

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION – JANUARY 11, 2016**

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, January 11, 2016, 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; Van “Randy” Hollifield; Matthew Crawford, and Tony Brown.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Vice-Chairman McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown, to approve the December 14, 2015 Regular Session minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Wooten requested to add an item to the agenda, Mr. Mark Hamlett from Wildlife Resources Commission.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chairman McPeters to approve the agenda with the addition. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS AND BUDGET UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten stated the audit should be ready for the February board meeting. A draft copy is available in his office. He also stated that Chairman Walker, Alison Morgan, Finance Officer, and he had met with the audit team and they had a very good audit. Mr. Wooten said the fund balance had grown slightly.

**WAIVER OF TIPPING FEE**

Mr. Wooten presented a request from the Sugar Hill-Montford Cove Fire Department for waiver of tipping fees. He stated the department is cleaning out the facility and anticipate one or two container loads. They will provide the container and transport.

Vice-Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield, to grant the request from Sugar Hill-Montford Cove Fire Department to waive the tipping fee. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

## **BUDGET AMENDMENTS**

Finance Officer, Alison Morgan, presented a list of budget amendments for approval:

- GF 15 — Allocates miscellaneous income to adjust the 911 funds, \$38
- GF 16 — Transfer funds to the McDowell House project to cover the local project match, \$3,580
- GF 17 — Transfer funds from various benefit and salary line items and fund balance to cover health insurance claims, \$150,311
- GF 18 — Allocate fund balance to cover the purchase of an ambulance, \$156,977
- GF 19 — Allocate various Sheriff department revenues, \$91,131
- GF 20 - Allocate various DSS grants/revenues, \$23,892
- GF 21 — Allocates Senior Center donations to various line items,\$8,989
- GF 22 — Makes various transfer between line items under \$3,000.,
- LJA1 Lake James EPA Project—Allocates funds for the water treatment plant property purchase in the last fiscal year,\$95,423
- SP1 School Project Fund — Allocates revenues to cover school project expenditures, \$384,175
- 911 Fund — Appropriates 911 fund balance to cover various expenditures, \$30,000

## **PROJECT BUDGET AND CLOSEOUT RESOLUTIONS**

Ms. Morgan then presented the following ordinances and resolutions:

- \*\*Project Budget Ordinance Amendment 2 for the Jail and Courthouse project. The ordinance depletes the contingency and moves funds to construction line item. (Attachment A)
- \*\* *RESOLUTION CLOSE-OUT OF PROJECT FUND (38)*, for the Appalachian Regional Council Grant for the purchase of equipment at McDowell Technical College.(Attachment B)
- \*\* *RESOLUTION CLOSE-OUT PROJECT FUND (46)*, for the Old Fort and AEC school roofing projects.(Attachment C)
- \*\* *RESOLUTION CLOSE-OUT PROJECT FUND (47)*, for the PARTF Grant for the construction of a greenway at the Spaulding Road property. (Attachment D)
- \*\**RESOLUTION CLOSE-OUT PROJECT FUND (53)*, for the NC Housing Grant for renovations to needy family's homes.(Attachment E)

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown to approve GF 15-22, LJA1, School Project Fund, and 911 Fund, and all close out projects. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

## **RENEWAL OF TAG OFFICE CONTRACT**

Mr. Wooten presented a contract from the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles for the License Plate Agency (LPA). The contract is for eight years. Chad Phillips, Tax Assessor and also oversees the LPA, spoke in favor of keeping the tag office in the county facility for ease of public use.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Vice-Chair McPeters to approve the eight year contract with NCDMV License Plate Agency. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

## **CDBG AWARD AND CONTRACTS**

Mr. Wooten stated the county has received notification of a \$22,500 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Commerce Fellows Capacity Building. He recommended that Randall Conley

attend the classes in order to advance his skills. The program will be held at East Carolina University, and there will be no cost to the county. Mr. Wooten introduced Mr. Conley, who expressed his appreciation for the professional development opportunity.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Vice Chairman McPeters to approve *RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SIGNATORIES FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT*. (Attachment F) By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **SHOOTING RANGE**

Mr. Mark Hamlett, Chief of Engineering, NC Wildlife Resources Commission made a presentation on the Commission's Shooting Range Program. He stated under a Memorandum of Agreement the Commission would design, permit, and construct the facility, while the partner agency would maintain the shooting range, and provide a Range Safety Officer during the hours of operation.

Commissioners expressed their favorable opinions on entering a partnership with the Commission. Mr. Hamlett explained the next step would be to find a site, hire an environmental consultant, and conduct noise level studies in the area. Once sound studies and an assessment are completed, the Commissioners and Commission would hold a public meeting for input. If meeting is favorable, the Commission would present an agreement with the county and proceed with design of site.

Mr. Wooten recommended Mr. Ron Harmon, Assistant County Manager/Planning Director, work with Mr. Hamlett to look at possible sites for the range. Commissioner Brown added he would like to thank Benny Stamey and Arvin Hicks for their work in getting the Commission to present the plan to our county.

### **AMBULANCE PURCHASE AUTHORIZATION/GRANT DISCUSSION**

Mr. William Kehler, Emergency Services Director, presented a request for authorization to purchase an ambulance.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield, to authorize construction of bids for purchase of ambulance. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Kehler then presented an update on several grants that the agency has received and/or applied for:

- Foundation for the Carolinas awarded McDowell County EMS Community Care Paramedic Program a \$25,000 grant to enhance program capacity by funding a community paramedic on Saturdays and Sundays for 52 weeks. This grant uses existing personnel and does not create a new position or require matching funds.
- Community Paramedic Program has also applied for a \$75,000 grant through the NC DHHS to conduct a pilot project in community paramedicine. The initial bill which directed DHHS to award three existing programs with grant funding was co-sponsored by Rep. Josh Dobson. This pilot project seeks to collect data from an existing program on the effectiveness of community paramedicine and the evaluation of high utilizers of EMS and ER services.

- Behavioral Health Diversion from Local ER-

Mr. Kehler reported significant progress has been made in assisting with diverting mental health patients from the local emergency room. McDowell EMS is one of 12 agencies in North Carolina selected to be part of the Mental Health Diversion Project. The project seeks to reduce the serious financial and operational impact on local emergency rooms due to long stays of mental health patients.

McDowell EMS Community Care Program will be reimbursed from Smoky Mtn. LME during the pilot project \$166 for diverting a patient to mobile crisis, or \$211 for a patient who is diverted to RHA's clinic.

- **Kate B. Reynolds Grant Cycle**

McDowell's Community Care Paramedic Program was initially funded by the Trust as a three year grant which ends June 30, 2016. Mr. Kehler requested approval for McDowell EMS to reapply with the Trust under the Healthy Places Initiative for an expansion grant to fund the program for an additional three to four years.

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

### **MCDOWELL HOSPITAL UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten introduced the McDowell Hospital CEO Carol Wolfenbarger. Ms. Wolfenbarger gave an update on the hospital construction and future of healthcare in the county. She gave an expected opening date of mid 2017 for the new hospital.

Commissioner Hollifield ask about funding for the construction. Ms. Wolfenbarger stated the Mission Health is funding the project. The Foundation may fundraise for special projects.

### **JAIL/COURTHOUSE PROJECT UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten gave a report on construction at both facilities:

\*\*Late March, early April should wrap up initial scope of construction:

\*Jail — female expansion and juvenile dorm

\*Courthouse — elevator and security enhancements.

\*\*Courthouse:

secure corridor, prep/installation of elevator

lower level courtroom needs a flip, to make it more accessible to public. Bids are approximately \$163,000 and need judicial approval also.

alternate sites are being researched to hold court during the flip construction

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield, to authorize flip of the courthouse and change orders necessary of \$163,203.30 as presented. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

### **DREXEL SITE UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten reported the City of Marion was awarded \$500,000 in Community DBG funds to assist with the cleanup and remediation of the Drexel site. As per previously decided the match is \$125,000 which the county would split 50/50 with the city. Mr. Bob Boyette, Marion City Manager, Mr. Chuck Abernathy, MEDA Director, and Mr. Wooten met to discuss an interlocal agreement. Mr. Boyette will present a draft agreement at the next joint city/county utility committee meeting.

### **PARTF UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten reported the county had received notification of the awarding of the PARTF Grant. He also stated he has been working with representatives of the McDowell Trails Association (MTA) and adjacent property owners on an easement for the access road. MTA has also been working with nearby

property owners to secure easements for future trail extensions. Mr. Wooten stated he was hopeful to have a design plan in six to nine months. Mr. Wooten stated he had spoken with Frank Dean, President of MTA, and the association has secured a donation from the local Marion Rotary Club of \$15,000.

### **WATER LINE/RECLASSIFICATION UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten gave an update on the Harmony Grove Road and Universal waterlines. Both lines are currently in design and permitting. Isothermal Planning is assisting with the grant documentation and reporting for the Universal lines. Depending on the grant requirements, the work may be bid in late spring.

Mr. Wooten stated the lake reclassification as a water source is also proceeding. McGill Associates has been completing various reports for Duke Energy, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and several state agencies. The state will review the request in the next month or so, according to their staff.

### **BROADBAND GRANT UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten stated the county has worked with MEDA, the Chamber, NC Commerce, and other partners to develop strategies to expand broadband availability. After meetings with current and existing providers the only company that was interested in tackling broadband is Skyrunner. The company operates antennas on communication towers that transmit Internet service wirelessly. They have been in business in several parts of the county for several years.

Mr. Wooten reported the broadband committee and Skyrunner proposed to install at least one additional transmitter in the Old Fort area to expand the wireless broadband. A grant was submitted to the Appalachian Regional Commission several months ago and has been provisionally awarded. MEDA will act as a conduit for the funding. Mr. Wooten expressed appreciation to the McDowell Chamber for their assistance, and introduced Mr. Steve Bush, Chamber Executive Director. Mr. Bush spoke on the need of broadband in the county.

Vice-Chair McPeters left the meeting to attend another meeting at 6:40pm.

### **IPDC BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

Isothermal Planning and Development Commission currently has two members appointed by the McDowell County Board of Commissioners, Dean Buff and Chuck Abernathy. Mr. Abernathy has asked to be replaced. Mr. Buff's term expires in April.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield, to appoint Ashley Wooten in Chuck Abernathy's place on the Commission. By unanimous vote, motion carried. Chairman Walker stated Mr. Buff's was first reading, and the Board would make a decision after second reading.

### **TAX MATTERS:**

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

Write-offs/Deceased	\$ 557.22
Refunds	\$ 711.48
MV tax refunds	\$1788.82
Releases under \$100	\$ 64.47

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

**REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Wooten stated the Board had been invited to the Martin Luther King, Jr. program at Addies Chapel, at 11am on Monday, January 18.

Mr. Wooten also stated the Board was invited to attend Community Health Forum on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 at MTCC, to discuss the health assessment.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Paws and Claws made a presentation that is presented to all 4<sup>th</sup> graders in the county on the importance of spay and neuter.

Mr. Steve Bush, spoke on shooting sports and hosting shooting tournaments in our county. Also, would be glad for the Chamber to work with the county to support shooting tournaments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner Brown, second by Commissioner Hollifield, the meeting was adjourned.

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DAVID N. WALKER  
CHAIRMAN

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CHERYL L. MITCHELL  
CLERK TO THE BOARD