

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – OCTOBER 8, 2018**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, October 8, 2018, at 4:00 p.m., at the Historic Carson House, 1805 Highway 70 West, Marion, North Carolina. The meeting was duly advertised for the change in time and location.

Members Present

David Walker, Chair; Barry McPeters, Vice-Chairman; Tony Brown; and Brenda Vaughn

Members Absent

Lynn Greene

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board

Call to Order

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

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the September 10, 2018 Regular Session, and October 1, 2018 Special Session minutes, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Approval of Agenda

Chair Walker called for any additions or deletions to the agenda. Mr. Wooten requested to remove Item B. Property Revaluation Update and postpone the item to next month.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve the agenda with the deletion, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Gold Festival Funding Request

Carol Price, Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Director, Ms. Sullivan, TDA Board Chair, and David Blackwelder, past chair of the Gold Festival, requested partial funding to hire an Event Manager, Deborah Millikan to manage and grow the annual Gold Festival in Old Fort. The Town of Old Fort and the TDA have agreed to share in the funding. The total fee would be \$4,500. Ms. Price noted they were hoping to get enough new vendor growth to cover the fee for an Event Manager.

Don Markum, with the NC Gold Foundation, noted the Foundation had a festival for 15 years. For six of the 15 years the NC Gold Foundation rented space at the NC State Mountain Gateway Museum in Old Fort. The NC Gold Foundation acquired its own land in the area of the original historic gold mines in McDowell County, and this year's festival was held on that property. Mr. Markum noted the attempts to take over the NC Gold Festival had already cost the NC Gold Foundation unnecessary expense of attorney fees to file a cease and desist action against using the name "North Carolina Gold Festival". He requested the Board not to fund another gold festival, instead support the Original NC Gold Festival.

Chair Walker asked Mr. Markum if his Foundation would work with the Old Fort festival committee, and he expressed his desire to work with them. Ms. Price also noted a shuttle service could be run on the day of the event, so festival goers could experience the gold mining and the area.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to fund the \$1500, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Smoking Policy Amendment- Second Reading

Mr. Wooten noted the current Smoking Policy had been updated by prohibiting all smoking/vaping on courthouse lawn. The revised policy read:

Courthouse Property

Smoking is prohibited on the lawn of the McDowell County Courthouse. The lawn is defined as the space between the driveway, the front of the building, and the city sidewalks on Main Street and East Court Street. Smoking is also prohibited within 50 feet of any door of the Courthouse.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve the McDowell County Smoking Policy, second by Chairman Walker. Discussion followed. Commissioner Brown asked for clarification of where the public could smoke, and did the policy include county employees. The policy did include county employees, and smoking was permitted on city sidewalks and in the drive. Also, there are cigarette butt containers located on the sidewalks. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Tax Matters

Releases, Refunds, & Write-offs

Write- offs	\$ 363.79
MV tax refunds	\$ 596.81
Releases under \$100	\$ 73.12
Releases over \$100	\$ 196.38
Refunds	\$ 256.79
Discoveries	\$ 931.03

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve tax matters as presented, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Board Appointments

The Planning Board submitted a vacancy due to a member's term expiring. This was the first reading for the vacancy. The Clerk will advertise the opening, and bring applications back to the next Board meeting.

Glenwood Parade Road Closure Ordinance

Request was received from the Glenwood Christmas Parade committee for approval of *An Ordinance Declaring a Road Closure for the 2018 Glenwood Christmas Parade*. The parade would be Saturday, November 24th, from 3:00-4:30pm, 1.64 miles on SR 1786 from SR 1168 southward to SR 1785.

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

Economic Development Public Hearing

Chairman Walker declared the Board in public hearing pursuant to NCGS 158-7.1

Mr. Chuck Abernathy, MEDA Director, presented a request from an existing company, for an incentive of \$10,000 to participate in the NC Building Reuse Program. The company will have a capital investment of up to \$3 million in machinery and the employment of 16 people. The proposed wages paid by the company will exceed the county average.

Public comments: There were none.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to go out of public hearing, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Commissioner Brown noted the unemployment rate was very low at 3.4%, 4th lowest in the state, and made a motion to approve the incentive, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Admin Items

Write-offs

Request was presented for write-off of non-collectible EMS accounts totaling \$279,942.52.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve the write-offs, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

DSS Vehicle Purchase

Request was presented to purchase four Chevrolet Equinoxes for the Dept. of Social Services.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to approve the purchase of four Chevrolet Equinoxes for purchase price of \$79,930.20 off of state contract, financed with First Bank at a term of four years at a 2.9% fixed interest rate, second by Commissioner Brown. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Resolution Supporting Farmers

Request was presented for endorsement of a *Resolution Supporting SB711 NC Farm Act of 2018*. The resolution supports the efforts of farmers and recognizes their importance to the state.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to support the Resolution Supporting SB 711 NC Farm Act of 2018, second by Vice Chair McPeters. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Reports and Communications

Mr. Wooten noted due to the Veterans Day holiday and administrative offices being closed on November 12th, by consensus of the Board, the Regular Session meeting would be moved to November 19th.

The Clerk presented certificates to Chairman Walker and Vice Chair McPeters in recognition of being chosen *Best Elected Officials in McDowell County* by the McDowell News annual "Best Of" contest.

Citizen Comment

Van Boyd- wanted to clarify he was the one who had told Commissioner Brown it was 10-12 weeks to get environmental health inspections done, and the job was actually done in 8 weeks, some are now being done in 5 weeks. He suggested an expedited review process like the one in Iredell County, where the individual/contractor could pay more to have the soil scientist come to the property and lay out where the septic would need to go.

Bill Bach – received invitation to be a poll worker and paperwork to be completed for direct deposit. He knew some workers would not be working because they did not want to give out their bank information. He also noted there were 13 vacancies for poll workers to work on Election Day.

David Patneau – Environmental Health issues are still ongoing; also met with the Health Director a year ago, and the department is still needing inspectors. He noted Ms. Ruth Keener is very helpful, and legislators need to make it easier for inspectors to re-enter the soil scientist field after leaving. Currently past inspectors have to wait 12 months to be able to make inspections. Inspectors can go to another county and make \$10,000 more in salary. Chair Walker noted that should be a Legislative Goal to make inspectors easier to re-enter the field.

Ruth Keener -- suggested talking with Building Inspector's office, and also with Corey, the Environmental Health Director, about the expedited review process.

Chair Walker suggested a Legislative Roundtable with Senator Hise; Rep. Dobson; Commissioners; County Manager; Health Director; and Home Builders Assoc.

Carson House Update

Martha Jordan, Carson House Executive Director, welcomed the Board to the Carson House and invited the Board to a personal tour of the facility. She thanked the Board for their

support of the great 175th celebration. She noted some of the events held during the weeklong celebration are going to be built upon and offered again.

She noted on November 1st, all 4th graders can bring their parents with them to the Carson House for evening activities. The Over the Mountain Victory Trail men will also be giving live demonstrations that evening.

On December 1st and 2nd the annual candlelight tours at 6pm will again be happening. This is a free event, where the house is decorated in all natural greenery, and tour guides are dressed in period attire.

Chairman Walker announced the wayfinding signage for the Carson House that the Commissioners have been working on obtaining, will happen with assistance from Sen. Hise's office. The signs will be located off of the bypass.

Vice Chair McPeters made a motion to pick up the cost for tonight's meal, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By unanimous vote, the motion carried.

Chairman Walker introduced Dr. Haney to give the blessing for the meal. Dr. Haney gave a brief history about Jonathan Logan Carson, the youngest son of the builder of the Carson House, and the host of the first meeting 175 years ago for the organization of the county. The Carson family was the second wealthiest family, of the 23 families in the county. After the brief history, Dr. Haney gave thanks for the meal.

Adjournment

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

Cheryl Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

David Walker
Chairman