

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION – May 15, 2023**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, May 15, 2023, at 11:30 a.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

Members Absent

Lynn Greene

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Victoria Craig, Clerk to the Board; Bobbie Sigmon, DSS Director; Alison Bell, Finance Director

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 11:31 a.m.

Cryptocurrency Mining Public Hearing

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to go into a public hearing at 11:32 a.m. regarding Cryptocurrency Mining, seconded by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 3-0, the motion passed.

Ashley Wooten explained that Cryptocurrency Mining (Cryptomining) is essentially linking a multitude of computers together in a mining farm causing a large energy drain and a cause for major noise concern.

Vice-Chairman Walker entered the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Staff suggested placing a moratorium on Cryptomining for the time being.

Citizen Chris Price asked if the moratorium was being placed just because of the sound issues it would cause. Mr. Wooten and Vice-Chairman Walker informed Mr. Price that the moratorium was being placed more so as to give staff more time to research in greater detail what cryptocurrency mining is and what it can do to the community.

Vice-Chairman Walker made a motion to go out of the public hearing at 11:39 am seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Vice-Chairman Walker made a motion to approve the two-month recommended moratorium as presented by staff, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

DSS Update

DSS Director Bobbie Sigmon reviewed her monthly memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Board. Mrs. Sigmon is still working on recruiting employees to fill current vacancies from surrounding colleges, which the Board appreciates.

DSS staff is working on providing heating and air for clients in severe need. Staff is also waiting on direction from the state for Medicaid expansion.

Mrs. Sigmon updated the Board on finding placements for children who have severe behavioral needs and continues to seek guidance and support from legislative representatives.

Finance/HR Items

HR Director Anna Lee presented NEOGOV, which is a public sector HR software and management solution. Mrs. Lee informed the Board that in 2022, there were 94 total employee terminations and 74 of those terminations were eligible for additional payouts such as vacation balances and compensatory time.

Commissioner Ellis requested that staff look into paying vacation out for an employee leaving voluntarily.

Mrs. Lee also discussed the employee turnover rate. Commissioner Ellis inquired about the reasoning for the number of turnovers and he was informed that there are various reasons such as a change of career, transitioning to the private sector, pay, etc. By the year 2023, based on age, 33% of the workforce will be eligible to retire.

There are current challenges with staffing, assessment, data, time, and outdated filing and file retention since there isn't adequate software for the County. All of these could lead to fines due to avoidable penalties. The total cost for year one of NEOGOV is \$70,105.66.

Vice-Chairman Walker made a motion to approve NEOGOV and to take the money out of ARPA interest for one year followed by including the cost in the budget for years after, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Mr. Wooten informed the Board that most of the County's bank accounts are currently at First Citizens. First Bank approached the County Finance Director, Alison Bell, and offered higher interest rates. For the operating bank account at First Citizens, the County earns 0% interest, but everything flows through a reserve account, which accrues 0.7%. At First Bank there will be a rate of 2%.

Vice-Chairman Walker made a motion to approve the staff's recommendation and move accounts from First Citizens to First Bank, seconded by Commissioner Allison. Commissioner Ellis asked if there were any other banks that were looked into and Mrs. Bell informed him that First Bank was the best rate. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Closed Session

Vice-Chairman Walker made a motion to go into closed session at 12:10 p.m. N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a) (6), seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to go out of closed session at 12:48 p.m. seconded by Vice-Chairman Walker. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to adjourn at 12:55 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Attest:

Victoria Craig
Clerk to the Board

Tony G. Brown
Chairman