

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED SESSION – MAY 4, 2020**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Recessed Session on Monday, May 4, 2020, at 11:30a.m., at the Universal Conference Room.

Members Present

David N. Walker, Chair; Tony Brown, Vice-Chair; Barry McPeters; Lynn Greene; Brenda Vaughn

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; William Kehler, Director ES; Terry DePoyster, Public Services Director; Virginia Rhodes, EOC Public Information Officer

Call to Order

Chairman Walker 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 50th day of activation
- COVID-19 numbers: 523 tested; 459 negative; 35 pending; 29 positive; 1 death
- currently there are no pending test in the long term care facilities, and no positives
- HCA is not conducting outpatient testing; HCA physicians are having symptomatic patients call the hotline number to get tested
- Atrium Health is testing via a drive thru clinic for flu, strep and COVID
- flu and strep is still active in the community
- 160 individuals were tested last week—the highest yet
- continue hotline—16-20 calls per day
- contact tracing; self isolation is the key strategy to keep the recovery process moving forward
- PPE stabilized; still have shortage of gowns
- PIO have been updating charts/graphs on the Emergency Mgmt website
- \$214,000 in reimbursable expenses for COVID-19 have been spent

Commissioner McPeters would like to have the CEO of Mission-McDowell come to the next meeting to discuss outpatient testing.

Mr. Wooten asked how much it cost to send a test to a lab; Mr. Kehler noted LabCorp charges \$53 per test.

Mr. Kehler added this week is Hurricane Preparedness Week and his staff is looking at possibility of opening up shelters in light of COVID-19 concerns in the event of an emergency situation.

Mr. Wooten informed the Board about House Bill 1043 where initially three counties in the state received direct funding from the CARES Act; the other 97 counties are allotted a share of \$150M. The funds will be allocated on a per capita basis. The CARES Act and FEMA funds are two separate funding sources.

Chairman Walker added the City of Marion would like to phase out their cost for two telecommunicators at the 911Center over the next 3 years. This would be discussed during the budget process.

Operations Update

Mr. Wooten presented recommendations on the county operations reopening plan:

May 11

- Lobbies open at Administration Building and Administration Annex; social distancing will be maintained for tag and tax offices. Suggestion of an employee keeping head count and making sure 6 ft distance is maintained in the waiting lines
- Marion Library will offer curbside services

May 18

- visitors will be allowed to enter both Administration office areas to conduct business

June 1

- Library facilities open to public
- bringing DSS employees back to their offices—shared offices alternate with in-person/telework

To Be Determined

- Senior Center congregate meals and programming
- McDowell Recreation swimming pools

Mr. Wooten will also check on what is needed and how much time is needed to open the pools including hiring lifeguards, etc. The Governor's Executive Order will also dictate per mass gatherings order when the pools can be opened.

Mr. Terry DePoyster reviewed the necessary requirements for reopening the county buildings to the public. He also addressed reducing interaction among employees while at work.

Discussion followed on the effects of the closure restrictions on small businesses and churches. Consensus from the Board was for Mr. Wooten to write a resolution to the Governor on opening up businesses and church services, noting each county is different, and encourage reopening of the state while being in constant contact with health and emergency officials' guidance. The draft would be sent to each Commissioner for their input and the final draft would be presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Wooten added there would be a Town Hall discussion oriented toward businesses reopening with participation from the Chamber, City of Marion, Town of Old Fort and the county this Wednesday. Discussion would be on how the Chamber and local government could help the businesses and reminding the public to shop local.

Adjournment

Commissioner McPeters made a motion to adjourn at 12:54pm to Monday, May 11th, at 5:00pm 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