

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – FEBRUARY 13, 2017**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, February 13, 2017, at 5:00 p.m., at the County Administration Building, 60 E Court Street, Marion, North Carolina.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Ashley Wooten, County Manager, Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Theresa Strickland, Public Information Technician (Filming)

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Walker called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Vice Chair McPeters, followed by the pledge of allegiance, led by Commissioner Crawford.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford, to approve the January 9, 2017 Regular Session minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Greene made a motion, second by Vice Chair McPeters to approve the agenda. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

RECOGNITION OF OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Sheriff Greene recognized Deputy Jason Cook who was selected as the 2016 Officer of the Year. Deputy Cook serves as the School Resource Officer for the county school system with primary responsibilities at McDowell High School. He also serves as the department liaison with the Explorers program for students who are interested in going into law enforcement.

Each Commissioner expressed their appreciation to Deputy Cook for the outstanding job he is doing. Chair Walker presented Deputy Cook with a Certificate of Appreciation.

CARSON HOUSE UPDATE

Mr. Chuck Abernathy, Chair of the Carson House Board of Directors, introduced Amanda Finn, Executive Director of the Historic Carson House, and the Carson House Board and Partners. Ms. Finn gave an update of the upcoming events.

Mr. Abernathy announced that Dr. James Lawton Haney, Jr had been awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award, the most prestigious award from the State of NC.

Dr. Haney expressed his appreciation to the Carson House Board and the Commissioners for the recognition.

Each Commissioner expressed their appreciation to Dr. Haney.

Chair Walker called for a brief recess at 5:37pm.

Called back in session at 5:40pm

TAX COLLECTION ITEMS

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. She stated the listing would publish Wednesday, March 29th. She advised she would send an advertising notice to the delinquents, and advised payment could be made up until March 22nd. The quote for the advertisement was \$4,649.40.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Vice Chair McPeters to approve the advertising of the unpaid tax liens and set the close date of March 29th and authorize advertisement in the paper for quote presented. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

TIME CLOCK DISCUSSION

Mr. Terry DePoyster, Facility Maintenance Director, gave an overview of the uAttend time management system his department had been evaluating over the last month.

Mr. DePoyster reviewed the advantages of the time management system, and noted he had found nothing negative about the system. Ms. Lisa Sprouse, DSS Director, also spoke on the ease of use of the system. Ms. Sprouse noted having one element of time that all employees use to replace the paper time system now in use would be very beneficial. Ms. Robbin Silvers, HR Director, also gave her positive opinion on the system.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Commissioner Greene, to go ahead with the system. By unanimous vote the motion carried.

EMS VEHICLE BIDDING REQUEST

Mr. William Kehler, Emergency Management Director, presented an authorization request to move forward with the purchase of quick response vehicle (QRV), and the remount of a box on a new chassis. The remount was for a 2009 ambulance with a 2017 or newer type I Ford F-450 4WD ambulance. The QRV would be replaced by utilizing state contract pricing for a SUV.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve going out for bid for ambulance and also purchasing QRV off of state contract, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW HEALTH DIRECTOR

Mr. Wooten introduced Ms. Karen Powell, the new Rutherford-Polk- McDowell Health District Director. Ms. Powell has been employed with the district health department for the last nine years, and has worked in many areas throughout the district.

Ms. Powell noted she had met with the county managers of the district and was looking forward to working with each county.

Commissioner Brown asked if employees had been hired for the two full-time Environmental Specialist vacancies. Ms. Powell noted one position had been filled, and she had hired three contract specialists out of Buncombe County to help with the needs of McDowell County. Ms. Powell noted from July to December 2016 there were 270 permits. In 2017 there had been 334 permits issued, showing the growth of McDowell County. Commissioner Brown suggested Ms. Powell meet with the Builders Association. Commissioner Crawford who serves on the District Health Board stated he has full confidence in Ms. Powell's ability.

MCDOWELL QUILT TRAIL UPDATE

Mike and Jill Lucas announced the Quilt Trail Committee will cease operation effective March 31, 2017. They will vacate the McDowell House on or before April 30, 2017. Ms. Lucas reported all remaining funds and record keeping will be turned over to the MACA Board. Also they will donate, with MACA approval, 534 cans of paint, scrap lumber, plywood and scaffolding to McDowell High School. The website would continue to be active.

The Commissioners expressed their appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. Lucas for their work and dedication to the program.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Chair Walker presented the second reading of an application from Alison Sprouse-Tucker for the Adult Care Home Advisory Committee/Nursing Home Advisory Board.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Greene to approve Alison Sprouse-Tucker. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

WATER PROJECTS UPDATE

Mr. Wooten reported the Universal Water Line is complete. The Advanced Mfg Center will be connected first.

The Harmony Grove Road line would be complete by the end of the month. The deadline had been set for waiving of connection fees for September 1.

Commissioners by consensus agreed to waive tap fees for businesses as well as individuals.

TAX MATTERS

Mr. Wooten presented a request from Creston Development LLC, Black Forest on Lake James POA, and Bent Creek POA LLC, for exemption.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve exemptions, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Releases, Refunds, & Write-offs	
Write-offs/Deceased	\$ 1,341.07
Refunds	\$ 572.37
MV tax refunds	\$ 589.06
Releases under \$100	\$ 114.92
Releases over \$100	\$ 1,720.30

Discoveries \$ 3,128.08

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve all releases and refunds, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

SUBDIVISION PAVING ESCROW AGREEMENT

Mr. Wooten presented a request from a developer in Old Fort for the county to hold funds in escrow until the asphalt plants are open for the paving of roads in the subdivision. Per the Subdivision Ordinance developers are required to guarantee the installation of roads as part of the approval process.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve paving escrow agreement, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS AND BUDGET UPDATE

Fee Waivers

Mr. Wooten presented two requests for fee waivers. The first request was from Grace Community Church to waive tipping fees for a burned down mobile home. Church volunteers will do all the demolition and hauling of materials.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown, to approve the request. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

The second waiver was for a water leak on the Nebo Water System. Amy and Richard Chang requested a \$289.12 adjustment.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve request, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Budget Update

Mr. Wooten noted he would begin work on the budget process with budget packets being distributed this month. He plans to present the budget recommendation in May to the Board for their review.

BUILDING INVENTORY OVERVIEW

Mr. Wooten made a presentation on some of the county owned buildings from the oldest to the newest including:

- McDowell House – Built around 1815
- Court House – Opened 1922
- Marion Library – Opened in 1930's
- Public Works – Opened in 1950's
- DSS Building – Opened in 1962 as a supermarket
- Administration Building – Opened 1976
- Marion EMS Base – Opened in 1977
- Animal Shelter – Opened in 1981
- County Maintenance – Opened in 1982
- Recreation Center – Opened in 1992
- Law Enforcement Center – Opened in 1995

- Health Department – Opened in 1996
- Mental Health Building – Opened 1997
- Old Fort Library – Opened in 1998
- Old Fort EMS Base – Opened in 2002
- Marion Senior Center – Opened in 2002
- Old Fort Nutrition Center – Opened in 2006

Commissioner Brown noted Mr. Bud Hogan had passed away who was a huge contributor to the county, and who the OF Nutrition Center was named after.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Joy Harkleroad gave a report from McDowell County Animal Welfare Alliance. She noted the Pet Responsibility Education Program had been taught in all 4th grade elementary schools. The program is fully funded through the Alliance. She also gave an update on the other programs of the Alliance. Ms. Harkleroad expressed her appreciation to the Board for their support.

Mr. Alan McLaughlin had a complaint about a new business that had moved into the neighborhood where Metal Industries on Hwy 70 had vacated. The name of the business was Smokey Mountain Natural Stone. He had called the sheriff's office, and been told nothing could be done about the excessive noise. The noise continues until 10:30-11pm and starts at 6:00am, seven days a week. The business is sawing rock, and unloading rocks with noisy machinery.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to have the Planning Board look at the Noise Ordinance, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Chair Walker noted A.C. "Bud" Hogan had passed away this week. He noted he would be remembered for his strong Christian faith, and his charitable contributions. He had donated land for the Old Fort Nutrition Site, and made several contributions to the Old Fort Library. He also made a \$100,000 donation to the nursing program at MTCC. Mr. Wooten noted the video of Mr. Hogan's bio is on the Legacy Program on McDowell County website.

Mr. Wooten noted Ms. Lisa Sprouse requested to have a lunch and learn program on the Foster Care Program on Monday, February 27th if possible. Consensus was the Commissioners could meet at noon on February 27th.

Mr. Wooten announced the Board had received an invitation to the Caldwell C3 ribbon cutting ceremony on Tuesday, February 21st at 2pm in Lenoir.

Commissioner Brown noted the Wildlife agency is looking at county sites for the proposed shooting range.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to transact at this time, Commissioner Brown made a motion to adjourn to February 27th, second by Vice Chair McPeters, and the meeting was adjourned.

DAVID N. WALKER
CHAIRMAN

CHERYL L. MITCHELL
CLERK TO THE BOARD