

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION – MAY 12, 2014**

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, May 12, 2014, at 5:00 p.m., Commission Board Room of the County Administration Building, 60 East Court Street, Marion, North Carolina.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Van Randy Hollifield, Chairman; Joseph R. Kaylor, Vice-Chairman; Michael K. Lavender; Barry E. McPeters; and David N. Walker.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Charles R. Abernathy, County Manager; Ashley Wooten, Deputy Clerk to the Board; and Theresa Strickland, Public Information Technician (Filming).

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Hollifield called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Commissioner McPeters, followed by the pledge of allegiance, led by Commissioner Lavender.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the April 14, 2014 Regular Session Minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Walker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters, to approve the agenda as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**PRESENTATION ON NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE**

Mr. Jimmy Hines, the director of the Rutherford-Polk-McDowell Health District presented an overview of dental needs of students in the county. The district had help to set up a clinic in Polk County for children in need of dental services.

Mr. Hines credited Commissioner Kaylor for his support and leadership in bringing the program to the District. He said there had been an effort to build a clinic in McDowell County, but grant efforts had been unsuccessful. The district was able to purchase a used

dental truck from Wilkes County in order to meet the dental needs of children throughout the county. The district will spend the next several months preparing the vehicle for use in the schools in the fall. Mr. Hines stated that the vehicle will be in McDowell County for three days a week.

Commissioner Walker commended Mr. Hines and Commissioner Kaylor for their efforts in securing the vehicle.

The County Manager stated that there had been several meetings with the school staff and that there will be need to continued planning to make sure it is a success.

The Chairman asked several questions of Mr. Hines about scheduling of the vehicle. Mr. Hines stated that the schedule would be flexible depending on the need of the schools.

Commissioner Walker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lavender, to endorse the dental health program. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

### **BUDGET UPDATE AND AMENDMENTS**

The County Manager presented an update on the county's expenditures and revenues through this point in the fiscal year.

The County Manager and Finance Officer presented the following budget amendments for the Board's approval:

GF 48 - This amendment allocates funds donated to the 4-H program.

GF 49 - This amendment allocated dedicated cable funds, which are use for the intern and equipment.

GF 50 - This amendment allocates EMS donations and EMS revenue.

GF 51 - This amendment reduces the workmen's comp line-item and reduces the reduction to fuel and maintenance and utilities.

GF 52 - This amendment allocates grant funds for the Library.

GF 53 - This amendment recognizes a state allowed fee for flood plain processing.

GF 54 - This amendment recognizes loan proceeds on financed items in the Sheriffs department.

GF 55 - This amendment makes a small adjustment in the Soil Conservation budget.

GF 56 - This amendment allocates funds for the workmen's compensation adjustment in the fire department budget that you agreed to last fall.

GF 57 - The State changed their budget in the JCP program and ours needs to adjust accordingly.

GF 58 - This amendment adjusts several contract amounts including the grant writer and the tax audits.

GF 59 - This amendment balances out the recreation programs.

GF 60 - This amendment transfers \$200,000 from fund balance for the Universal Project.

GF 61 - This amendment receives additional DSS revenue and allocates accordingly.

GF 62 - This amendment transfers various jail and law enforcement related expenses from either inmate housing or the appropriate jail related revenue.

ENT2 - This amendment is in the Enterprise Fund and it appropriates state designated disposal tax for the purchase of a recycling truck.

911 F3 - This amendment increases travel to have all of our communicators up to date on their certification.

The Finance Officer also presented a resolution and associated project budget ordinance for the Single Family Rehabilitation 2014 grant.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters, to approve budget amendments GF 48-62, ENT2, 911 F3 as well as the resolution and project budget for the Single Family Rehabilitation grant. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

### **FINANCE MATTERS – WRITE-OFFS, TOWER LEASE RENEWAL, BIDS**

The Finance Officer presented the Board with a list of EMS accounts that were deemed uncollectable that need to be written off. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Walker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kaylor, to approve the write-off of the uncollectable accounts. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

The County Manager mentioned that he and staff had been preparing the recommended budget and would like to present it to the Board on Friday, May 16 or Monday, May 19. The consensus of the Board was to meet on Monday, May 19 at 11:30 AM.

The County Manager presented a lease renewal between the County and the NC State Highway Patrol for use of the communications tower on Grants Mountain. After a brief discussion, Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lavender, to approve the lease renewal for a ten-year period. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

The Finance Officer presented financing bids for the GMC Ambulance Chasis. She recommended approving BB&T's offer of 1.88% interest over four years of eight semiannual payments. Bank of America, Fifth Third, SunTrust, First Citizens, and Capital Bank did not respond to the quote request. PNC and Wells Fargo responded with unfavorable length of financing terms, and Carolina Alliance Bank responded with a 2.25% interest rate.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the *Resolution Approving Finance Terms* for BB&T's to finance no more than \$86,999 for 1.88% interest over four years of eight semiannual payments in the amount. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

The Finance Officer also presented a trash collection waiver for the recent Relay for Life event. Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to waive the trash fee. By unanimous approval, the motioned carried.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Lavender, to approve the water system fee waivers for McCall, Moore, Williams, and the USPS, as well as the trash fee waiver. Commissioner Walker did suggest that the county consider a policy change to waive the late fee for customers who are late for the first time. The Finance Officer and the County Manager stated they would develop a policy recommendation to bring back to the Board. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

#### **RETIREMENT OF TAX ASSESSOR KEITH RENFRO**

The County Manager announced to the Board that Tax Assessor Keith Renfro would be retiring at the end of May. He provided a summary of the tax assessor position and the statutory requirements. Mr. Abernathy noted that Mr. Renfro had served for 17 years and would be missed.

Mr. Renfro addressed the Board and expressed his appreciation for McDowell County and its people. He stated that he felt the staff were very competent and would continue to work well after he left. Mr. Renfro recommended that the Board consider appointing Assistant Tax Assessor Chad Phillips as the new Tax Assessor. Mr. Phillips is one class away from being a certified tax assessor, has a master of public administration, and is trained in several areas of the department including the operations of the tag office, according to Mr. Renfro.

A general discussion of the retirement of Mr. Renfro and the appointment of his replacement followed. Mr. Abernathy suggested that the Board consider appointing Mr. Phillips to fill out Mr. Renfro's term that expires on October 31, 2015.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to appoint Mr. Phillips as the new tax assessor effective June 1, 2014 to fill out the term of Mr. Renfro. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

### **REQUEST BY SADDLE AND BRIDLE CLUB**

Lawrence Moore of the Saddle and Bridle Club provided an update to the activities and membership of the club. Mr. Moore presented a request to the Board to authorize the expansion of their leased area to include property that was deeded to McDowell County Animal Outreach several years prior. The County Manager informed the Board that the property was granted to the animal group with a reversion clause if a shelter was not constructed. Mr. Abernathy stated that county staff has requested that the organization deed the property back to the county.

Commissioner Walker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kaylor, to exercise the reversion clause and to authorize the expansion of the lease area to the Saddle and Bridle Club. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

### **NC GOLD TRAIL DESIGNATION**

Carol Price, the director of the Tourism Development Authority, provided an update on the activities of the NC Gold Foundation and the NC Gold Festival. Ms. Price has contacted Representative Josh Dobson to officially designate the Gold Festival as the Official NC Gold Festival. She also informed the Board that she had been working on a proposal to have McDowell County designated as a site along the proposed NC Gold Trail. The Trail would be a designation that would hopefully bring attention to the county's gold mining history. She asked the Board to make a formal endorsement of the ongoing efforts, which would be used to show that there is official support for the concept.

Mr. Don Markum of the NC Gold Foundation spoke about the group's origin, the ongoing effort of the license plate sign-ups, as well as the NC Gold Festival.

Commissioner Kaylor made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to endorse the NC Gold Festival as the official Gold Festival of North Carolina. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

### **KBR GRANT UPDATE**

The County Manager provided an update on ongoing activities related to the Kate B. Reynolds grant process. He reminded the Board that the recreation center renovations and the workplace wellness grant were two recent successful projects.

Mr. Abernathy stated that he has met with the school superintendent and grant staff to discuss the afterschool program. A parent survey has been developed and will be used to gauge interest. Early feedback has been very positive.

Mr. Abernathy also informed the Board about the possibility of submitting a grant to KBR to purchase and install a large bubble for the pool at the Recreation Center. The bubble would allow the pool to be open during the entire year. He presented several letters from parents of swim team members expressing support for the project. Costs have not been determined, but the goal would be for a KBR grant to pay for most of the cost.

Commissioner Walker stated that he heard from the school staff that they are very supportive of the after school grant and the swimming pool enhancement.

### **WATER PROJECTS UPDATE**

The County Manager stated that staff had been working for the last several months on the permitting process for the Lake James intake. He suggested that the Board and staff meeting in late May or early June with officials from the NC DENR permitting office to discuss the impacts of reclassification on the county.

Mr. Abernathy reminded the Board that the City of Marion and Burke County had approved resolutions concerning the reclassification.

Mr. Abernathy and Mr. Wooten provided a brief update on the water extension project to the interstate interchange.

### **MOVIE THEATER RECRUITMENT UPDATE**

The County Manager updated the Board on the movie theater recruitment process. He stated that the contract with the consultant David Beauregard had been signed and that Mr. Beauregard would begin the data collection process that would be used for the basis of the effort.

Mr. Abernathy stated that he would update the Board on future updates during Mr. Beauregard's process.

### **HIGHWAY 221 WIDENING UPDATE**

The County Manager informed the Board that the City-County Utility Committee had met with David Brown, the county's representative to the NCDOT board, recently to discuss the US 221. Mr. Abernathy stated that while the meeting was informative, Mr. Brown noted that due to recent changes in project ranking by NCDOT that the US 221 project was now a low priority for his department.

Mr. Abernathy did note that the Utility Committee discussed with Mr. Brown alternating the design of the highway to be more like the section between Marion and Baxter Healthcare and less of a super-highway.

### **FIXED ASSET UPDATE**

The County Manager provided a brief update on the recent discussion involving the county's fixed assets. In addition to the property item discussed earlier with the Saddle and Bridle Club, he noted that the county attorney has been reviewing the Fern Avenue property issues that had previously upheld the sale. Mr. Abernathy stated that he would instruct the attorney to remedy the issues if possible in order for the property to be listed for sale.

## **UNIVERSAL UPDATE**

The County Manager presented a summary of a recent activity regarding the Universal training facility. He stated that Columbia Carolina had agreed to donate a large amount of wood paneling in order to upgrade several of the public spaces in the facility. He also noted that the contractor and architect had been working hard over the last several weeks to incorporate changes that were previously discussed.

Mr. Abernathy also added that he had tentatively discussed a late October ribbon cutting with the governor's staff. He also suggested that existing industry be invited to the program.

Mr. Abernathy noted that there are several items related to the operation of the facility that need to be discussed with the college staff including utilities and cleaning. He also presented a drawing of the parking area as designed by the architect.

Commissioner Walker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters, to purchase the signage for the skills center as identified by the college staff. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Mr. Abernathy also stated that he would provide a financial update at the budget meeting on May 19.

## **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND ORIENTATION**

The County Manager provided an update on the ongoing revision of the county's personnel handbook. He stated that the revisions were essentially complete and that the next step would be to submit it to an attorney that specializes in employment law for review. After the review, the handbook would be presented to the Board for review and approval.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to authorize staff to submit the personnel policies to an appropriate attorney for review. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Mr. Abernathy also provided an update on a new orientation program that staff recently implemented. He and staff will meet quarterly with recent hires to review the county organization as a whole and to review any potential areas of need. He stated that the first session was well attended and very interactive.

## **SALE OF SILO AT UNIVERSAL**

The County Manager informed the Board that a business from Statesville had expressed interest in purchase the blue silo located at the Universal facility. Mr. Abernathy stated that the silo has no use for the county and can be utilized by the business. He proposed authorizing the sell to the company under the authority granted by North Carolina General Statute 160A-267.

Commissioner Kaylor made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the ***RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SALE OF COUNTY OWNED PROPERTY***. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

### **TAX MATTERS**

The monthly listing of tax releases and refunds were presented for the Board's approval. In summary they were:

Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$2,554.98
Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$2,748.53
Motor Vehicle Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$375.77
Motor Vehicle Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$635.27
Release Refunds	Refunded amount of \$1,910.34

The NCVTS Pending Refund report showed a refund total of \$4,2080.47.

Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters, to approve the tax releases and refunds as presented. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

### **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

The County Manager informed the Board that there will be a Picnic for Permanence hosted by DSS to celebrate foster parents on May 17.

He also reminded the Board of the Utility Committee meeting on May 15. Mr. Renfro's retirement party would be on May 21 from 2 to 4 in the Cooperative Extension Board Room.

Commissioner Lavender asked if the flags on the courthouse lawn could be replaced since they appear to be faded. He also asked if the Board would reconsider the dog tethering issue in the future.

After a discussion of the issue, Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kaylor, to ask the Planning Board to study the tethering issue and bring back any suggestions to the Commissioners. The motion carried by a 4-1 vote with the follow votes:

AYES:	Hollifield	NOES:	Walker
	Kaylor		
	Lavender		
	McPeters		

**CITIZEN COMMENTS**

No one from the public requested to speak.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner Kaylor and a second by Commissioner Walker, the meeting was adjourned.

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VAN RANDY HOLLIFIELD  
CHAIRMAN

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ASHLEY R. WOOTEN  
DEPUTY CLERK TO THE BOARD