

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – DECEMBER 14, 2015**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, December 14, 2015, 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

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown, to approve the November 9, 2015 Regular Session minutes as presented. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Wooten requested to add a Resolution Authorizing Sale of County Owned Property to the agenda.

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

SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Commissioner Walker noted the first item of business required by North Carolina State law at the December Board meeting is the selection of a Chair and Vice-Chair. Chairman Walker turned the meeting over to the Clerk for this purpose. Mrs. Mitchell asked if there were nominations for the position of Chairman of the Board. Commissioner Hollifield nominated Commissioner Walker to continue as Chairman for the 2015-2016 year. Commissioner McPeters made a motion to cease nominations, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried. The Clerk called for a vote on retaining Commissioner Walker as Chair of the Board of Commissioners. The resulting vote was 4-0 (with Commissioner Walker not voting).

The Clerk announced the floor was open for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Brown nominated Commissioner McPeters to serve in the position of Vice-Chair. Commissioner Crawford made a motion to cease nominations, second by Chairman Walker. By unanimous vote, the motion carried. The Clerk called for a vote on retaining Commissioner McPeters as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Commissioners. The resulting vote was 4-0 (with Commissioner McPeters not voting).

Mr. Walker thanked the Board members for the confidence they had demonstrated in him and that he looked forward to continuing the good work and progress being made in the county. He also thanked the Board members for their hard work, and expressed his appreciation for the way the Board worked together for the good of the county. Vice-Chairman McPeters also expressed his appreciation for the Board and their confidence placed in him.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS AND BUDGET UPDATE

Mr. Wooten presented a resolution for Steve Hensley, who has retired from the McDowell Sheriff's Office, to authorize the Sheriff to donate the badge and authorize the sale of service sidearm to Deputy Hensley.

Vice-Chairman McPeters made a motion to authorize the *RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SALE OF COUNTY OWNED PROPERTY*, second by Commissioner Hollifield. By unanimous approval, the motion carried.

Mr. Wooten stated for the most part sales tax revenues are up slightly over the previous month.

Finance Officer, Alison Morgan, presented a list of budget amendments for approval:

GF 12 — Allocates asset forfeiture and inmate revenue and reserves to purchase a vehicle.

GF 13 — Allocate EMA reimbursements and to transfer between line items.

GF 14 — Allocates technical reserved funds for Register of Deeds office.

Vice-Chairman McPeters made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Crawford to approve GF 12-14. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Waiver of Occupancy Tax Penalties

Mr. Wooten presented two businesses requesting waivers.

Business A: Late due to family issues that interfered with the business - \$500

Business B: Late due to change in management of business - \$230

Vice-Chairman McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield to approve the waiver of occupancy tax penalties. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Wooten stated the McDowell Mission Ministries had an informal approval previously of a waiver of tipping fees for their trash. He requested a formal Board approval due to audit requirements.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion, second by Vice-Chairman McPeters, to grant a waiver of tipping fees for McDowell Mission Ministries. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Wooten then presented a request from Steve Hensley for approval of resolution for purchase of his side arm and donation of his badge.

Commissioner Brown made a motion, second by Vice-Chairman McPeters, to approve *Resolution Authorizing Sale of County Owned Property*. By unanimous vote, the motion carried. Chairman Walker expressed appreciation on behalf of the Board for Deputy Hensley's service, and all the best in his retirement.

Ms. Morgan presented a request for increasing fixed asset listing to \$5,000 fixed assets. Currently the Finance Department keeps a listing of everything over \$800. It is standard procedure across several counties in the state to only list \$5,000. Purchase orders will still be necessary for any purchase over \$800.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Vice-Chairman McPeters to increase fixed asset limit to \$5,000. By unanimous approval, motion carried.

JAIL/COURTHOUSE PROJECT UPDATE

The County Manager reported construction continues at both facilities.

Courthouse: Elevator construction is going well.
Sprinkler system work has begun.

Commissioner Brown, Chairman Walker, and Mr. Wooten met with Judge Davis and Judge Pool to review construction work that has taken place at the courthouse. Updates will continue periodically between Commissioners and Judges. Commissioner Brown stated the importance of keeping the Judges abreast of the construction.

Jail: Work is proceeding with no major issues.

REAPPOINTMENT OF TAX ASSESSOR

Mr. Wooten introduced Mr. Chad Phillips, Tax Assessor, who is up for reappointment. Mr. Phillips stated he appreciated his job, and would like to continue to work in his position. When asked what his greatest achievement has been since being appointed, Mr. Phillips stated the DMV office is more efficient, and the GIS system is a much smoother process. He also stated he has reached out to the Board of Realtors to go over the GIS system, and he now has new businesses bringing their title work to the DMV office.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion, second by Vice-Chairman McPeters to reappoint Chad Phillips as Tax Assessor. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

PART F GREENWAY PHASE III UPDATE

Mr. Wooten stated he was notified that the State of North Carolina has awarded the county \$250,000 to go towards the construction of the third phase of the Catawba River Greenway. The total estimated cost in the application was \$543,304. The county will need to secure the balance of the funding in order to move forward with the project.

The proposed project would construct 2,600 feet of paved greenway, a parking area, dog park, canoe launch, fishing pier, horseshoe pits, picnic tables and signage.

Discussion was held in regards to the greenway and the City of Marion.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Vice-Chairman McPeters to approve contract between county and NC Parks and Recreation. Discussion was held in regards to matching funds. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

Mr. Wooten stated the McDowell Trails Association has been talking with property owners to obtain easements for trail expansion in the future. Mr. Wooten will keep the Board updated.

PUBLIC HEARING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Wooten recognized Mr. Chuck Abernathy, MEDA Director. Mr. Abernathy introduced Mr. Steve Parks, a former resident of McDowell, who will relocate his business in the county. Mr. Parks is a co-owner of a machining and welding operation. He stated he did not need an incentive, therefore no public hearing was held. He also stated he was very impressed with the training operation at the Universal Building, and the old Marion Manufacture building would be a good fit for his business.

Chairman Walker expressed his appreciation to Mr. Parks in locating his business here.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Wooten presented a second reading application from Walter Crosby for Nursing Homes/Adult Care Homes Advisory Committees. Chairman Walker ask the staff to research the process for non-active members of a committee.

Vice-Chairman McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Crawford to approve Mr. Crosby for appointment to the Nursing Homes/Adult Care Homes Advisory Committees. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Mr. Wooten stated he had received a resignation letter from Mr. Joe Kaylor on the MTCC Board of Trustees. He also stated the Board is responsible for naming his replacement. Chairman Walker stated Mr. Kaylor had contacted him and expressed his desire to have him be his replacement on the MTCC Board of Trustees. Commissioner Hollifield also stated he had received a call from Mr. Kaylor expressing his desire to have Chairman Walker fill his seat on the Board.

Vice-Chairman McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown to waiver first reading. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

Commissioner Hollifield made a motion, second by Vice-Chairman McPeters to appoint Chairman Walker to fill the vacancy of Mr. Kaylor on the MTCC Board of Trustees. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

EXTENSION UPDATE AND COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

Ms. Molly Sandfoss, Extension Director, appeared before the Board to ask for a representative from the Board to serve on Extension Advisory Leadership Council, and Local Foods Advisory Council.

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Vice-Chairman McPeters to appoint Commissioner Brown to the Advisory Leadership Council, and Commissioner Hollifield to the Local Foods Advisory Council. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

Ms. Sandfoss gave an update on Extension programs. She stated the Livestock Judging Team Junior Division were the State Champions at the State Fair. Chairman Walker ask for the team to come to a meeting for recognition. She also gave updates on the 4-H youth program, EFNEP, and agriculture programs.

Chairman Walker thanked Ms.Sanfoss for the update.

TIER RANKING CHANGE

Mr. Wooten stated the county had received notice from the NC Department of Commerce indicating that the tier ranking for McDowell County would change from Tier 2 to Tier 1. Tier 1 is a more economically distressed level than Tier 2 or 3. The change is due to the county's poverty rate of

21.9% which automatically places McDowell in the Tier 1 category. Tier 1 placing means the county will be eligible for increased grant funding and additional reimbursements for state programs.

Chairman Walker stated a large percentage of our county is in forest land, and we lose a lot of tax base accordingly.

TAX MATTERS:

- **Exemption Requests**

Mr. Wooten stated that GS 105-277.1D(e) provides that an application for property tax relief provided by this section should be filed during the regular listing period but may be filed after the regular listing period upon a showing of good cause by the applicant as determined and approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

The list of applicants who qualify for Elderly Exemption who are asking for exemptions with reason:

John Johnson
Charles Finley
Vestal Caldwell
Carl Lewis
Mildred Ward

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

Write-offs/Deceased	\$2,529.67
Refunds	\$3,618.86
MV tax refunds	\$ 525.62
Releases over \$100	\$1,746.08
Releases under \$100	\$ 444.93

Commissioner Crawford made a motion, second by Commissioner Hollifield to approve Elderly Tax Exemptions, tax releases and refunds. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

JURY COMMISSION COMPENSATION

Mr. Wooten stated NC General Statute requires Commissioners approve compensation for the three Jury Commission members. Suggested compensation is \$350.00 each.

Vice-Chairman McPeters made a motion, second by Commissioner Brown, to approve request for \$350.00 for Jury Commission. By unanimous vote, motion carried.

REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Brown ask Mr. Wooten if there was an update from the Old Fort Planning Department. Mr. Wooten reported he had not received any official notification from the city there was any problem with county staff. Mr. Wooten has attempted to contact the individual and has not had a response.

Chairman Walker stated he was happy with the county Christmas party, and enjoyed the fellowship with retirees and employees.

Vice-Chairman McPeters read the Christmas story from Luke Chapter 2.

Chairman Walker ask each Commissioner to give Christmas greetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one from the public requested to speak.

ADJOURNMENT

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

DAVID N. WALKER
CHAIRMAN

CHERYL L. MITCHELL
CLERK TO THE BOARD