

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECESSED SESSION-CITY COUNCIL – JUNE 17, 2021**

ASSEMBLY

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Recessed Session on Thursday, June 17, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., at the Universal Conference Room.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair Tony Brown; David N. Walker, Vice Chair; Brenda Vaughn; Chris Allison; and Patrick Ellis

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Alison Bell, Finance Director; Will Kehler, EM Director; Craig Walker, Deputy Director; Adrienne Jones, Deputy Director; Mike Conley, McDowell News

City Council

Steve Little, Mayor; Juanita Doggett; Woody Ayers; Billy Martin; Ann Harkey; Don Ramsey; Landis Hollifield; Bob Boyette; Julie Scherer; Corey Presnell

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 5:00pm and Vice Chair Walker gave the invocation.

Fire Department Needs

Mayor Steve Little spoke on the agreement with the City and the County for the Marion Area Fire District. The last agreement was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2005, and he suggested revisiting the MOU and bring it up to date.

Corey Presnell, Asst. Chief of the Marion Fire Dept presented a request for 1.33 cent tax increase. A copy of the presentation is with the agenda materials. The 1.33 cent request would be used to continue the funding of five full time employees hired on a FEMA SAFER grant, and purchase needed rescue equipment.

Commissioner Ellis noted it is the responsibility of each fire department to have a strategic plan of phasing in what the needs are for current and future years. Also, for consideration of how a grant will be sustained, once the grant period is over. He challenged both Boards to create a plan by year's end of how to handle fire tax, and each member communicate why they decided to vote the way they voted.

Consensus from both Board and Council was there needed to be a better job of communicating what the fire tax is used for; have a strategic needs plan for future years; update the Marion Area Fire Tax agreement between the City of Marion and McDowell County; and both Board and Council make decisions on the fire budget.

Mr. Wooten noted it was a difficult situation since the Board just lowered property tax by one-cent, and now asked to increase fire tax by 1.33 cents.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to approve the requested 1.33 Marion Area fire tax with the addition to redo the City and County contract by October 15, 2021; and both City and County approve expenditures over \$3,000 regarding the Marion Area district, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 4-1 the motion passed.

Chairman Brown; Vice Chair Walker; Commissioner Vaughn; Commissioner Allison—yes
Commissioner Ellis-no

City Council Member Juanita Doggett requested the Board to consider requesting the Governor and Legislature to shorten the benefits period for unemployment to show support for our local businesses.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to send a letter to the Governor and Legislature requesting an early termination for unemployment benefits, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to send a letter to the Governor, House and Senate for the children to not be required to wear a mask in summer school, send by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to adjourn at 7:33pm, second by Commissioner Vaughn. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman