

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION –OCTOBER 19, 2020**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, October 19, 2020, at 11:30 a.m., at the Universal Conference Room.

Members Present

David N. Walker, Chair; Lynn Greene; Brenda Vaughn

Members Absent

Tony Brown; Barry McPeters

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Lisa Sprouse, DSS Director

Call to Order

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order at 11:30am.

DSS Update

Ms. Sprouse gave an update and distributed the agency reports. A copy is with the agenda materials.

Ms. Sprouse reported on the events that happened at their location on Friday of shots being fired in the parking lot at the DSS building. Due to Ms. Sprouse's absence, Ms. Cindy Reel, Supervisor, immediately locked the front doors, and announced on the intercom for all employees to stay in their office and shut their doors. Ms. Sprouse thanked Ms. Reel for her quick thinking and response to the situation. It was reported there had been four individuals entered a business across from the DSS building trying to cash a bogus check, and the owner had chased the individuals out and fired warning shots in the air. The owner was in the DSS parking lot when the shots were fired. After police had secured the scene the lockdown was lifted.

Ms. Sprouse has reached out to the Marion Police Department requesting an active shooter training for the DSS employees.

Ms. Sprouse also reported there are 131 children in foster care. She added there have been several teenagers coming in with mental health issues due to their home situation.

Energy Assistance Program will begin in November for those 65 years old and disabled.

Chairman Walker thanked Ms. Sprouse and Ms. Reel for their work and quick thinking in a potentially dangerous situation.

69 N Main St Building Purchase Update

Mr. Wooten gave an update on the former Kirksey Funeral Home building noting the purchase should be finalized Wednesday, 21st. It is a cash purchase. Mr. Hamrick will be onsite next week to be measuring the building since the county has not been able to locate blueprints for the prior remodel of the building. Mr. Wooten noted although Vice Chairman Brown was not able to attend the meeting today, his desire was to see the Commissioners Boardroom moved to the former chapel and the Administrative staff also be relocated to the building.

Commissioner Greene made a motion for the Administration staff and the Commissioner's Board room be moved to 69 North Main Street after the renovations, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Mr. Wooten noted some staff from Probation and Parole office had moved into the West Court Street leased space, with the majority of the staff remaining at the State St. location, due to overgrowing that site and needing more space. The office currently has 15 officers. Mr. Wooten said staff had looked at the second floor of the Administration Building for putting all probation and parole employees together, and they would be in closer vicinity to the courthouse. The move would require the relocation of the Extension department and two employees of the Guardian Ad Litem department.

Commissioner Vaughn asked if there was room at the State St location for Extension to have a conference room of the same size or larger. The State Street location is county owned, and staff would have to see if it met Extension's needs.

Chairman Walker added the National Guard Armory construction had begun in Burke County, once it was completed the local Armory property would revert back to the county.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to relocate the Probation and Parole office to the second floor of the Administration Building, and move Extension to the State St location, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Commissioner Greene recommended keeping the folding doors at the chapel where the Board room will be relocated, so other departments could also utilize the space.

The IPDC Housing Director has requested for the housing office to be relocated to a more visible and higher traffic location for security and also to be more easily accessible.

Personal Property Disposal Request

Mr. Wooten presented as a first reading disposing of equipment at the former Pilot Plant. He noted some equipment could be utilized by other departments or organizations in the county. Foothills Food Hub has expressed a need for the walk-in freezer; and Extension has requested the carport and fans. Due to this being the first reading, staff will advertise and bring back the request at the next meeting.

Mr. Wooten noted the processing equipment could be advertised through Gov Deals, he requested Board approval to negotiate a private sale. Commissioner Vaughn noted Joe Lawing would be a great source to start with, since he was in poultry equipment sales.

Consensus of the Board was to do whatever is necessary to move the items.

Planning Ordinance Update

Shoreline Protection Fees

Mr. Wooten presented a request from the Planning Board for establishment of a major and minor shoreline protection permits. A minor permit would cover boat docks installation and footpath establishment. A major permit would cover building, ground disturbance, and vegetation removal. Staff gave recommendation of \$150 for a minor permit fee; and \$250 for a major permit fee.

Commissioner Vaughn made a motion to approve the fees, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Trash Ordinance

Mr. Wooten presented a draft Solid Waste Operation Ordinance and a draft Illegal Solid Waste Ordinance (will be sent via email) as a first reading.

Board of Adjustments Request

Mr. Wooten presented a letter from the Board of Adjustments requesting the Commissioners to request the Planning Board to review the criteria for approval for future tram requests on Lake James.

Commissioner Vaughn made a motion to have the Planning Board look at criteria for tram request, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Sales Tax

Chairman Walker reviewed the county and state tax sales figures for the month of July. The month of June was the highest on record, and July was the second highest on record for McDowell County.

Adjournment

Commissioner Vaughn made a motion to adjourn at 12:19pm, second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 3-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

David Walker
Chairman