

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
ADJOURNED SESSION – APRIL 2, 2020**

**Assembly**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Adjourned Session on Thursday, April 2, 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, ES Director; Sheriff Ricky Buchanan

**COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Kehler gave an update from Emergency Services:

- As of this date North Carolina has 1,837 confirmed cases, and 16 fatalities
- As of this date McDowell County has tested 124; 8 positive; 75 negative; and 41 pending
- two (2) triage tarps were set up outside of McDowell Hospital for an exercise and conducting drills in case they are needed
- EM has uploaded a screening tool where citizens can screen themselves for the virus by going to their website—[mcdowellem.com](http://mcdowellem.com) the website provides resources and links for assistance. The site was funded by a grant from the Dogwood Health Trust.
- planning is continuing with medical partners for a potential surge of COVID-19
- looking at alternative sites for surge if needed; and continuing to work on telehealth for paramedics, and community care paramedics
- regarding human services, McDowell County Schools are continuing to provide meals for children 18 and under
- the volunteer coordinator continues to work on feeding plan; homeless plan; and various request from individuals who have recently lost employment
- logistics team is still securing personal protection equipment (PPE) for emergency personnel; first responders, and healthcare personnel across the county. EM is scheduled to receive a shipment today from the State of NC
- State of NC EM notified local EM that the national supply has been depleted

- EM conducted a reverse Nixel call on the 9-1-1 system, the call rang over 12,000 phones; it was the first time it had been activated. Public information officers are also using the local radio and paper to get information to the public.

Vice Chairman Brown asked for an update on the assisted living centers and nursing homes. Mr. Kehler noted all those facilities have restricted visitations. Also a DSS representative is an acting liaison embedded at the EOC, and is fielding calls about PPE and general questions regarding the homes.

Chairman Walker asked when the peak of the virus would be. Mr. Kehler noted his department was anticipating an increase in cases through the month of April.

Chairman Walker asked Mr. Kehler for recommendations on how the public could help slow the spread of the virus. Mr. Kehler noted social distancing works; stay at home, travel only if necessary; only one family member pick up supplies; and check on the elderly, if you can pick up their supplies and drop them off at their door.

### **COVID-19 Policies**

Mr. Wooten presented Emergency FLMA Act, and Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (copies with agenda materials) recommended by the School of Government for approval. The policy would cover the Emergency Management employees and Sheriff's Office employees.

Commissioner Greene made a motion Brenda to approve the policies, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Mr. Wooten noted essential staff is still working. As a follow-up:

- \* Library Department has caught up on their work and some of the employees have been sent home, while some have been deployed to other departments.

- \* Recreation employees are still working on projects

- \* Senior Center distributes boxes of food one day a week. Staff is working three days a week, and when they are in the office employees are making well check calls on those who receive the home delivered meals. There are approximately 145 recipients of the home delivered meals. Chairman Walker suggested the possibility of the WE Care volunteers also making well check calls for the recipients.

- \* DSS has most employees teleworking with help from Rayburn Davis, IT Director who worked hard to help employees get online at home.

Mr. Wooten suggested closing the Administration and Annex lobbies to the public and have customers use a drop box, online services or mail in payments. Discussion followed on allowing citizens by appointment only.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to close the Administration and Annex lobby on Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup>, and schedule by appointment only for dealers for tag office, with exemptions for elderly or those who could not travel out of town to also have access by appointment only, second by Vice Chairman Brown. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Commissioner McPeters asked about the possibility of creating an employee pool that could be shared with another department. He also added Baxter and Columbia Carolina are hiring for part-time and fulltime.

Commissioner Greene noted the Board had received an email petition supporting campgrounds staying open. Board consensus was to continue to hold to the State of Emergency Amendment 1 as written.

Mr. Wooten also noted the intent of the Declaration was for out of state employees who held jobs in McDowell County to continue to work.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to adjourn at 12:09pm to Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am to a location to be determined, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

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Cheryl L. Mitchell  
Clerk to the Board

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David Walker  
Chairman