

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ADJOURNED SESSION – APRIL 6, 2020**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Adjourned Session on Monday, April 6, 2020, at 11:30a.m., at the Historic Carson House Jubilee Arbor.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Barry McPeters

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; William Kehler, ES Director; Carol Wolfenbarger, CEO Mission Hospital-McDowell

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Kehler gave an update from Emergency Services:

- As of this date McDowell County has 149 tested; 10 positive; 32 pending; 107 negative
- Karen Powell, Health Director continues to work with EOC to investigate contacts of the individuals with positive test
- on April 2nd EM implemented an online screening tool and in three days over 750 individuals had accessed the screening tool and completed it
- McDowell Cares.com continuing to work on feeding plan, childcare plan, sheltering of homeless individuals, and offering crisis assistance to individuals for various issues
- Planning section continues to write 72 hr working plans; working on short term; long term, and recovery
- logistics top priority is sourcing of PPE for first responders, and healthcare professionals in this county
- McDowell Cares.com has given great assistance by providing masks made by volunteers for the assisted living and nursing homes
- Public Information Officer (PIO) continues to push out timely and valid information on social media, websites, and newspaper. PIO and staff at the EOC are also finalizing a draft copy of a postcard with vital information about the virus for mass mailing
- current COVID-19 cost is approaching \$100,000, and the county threshold is \$165,000
- the majority of the expense is associated with obtaining PPE for first responders, healthcare professionals, as well as EOC related cost

Commissioner Greene asked after an individual has tested positive when is the individual declared recovered. Mr. Kehler noted when the individual's no longer had a fever for 72 hours, and they have met the quarantine timeframe of 14 days.

Mr. Kehler noted there has been a lot of compliance with the stay at home declaration, and the next couple of weeks will be critical for the spread of the virus. He added social distancing works, and encouraged the public to practice safe measures when they had to be in the public in order to flatten the curve. He added 92 out of the 100 counties in NC have positive cases.

Mission Hospital-McDowell Update

Ms. Carol Wolfenbarger, CEO of Mission Hospital-McDowell gave an update:

- goal to protect their workforce so they were not spreading the virus and also, to enable them to take care of the community
- the hospital is currently at Level 3-no visitors-exceptions are pediatrics, labor and delivery patients, and end of life patients
- all staff are wearing universal mask; an individual can be cotangent two days before their first symptom
- high-risk personnel are having their scrubs laundered internally at the hospital
- currently working on surge plans in the event of increased demands
- acute care unit has 25 beds—medical or surgical patient planning on increase of patients in ER
- supplies—PPE--is adequate for now, staff check out their own PPE every morning
- available beds--licensed for 65 beds—currently have 30 beds—20 acute care beds out of 25 are in use; labor and delivery currently have 2 out of 5 bed suites in use

Chairman Walker expressed his appreciation of having a hospital in the county. Ms. Wolfenbarger noted the great collaboration in McDowell County through the EOC and the cooperation of agencies will be what pulls the county through this pandemic.

Operations Update

Mr. Wooten advised the Administration and Annex lobbies are closed to the public. Also, the animal shelter has visitors by appointment only so they can limit the number of individuals in the building at the same time. He advised other departments also take in funds and are being addressed by each department head.

Mr. Wooten suggested Steve Bush, Chamber Director, if available should come to the next meeting to give updates on small business loans.

Chairman Walker asked if the Chamber and DSS were able to work together to establish a list of hiring opportunities for distribution to DSS clients. Mr. Wooten will update the Board at the next meeting on the status of that collaboration. Suggestion was also made to have an unemployment representative at the next meeting.

Mr. Kehler added that Mr. Bush had been very helpful at the EOC as liaison with industry and small business.

Mr. Wooten noted other counties had heard about the operation of the EOC, and the involvement of the faith community and businesses in the operation at the EOC. Other counties are using McDowell EOC as their model.

Adjournment

Commissioner Greene made a motion to adjourn at 12:08pm to Thursday, April 9th at 11:30am at the Carson House Jubilee Arbor, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 4-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

David Walker
Chairman