

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED SESSION – JUNE 1, 2020**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Recessed Session on Monday, June 1, 2020, at 11:30a.m., at the Universal Conference Room.

Members Present

Tony Brown, Vice-Chair; Barry McPeters; Lynn Greene; Brenda Vaughn

Member Joining Later

David N. Walker, Chair

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; William Kehler, Director ES; Alison Bell, Finance Director

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Brown called the meeting to order.

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Kehler gave an update from Emergency Services:

- The EOC remains activated at Level 2 on this the 78rd day of activation
- 1190 tested; 935 negative; 64 positive; 1 death
- 88% of positives have not required hospitalization; percentage positive of total number tested is 5.4%; highest was 8.8% the middle of April
- NCDHHS data figures are not accurate to McDowell numbers due to someone coming in from out of county and being tested. Foothills Health Dept. is keeping up with the numbers and they are accurate
- today was the first day of community testing at three locations
- coordination with long term care facilities continues; and a DSS rep is still in the EOC with daily calls to the facilities
- continue to work closely with NCEM regarding Category B funding and CRF funds
- the first 2-3 weeks of the virus, the EMS volume was very low; within the last 2-3 weeks EMS has seen an above average in calls
- 386 citizens were tested last week

Mr. Kehler noted his department is examining damages due to the recent flash flooding in the county due to a recent unnamed storm. Currently there is \$249,570 worth of damages which is over the federal reimbursement threshold. He reported NCEM is still examining to see if

the state as a whole has enough damages to qualify. He noted parts of the county received 1 ½ inches of rain.

Chairman Walker joined the meeting at 11:40am.

Mr. Kehler noted there are automated rain gauges at the various fire departments which provide real time information to Emergency Services.

Coronavirus Relief Fund

Mr. Wooten noted Congress had passed the CARES Act which established the Coronavirus Relief Fund. The McDowell County share is \$994,465. Since municipalities were not provided funding in the legislation, sharing funding from the county was strongly encouraged by NCACC. Using the per capita funding the breakdown would be:

McDowell County:	\$827,465
City of Marion:	\$150,800
Town of Old fort	\$16,200

Vice Chairman Brown made a motion to include the municipalities if they provide receipts for reimbursement, and for the staff to work up an Interlocal Agreement, second by Commissioner Greene. Discussion followed. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Budget Presentation

Mr. Wooten presented his 2020-2021 budget presentation to the Board. He started his presentation with an overview of fiscal year 2020 accomplishments:

- The Transit Dept continues to improve service. New Ford Transit vehicles were delivered this year. The goal is to have all vehicles replaced within the next two years
- Fonta Flora State Trail at Greenlee Park was opened
- Courthouse renovation project is continuing and should be complete in the next fiscal year
- Universal property development continues, grants received will extend water and sewer on College Dr.
- approval of land for a housing development in partnership with the Gateway Wellness Foundation
- new Board of Elections building opened providing space for one-stop voting, training, equipment and storage
- Public Shooting Range planning continues
- The McDowell County Trail Committee continues to meet quarterly with staff and Chairman Walker
- Black Bear property on Lake James was approved for a day use area with picnic tables, a fishing pier, and a separate area for overnight camping.
- Recreation Department has improved collaboration with the school system, as well as the volunteers who help coordinate various programs. There are major capital needs at county facilities that will need resources in the coming years.
- Emergency Services four-station plan continues with the bidding of the new North Station and new Headquarters.

- Assessment Solutions of NC began the real property revaluation for 2023 for every parcel in the county

Fiscal Year 2021 Overview

Budget Priorities

- maintain public education funding
- improve public safety through investments in Emergency Services and Sheriff’s Office
- recruit and train skilled county staff
- improve county facilities
- invest in community and economic development

New Expenditure Impacts

Public Education – increase MTCC operating \$40,000-for the new building operating cost

Public Safety – EMS building debt payment	\$94, 054
EM Communications holiday pay	\$29,000
Sheriff operating	\$120, 286

County Facilities and Equipment – Public Services Vehicle Debt	\$10,200
Building Inspections Vehicle Debt	\$ 5,064
EMA Vehicle Debt	\$ 7,308
Elections Utilities	\$24,000
Sheriff’s facility roof	\$35,000
Catawba River Trail maintenance	\$10,000

County Organization Improvements – Local retirement rate increase	\$186,372
Revaluation Contract	\$128,000

Community and Economic Development – Waste Disposal	\$ 30,477
Health Dept	\$ 46,987
Shooting Range	\$250,000
Broadband Study	\$ 11,000
Universal utility grant match	\$117,500

The 2020-2021 proposed budget was for \$45,893,518 – an increase of .99%. The proposed tax rate remained the same at 58.75 cents for the General Fund. Property taxes remain the largest single source of revenue.

Chair Walker requested the Board review the budget recommendations and let the County Manager know their thoughts regarding the budget.

Vice Chairman Brown noted he had mentioned the teacher incentive the Board had been giving the school system, and the teachers knew nothing about it. Chairman Walker noted the best way was to find out how the school board would prefer teacher increases.

Mr. Wooten noted there would be a budget public hearing on June 15th at 11:30am at the Universal Conference Room. He added the Board would need to approve the budget on June 30th at their meeting.

Chairman Walker declared the Board in Closed Session at 12:42pm pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a) 3 and 6.

Chairman Walker declared the Board back in Open Session at 1:25pm.

Adjournment

Commissioner McPeters made a motion to adjourn at 1:26 pm to Thursday, June 4th, at 11:30am at the Universal Conference Room, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

David Walker
Chairman