

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – APRIL 14, 2014**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, April 14, 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; Joseph R. Kaylor; David N. Walker; Barry E. McPeters; and Michael K. Lavender (arrived at 5:25).

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 Walker.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the March 10, 2014 Regular Session Minutes with an adjustment to the mental health item by including the word concept instead of planning. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Walker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters, to approve the agenda with the deletion of the Fee Waiver Request and by moving Ms. Burrow's appointment to 5:05. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

KEEP MCDOWELL BEAUTIFUL AND VOLUNTEER CENTER UPDATE

Gloria Burrow of Keep McDowell Beautiful and the Volunteer Center presented an update on upcoming activities for her agencies. On April 24, the Volunteer Center will host the annual Volunteer Recognition Awards at the McDowell Senior Center. The Commissioners were asked to be present to help present awards.

On April 26, Keep McDowell Beautiful will host an Earth Day Celebration on the grassy area in front of Big Lots. There will be a school banner contest open to all schools in the county. There are several vendors from throughout the community that will be present.

On May 17, Keep McDowell Beautiful will also host the annual Lake James Cleanup at Black Bear Access. There will be food and t-shirts for the volunteers.

Ms. Burrow also presented an anti-littering campaign poster that will be posted at sites throughout the county that encourage folks to keep in mind unintentional littering. The County Manager praised Ms. Burrow and her organization for their efforts to reduce litter and illegal dumpsites in the county.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS, RESOLUTIONS AND WRITE-OFFS

The County Manager presented an update on the county's expenditures and revenues through this point in the fiscal year. He mentioned that the sales tax projection has decreased slightly from the month before.

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

GF 41 - This amendment transfers \$138,512 into the self-insurance fund.

GF 42 - This amendment allocates grant, EMS and donated revenue funds.

GF 43 - This amendment allocates tax interest revenue due to heating fuel prices.

GF 44 - This amendment allocates additional restricted inmate housing revenue to cover repairs made to the existing jail facility, equipment, uniforms and supplies.

GF 45 - This amendment transfers telephone expenses between DSS and the Senior Center. Expenses for both agencies were budgeted in DSS. It also allocates donations.

GF 46 - This amendment allocates additional revenue billed and collected on behalf of the Rescue Squad and State funds received for the Foothills Industry Transportation program.

911 F2 - This amendment transfers funds between the 911 Fund line items.

SI 1 - This amendment allocates revenues in the self-insurance fund.

A general discussion about anticipated revenues and expenditures followed.

Commissioner McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve budget amendments GF 41-46 as well as 911 F2 and SI 1. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

The Finance Officer also presented a leak waiver request for Susan Icard. Commissioner Lavender made a motion, seconded by Commissioner McPeters, to approve the waiver. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

FIXED ASSET REVIEW

The County Manager presented the Board with a list of fixed assets (buildings and land) owned by McDowell County. He stated that staff has been working to identify the assets, their use, and make recommendations on retention or disposal.

Mr. Abernathy reviewed the list of buildings as well as the list of property. Chairman Hollifield asked if some of the property could be sold. The County Manager stated that the goal might be to develop a list of properties that could be disposed. Commissioner Lavender stated that he thought the Pless property should be sold as soon as possible once any legal issues are sorted through. A general discussion of various properties followed.

The County Manager stated that he would bring back a list of recommendations at a future meeting. Commissioner Walker stated that he felt that the County needed to focus maintenance on its own buildings in the coming year.

911 PHONE SYSTEM UPDATE

Emergency Services Director William Kehler brought a request to update the telephone system in the 911 Communications Center. He stated that the equipment in the center is owned by Frontier Communications. He stated that the contract with Fronter is set to expire in May of 2014. Mr. Kehler requested that the County renew the lease agreement with Frontier.

Commissioner Walker asked if the 911 Board in Raleigh had approved using 911 funds for lease. Mr. Kehler confirmed that it was the case.

Ms. Morgan confirmed that the equipment would be owned by Frontier and if a piece of equipment breaks, Frontier would replace it as part of the lease agreement.

Commissioner Kaylor made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the lease agreement. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

PURPLE HEART PROCLAMATION

The County Manager stated that there is a nationwide effort for each county to adopt a proclamation stating support for the Purple Heart veterans.

Commissioner Kaylor made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Walker, to approve the Proclamation entitled ***PURPLE HEART COUNTY PROCLAMATION FOR McDOWELL COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA***. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

The Chairman recognized Alan Mainer with the American Legion and asked if Mr. Mainer would read the following Proclamation and present it to Purple Heart recipient Gary Gragg:

**PURPLE HEART COUNTY PROCLAMATION
FOR McDOWELL COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart is the oldest military decoration in present use and was initially created as the Badge of Military Merit by General George Washington in 1782; and

WHEREAS, the Purple Heart is the first American service award or decoration made available to the common soldier and is specifically awarded to any member of the United States Armed Services wounded or killed in combat with a declared enemy of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, chartered by an Act of Congress, is to foster an environment of goodwill among the combat wounded veteran members and their families; promote patriotism, support legislative initiatives and most importantly—make sure that we never forget; and

WHEREAS, McDowell County residents have been engaged in every war against a declared enemy fought by the United States, including the war for our nation's independence; and

WHEREAS, McDowell County recognizes the commitment and increasing sacrifices of military families; and

WHEREAS, McDowell County pledges its ongoing commitment to and support for the men and women who so honorably serve our nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of McDowell County, North Carolina, that we do hereby proclaim McDowell County as a Purple Heart County in the State of North Carolina.

Adopted this day, the 14th of April 2014.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM UPDATE

The County Manager updated the Board on recent planning for the after school program. He has met with school officials and members of the community to discuss the initiative. Mr. Abernathy has met with Abena Asante with Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust to discuss potential grant funding for the project. The target date for the program would be in the fall of 2014. A survey will be developed to gauge interest before implementation.

WORKPLACE WELLNESS GRANT

The County Manager advised the Board that the McDowell Economic Development Association (MEDA) has received a \$25,000 grant from the KBR Foundation to work with local businesses to develop workplace wellness plans. MEDA will hire a researcher evaluate existing wellness programs and to identify initiatives that businesses can use to improve their workers' health.

RELAY FOR LIFE TEAM UPDATE

The County Manager updated the Board on the efforts of the Relay for Life team made up of County employees. A recent hamburger and hot dog sale had raised several thousand dollars for the effort. Additional fundraisers are planned culminating with a dunking booth at the Relay for Life event on May 9 at Tom Johnson's Camping Center.

Mr. Abernathy wanted to acknowledge the effort of Susan Huskins as chair of the team committee as well as the work of the other committee members.

TRAILS UPDATE

The County Manager presented an update on trail projects throughout the county. According to Mr. Abernathy, Phase II of the Catawba River greenway is to proceed this summer with a completion date of March 2015. The grant application Phase III of the greenway has been submitted and comments from the grant agency has been positive. The application will be considered this spring or summer. Mr. Abernathy also mentioned that the last of the signage at the YMCA trail would be installed soon.

Mr. Wooten provided some additional information regarding the Phase III applications.

WATER PROJECTS UPDATE

The County Manager stated that the Hendrix family was working to remove all personal property from the Hendrix farm in Nebo. The original date to remove all the property was originally March 31. Mr. Abernathy asked that the Board allow the family to have until the end of April to remove.

Commissioner Kaylor motioned, with a second by Commissioner McPeters, to allow the family to have until the last day of April to remove personal property from the former Hendrix farm. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

The County Manager also presented an Agreement between the County and Harold Childers to maintain livestock on the Hendrix farm for an additional year. The Chairman felt that Mr. Childers is able to keep an eye on the property while he is visiting the livestock.

Commissioner Lavender motioned, with a second by Commissioner McPeters, to approve the agreement with Mr. Childers. Commissioner Walker stated that he felt after the

year that others should be offered the opportunity to utilize the farm. The motion to approve the motion was unanimous.

The County Manager gave a brief update on the permitting issue and stated that it would be likely be presented in August for further discussion.

Mr. Wooten provided a brief update on grant activity related to the I-40 Interchange Project.

CALDWELL COUNTY CRISIS CENTER UPDATE

The County Manager presented some information compiled by Genny Pugh of the Smoky Mountain Center related to the Crisis Center discussed at prior meetings. Commissioner Lavender stated that the local match would be covered by building sale proceeds from the former Foothills Area program.

A general discussion of the disposition of the remaining Foothills properties followed.

UNIVERSAL UPDATE

The County Manager presented a summary of a recent tour of the ongoing construction at the Universal training facility. Several of the attendees had expressed a desire to upgrade some of the finishings in several of the public areas in order to enhance the facility from a business recruitment perspective. The architect is compiling a list of requested enhancements and will provide an estimate in the coming weeks.

Mr. Abernathy stated that it has been determined that it is likely that the large trees in front of the facility will need to be removed due to their poor condition and the negative effect they would have on the parking area.

By consensus the Board asked that the County Manager move forward with the tree removal and the upgrades.

REQUEST TO PURSUE MOVIE THEATER

The County Manager informed the Board that there have been discussions amongst the City, and other local partners regarding the recruitment of a movie theater to the community since the closure of the McDowell Twin.

A consultant named David Beauregard has submitted a proposal to conduct a feasibility study of the community for a price of \$7,500 with the County contributing \$2,500. Mr. Beauregard would use the information in the study to recruit movie theater operators with a target of at least a six-screen facility.

Chairman Hollifield stated the County was not interested in developing a theater itself, but would work to recruit private developers who would have the expertise to develop a facility.

Commissioner Kaylor motioned, with a second by Commissioner Walker, to approve spending \$2,500 for the movie theater feasibility study to be completed by Mr. Beauregard. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

MCDOWELL HOUSE AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF MARION

The City Manager stated that the City of Marion is close to beginning construction of Phase II of the Catawba River greenway. The ongoing maintenance would be split between the City and the County. The City would be responsible for scheduling the use of the amphitheater but will allow it to be used by the McDowell House for its events.

Commissioner Lavender motioned, with a second by Commissioner Walker, to approve the agreement with the City of Marion. 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 \$5,344.07
Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$4,598.64
Motor Vehicle Releases Under \$100.00	Released amount of \$214.95
Motor Vehicle Releases Over \$100.00	Released amount of \$761.19
Release Refunds	Refunded amount of \$4,531.26

The NCVTS Pending Refund report showed a refund total of \$2,849.39.

Commissioner Walker 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 reminded the Board of the upcoming meeting with the Fire Commission on April 22 at McDowell Tech.

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 McPeters and a second by Commissioner Walker, the meeting was adjourned.

VAN RANDY HOLLIFIELD
CHAIRMAN

ASHLEY R. WOOTEN
DEPUTY CLERK TO THE BOARD