

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION – January 30, 2023**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, January 30, 2023, at 4:30 p.m., in the Commissioner's Board Room, 69 N Main St., Marion, NC.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Victoria Craig, Clerk to the Board; Lake Silver, Management Assistant; Anna Lee, HR Director; Alison Bell, Finance Director

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Pay Study Presentation

Ashley Wooten, County Manager, introduced David Hill to the Board and attendees. Last year there was a pay adjustment for County employees, which led to the Board deciding to conduct a pay study. David Hill came highly recommended and had a great reputation for being fair. Mr. Wooten made the audience aware it wasn't an open forum meeting; therefore, the audience couldn't ask questions or participate in the conversation.

David Hill presented his findings from the 2022 Pay Study that was conducted as requested by the Board of Commissioners. The pay study was about a 4-6-month process.

Mr. Hill presented a workforce analysis snapshot of the workforce at the beginning of the study, which was June 2022 at the end of the last fiscal year. According to Mr. Hill, the average length of employment is from 8 to 10 years in a mature workforce. With the information Mr. Hill acquired from McDowell County at the end of last fiscal year, it was found that 17.2% of the workforce had worked for the County under one year, 25.9% of the workforce worked for the County under two years, 50.1% of the workforce worked for the County under five years, and 72.1% of the workforce worked for the County for under 10 years. Based on this information, it was found that the average years of service for McDowell County was 7.3%.

Mr. Hill showed the Board and the audience a presentation with graphs showing various bell curves based on statistics of the County. What Mr. Hill found was that employees who were newly hired were making only about 5-10% less than those employees who had worked for the

County for a long time. Each employee is on a grade scale. Currently, the scale range in salary is 36.4%. Mr. Hill suggested that the grade scale pay differential be at 5% with a 40% range.

At the beginning of the study last summer, Mr. Hill met with employees to explain the study and met with each department director to better understand their staff's roles. Employees then completed the 12-page position description questionnaire, and employee interviews were conducted with a few employees to better understand those positions.

Mr. Hill compared McDowell County to the following communities: Black Mountain, Buncombe County, Burke County, Marion, Morganton, Rutherford County, Yancey County, Beaufort County, Haywood County, Jackson County, Richmond County, Stokes County, and Vance County. Those counties were selected for comparison based on proximity as well as similar population sizing.

There were 6 market comparison examples given by Mr. Hill. In the examples, there were current and projected grades, various county comparisons, the market value of the positions, and more.

The following recommendations were given to the board:

- Implementation Cost: \$2,224,527
- With \$15,000 Cap: \$2,107,017
- With \$12,000 Cap: \$2,041,816
- With \$10,000 Cap: \$1,977,719

Mr. Hill informed the Board that if recommendations are adopted, the County will be making a substantial investment in the workforce. Going forward, he recommended annual one-third studies. This ensures that each position is reviewed every third year to maintain market positioning.

After Mr. Hill's presentation, there was a discussion among Board members along with questions for Mr. Hill.

Mr. Wooten reminded attendees that this implementation cost, at the \$2,224,527 level, would be on top of the raises from last year, totaling about a \$4 million budget impact.

Vice-Chairman Walker made a motion to approve the recommendations regarding McDowell County's Pay and Classification Study starting July 1, 2023, of \$2,224,527 with personnel policy language to be brought back to the Board for the decision made as well as 1/3 study completed annually after the first year, seconded by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Recess

Chairman Brown declared the Board into recess at 5:19 p.m.

Chairman Brown called the meeting back to order at 5:59 p.m.

Opioid Settlement Recommendations

Mr. Wooten gave an overview of the opioid settlement.

McDowell County has been allocated a total of \$465,083.00 in funds for the 2022 calendar year. This amount is based on a formula the national council representing local governments developed. All organizations requesting funding must submit proposals with opioid mitigation strategies that align with the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Option A. McDowell County Board of Commissioners may fund one or more strategies from (Exhibit A) of evidence-based, high-impact strategies to address the epidemic. The funding must be for specific projects that serve persons with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) or any cooccurring Substance Use Disorder (SUD) or mental health condition. Funding Applications will be reviewed by McDowell Substance Use Task Force Members.

The Substance Use Task Force conducted research on what they feel would be the best option for McDowell County in conjunction with McDowell EMS.

Danny Hampton presented the following recommendations to the Board regarding the Opioid Settlement funds:

Rank	Organization	Score	Requested	Award Recommendation
1	McDowell Emergency Services	162	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
2	Care Reach	159	\$56,486.00	\$50,000.00
3	Freedom Life	155	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
4	RHA	154	\$49,302.89	\$49,302.00
5	Black Mountain Counseling	149	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
6	McLeod Center	149	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
7	Marion PD	146	\$56,486.00	\$50,000.00
8	McDowell Mission	129	\$50,000.00	\$27,849.00
9	CULA	109	\$50,000.00	\$27,849.00
	Total Awarded			\$400,000.00
	Community Narcan			\$65,083.00
	Total Opioid Funds Expended			\$465,083.00

Adrienne Jones, Deputy Director of McDowell EMS, informed the Board about the process that led to the recommendations. The Board was later provided with the Opioid Fund Proposal Scoring Rubric that was used to score each organization.

Jason Wallace gave his testimony of how a frontline program helped him through his journey.

Jacqueline Fox, a Peer Support Specialist with Impact, talked about what a Peer Support Specialist is. Julie McAlister shared her testimony with the Board.

The Board will vote on recommendations at a later meeting.

Adjournment

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to adjourn at 6:28 p.m., seconded by Vice-Chairman Walker. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Attest:

Victoria Craig
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman