

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
MCDOWELL COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR SESSION – September 9, 2024**

**Assembly**

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, September 9, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., in the Commissioner's Board Room, 69 N Main St., Marion, NC.

**Members Present**

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

**Members Absent**

**Others Present**

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Sena A. Allison, Clerk to the Board; Fred Coats, County Attorney; William Kehler, ES Director; Jason Hollifield, Transportation Director and J.J. Boyd, Skyrunner President/CEO

**Call to Order**

Chairman Walker called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. The Prayer was given by Commissioner Allison. The Pledge of Allegiance was given by Commissioner Greene.

**Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to approve the August 12, 2024 Regular Session minutes; the August 19, 2024 Regular Session minutes; with a second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

**Approval of Agenda**

Commissioner Greene requested a Closed Session on employee matters. Commissioner Ellis made a motion to approve the Agenda; this was seconded by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

## EMS Staff Recognition

Chairman Walker welcomed William Kehler to come forth to give recognition to three outstanding individuals of the EMS Department.

Mr. Kehler began with Paramedic Boyd Hoyle, asking he and his wife to come forward, addressing his retirement that was on July 31, 2024. He gave the history of Paramedic Hoyle's service and recalled during his job interview how he noticed his clear dedication, persistence and laser like focus that stood out. Mr. Kehler described him as an EMS Director's dream, he never caused problems, was always there for work early, never called in, took care of patients like he would his own family and never had a complaint given against him. The Director said speaking of his work ethic would not do it justice, he was always available when the organization needed him and he thanked Paramedic Hoyle's wife for the support she provided to his service. He went to say during the comments at his retirement reception, his work ethic and dependability was noted time and time again. Chairman Walker read aloud the Resolution the Board made to honor Paramedic Hoyle on his faithful serviceability to McDowell County and his retirement.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to adopt the Resolution, with a second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0, the vote passed.

Each Commissioner spoke to congratulations and thankfulness to the lives he saved during his term and had their picture taken with him and his wife to commemorate the occasion.

David Walker, Chairman  
Tony Brown, Vice Chairman  
Lynn Greene, Commissioner  
Chris Allison, Commissioner  
Patrick Ellis, Commissioner



Ashley Wooten, County Manager  
Sena Allison, Clerk to the Board  
Donald Fred Coats, County Attorney

# McDowell County

## RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION FOR PARAMEDIC BOYD HOYLE

**WHEREAS**, Paramedic Boyd Hoyle began his career at McDowell County EMS as a part time employee on October 1, 2015, after serving in manufacturing for 30 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Paramedic Hoyle enrolled in AB Tech's EMS Program, graduating with a paramedic certification; and

**WHEREAS**, Paramedic Hoyle transferred into full time status with McDowell County EMS in 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, the McDowell County Emergency Services would like to recognize Paramedic Boyd Hoyle as a loyal and dedicated employee, serving his community with compassionate medical care with a work ethic that is second to none while being an inspiration within the EMS agency.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the McDowell County Board of Commissioners do hereby congratulate Paramedic Hoyle on his retirement and do hereby authorize McDowell County EMS to present his duty badge in honor of the faithful service he demonstrated to the citizens of McDowell County.

This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

**ADOPTED** this the 9th day of September, 2024.

Attest:

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Sena Allison  
Clerk to the Board

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David N. Walker  
Chairman

Director Kehler called Captain Marvin Hancock and his wife Iretha to come forward in recognition to his retirement and service to the McDowell County EMS. He stated how Captain Hancock first started working for the EMS on weekends, while he worked a full-time job, and how they worked together on many holidays. Captain Hancock rose through the ranks, served as a Level 1 Instructor at MTCC and his footprint is in all aspects of the Emergency agency in the County. Mr. Kehler noted the Captain comforted countless people and how when he was on duty he was at the site of every incident that was called in. Mr. Kehler proudly announced Captain Hancock would remain as a part-time paramedic and officer, to carry the rank of Captain. He told that words cannot express how much he had done for him and the organization. The Commissioners spoke towards their personal experience with Captain Hancock, his love for the Lord, the commitment the job requires and his heart for the citizens. Vice Chair Brown read aloud the Resolution the Board made to honor Captain Hancock for his outstanding service to McDowell County and his retirement from full time.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to adopt the Resolution, with a second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the vote passed.

The Board had their picture taken with him and his wife to commemorate the occasion with presenting the adopted Resolution.

David Walker, Chairman  
Tony Brown, Vice Chairman  
Lynn Greene, Commissioner  
Chris Allison, Commissioner  
Patrick Ellis, Commissioner



Ashley Wooten, County Manager  
Sena Allison, Clerk to the Board  
Donald Fred Coats, County Attorney

## McDowell County

### RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION FOR CAPTAIN MARVIN HANCOCK

**WHEREAS**, Captain Marvin Hancock began his career at McDowell County EMS as a part time employee on September 16, 2001; and

**WHEREAS**, Captain Hancock worked nearly every weekend until he went full time on October 1, 2011; and

**WHEREAS**, the McDowell County Emergency Services would like to recognize Captain Hancock as an outstanding care provider, instructor, mentor, who has left a lasting impression on McDowell County EMS by saving countless lives, consoling hundreds of families who lost loved ones and has served the EMS agency with honor and dignity; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Hancock plans to continue his service with McDowell County by working part time with the EMS Agency.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the McDowell County Board of Commissioners do hereby congratulate Captain Marvin Hancock on his retirement, express an appreciation of his desire to work part time with McDowell County EMS, and do hereby present his duty badge for his prestigious and steadfast service he demonstrated to the community of McDowell County.

This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

**ADOPTED** this the 9th day of September, 2024.

Attest:

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Sena Allison  
Clerk to the Board

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David N. Walker  
Chairman

The EMS Director welcomed Dr. William V. Fowler and his wife, to recognize him as a former Medical Director for McDowell County EMS and his retirement. Mr. Kehler told of his vast career as a family care physician, Chief of Staff at the hospital, President of McDowell Medical Associates and his continuous support to the EMS agency throughout his mission. The Board spoke accolades to the Dr.'s leadership, his noteworthy practice and all gave congratulations.

Commissioner Ellis read aloud the Resolution the Board made to honor Dr. William V. Fowler for his stewardship and guidance to the many agencies he served in McDowell County and his retirement on June 28, 2024.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to adopt the Resolution, with a second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the vote passed.

Dr. Fowler gave words to the Board in recognizing what a fine, valuable job they all do for the County. He spoke of the care the McDowell County EMS Department delivers as being second to none, and highlighted his staff that were present with him in the Board Room.

The Board had their picture taken with him and his wife to commemorate the occasion with presenting the adopted Resolution.

Ashley Wooten, the County Manager reiterated to all the esteemed honorees the County's appreciation in their service and to Mr. Kehler as a Director who always graciously salutes his staff.

David Walker, Chairman  
Tony Brown, Vice Chairman  
Lynn Greene, Commissioner  
Chris Allison, Commissioner  
Patrick Ellis, Commissioner



Ashley Wooten, County Manager  
Sena Allison, Clerk to the Board  
Donald Fred Coats, County Attorney

## McDowell County

### RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION FOR DR. WILLIAM V. FOWLER

**WHEREAS**, Dr. William Fowler graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill School of Medicine in 1978; and

**WHEREAS**, he joined the Medical Staff of the McDowell Hospital in 1981; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Fowler was an establishing partner in forming McDowell Family Medicine in 1981; and was elected President of that organization, now known as McDowell Medical Associates in 1981 thru 2009; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Fowler served as the Medical Director of McDowell County from 1985 thru 1987; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Fowler was awarded Chief of Staff at the McDowell Hospital from 1990 thru 1991; and became District 9 Director for N.C. Academy of Family Physicians from 1993 thru 1995; and

**WHEREAS**, Dr. Fowler continued his work at McDowell Medical Associates until retiring on June 28, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, the McDowell County Emergency Services would like to recognize Dr. Fowler for his leadership, guidance, and unwavering support of McDowell County EMS through the years, which contributed to the overall success of the organization.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** the McDowell County Board of Commissioners do hereby express their gratitude to Dr. William Fowler for his decades of service to the citizens of McDowell County, for his service to McDowell County EMS and, furthermore, congratulate him on his retirement.

This resolution shall become effective upon adoption.

**ADOPTED** this the 9th day of September, 2024.

Attest:

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Sena Allison  
Clerk to the Board

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David N. Walker  
Chairman

### **Transit Public Hearing**

Chairman Walker welcomed Jason Hollifield who asked for the Fiscal Year funding for the Transportation Department . Mr. Hollifield told the State’s administrative grant this year is \$192,832.00, with the County match being \$38,566.00. At this time the Chairman declared the meeting go into a public hearing under statute G.S 153A-52, then he asked if anyone in the Board Room wanted to speak to this matter, whereas no one did.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to come out of the public hearing, with a second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to approve the requested funding, with a second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Mr. Hollifield gave an update for his department, telling by the end of August the transportation department had already given 21,000 rides for the calendar year and is on track to have a record-breaking year. He told they are up to 600 employment rides – coming and going per month. Chairman Walker asked Mr. Hollifield if they turn people away for these rides, in which he answered there is a waiting list, and told of several riders who have to be at work at 7:00 a.m. and the transportation drivers starting at 6:00 a.m. It can take up to an hour to pick up the riders from their location and get them all to work on time. Vice Chair Brown asked if there

was a set limit of rides people can take until they would be able get their own transportation as to not be a permanent situation to the transportation department. Mr. Hollifield responded there is not, due to a mandate from the State and cited they do receive funding to accommodate rides. Commissioner Greene asked how many requests have been made for 2<sup>nd</sup> shift riders, in which Mr. Hollifield gave his estimate of 10-12 a month. He did clarify that they are able to take people to second shift, by they are unable to take them home.

Lastly, he updated the MEE grant they have been waiting on for approximately 2 years, of now being out of D.C. and in Raleigh. This enables the department to send in the paperwork as requested for monies to assist the department on evenings and weekend shifts. He stated this will hopefully be attained by the first of the year.

Chairman Walker expressed his appreciation to the work Mr. Hollifield and his staff does for the County, with how valuable the service is to the community. He noted the importance of getting people to and from work in order to provide for their families, while giving a way to ultimately buy their own vehicle.

### **Skyrunner Broadband Project Update**

Mr. Wooten introduced JJ Boyd to the Board addressing how the Board has supported Broadband expansion, with recognizing prior limitations for expansion until the past 3 or 4 years. He pointed to pandemic related funding now being made available. The County Manager spoke on how Skyrunner was the recipient to a CAB grant that permits an agreement of the NC Department of Information Technology (NCDIT) and the County to serve over 700 locations. Mr. Boyd thanked the Board for having him, telling Skyrunner has been providing wireless internet to the community since 2004. He told with the funding now available, they can provide fiber network for a better internet service to homes and businesses. They began work to provide approximately 795 locations in McDowell County with engineering and pole make-ready applications being submitted for the direction of installing underground to communities. He acknowledged the Board is interested in seeing as many locations as can be served, especially school age children's homes. He highlighting their basic program being 200 megabits through the fiber plans. Skyrunner has about 2 years to complete the project and mentioned if you go to the nc1 map for Broadband, you are able to identify who the awarded addresses are. Following Mr. Boyd's presentation, he asked if any of the Commissioners had questions, in which Commissioner Ellis noticed the majority of the 795 locations are in the Eastern part of the County and are there plans to serve the middle, north or western areas. Mr. Boyd answered there is a complicated process to selecting addresses while being under challenge by the state. He cited the locations were chosen as contiguous areas that were bordering together. In closing he said there may be another round of CAB grants or other funding sources such as BEAD they would apply for, encouraging the Board to ask the NCDIT if there would be additional rounds for McDowell County, to which Skyrunner would participate in qualifying addresses.

### **Water Projects Update**

Mr. Wooten started with Phase 1 being almost completed that is NC 126, Wildlife Road, Lonesome Pine Drive, Jack Corpening Road, Sunny Acres and Bentwood Drive.

The Hoppy Tom Hollow project, which is a different funding source that pays for the plumbing, is about to have the service lines installed and will serve 15-20 homes.

Nebo Phase 2A and 2B will start in a couple of weeks, with the initial part to move the master meter from Stacy Hill Rd. to Beaman Rd. close to the city limits. This means the City would transfer ownership and maintenance of approximately two miles of water line to the County.

The designs are complete on the East End project, with Mr. Wooten working alongside the County attorney on easement acquisitions to release for bids.

The Exit 90 project has designs underway, with a meeting scheduled Friday, the 13th for approval.

Lastly the West Marion Elementary/Providence project has an approved contract, with surveying initiated that is scheduled take approximately 11 months. This project is funded by the State and will service the school as priority from the Board's direction. A request was given for a Resolution authorizing receipt of State funding.

Commissioner Allison made a motion to authorize the Resolution, with a second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

### **Building Update**

Mr. Wooten started with no updates to the DSS building project, with telling there is a possibility to a meeting in November after the election, with the General Assembly to address funding this request.

He updated the Transfer Station Building project with having engineering plans complete, but no bids as of yet. Mr. Wooten noted a slight change was made for the requirements, in hopes that will allow a better response for bids. With the State saying we have to repair the building after they did an inspection, the County is looking into funding resources to assist the required repairs. Chairman Walker asked when the bids will be offered, in which Mr. Wooten answered in around 3 weeks. Mr. Wooten told the second set of scales had been ordered to assist on busy days and the permit will need to be revised due to the addition. He mentioned Vice Chair Brown speaking about a second entry in which a site visit has been scheduled for September 12<sup>th</sup> for an engineer to give a cost on. A brief discussion was had on the road at the lower and upper section, in which a recommendation was given to asphalt the lower part first. Vice Chair Brown gave his opinion to not to spend a lot of money on the road that big trucks go up but would consider spending more for a separate road of travel for standard vehicles. Commissioner Ellis addressed having engineers look at the road being closer to the scales for less road wear and cost, allowing the upper section more road allowance to take metal, wood and other material to. Chairman Walker added to have the engineer look at what was recommended to the Manager on the dimensions on material, for a second opinion.

Mr. Wooten updated the Recreation Center project with having several discoveries of underground sewer and water lines. The project should take 4 to 5 months to complete.

Mr. Wooten gave an update on the Animal Shelter site where the Commissioners authorized a possible location on Spaulding Rd., telling of the start to the necessary topographical surveys.



## **Broadband Update**

The County Manager updated Broadband with the Board's authorization of submitting for Round 2 of CAB grants, in which staff has sent a letter of interest for. These grants waive local matches, as the matching funds will be covered by the State. The opportunity for us to earn the second round will be disclosed in about a month.

## **Employee Leave Discussion**

Mr. Wooten noted the discussion from last month on the parental leave cost in which he presented a couple of scenarios to the Board on number of weeks taken, how the employee could use their leave time for maternal and adoption instances. Chairman Walker asked what does the State say is the recommended time for parental leave, in which Mr. Wooten answered the State allows 4 to 8 and FMLA allows 12 weeks. FMLA and the State's benefit starts after 12 months of employment. Commissioner Ellis asked how many days sick leave does an employee earn in 12 months, in which the County manager answered approximately 1 day per month. A brief discussion was had on seeking what do other County's equivalent to ours, along with the 5 largest business in McDowell County allow for their parental leave guidelines.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to have Mr. Wooten present a policy based on that request to the Board, detailing what he deems appropriate from the information gathered, with a second by Vice Chair Brown. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

## **Charlotte Water IBT**

Mr. Wooten relayed how the Western Piedmont Council of Governments has hired a lobbyist firm to execute a strategy in response to the Charlotte IBT request for the transfer of our water for their use. He told that he and Mr. Boyette will serve on the planning committee. The first meeting will be in a month and he will keep the Board posted on all details.

## **Strategic Planning Update**

Mr. Wooten went over the Strategic Plan for the Board to review and make changes as they deem appropriate, taking into consideration requests from the citizens who attended the Public Forum meeting in July, as well as other suggestions made and their own wishes established, prior to adopting.

## **Budget Reports**

Mr. Wooten cited the Property Tax Collection Report, the Sales Tax Report and a GF-1 amendment that is related to sales tax we will recollect from the State. He went over a Project Budget Ordinance for the Providence Water Project with one budget amendment for the Board to approve.

Commissioner Greene made a motion to approve the Budget items as presented, with a second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

## **Administrative Items**

Mr. Wooten outlined the EMS write-offs for the month of uncollectable bills.

A request by NCDOT on behalf of property owners on Linville Road north of Lake James, in which the Board had directed staff to find out if any other property owners - whether deeded or not, had any right of ways, whereas they discovered there were none.

An appeal from The Daughters of the American Revolution to approve a proclamation for Constitution Week for September 17-23<sup>rd</sup>.

Request for an Inspection Waive Fee by England Builders on behalf of the Dysartsville and Sugar Hill-Montford Cove Fire Departments to install new generators that are grant funded projects.

A new lease agreement with The Radio Club, who has been in one of the County's buildings for decades, as the former lease agreement cannot be found by either party. It states the Club is providing a service in exchange for \$1.00 per year.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to accept all Administrative Items as presented, with a second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

### **Tax Matters**

The County Manager presented a request from Linda Onufrey, Tax Collector, to charge off uncollected taxes for the 2013 tax year in the amount of \$76,212.88 as of August 31, 2024. The amount was not included in the accounts receivable annual audit report because by statute the funds were not collectible

Mr. Wooten presented the monthly tax releases, refunds and discoveries.

Motor Vehicle Tax Refunds: \$1563.88

Releases over \$100.00: \$1584.82

Releases under \$100.00: \$170.17

Discoveries: \$8508.77

Commissioner Allison made a motion to approve, with a second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

### **Board Appointments**

The Clerk to the Board gave applications for consideration to the Board, with the first being Dawna Ledbetter to serve on the America250 Committee as a Commissioner appointee.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to approve Ms. Ledbetter to serve on the America250 Committee, with a second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

The Clerk gave notice for Amy Davis to serve as a Library Board of Trustee for the Old Fort district.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to approve Ms. Davis to serve as a Library Board of Trustee for Old Fort, with a second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

**Citizen Comment**

None

**Commissioner/Staff Reports**

Commissioner Ellis addressed for staff to verify all County buildings are handicap accessible, especially where there is pavement such as the tax office and to get back next month to the Board with the findings. Mr. Wooten will talk with Mr. Suttles the building inspector in this matter.

Commissioner Ellis made a motion to install a push button door for handicap accessibility at the entrance to the lower entry of the tax office, with a second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

**Closed Session**

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to go into closed session at 6:28 p.m., for employee matters under [NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (4)], with a second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to come out of closed session at 7:33 p.m., under [NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (4)], with a second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

**Adjournment**

Vice Chair Brown made a motion to adjourn at 7:33 p.m., with a second by Commissioner Greene. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

Attest:

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Sena Allison

Clerk to the Board

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David N. Walker

Chairman