

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION –MAY 2, 2022**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session on Monday, May 2, 2022, at 5:00p.m., at the Commissioner’s Board Room located at 69 N Main Street, Marion, NC.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Cheryl Mitchell, Clerk to the Board; Alison Bell, Finance Officer; Lake Silver, Management Asst.

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Fire Depts. Tax Increase Request

Mr. Wooten noted a couple of weeks ago the Board had met with four fire departments to hear their request for a fire tax increase. The requests were from:

	Current Tax Rate	Proposed New Tax Rate
• Hankins-North Fork	0.08	0.10
• Pleasant Gardens	0.08	0.11
• Ashford North Cove	0.06	0.09
• Sugar Hill-Montford Cove	0.09	0.11

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to approve the four (4) fire departments requests as presented to the Board, second by Commissioner Vaughn. Discussion followed. Commissioner Allison noted he appreciated the fire departments being good stewards of the taxpayer’s monies, and the good job they do. Vice Chairman Walker added the County has the greatest, most highly trained group of men and women protecting our property of anywhere in the State. Commissioner Ellis expressed his appreciation for the reports each department gave on their budget needs for the next five years, the high level of coverage the fire departments provide, and the long range plans they submitted. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Staffing Request

Both the Emergency Services Director, William Kehler, and Sheriff Ricky Buchanan presented salary studies last month and asked for increases. The Board of Elections requested an increase in their staff salaries also.

Mr. Wooten presented a report with increases of 2.5%; 5%; 7.5%; and 10% in salaries. Also, the report contained a jail offset of \$200,000 from the Sheriff's jail line item.

Also, Mr. Wooten presented a hypothetical base increase based on 10%, 15%, and 20% of possible new revenue from the tax revaluation.

Discussion followed on the Elections request for an increase in salaries for the Elections Director from \$55,000 to \$70,000, and the Deputy Director from \$34,000 to \$46,000. Mr. Wooten noted the NCGS stated compensation of the director shall be commensurate with the salary paid to directors in counties similarly situated and similar in population and number of registered voters. Commissioner Ellis agreed there needed to be just compensation, and that could be done over time.

Commissioner Ellis agreed with Commissioner Allison the need for salary increases in Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Dept. was immediate in order to keep staff.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to approve the request submitted from the Sheriff, and Emergency Services as presented, and a 10% increase for all other county employees effectively immediately, second by Commissioner Allison. Commissioner Allison also noted this was Public Service Recognition Week, and this was a great gesture of appreciation that the County public service workers needed. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to approve the request by the Board of Elections as presented, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 4-1 the motion passed.

Brown, Walker, Vaughn, Allison - yes
Ellis – no

Set Budget Presentation Date

Mr. Wooten requested the budget presentation meeting be set for Monday, May 23rd at 5:00pm. He also asked the Board if they would like to have the County insurance broker at the meeting. The consensus of the Board was yes, he needed to attend the meeting with suggestions.

Commissioner Vaughn noted she would like to name the road going into the new shooting range after Tony G. Brown, in honor of all the work he had done in bringing the range to McDowell County. Consensus of the Board agreed, and they would discuss the matter further at a future meeting.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to adjourn at 5:35pm, second by Vice Chairman Walker. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman