

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION –JULY 19, 2021**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, July 19, 2021, at 11:30 a.m., at the Universal Conference Room.

Members Present

Tony Brown, Chair; 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; Lisa Sprouse, DSS Director; Melinda Cole; Jennifer Morgan, Child Welfare Division

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 11:30a.m.

DSS Update – Adult Services

Ms. Sprouse gave an update and distributed the agency reports. A copy is with the agenda materials.

Ms. Cole and Ms. Morgan discussed issues regarding child welfare and the legal system in the county. Staff had noticed an increase in Homeland Security cases of child abuse/neglect in the county.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion for staff to send a letter to Judge Davis, Judge Martelle, and District Attorney Ted Bell requesting their support of DSS staff advocating on behalf of the children, second by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Ms. Sprouse noted staff had received a job availability list from JobLink showing there were 800 jobs available in the county. A copy of the job listings with pay, address and telephone numbers is given to applicants as they come to apply for services.

Inmate Labor

Mr. Wooten noted the Marion Minimum Security Unit is not reopening anytime soon. The solid waste facility and the Law Enforcement Center have relied on inmates for years from that facility for labor. Those facilities have been using Manpower staff at a cost each week of about \$3,000, compared to \$25 a week for the inmates. The cost was not accounted for in the budget request, since it was understood the prison would be providing inmates again.

Consensus was to discuss with the Sheriff options on inmate staffing, and find out how much notice must be given to Manpower.

Mr. Wooten advised the Board he recently attended the Fire Commission meeting, and the Commission had discussed a proposed cancer-related bill (HB 535). NC is the only state in the union to not provide assistance to firefighters who have service-related cancer. The Commission asked for the support of the County Commissioners in endorsing the bill.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to provide a letter of support for HB 535, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Vice Chairman Walker made a motion to adjourn at 12:28pm, second by Commissioner Allison. By a vote of 5-0 the motion passed.

Attest:

Cheryl L. Mitchell
Clerk to the Board

Tony Brown
Chairman