

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – JANUARY 9, 2017**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, January 9, 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 Commissioner Greene, followed by the pledge of allegiance, led by Commissioner Brown.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown, to approve the December 5, 2016 Regular Session minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

RECOGNITION

The Board recognized Miss McDowell High School, senior Kaitlyn Helton; Miss Titan, freshman Piper Styles; and Mr. MHS, senior Dakota Merrill. Ms. Heather Kaylor, pageant director for Miss McDowell High School Scholarship Pageant, spoke on the requirements for the contestants. Both queens will be able to compete in Miss America and Miss America Teen in Raleigh. Ms. Helton will compete as Miss Mountain Glory; and Ms. Styles will compete as Ms. Mountain Glory Teen. Mr. Merrill noted the Mr. MHS pageant was a fundraiser which raised over \$8,000 that was donated to two local families.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Mr. Wooten presented an adjustment for \$37.68 for a water leak.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford, to grant the request for the adjustment. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Mr. Wooten presented a list of budget amendments for approval:

- GF 22 --- Transfers donated revenue to the education line item in Extension
- GF 23 --- Transfers taxable poll worker pay to the salary line item from election expense
- GF 24 --- Allocates grants, revenues and other fund balance in Emergency Services
- GF 25 --- Appropriates fund balance due to roof repairs and to transfer between line items
- GF 26 --- Appropriates fund balance due to convenience site paving and donated revenue
- GF 27 --- Appropriates fund balance (asset forfeiture reserve) grant revenue, and transfer between line items
- GF 28 --- Appropriates grant revenue for the ECU training grant
- GF 29 --- Appropriates additional revenue and transfers between line items
- 911 F1 --- Appropriate fund balance and transfer between line items in the 911 fund

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve GF 22 – GF 29, and 911 F1 budget amendments as presented, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Wooten noted staff had started the process of budget work. He also reviewed the sales tax receipts.

LEGISLATIVE GOALS CONFERENCE

Chair Walker presented a list of Legislative goals presented by the NCACC Board that will be reviewed at the Conference. Commissioner Greene asked for input on the list of goals from the Commissioners. Consensus was to vote in agreement with the goals.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Chair Walker presented as a first reading an application from Alison Sprouse-Tucker for the Nursing Home/Adult Care Committees. No action was taken.

DISPOSAL of PROPERTY

Mr. Wooten presented a request for disposal of a milk cooler by the Senior Center. He noted NCGS 160A-280 allows donating personal property to another governmental entity. The school system had expressed interest in acquiring the cooler. Staff had previously posted the cooler for sale with no interest.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve, second by Commissioner Greene. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

TAX MATTERS:

- **Releases, Refunds, & Write-offs**

Refunds	\$ 447.59
MV tax refunds	\$1,237.76
Releases under \$100	\$ 58.41
Releases over \$100	\$5,370.96
Discoveries	\$ 380.15

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford to approve all tax matters. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

Chair Walker called for a recess at 5:23pm. Called back in session at 5:25pm

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Wooten noted the Public Works department had worked hard and opened the day after Christmas, which was a county holiday. He expressed his appreciation to the staff.

He also expressed his appreciation to the Emergency Management, Facility Maintenance, and DSS departments for their hard work over the past weekend's snow storm.

Mr. Wooten stated the Board had been invited to the Martin Luther King, Jr. program at Addie's Chapel, at 11am on Monday, January 16. He also noted county facilities would be closed on Monday, January 16 for MLK holiday.

AUDIT PRESENTATION

The county's independent auditor Kathy Atkinson from Johnson Price and Sprinkle, and April Westmoreland, chief auditor presented a detailed overview of the county's FY 2015-16 independent annual audit as required by the State of North Carolina.

Ms. Atkinson reviewed several specific items of interest related to the various funds. She stated that she felt it was a very good audit report. She added the fund balance percentage was healthy and stable as well, noting the State of NC monitors the percentage and like to see it at least 8%. The five year history showed the fund balance had been 24%-26%.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown to approve the audit as presented and submit to the NC Treasurer's office. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Chair Walker spoke on the excellent job Ms. Morgan and her staff does each and every year. He also expressed his appreciation to JPS.

CDBG CLOSEOUT PUBLIC HEARING/REPORT

Mr. Wooten introduced Randall Conley, Managerial Asst, and Laurie Powell, grant administrator.

Mr. Conley gave a report on the training program he attended through the CDBG Commerce Fellows Training Grant. The classes were held at ECU, where he learned more about local government and community improvement. He also presented a plaque to the Commissioners from the program administrators at ECU.

Chair Walker declared the meeting in public hearing in order to receive comments regarding the closeout of the 2015 Community Development Block Grant Commerce Fellows Building Community Grant 11-D-2694.

There were no public comments.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to go out of public hearing, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote the motion carried.

Chair Walker called for recess at 5:52. He called meeting back in session at 6:00.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Chuck Abernathy, MEDA Director, expressed his congratulations to the Board on receiving the prestigious County Commissioners of the Year Award by the NC School Boards Association.

Next, he presented an economic development incentive of \$66,000 over a three year period and the hiring of 22 new jobs for a new industry.

Chair Walker declared the meeting in public hearing under NCGS 158-7.1

There were no public comments.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to go out of public hearing, second by Commissioner Crawford. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve incentive of \$66,000 for 22 new jobs, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Abernathy presented a second economic development incentive value of \$358,334 over a four year period and the hiring of 90 new jobs over a three year period for an existing company. Mr. Abernathy noted talks with the company the number of employees had changed initially from 50 to 90 to 150. Mr. Abernathy requested authorization to sign documents that could go up to 150 jobs.

Discussion followed on the history of manufacturing jobs in the county.

Chair Walker declared the meeting in public hearing under NCGS 158-7.1

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to go out of public hearing, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Chair Walker declared the meeting back in public hearing under NGS 158-7.1

Jacob Blair ask about the competitiveness from other counties.

Discussion was held on economic competitiveness from other counties and even the state. Chair Walker spoke on the diversity of the Board.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to go out of public hearing, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve incentive agreement at \$3,000 per job for whatever economic development works out, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

2016 YEAR in REVIEW

Mr. Wooten made a presentation on the highlights of 2016.

Public Education:

- The Board budgeted additional funds for teacher supplements, with a goal of having one of the top supplements in the region within four years.

- The Board was recognized by the NC School Boards Assoc as “County Commissioners of the Year”
- The Board works with the MTCC Trustees, and toured the campus during the fall to learn of facility needs.
- Two Commissioners serve on Education Committee with representative of the School Board and MTCC to discuss concerns and opportunities for improvement.

Economic Development:

- Held several public hearings through the year to consider incentives
- Great relationship with MEDA
- Expand wireless broadband throughout the county with Skyrunner
- Universal complex continues to provide opportunities for business development

County Facilities:

- Courthouse renovations included an addition of a public elevator, and safety enhancements for inmate holding and transfer.
- Law Enforcement Center was also expanded to add beds for female inmates.
- The last two convenience centers were paved.
-

Emergency Services:

- Community Care Paramedic Program continues to receive praise and attention state and nationwide.
- Approval given for 911 Backup Center
- Staff assisted in Hurricane Matthew aftermath, and also several neighboring counties fight against wildfires.

Public Infrastructure:

- Harmony Grove Road water line added 1.5 miles of line to the I-40, Exit 90 Interchange.
- Continued work on the permitting project on the future Lake James Water Treatment Plant.

Chair Walker left the meeting at 6:42pm. He returned to the meeting at 6:44 pm.

- Universal water line was constructed to serve the Advanced Manufacturing Center.

Employee initiatives:

- 2.5% COLA for employees
- Personnel Handbook was revised with enhancements in employee benefits.
- Wellness program continues to reduce health insurance costs and early detection of health concerns for employees.

Outdoor Recreation and Environment:

- Board is pursuing a public shooting range for the county.

- The county received \$80,000 in Recreational Trails Program funding to help with the Catawba River Greenway project.
- Revised the Lake James Protection Ordinance to further protect the water quality of Lake James.
- The Board met with US Forest Service representatives to discuss the Pisgah National Forest Plan, requesting any future plans maintain public access and resource protection.

Chair Walker noted the importance of having a report of projects and work the Board had done in the past year.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one in attendance wished to comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Vice Chair McPeters, second by Commissioner Crawford, the meeting was adjourned.

DAVID N. WALKER
CHAIRMAN

CHERYL L. MITCHELL
CLERK TO THE BOARD