

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
RECESSED SESSION – May 11, 2023**

**Assembly**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in a Recessed Session on Thursday, May 11, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., in the EOC/Backup 911 Center at 634 College Dr. Marion, NC.

**Members Present**

David N. Walker, Vice-Chairman; Chris Allison; Patrick Ellis; Lynn Greene

**Members Absent**

Tony G. Brown, Chairman

**Others Present**

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Victoria Craig, Clerk to the Board; William Kehler, EM Director; Alison Bell, Finance Director

**Call to Order**

Vice-Chairman Walker called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

**Welcome**

Each Commissioner took their time to speak on their appreciation to each department represented.

**Department Requests**

Ashford-North Cove Fire Department – *Brad Washburn, Chief*

- 19 volunteers
- 4 full-time, looking for a 5<sup>th</sup>
- 8 part-time, looking for a 9<sup>th</sup>
- 24 certified firefighters
- 14 rescue certified
- 11 EMT basics
- 2 EMT advances
- 12 paramedics
- Class 5 rating

Crooked Creek Fire Department – *Steven Lytle, Chief*

- Trying to hire their first full-time personnel
- Increase part-time
- Current roster is 26

- Added on a used tanker to the fleet
- UTV and trailer package – bought by grant
- Trying to find another large tanker

Dysartsville Fire Department – *Nick Washburn, Chief*

- 376 calls this fiscal year
- 27 volunteers, 3 juniors, 1 paid
- Took over the community building (\$200k)
- Looking to purchase/lease property to have a substation to help with call volume
- 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary on July 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Wants incentives for volunteers
- Needs water access

Hankins-North Fork Fire Department – *Ray Hollifield, Chief*

- YTD May 11<sup>th</sup> – 237 calls, 1258 personnel response, 5.3 persons per call
- Completed 2026.5 training hours
- 28 volunteers, 6 part-time
- Secured Engine 19
- Purchased new boat w/ fire pump
- Drone program
- Working on rescue certification
- Wants a full-time engineer

Marion Fire Department – *Ray McDaniel, Chief*

- 13 volunteers, 12 full-time, 2 part-time, 2 juniors
- Class 3 certification
- March 2022 – medium rescue
- 1360 calls, 22% are overlapping
- 300 calls were EMS
- In 2022, 5,489 training hours were completed
- Grant to help pay for 2 engines
- SAFER Grant for 3 personnel; 100% paid for 3 years
- Applied to AFG Grant

Nebo Fire Department – *Rick Simmons, Chief*

- 1 paid; not manned on the weekends
- 376 calls this year
- 28 volunteers
- Fire boat coming in mid-winter hopefully

Old Fort Fire Department – *Ron Richardson, Chief*

- 28 volunteers
- 5 part-time
- In 2022, there were 884 calls - 40% of the calls are medical
- Maintain fire protection service
- Working on medium rescue certification
- Need more people – recruitment and retention

PG Fire Department – *Neil Settlemyre, Chief*

- 42 members, 1 full-time, 9 part-time
- In 2022, there were 690 calls
- New addition was completed on the building
- Bought a new truck “Rescue 11”
- As of March 2023, the staff obtained the following certifications: heavy rescue, ag. rescue, swift water high angle, and medical responder
- \$45k from the state – \$35k went to new turnout gear and machines to wash the gear, \$10k went to supplies for the truck
- Needs a new engine
- Class 5 rating

Sugar Hill-Montford Cove Fire Department – *Joe Washburn, Chief*

- 613 calls last fiscal year
- 25 volunteers, 3 juniors
- 2 full-time, 7 part-time
- 23 certified firefighters, 19 medical certifications, 13 rescue certifications
- Applied to the AFG grant for a washer and dryer for gear and hoses
- Added a rescue engine to the fleet
- Class 4 certification
- Broke ground on a new building
- Medium rescue

Woodlawn Fire Department – *Keith Stockton, Chief*

- 25 volunteers, 2 junior, 1 cadet
- 3 part-time
- 1 Full-time
- Mid-300 range of calls
- Bought a new truck and converted it to a brush truck

McDowell Rescue – *Brian Gentry, Chief*

- 1,617 calls - 61% medical, 39% rescue, fire, and other related areas
- Trying to update the Standard Operating Procedures within City limits
- Renewed certification in various areas
- 1,930.3 training hours
- Drone services

Forest Service – *Weston Vandenabeele, County Ranger*

- In 2022, there were 84 responses to wildfires
- 5-year average – 38 wildfires a year
- Debris burn is the number one cause of forest fires
- Truck should be here this year

McDowell Fire Rescue Association – *Brian Piercy, President*

- Purchased dummies for training
- Received a grant for recruitment and retention
- The association is giving out two 1,500 training grants to a department in McDowell County

Emergency Management – *William Kehler, Director*

- 10,554 calls
- 84,631 911 calls
- Working on FEMA generator grants
- Closing out Tropical Storm Fred issues

Joe Washburn discussed the positivity of Viper radios and stocking the County. The training grounds need to be improved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Attest:

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Victoria Craig  
Clerk to the Board

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David N. Walker  
Vice-Chairman