

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – FEBRUARY 11, 2019**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, February 11, 2019, at 5:00 p.m., at the County Administration Building, 60 E Court Street, Marion, North Carolina.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

None

Others Present

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

Call to Order

Chair Walker called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. The invocation was given by Dr. Haney, followed by the pledge of allegiance, led by Commissioner Vaughn.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, second by Vice Chair Brown, to approve the January 14, 2019 Regular Session, and January 24, 2019 Special Session minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Brown made a motion, second by Commissioner Greene to approve the agenda. By unanimous vote 5-0, the motion passed.

Tax Lien Advertisement

Ms. Linda Onufrey, Tax Collector, presented the listing of taxpayers who were delinquent and requested authorization to place notice of Unpaid Real Property Tax Liens in the McDowell News. The total amount of 2018 county real property taxes due as of January 31, 2019 was \$1,328,309,34.

Ms. Onufrey requested the advertising listing be published Wednesday, March 27, 2019. The quote for the advertising was \$4,649.40.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion to approve the advertising of the unpaid tax liens, set the publish date of March 27th, and authorize advertisement in the paper for the quote presented, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Administrative Items

Staff presented a fee waiver request from Stephen Locke for \$263.56 for a water leak adjustment. Mr. Locke had made the repairs to the leak.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion to approve the fee waiver request, second by Vice Chair Brown. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

The McDowell High School Career and Technical Education (CTE) program requested two surplus cars from the Sheriff's Department. The vehicles would be used in the automotive program, and once that program is finished with them, the fire program would use them as part of the vehicle extrication training. The vehicles would not be used for transportation purposes.

The Sheriff's Department had two vehicles, 2005 Crown Victoria and a 1995 K25 Suburban that were inoperable that could be used for the CTE program.

Mr. Wooten presented Resolution Authorizing Donation of County Owned Property:

Resolution Authorizing Donation of County Owned Property

WHEREAS, the 2005 Ford Crown Victoria VIN 2FAFP71W25X120642 and the 1995 Chevrolet K25 Suburban VIN 1GNGK26K5SJ415090 are no longer needed by McDowell County and therefore need to be sold or disposed; and

WHEREAS, McDowell County desires to donate the 2005 Ford and the 1995 Chevrolet to an education institution; and

WHEREAS, McDowell County Schools has expressed a desire to receive the vehicles for training purposes

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of McDowell County do hereby donate one 2005 Ford Crown Victoria and one 1995 Chevrolet K25 Suburban authorized by G.S. 160A-280.

ADOPTED this the 11th day of February, 2019

David N. Walker, Chairman

Cheryl L. Mitchell, Clerk to the Board

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to approve the *Resolution Authorizing Donation of County Owned Property*, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

The next item was a list of EMS accounts totaling \$353,609.82 for write-off. The accounts had been through the collection agency, garnishments if available, and then placed with NC Debt Setoff. Attempts had been placed on estates for up to three years.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to approve the EMS write-off of \$353,609.82, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Mr. Wooten then presented the final lease agreement for the McKinney building where the Elections Department will be relocated. The lease agreement will be located in the McDowell County Finance Department with the Purchasing Agent. The lease is between James F. McKinney Sr. Family Trust as Landlord, and McDowell County as Tenant. The lease is for three years at annual rental of \$36,000, with a three year option.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the Commercial Lease Agreement, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Budget Amendments

GF 19 - transfers between line items in various departments below \$3,000

GF 20 – Building Inspections-appropriates funds from increased building permit fees for the new software program

GF 21 – Board of Elections-transfers funds between line items to cover part time help in Elections

GF 22 – Emergency Services- transfers funds between line items and appropriates revenue received

GF 23 –Social Services- transfers between line items and appropriates revenue

GF 24 – Human Services- transfers between line items to cover increased workers compensation and unemployment costs

GF 25 – Facility Maintenance-appropriates revenue and fund balance for Spaulding Road and the Law Enforcement roof replacement project

GF 26 – Library - appropriates grant revenue

GF 27 – Animal Shelter-appropriates revenues to offset increased adoption expenses

GF 28 – Sheriff -appropriates revenue to cover contract housing at the Jail

GF 29 – Senior Center- appropriates revenue

GF 30 –Soil and Water Technician- appropriates revenue and transfers between line items

CP1 – County Projects-appropriates fund balance for Board-directed projects

ENT1 – Enterprise Fund(Waste) transfers between line items in the Waste Enterprise Fund

NWENT1 – Enterprise Fund-(Water) allocated revenue for additional water sales in the Nebo Water Fund

UENT1 – Enterprise Fund(Universal Fund)transfers between line items in the Universal Fund

SP2 – Amends for the School Project Fund for East Middle roof and McDowell High security

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve budge amendments GF19-GF30; CP1;ENT1; NWENT1; UENT1; and SP2, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

County Seal Revision

Staff was requested to produce a high resolution version of the county seal. While doing so, the design was tweaked to show a more accurate outline of the county, and the color more golden than yellow on the current seal. The picture of the 1845 courthouse was retained.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the revised seal, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Tax Matters

Releases, Refunds, & Write-offs

Write-offs	\$ 748.19
Refunds	\$1,913.04
MV tax refunds	\$ 597.51
Releases over \$100	\$3,023.77
Releases under \$100	\$ 432.85
Discoveries	\$2,829.89

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Vaughn to approve all tax matters. By unanimous vote of 5-0, the motion carried.

Board Appointments

The Isothermal Planning and Development Commission Board presented as a first reading the expiration of Dean Buff and Ashley Wooten's terms. Due to the first reading the board took no action.

Carson House Project

Mr. Chuck Abernathy, Dr. Jim Haney, and Jennings Bryant presented a request for funds to go toward the repair of one of the four chimneys in the Carson House. The chimney is separating from the house, and there is fear due to a shifting in the foundation also, the chimney will pull the side of the house with it when it falls. The repair estimate was \$56,000.

The request was for \$5,000 in the 2020 budget, and \$5,000 in the 2021 budget.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to grant the request, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Economic Development Public Hearing

Chair Walker declared the Board in public hearing at 5:30pm to hear public comments on an economic development incentive.

Mr. Chuck Abernathy, MEDA Director, presented information on an existing company based out of state. The company would have an initial employment of 30 people, with \$1.5M investment within two years. The company makes plastic patio furniture. The incentive offer was 40,000sf at \$1 a foot for the vacant space at Universal for one year. After the first year the rental would be \$2 a square foot. Mr. Abernathy has applied for two grants for the company, One NC Incentive from the State of NC offers \$2,000 per job, and the county would match that amount in the reduction in the lease rate. The other grant is Building Reuse Grant which offers \$10,000 per job, with a 50% match.

Chair Walker took comments from the public:

David Oetjen -asked if there would be an environmental impact on the county. Mr. Abernathy noted there would be no environmental impact.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion to go out of public hearing, second by Commissioner Greene at 5:36pm. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Discussion followed from the board regarding the benefits of hiring 30 people and the good deal the company is receiving on the lease at the space at Universal.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to approve the incentive, second by Commissioner McPeters. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Shooting Range Update

Mr. Wooten noted that he, Vice Chair Brown, Ronald Harmon, and Blair Melton had met with representatives of NC Wildlife to get an update on the proposed range. The NC Wildlife will request the property donation in order to utilize the value of the land as a grant match for the federal funding that will be used to build the range. The state ordered an appraisal of the property, and the appraisal was \$63,000 below what was necessary for the requirement. One option was to secure a second appraisal.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion for staff to obtain another appraisal on the property, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Health Coalition Update

Zach Wallace, Executive Director, of the Health Coalition gave an update on the coalition. The coalition which began in 2014 helps health based projects get started, such as The McDowell Access to Care and Health (MATCH) Program, and WorkFORCE Wellness program. The coalition also keeps an up-to-date resource guide for citizens.

Stacy Hill Road Water Project Update

Mr. Wooten noted the section would be open and running later this week. The Nebo Water Department had received 22 applications for request for service.

Staff requested the connection fees be waived from March 1st – August 31st for new customers, as the Board had done in the past for new water lines.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to approve the connection fee waiver from March 1st through August 31st, second by Commissioner Greene. By a 5-0 vote, the motion passed.

Trail Agreement

Mr. Wooten presented *the Interlocal Agreement between the City of Marion, McDowell County, and the McDowell Trails Association Concerning Trail Maintenance and Development*. The agreement notes the three entities will meet quarterly with at least two representatives of each party. The city and county would cost share for repairs to affected areas.

The Board considered the agreement as a first reading, and the item will be placed on the next Regular Session agenda.

Community Engagement Report

Ginger Webb and Paula Avery gave a presentation on the 70 page Community Engagement Project report. In partnership with the Community Forums in the West Marion, Marion East, and Old Fort, the forums prioritized ten issues: housing; transportation; childcare; food & farming; food insecurity; active living; youth engagement; substance use disorder; economic development; and public safety.

The report was prepared by the Community Engagement Project and authored by the Equitable Community Strategies. Appalachian State University partnered with the company to collect the data for the report. A copy of the report is filed with the agenda materials.

Foothills Food Hub Update

Heather Edwards, Project Developer, gave an update on the newly formed Foothills Food Hub. The Hub is a project of the McDowell Local Foods Advisory Council (LFAC). The Council is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to connecting, coordinating, and strengthening the local food system in McDowell County.

The Foothills Food Hub facilities will include

- food pantry storage and packing;
- farm fresh produce wash line, cold storage and distribution;
- teaching kitchen for cooking and other classes; and
- commercial kitchen for meal preparation, value added processing and food entrepreneur development

Nebo Crossing has given the Foothills Food Hub 9,000sf of leased space in their new building at no cost for 15 years. They will also support the Hub with \$1,000 a month for the next 4 years to help with expenses while funds are being secured. Ms. Edwards requested \$75,000 from the county to support building the facility, and would be asking the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation for \$150,000 grant later this week.

Commissioner Greene left the meeting at 6:33pm, and returned at 6:35pm.

Handouts from the presentation are filed with the agenda materials.

Offer for County Owned Property

The county had received offers on three county owned surplus lots. Two of the lots were tax foreclosures and one was acquired as part of the Eastfield sewer project years ago.

Mr. Wooten noted the Wild Ridges lot would need to be considered next month due to an upset bid being received on the lot.

Wild Ridges Lot	\$560
Grayson Street Lot	\$300
Matilda Avenue Lot	\$300

Commissioner Greene made a motion to accept the offers for the Grayson Street Lot and Matilda Avenue Lot property, second by Commissioner McPeters. By unanimous vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Change of Independent Auditors

The auditing firm of Johnson, Price, and Sprinkle notified staff their company will no longer perform county government audits due to changing regulatory requirements and other factors. The notice was effective immediately. Staff will send out Request for Proposals to auditors and will work with the Board to develop a selection process.

Citizen Comment

Chair Walker opened the floor for public comments at 6:50pm.

Brant Lindsey, Board member with Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail Association reported the National Park Service (NPS) has reached out to Mitchell, McDowell, and Burke Counties to help build a local coalition to plan a section of the trail that will connect Spruce Pine to Lake James. The Toe River Watch is coordinating the \$40,000 cash match to the \$60,000 NPS funding for the Master Plan.

Ellen Galloway spoke as a volunteer on animal welfare and expanding/relocating the existing Animal Shelter

Public comment ended at 7:02 pm.

Reports and Communications

Mr. Wooten noted the sewer line will be converted over soon at the Animal Shelter due to the line going to the new construction on Hwy 226S.

Mr. Wooten had spoken with Bob Boyette, City Manager, who noted the contract would be signed with DH Griffin for the Drexel clean up, and work would soon begin.

Mr. Wooten requested the meeting be recessed and continue on Monday, February 18th at 11:30am. The Board will hear updates on the MATCH program, and Emergency Management projects.

Recess

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner Greene, second by Commissioner Vaughn, the meeting was recessed at 7:05pm, and will reconvene on Monday, February 18th at 11:30am.

DAVID N. WALKER
CHAIRMAN

CHERYL L. MITCHELL
CLERK TO THE BOARD