

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
ADJOURNED SESSION – JUNE 29, 2018**

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in adjourned session on Friday, June 29, 2018, at 11:30a.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; Lynn Greene; and Brenda Vaughn

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**OTHERS PRESENT**

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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Walker called the meeting to order.

**TOWER DISCUSSION**

Mr. Wooten presented a request from a small for-profit company to place a transmitter on the Grants Mountain public safety communications tower. An existing customer requested a study be done to determine for weight and frequency interference. A quote had been received from the tower consultant for \$5,600 to do an inventory and load study for the proposed usage. If the load and frequency studies come back positive, the county could consider leasing the tower space.

Mr. William Kehler, EM Director, spoke on the need of the load study, and the department's recommendation the study be done. He added the tower is vital to public safety in the county.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to have the study done and then meet again to consider the lease request, second by Commissioner Vaughn. Discussion was held regarding if the motion included cost sharing on the study. Commissioner Brown amended his motion by adding the county pay for half of the cost of the study, and the company making the request pays the other half, second by Commissioner Vaughn. Discussion was held regarding the cost share of the study. Commissioner Brown requested to withdraw his motion, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By unanimous consent, the motion was withdrawn.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to have the study done and paid for by the county, then recoup the cost in the lease, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**FY 2019 BUDGET / FEE SCHEDULE**

Several fee adjustments were presented with a proposed effective date of August 1, 2018:

- Nebo Water: City of Marion increased water rate by 3% and the county rate is very low to most surrounding county water rates of \$25-\$30 base rate  
 Proposed: Increase the zero gallon/base rate from \$12 to \$17
- Public Works: The county hauler, Republic Services, is increasing tonnage fees to \$49.50  
 Proposed: Increase tipping from \$48 to \$50
- Planning: Due to increased inspection involved in shoreline protection  
 Proposed: Increase the shoreline protection fee from \$100 to \$150
- Planning: Due to increased paperwork involved  
 Proposed: Increase the cell tower permit fee from \$2,000 to \$2,500 and the co-location fee from \$1,000 to \$1,500
- Inspections: Due to increased fees in surrounding counties  
 Proposed: Trades permit increases from \$60 to \$80  
 Residential permits go from a square footage sliding scale to a rate of 40 cents per square foot with a \$500 minimum
- Emergency Management  
 Proposed: Various fee increases for equipment usage

Discussion followed on the proposed fees. The Inspections Department residential permits fees, consensus of the Board was 3,000 to 5,000 square foot pay 35 cents a square foot and above 5,000 square foot pay 40 cents per square foot.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the budget and amended fee increases with effective date of the fee increases of August 1, 2018, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Request to close out the money market account at PNC and move it to a new account at First Bank for a higher interest rate.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to move to First Bank, second by Commissioner Greene. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **Contract to Audit Accounts**

Mr. Wooten presented a contract to audit accounts with Johnson, Price & Sprinkle, P.A. for approval for July 1, 2017 ending June 20, 2018.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the contract with Johnson, Price & Sprinkle for the audit, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **Purchasing Policy**

Staff had received guidance the threshold for additional purchasing requirements using federal funds needs to be raised for micro-purchases from \$3,500 to \$10,000 and simplified acquisitions from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve purchasing policy revisions, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

## **Budget Amendments**

The following Project Ordinances and budget amendments were presented for approval:

### **Project Budget Ordinance**

Courthouse Renovation and Addition Amendment1  
 Stacy Hill Water Line Amendment 1  
 Stacy Hill Water Line Amendment 2  
 Catawba Falls Trail Improvements

### **Budget Amendments**

GF 79 – Various transfers under \$3,000  
 GF 80 – Allocates anticipated revenue for Alberto  
 GF 81 – Allocates anticipated revenue in the Register of Deeds department  
 GF 82 – Transfers between line items at the Senior Center  
 GF 83 – Transfers between various line items  
 GF 84 – Transfers between various line items  
 ENT5 – Transfers between line items and allocates revenues in the Waste Fund  
 NWENT4 – Allocates loan proceeds to the Stacy Hill Road Project  
 UENT3 – Allocates incentive discount for American Plastics  
 SI4 – Allocates revenue for the Self Insurance Fund  
 SI5 – Allocates revenue for the Self Insurance Fund

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve Project Ordinances and Budget Amendments as presented, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

## **EVENT CENTER DISCUSSION**

An interlocal agreement was presented on behalf of the City of Marion, Chamber of Commerce, and McDowell County for the Municipal Events Center. The City and Chamber would lease the 15,000 square foot space for an event/civic space from the LDM Event Center LLC. Chamber asked the County for a financial commitment of \$20,000 each year for an initial 10 year period. Discussion followed. The City commitment was \$25,000 per year for a 10 year period.

Consensus from the Board was to table the item and bring back to the August meeting in order to review the contract and offer input.

## **DREXEL PROPERTY DONATION AGREEMENT**

The current owner of the former Drexel property did a half demolition of the site, and now seeks to donate the property to the City of Marion and McDowell County. The environmental studies have been completed on the site, and the City and County are afforded the liability protections contained within the Brownfields Property Reuse Act. The City and County agreement notes the State is providing through a CDBG grant and Building Demolition Grant \$800,000 in funds with remaining \$250,000 being split between \$125,000 contributed from the City and \$125,000 contributed from the County.

Discussion was held on the cleaning up and the value of the property and liability. The County Attorney had not reviewed the agreement.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to table the issue until the County Attorney looks at the agreement, second by Commissioner Greene. Discussion followed of bringing back the agreement at the

July meeting.

Aye- Vice Chair McPeters  
 Commissioner Brown  
 Commissioner Greene  
 Commissioner Vaughn

No- Chairman Walker

By a vote of 4-1 the motion passed.

### **Capital Planning Discussion**

The Courthouse Project is underway, and vertical construction should start very soon. The Old Fort Elementary construction is still in discussion and will be approximately \$20 million. There are concerns from the School Board there will not be sufficient funds for other capital projects such as roofs, HVAC, etc, needs in the other schools.

Also, replacing EMS base and construction of a new base station on Barnes Road, and a substation on the north side of Marion in 2020. Design work and site planning are in the preliminary stages, anticipated cost of \$2-\$3 million for the type of facility needed.

Discussion held on the prospect of ¼ cent sales tax increase to go toward school construction (Old Fort Elementary) and public safety construction (Emergency Management). Discussion held on percentage based distribution, and also consideration of a standalone Health Dept. Currently McDowell partners with Rutherford and Polk counties. Commissioner Brown noted it was his desire to have a standalone Health Dept. due to all the complaints from builders and homeowners.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to put ¼ cent sales tax on the ballot, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **HEALTH DEPARTMENT DISCUSSION**

Mr. Wooten noted he, Chairman Walker, and Commissioner Greene had met with Karen Powell, Health Department Director and discussed issues and complaints the Commissioners had received from county citizens in regards to services. Mr. Wooten has a meeting with the Rutherford and Polk County Managers and Ms. Powell on July 5<sup>th</sup>. To have a standalone Health Department the Environmental Services can't be separated; the Director must have a Public Health degree; and Inspectors must also have a degree. The County already owns a building to house the additional personnel. Currently it takes 9-12 weeks to have septic inspections done.

Commissioner Brown suggested continuing the study and bringing back figures on a standalone Health Department. Mr. Wooten noted to move from a district you have to give notifications to the other counties, and can't move in the middle of the year. Chairman Walker suggested also looking into the Toe River Health and Burke County Health and consider joining them.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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DAVID N. WALKER  
 CHAIRMAN

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CHERYL L. MITCHELL  
 CLERK TO THE BOARD