

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – JUNE 8, 2015**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, June 8, 2015, at 5:00 p.m., Commission Board Room of the County Administration Building, 60 East Court Street, Marion, North Carolina.

MEMBERS PRESENT

David N. Walker, Chairman; Barry McPeters, Vice-Chairman; Tony Brown; and Matthew Crawford.

OTHERS PRESENT

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; and Ashley Wooten, Deputy Clerk to the Board.

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Brown, to approve the May 11, 2015 Regular Session, the May 18, 2015 Adjourned Session and the June 1, 2015 Public Hearing minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The County Manager asked that the Board allow a brief update from the Red Cross at the beginning of the agenda. Commissioner Crawford made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters to approve the agenda as amended. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

RED CROSS YARD SALE

The Chairman recognized representatives of the Red Cross who invited the Commissioners to their yard sale on June 27 at 7 am in the Jury Parking Lot. They also thanked the Board for allowing the Red Cross to utilize the county building since many other offices in the region have closed due to budgetary constraints.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE RECOGNITION

The Chairman presented several students with perfect attendance certificates that had achieved perfect attendance at East, West Middle, and Old Fort Elementary. The students recognized at the meeting were Lizbeth Almanaz-Ramirez, Savannah Henline, Mason McPeters, and Andrew Rouse of East Middle, and Analyeli Magana, Sanuel McPeters, and Sheila Stafford of West Middle. The McDowell Health Coalition had instituted an attendance recognition program at the three schools, according to Mr. Abernathy.

APPOINTMENT OF CLERK

Chairman Walker noted that longtime clerk Carrie Padgett would be retiring at the end of June. He stated that the Board had decided to hire Cheryl Mitchell, who had been working with the NC Cooperative Extension. Mr. Abernathy noted that Ms. Mitchell's position would be eliminated at the end of June, so it would be a smooth transition to move her into the clerk's position.

Commissioner Brown motioned, with a second by Commissioner Crawford, to appoint Cheryl Mitchell as Clerk to the Board effective July 1, 2015. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Each Commissioner praised Ms. Mitchell for her hard work with the Extension Service and commented that they looked forward to working with her.

Ms. Mitchell thanked the Board for the position and stated that she looked forward to working with them.

BUDGET UPDATE AND FINANCE MATTERS AND AMENDMENTS

The County Manager presented several administrative items for the Board to consider.

A summary of the tax matters:

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| MV Releases Under \$100.00 | Released amount of \$110.51 |
| Releases Over \$100.00 | Released amount of \$3,843.07 |
| Refunds | Refund amount of \$20.54 |
| The NCVTS Pending Refund report showed a refund total of \$2,090.19 | |
| Tax Write-offs | Write-offs total of \$12,567.10 |

The budget amendments included:

GF 48 - This amendment transfers 700.00 from equipment purchase to travel in the administration budget.

GF 49 - This amendment transfers \$1,500 between line items in the Elections Budget.

GF 50 - This amendment transfers \$1,100 between line items in the Maintenance Budget.

GF 51 - This amendment transfers \$283.00 in public works.

GF 52 - This amendment recognizes additional Register of Deeds revenue that must be turned over to the State.

GF 53 - This amendment recognizes additional federal DSS revenue.

GF 54 - This amendment allocates a grant in Soil Conservation and shifts a few dollars between line items.

GF 55 - This amendment allocates additional revenue and distributes the City hold harmless sales tax dollars per our agreement.

GF 56 - This amendment increases the transfer to the Enterprise Fund.

GF 57 - This amendment receives revenue for gymnastics (recreation).

GF 58 - This amendment allocates additional revenue received in Aging Programs.

GF 59 - This amendment transfers funds and allocates Jail Revenue in the Sheriff's Department.

GF 60 - This amendment transfers funds and allocates donations in the EMS department.

FD1 - This amendment amends the fire districts to match estimated collections.

Commissioner Brown motioned, with a second by Commissioner McPeters to approve the tax matters and budget amendments as presented. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

FY 2016 BUDGET

The Chairman noted that the Board had held a public hearing on June 1 to receive comments on the proposed budget. Mr. Abernathy reviewed the budget recommendation and touched on several of the items in the document. He did make a note that the Ashford-North Cove two-cent increase was in the recommended document.

Commissioner Crawford motioned, with a second by Commissioner McPeters, to approve the FY 2016 Budget. The vote to approve was unanimous.

OVERVIEW OF STATE BOND ISSUANCE

April Riddle of the Governor's Western Office updated the Board on a proposed bond referendum that could possibly be held in the fall. She noted the main benefit for McDowell County

would be the completion of two phases of the US 221 widening project. Additional regional benefits include improvements at Lake James State Park and several improvements at nearby universities. The Chairman noted that the Board had gone on record as being supportive of the referendum at the May meeting.

MARION RIPPER REUNION UPDATE

Ms. Pat Felmet, resident of Waynesville, and former Marion High School graduate informed the Board that there will be a Marion Ripper Reunion on the third weekend of September 2015. All Marion High School students will be asked to participate in the activities.

Ms. Felmet presented a rendering of a proposed marker to commemorate the school that would be placed at the current Recreation Building, the former Marion High School campus. She asked for permission to place the marker at the site.

Commissioner Crawford motioned, with a second by Commissioner Brown to proceed with the marker placement. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

ACT WORK READY COMMUNITIES

Jerry Broome from the Workforce Development Board informed the Board about a new initiative named the ACT Work Ready Communities. This program would help to develop a credentialing program that would help to identify skilled workers. The credential helps with recruitment for industries since the skills are matched to the need at the business.

Mr. Broome encouraged other employers throughout the county to participate in the program, which would help to find skilled workers for their job openings. The county could participate as well as any other employers.

Josh Kennedy of the McDowell Health Coalition praised the Board for their willingness to assist in programs that help to enhance the skills of the county's workforce.

Commissioner Crawford motioned, with a second by Commissioner McPeters to support the ACT Work Communities and to participate in the program. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

WATER UPDATES AND APPROVALS

The County Manager noted that the county had been attempting to secure grants for the extension of a water line to serve the Universal building. The NC Commerce grant would provide \$130,000 and the Appalachian Regional Commission would provide \$140,500 of the approximate \$280,000 project cost.

Mr. Abernathy noted that the grant funds would free up money that could be used for some other work to happen at the site, including the demolition of several structures at the rear of the property.

Commissioner Crawford motioned, with a second by Commissioner Brown, to approve the grant agreements, the engineering contract, and to move forward with bidding. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Mr. Abernathy noted that staff is also asking that the Board approve grant contracts, engineering contracts, and to authorize bidding for the I-40 Interchange Water Project.

Commissioner McPeters motioned, with a second by Commissioner Crawford, to approve the request from staff. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

ATM PLACEMENT

The County Manager noted that a private company had contacted the county about placing an ATM in the lobby of the Administration Building. The company would pay the county \$1 per transaction. Mr. Abernathy noted that the presented agreement would be revised.

Commissioner Crawford motioned, with a second by Commissioner Brown, to approve the placement of the ATM in the lobby. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

CDBG COMMERCE FELLOW PROGRAM PUBLIC HEARING

No one from the public requested to speak about the CDBG Commerce Fellows Program.

Commissioner McPeters motioned, with a second by Commissioner Crawford, to go out of public hearing. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

The County Manager reviewed several of the highlights of the program that would be run through Appalachian State University. He noted that the program would provide enhancement for local officials.

Commissioner Crawford motioned, with a second by Commissioner McPeters, to approve participation in the program. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

The County Manager noted that there were three first readings for the Focal Point Advisory Committee, the Jury Commission, and the McDowell Tech Board of Trustees. Mr. Abernathy noted that the vacancy would be advertised and brought back before the Board at their June 29 meeting.

CROOKED CREEK CONVENIENCE CENTER SITE

Mr. Abernathy presented a brief history of the development of the Crooked Creek Convenience Center site. He noted that since the site was now owned by the county, site improvements could now commence at the site. He stated that the goal would be to make the site larger and eventually to be paved.

Mike Gladden of McDowell County Public Works commented on several of the planned improvements including the grading, fencing, and paving. Mr. Gladden reviewed the following bids:

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Suttles Trucking | \$38,500 |
| McCormick Grading | \$34,000 |
| Robinson Landscaping | \$24,958 |

Commissioner Crawford motioned to enter the bids into the minutes, to authorize the low bid of Robinson Landscaping, and to pay a rental fee to Crooked Creek Convenience Store. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

NATIONAL FOREST PLAN UPDATE

District Ranger Nicholas Larson from the Grandfather Ranger District presented an update to the Board on their Forest Plan update. He mentioned that the Board would be informed about key updates moving forward with the process.

Commissioner McPeters noted that he had noticed several areas of trees that had been dying out. Mr. Larson noted that many of the hemlocks in the area were under threat by the woolly adelgid. Commissioner Brown agreed that it was a problem and noted anything that could be done would be helpful. Mr. Larson noted that their burn program helps to remove several of the dead trees.

He stated that he would be back in about a year to update the Board on the plan.

OVERVIEW OF CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE/PARKING DECK

Mr. Abernathy noted that construction work at the jail and courthouse is underway. He noted that the work should be completed by the start of December.

He also advised that staff had secured a contractor to seal the upper level of the parking deck. He noted that the work would begin in about four to six weeks and would take about two months to complete.

He stated that there are several other items that will need to be addressed during the project. He reminded the Board that Holland and Hamrick Associates was developing a plan on building a third courtroom at the courthouse. The Chairman also mentioned that a mechanical engineer was evaluating how to implement a modern heating and cooling system for the courthouse.

CITIZEN COMMENT

No from the public requested to speak.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

There were none to report.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner McPeters and a second by Commissioner Brown, the meeting was adjourned until June 29, 2015 at 11:30.

DAVID N. WALKER
CHAIRMAN

ASHLEY R. WOOTEN
DEPUTY CLERK TO THE BOARD