

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED SESSION – FEBRUARY 18, 2019**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Recessed Session on Monday, February 18, 2019, at 11:30a.m., at the County Administration Building, 60 E Court Street, Marion, North Carolina.

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

Call to Order

Chair Walker called the meeting to order at 11:30am.

Discussion of MATCH Program

Ms. Lisa Sprouse, DSS Director, introduced Amy Vaughn, McDowell Access to Care & Health (MATCH) Program Manager, and Annie Carpenter, Program Manager with Community Care of WNC. Grant funding for the MATCH program has been provided through Kate B Reynolds (KBR) for four years and there is confidence there will be two more years of funding. Mission Health was the fiscal agent and also houses the program manager. Since Mission Health was sold to HCA, and Community Care of WNC is restructuring due to the new Medicare reform, there has not been any communication that either entity is interested in continuing as the fiscal agent.

Ms. Carpenter requested for the county to be the fiscal agent to administer the grants, in the event HCA doesn't continue with the program. Ms. Carpenter added KBR will notify if MATCH will be receiving funds by May. She also noted their steering committee was always looking at sustainability funding and was pursuing other grants for operational cost. The second request was if one or both of the sponsoring partners pulled out of the project would the county be willing to house one or both of the positions under an existing department, such as DSS, or Health Department.

Chair Walker asked for the item to be placed on the agenda for the next Regular Session board meeting on March 11.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to write a letter of support for the MATCH program for their grant submission, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 4-0, the motion carried.

Emergency Services Update

William Kehler, EM Director, gave an update on recovery efforts from the 2018 storms Alberto, Tropical Storm Michael, Florence, and Winter Storm Diego.

Mr. Kehler presented a request for approval for the *Resolution Designation of Applicant's Agent for Tropical Storm Michael*. (Copy attached)

Winter Storm Diego does not appear to meet the federal threshold for federal declaration per Mr. Kehler.

Regarding the Westwood Chateau incident there has been an individual assessment done, and until a final determination has been done if the residents can return home there can't be a state declaration. There are 32 homes affected by the evacuation, one resident stayed in his home and will not heed the evacuation notice. He also noted there was a NC Dam Safety order in place, and the dam can't be drained more than one foot per day due to potential landslide or structure collapse.

Mr. Kehler also noted he is applying for a mitigation funding grant for a generator project to cover the DaVita Dialysis, Senior Center, and Administration Annex.

McDowell County was the only county east of Catawba that was declared an emergency for Tropical Storm Michael. Mr. Kehler advised his office has a database of roads in NW McDowell where the only access is by a foot bridge. Some of the roads have 5-8 homes that have been using a foot bridge since TS Alberto. NW McDowell had severe damages upwards of \$3M.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to send a letter to legislators asking for assistance for citizens whose private driveways were destroyed and a foot bridge is their only means of reaching their homes, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 4-0, the motion carried.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve *Resolution Designation of Applicant's Agent*, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Resolution Supporting School Calendar Flexibility

Mr. Wooten noted Mr. Terry Frank, School Board President, requested the following resolution supporting giving local control of school calendars to the School Board for approval:

Resolution Supporting Local Control of School Calendars

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Statutes give local boards of education powers of supervision and control of local school systems; and

WHEREAS, local control over establishing school calendars is an integral component of school system supervision and administrative powers with which local boards of education have been vested; and

WHEREAS, in 2004 the NC General Assembly seized control of setting school calendars and imposed a one-size-fits-all mandate on how school calendars are to be set; and

WHEREAS, the current one-size-fits-all school calendar start date is no earlier than the Monday closest to August 26 and the end date is no later than the Friday closest to June 11; and

WHEREAS, the State mandated late August start date means high schools do not complete the first semester until mid to late January; and

WHEREAS, the current law essentially requires high school students to take first semester exams after the winter break, which negatively impacts test scores, according to students and educators; and

WHEREAS, the second semester for high schools starts two to three weeks later than community colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, superintendents report that the calendar misalignment makes it nearly impossible for high school students or recent winter graduates to take courses at a nearby community college or university during the second semester; and

WHEREAS, exams for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes are given on the same day nationwide, and the current calendar law shortens the amount of time North Carolina's students have to learn the material before test day; and

WHEREAS, it is well-documented through multiple studies that children will experience a phenomenon known as summer learning loss, which has a disproportionate impact on low-income children; and

WHEREAS, long summer breaks can also negatively impact child nutrition, as low-income children who have access to regular meals at school through the free and reduced priced meal program may not have access to regular meals at home; and

WHEREAS, fall sports and band begin August 1, schedules for extracurricular have not changed to coincide with the State-mandated school calendar; and

WHEREAS, local boards of education are best equipped to understand the balancing act of meeting the community's needs and maximizing student success; and

WHEREAS, restoring local control of school calendars will allow local boards of education to best meet the calendar preferences of the families, educators, and businesses in our community while allowing for innovative experimental approaches to improve student achievement.

ADOPTED by the McDowell County Board of Commissioners this 18th day of February, 2019.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve *Resolution Supporting Local Control of School Calendars*, second by Vice Chair Brown. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Overmountain Victory Trail Funding Request

Starli McDowell, Toe River Watch, is gathering support and matching funds for a National Park Service (NPS) grant to develop a master plan for mapping of the Overmountain

Victory Trail from Mitchell County to Lake James. The \$60,000 of NPS Trail Planning funds requires a \$40,000 match. Ms. McDowell will also request funds from the City of Spruce Pine, Mitchell County EDC, Rotary of Marion, and other organizations. Steve Pierce, President of McDowell Trails Association sent a letter of support for the project. The request was for \$5,000 to go toward the project.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to grant the \$5,000 request, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Budget Planning Discussion

Mr. Wooten advised the budget packets would be going out to the departments by the end of the month.

Adjourn

Commissioner Greene made a motion to adjourn at 12:22pm, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

David Walker
Chair

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board