

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION – APRIL 11, 2016**

**ASSEMBLY**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, April 11, 2016, at 5:00 p.m., at the County Administration Building, 60 E Court Street, Marion, North Carolina.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

David N. Walker, Chair; Barry McPeters, Vice-Chair; Van “Randy” Hollifield; Matthew Crawford, and Tony Brown

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Ashley Wooten, County Manager, Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Theresa Strickland, Public Information Technician (Filming)

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Walker called the meeting to order. The invocation was given by Commissioner Crawford, followed by the pledge of allegiance, led by Commissioner Hollifield.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford, to approve the March 14, 2016 Regular Session minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion to approve the agenda, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

**MTA DONATION FOR GREENWAY PROJECT**

McDowell Trails Association (MTA) President Frank Dean, along with members of the Rotary Club and MTA, presented a \$15,000 check to the county for the development of the greenway on the county property off of Old Greenlee Road.

Chair Walker expressed his appreciation to the two organizations for their contribution.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS AND BUDGET UPDATE**

**Budget Update**

Mr. Wooten stated he has been meeting with department heads for budget meetings. He still plans on presenting the budget before the next meeting.

**Fee Waivers**

Mr. Wooten presented two fee waivers for review. One was from a case that had involvement

from child welfare at DSS. An electrician donated time and discounted his services to restore electric service to the home. Ms. Sprouse, DSS Director asked for the inspection fee of \$60 to be waived.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to wave \$60, second by Commissioner Hollifield. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

The second waiver was for a tipping fee. Three gentlemen affiliated with a local church helped to demolish a dilapidated home in the city limits for an elderly lady who could not afford to hire out the work. The men did the demolition at no cost and requested waiver of the tipping fees.

Vice-Chair McPeters made a motion to approve request for \$939.84, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **Budget Amendments**

Mr. Wooten presented the following budget amendments for approval:

GF 38 — Transfer funds between line items and allocates additional funding in Emergency Services.

GF 39 — Allocates additional funding received at the Library.

GF 40 — Allocates additional funding received in the Register of Deeds.

GF 41 — Transfer funds between line items and allocates additional revenue at the Sheriff's Office.

GF 42 — Transfer funds between line items and allocates revenue in Social Services.

GF 43 — Allocates revenue in the Senior Center budget.

GF 44 — Appropriates fund balance for the purchase of Garden Street property.

GF 45 — Appropriates fund balance and transfer between line items to cover health insurance costs.

SP2 — Appropriates lottery funds for the high school stadium project.

911F2 — Transfers between line items in the 911 Fund.

SII — Allocates revenues for the self insurance fund.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve GF38-45, SP2,911F2, and SII, second by Commissioner Hollifield. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **911 CENTER BACKUP PLANS**

Mr. William Kehler, Emergency Services Director, stated the General Assembly had passed a requirement that each Primary Safety Answering Point (PSAP) have a backup plan in place before June 30, with an actual backup operation within the next year.

Mr. Kehler presented a recommendation for a backup operation to be based at the Universal facility in a vacant space adjacent to the dry kiln. He stated he would have recommendations on how to implement the operation at a future meeting.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion to approve 911 backup plan and use of Universal site, second by Commissioner Hollifield. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Kehler also presented a Memorandum of Understanding with Mitchell County for consideration. Mitchell County requested the McDowell County 911 Center serve as their temporary site in the event their 911 center suffered catastrophic failure. This would only be until they could get their backup plan in operation.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve request of MOU with Mitchell County, second by Commissioner Hollifield. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH PROCLAMATION**

Ms. Lisa Sprouse, Department of Social Services Director, asked the Board to approve a proclamation declaring April "Child Abuse Awareness Month." Ms. Sprouse stated there had been a 50% increase in foster care since 2015, and there are currently 127 children in foster homes.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion to adopt the resolution, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried. Vice-Chair McPeters then read the proclamation.

Discussion was held on the support of the Commissioners for foster parenting.

### **TRANSPORTATION STUDY OVERVIEW**

Mr. Terry Evans, Transportation Coordinator with DSS, presented an overview of the transportation study. Focus was on employment transportation. They are currently transporting 101 members to their employment, averaging around 300 trips a month to sites of employment. Transportation ridership is up 300% over the last 2 years. Ms. Sprouse commented these additional trips have increased mileage and wear and tear on their vehicles, which will need to be addressed in next year's budget.

Mr. Evans introduced Gretchen Vetter of NCDOT to provide an overview of the Five Year Community Transportation Service Plan. Ms. Vetter stated the plan was just beginning and they would receive public input.

Discussion was held in regards to the employment transportation. Mr. Evans stated there are eight drivers and all parts of the county are covered daily.

Chair Walker thanked DSS for the presentation and Ms. Vetter for attending.

Chair Walker called for a brief recess at 5:51pm for technical issue, called back in session at 5:55pm.

### **SENIOR HOUSING STUDY REPORT**

Mr. David Rankin and Mr. Daniel Warrick with Alliance Consulting Engineers gave an update on the senior living feasibility and preliminary site analysis study.

The study focused on Active Adult Communities (AAC) which is large-scale retirement communities, and the recommended site area was near Lake James. The other focus was low income housing tax credit senior apartments with site options as follows: Ashworth Road site- no sewer and water on site, "the flats" aka Boyd Site, and the Barnes Road site.

Mr. Wooten stated there were other types of communities looked at, but only two types presented; senior apartments and AAC were the most prominent. Chair Walker stated he wanted to meet the needs of the senior population. He asked Mr. Weyland Prebor, Senior Center Director to find out the needs of the seniors. Mr. Prebor spoke on an aging study that had been conducted, suggested another housing study for not low income that provides services such as lawn care, transportation, etc.

Commissioner Crawford suggested continual care communities stating senior population is increasing, and look at the needs 10, 15, 20 years down the road.

Mr. Wooten suggested a recommendation be brought back at the May or June meeting.

Chair Walker called for a recess at 6:31pm, and called back in session at 6:38.

### **COURTHOUSE AND JAIL UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten stated he had been in the courthouse and looked over the construction. He stated a couple of the Commissioners had met with courtroom officials. The focus of these meetings had been reviewing the next steps such as new windows and a modern heating and air system. Mr. Wooten then introduced architect Mr. Chuck Hamrick who went over the 3<sup>rd</sup> courtroom expansion. Presentation was made on utilizing the parking deck for offices and a 3<sup>rd</sup> courtroom.

Discussion was held on the proposed third courtroom. Mr. Hamrick also spoke on proposed jury room options that would increase the size and function. Parking would be an issue, since parking deck would be taken for the new building. Once a proposal has been formalized and reviewed with court officials, staff will bring it back to the board for direction.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Hamrick for his presentation.

### **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

The Clerk to the Board passed out ballots for board appointments. By written ballot, unanimous vote was for: Jonathan Tipper as an Alternate Member for the Planning Board and Nikki Pittman, Mark Weber, and Steve Early for Region C Workforce Development Board

### **WATER PROJECTS UPDATE**

Mr. Wooten stated the two water projects are very close to being bid, likely at the end of May. There are some environmental review processes that are underway that need to be completed. Staff will reach out to residences and businesses along the Harmony Grove Road section in the next few weeks to alert them of the upcoming construction and to provide information on how to tie on for service.

Mr. Wooten stated the state will take the lake reclassification request to a subcommittee in May and will then start the planning for a public input session. After the public input session, the request would then go before the full Environmental Management Commission.

### **SOCIAL SERVICES UPDATES**

Mr. Wooten stated he would like to suggest a couple members of the Board meet quarterly with the DSS Director and several unit managers to receive updates on operations, to review initiatives, and to discuss policies specific to that operation. He proposed the first meeting take place in May, perhaps on Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> at lunchtime.

Mr. Wooten also stated he is working on an employee relations committee. These recommendations will be brought back to the board for review as soon as possible.

No action was taken by the Board.

### **ARC GRANT FOR US 221**

Mr. Wooten stated staff is recommending that McDowell join in with several other counties such as Rutherford, Mitchell, and Yancey to apply for a grant that would pay for a study that would examine ways to improve the transportation infrastructure in those counties, primarily the US 221/NC 226 corridor and to also evaluate potential properties that could benefit to proximity to the CSX rail line.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to authorize the application, second by Commissioner Hollifield. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **DUKE SITE READINESS GRANT**

Mr. Wooten stated several months ago Duke Energy presented a report on how best to market the spare acreage on the Universal property. Recommendation was made on making the property as marketable as possible by clearing out some overgrowth so that prospective clients could see the potential. They will provide \$10,000 grant in matching funds for such a project.

Mr. Chuck Abernathy, MEDA Director has requested the county budget \$10,000 in the next fiscal year to provide the grant match.

Commissioner Hollifield spoke on what potential companies look for in potential sites.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford to move forward with the Duke Site grant. By unanimous approval, motion carried.

### **TAX MATTERS**

#### **Releases, Refunds, & Write-offs**

Write-offs	\$ 2,582.66
Refunds	\$ 779.48
MV tax refunds	\$ 608.80
Releases under \$100	\$ 1,381.30
Releases over \$100	\$27,935.96
Discoveries	\$ 5,198.79

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve, second by Commissioner Hollifield. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one from the public requested to speak.

### **REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioner Crawford spoke on House Bill 432 in regards to county internet connectivity. He asked for a draft letter to be sent to state legislators in support of providing internet coverage to the entire county. He expressed a need for our students to be able to do their school work. Chrome books have been provided, but many students do not have any internet coverage.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford to send a letter. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to transact at this time, upon motion by Commissioner Hollifield, second by Commissioner Brown, the meeting was adjourned.

---

DAVID N. WALKER  
CHAIRMAN

---

CHERYL L. MITCHELL  
CLERK TO THE BOARD