended food and nutrition benefits without recertification for six more months
- Shannon Jones has been working at the EOC since it was opened for the pandemic, and is in constant contact with nursing homes and assisted living homes, ensuring personnel had all the PPE they needed. The county has two nursing homes and thirteen assisted living homes.
- Rayburn Davis worked to get 105 DSS employees remote access so they could work from home.

Local Water Supply Resolution

Mr. Wooten requested approval of the following resolution per requirement of the NC Environmental Quality for the 2019 Local Water Supply Plan for the McDowell County Water System.

RESOLUTION FOR APPROVING LOCAL WATER SUPPLY PLAN

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute 143-355 (l) requires that each unit of local government that provides public water service or that plans to provide public water service and each large community water system shall, either individually or together with other units of local

government and large community water systems, prepare and submit a Local Water Supply Plan; and

WHEREAS, as required by the statute and in the interests of sound local planning, a Local Water Supply Plan for McDowell County Water System, has been developed and submitted to the McDowell County Board of Commissioners for approval; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners finds that the Local Water Supply Plan is in accordance with the provisions of North Carolina General Statute 143-355 and that it will provide appropriate guidance for the future management of water supplies for McDowell County Water System as well as useful information to the Department of Environmental Quality for the development of a state water supply plan as required by statute;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of McDowell County that the Local Water Supply Plan entitled, McDowell County Water System dated 2019, is hereby approved and shall be submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Water Resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners intends that this plan shall be revised to reflect changes in relevant data and projections at least once every five years or as otherwise requested by the Department, in accordance with the statute and sound planning practice.

This the 20th day of April, 2020.

ATTEST:

Cheryl L. Mitchell, Clerk to the Board

David Walker, Chairman

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the *Resolution for Approving Local Water Supply Plan*, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Designation of Agent Resolution

Mr. Wooten then presented a request for approval for a Designation of Agent for a hazard mitigation grant application for EMS. NC Emergency Management requested combining the EMS HQ Generator and the EMS Station 4 Generator project. The grant required no match from the county. A copy of the resolution is with the agenda materials.

Vice Chairman Brown made a motion to approve the *Resolution Designation of Applicant's Agent*, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Chairman Walker noted the Board had received copies of letters from other counties addressed to the Governor, requesting when the Executive Order 121 expires that local governments would make decisions on what restrictions would be in place for the county to move forward. Discussion was held for the Board to do the same.

Vice Chairman Brown made a motion for Mr. Wooten to draft a letter from the Board to the Governor, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Commissioner McPeters noted he had seen a Facebook post stating the Board had closed all campgrounds. He clarified the amendment the Board had made on April 2nd, was for campers to quarantine in place for 14 days if they were camping for more than 30 days.

Mr. Wooten also noted he had four campground operators that had called to see if the order would be lifted in 30 days. Mr. Wooten noted the amendment was open ended, and that hotels are allowed to bring in guests through the Governors order. Discussion followed, and consensus was to wait another week and revisit the amendment.

Vice Chairman Brown added the health and safety of the community is the Board's top priority.

Mr. Wooten added he would have Maria Preswood, HR Director attend the next meeting to give an update on internal staffing.

Adjournment

Vice Chairman Brown made a motion to recess at 12:22pm to Monday, April 27th at 11:30am at the Carson House Jubilee Arbor, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

David Walker
Chairman