

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
MCDOWELL COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION – June 30, 2026**

Assembly

The McDowell County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Monday, June 30, 2026, in the Commissioners' Board Room, 69 N. Main Street, Marion, NC.

Members Present

Chairman, Tony Brown; Vice-Chair, Lynn Greene; Patrick Ellis, Trisha Garner, and David Walker

Members Absent

None

Others Present

Ashley Wooten, County Manager; Madalyn Robinson, Clerk to the Board; Alison Bell; Finance Director

Call to Order

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 11:30 am. Commissioner Ellis led the group in prayer. Vice-Chair Greene led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the agenda, with a second from Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Budget Approval

Mr. Wooten discussed the previous evening's budget meeting to hone in on some items of discussion. Mr. Wooten took the action from yesterday's meeting and updated the budget ordinance for the Board's approval. Since the presentation on May 29th, there have been some changes to the budget. The most recently updated ordinance includes a 3% COLA for employees, maintains the health insurance for employees (per employee per month) budget of \$1,000 per month, and keeps the funding percentage the same for the school system and college. Mr. Wooten asked if there were any questions about any of the changes that were made to the ordinance.

Vice-Chair Greene made a motion to approve the budget ordinance as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. Commissioner Walker asked about the appropriation from the Sheriff's Office. There has been an appropriation in this ordinance from the jail reserves of \$750,000 and the addition of one detective and one telecommunicator position. Commissioner Walker asked about the tipping fee. The ordinance includes an increase from \$72 to \$80 a ton in the tipping fee. Commissioner Walker asked if this fee primarily affects businesses, and it will mainly affect commercial accounts that pay a tonnage fee for the scales. Commissioner Walker stated that he supports the motion, but he wishes they could have the schools represented. By a vote of 3-2, the motion passed.

Yays:

Vice-Chair Greene

Commissioner Garner

Commissioner Ellis

Nays:

Chairman Brown

Commissioner Walker

Chairman Brown thanked the Board for working together and trying to do what's best for the County in a tough budget year.

Sales Tax Referendum Resolution

Mr. Wooten presented the sales tax referendum resolution for approval, as previously voted on. A resolution is required to be voted on to include this on the ballot. If approved, this will be added to the ballot in November. Language is included in the resolution to have the fiscal year 2027 equivalent of a cent as requested by the Board. If the vote passed, the property rate of the reduction will be the current year's equivalent.

Vice-Chair Greene moved to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. Commissioner Walker stated that he supports an increase in the sales tax, but will be voting against this motion because they lack the time to educate the public. Commissioner Garner asked what the revenue gain would be if they give the reduction, but the sales tax passed. Mr. Wooten replied that it would be a positive gain of \$850,000, but sales tax revenue can fluctuate based on the economy. Vice-Chair Greene asked about the cost to include this on the ballot, and Mr. Wooten said there was none aside from possible printing costs. Commissioner Garner asked if Mr. Wooten would recommend doing this, and Mr. Wooten added that he would not recommend this decision unless there are plans to educate the public on the referendum and what the impact of quarter-cent sales tax would be. Vice-Chair Greene added that this would be the fairest way by allowing the people to vote on this matter. By a vote of 4-1, the motion passed.

Yays:

Chairman Brown

Vice-Chair Greene

Commissioner Garner

Commissioner Ellis

Nays:

Commissioner Walker

**RESOLUTION CALLING A SPECIAL ADVISORY REFERENDUM FOR THE
LEVY OF**

A ONE-QUARTER CENT COUNTY SALES AND USE TAX

WHEREAS, Article 46 of Chapter 105 of the North Carolina General Statutes (§105-535 through §105-538) authorizes counties to levy a local sales and use tax at a rate of one-quarter percent (0.25%), contingent upon approval by a majority of voters in a referendum; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of McDowell County desire to provide the citizens of the county the opportunity to vote on the levy of this tax through an advisory referendum; and

WHEREAS, the proceeds from the levy of this tax, if approved and enacted, will be used to support intended uses, e.g., education, infrastructure, as determined by the Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners recognizes that the levy of an additional local sales and use tax, if approved, may provide revenue that could reduce the burden on McDowell County property taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Board of Commissioners of McDowell County to offer the possibility of such additional sales tax to the voters of McDowell County in an advisory referendum pursuant to North Carolina General Statute § 105-537.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the McDowell County Board of Commissioners that:

1. The McDowell County Board of Commissioners hereby states its intent to use the revenues from the Article 46 one-quarter cent County sales and use tax, if

Approved by the voters of McDowell County to fund projects as deemed appropriate by the Board.

2. A referendum is hereby called during the normal time the polls are open for the election to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, at which there shall be submitted to the qualified voters of McDowell County the question stated below.

3. The form of the question to appear on the ballot and in the instruction to voters for said referendum shall be as follows:

[] FOR

[] AGAINST

Local sales and use tax at the rate of one-quarter percent (0.25%) in addition to all other State and local sales and use taxes.

4. The referendum shall be held in accordance with the procedures of North Carolina General Statutes § 163-287. The McDowell County Board of Elections is hereby directed to conduct said referendum and to take all necessary steps to that end in accordance with the Act.

5. The Board of Elections shall publish legal notice of the special advisory referendum in accordance with the North Carolina General Statutes § 163-287(b) no less than 45 days prior to the election.

6. The Board of Commissioners hereby expresses its intent that, if the Article 46 one quarter cent sales and use tax is approved by the voters and enacted, the Board will endeavor, in the preparation and adoption of the Fiscal Year 2027–2028 budget, to reduce the ad valorem property tax rate by that number of cents per one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of assessed valuation that most closely approximates a revenue offset equivalent to one cent (\$0.01) per one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of assessed valuation based upon the County's tax base as certified for Fiscal Year 2026–2027.

7. This Resolution will take effect immediately upon passage.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this Resolution shall be delivered by the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners to the Director of the McDowell County Board of Elections.

ADOPTED this 30th day of June, 2026.

Opioid Settlement Funds Recommendation

Adrienne Rivera Jones presented the opioid settlement fund recommendations to the Board. Ms. Jones stated that earlier this year, the county released a request for applications. They received 11 applicants from across the County and proposals for opioid settlement funding for opioid abatement strategies. Staff has evaluated each application using the scoring rubric in the RFA that was posted for applicants. Based on that review, Ms. Jones brought forward six community funding recommendations along with continued support for some county-operated opioid response initiatives that have been ongoing. Throughout the process, the main focus has been investing in programs that demonstrate a measurable impact and also ensuring the long-term sustainability of that fund to continue to fund and support other ideas or organizations throughout the years. Ms. Jones asked if the Board had any questions.

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the request as presented, seconded by Vice-Chair Greene. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed. Commissioner

Walker asked if this would be a two-year period, and Ms. Jones relayed that there was a one-year reporting period to ensure that if there are others next year that didn't apply, they can continue to be equitable and sustainable. The Board thanked Ms. Jones and congratulated her on being named the incoming Emergency Services Director.

County Facility ADA Compliance Report

Zoe Montgomery, LEAD for NC Fellow, presented the ADA Compliance report to the board. Ms. Montgomery presented the ADA compliance and recommendations report completed at the board's request. Consistent with the county's commitment to providing high-quality services and operations for residents, Ms. Montgomery conducted a comprehensive review of county facilities for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Ms. Montgomery stated the purpose of the assessment was to evaluate current accessibility conditions, identify potential barriers to access, and provide recommendations to enhance public access to county facilities and services. The report includes an assessment of 21 facilities, 18 county-owned properties, and three leased properties. It contains an executive summary, methodology, countywide findings overview, and prioritization framework. Additionally, the report includes a cost analysis with estimated remediation ranges and individual facility assessments with corresponding recommendations. Ms. Montgomery noted that this report is intended to serve as a planning tool, providing the county with a framework for addressing accessibility improvements over time and incorporating them into future maintenance, renovation, and capital planning efforts. Ms. Montgomery thanked the Board for their time and asked if they had any questions.

Commissioner Walker thanked Ms. Montgomery for her report. Vice-Chair Greene appreciated the estimates for the cost to complete these items. Chairman Brown thanked Ms. Montgomery for her work within the County over the past year.

FY 2026 Budget Amendments

There is one Project Budget Ordinance for the Stream Rehabilitation Project for Old Fort. There is also a reimbursement resolution for a garbage truck. There are Budget Amendments:

GF96 - Transfer between line items under \$3,000 in various departments

GF97 - Allocate revenue due to anticipated expenditures at the Sheriff's Office

GF98 - Transfer between budget line items in Soil and Water

GF99 - Transfer between budget line items in Emergency Management

GF100 - Transfer between budget line items in DSS

GF101 - Appropriate revenue and transfer between line items in the Sheriff's Office and

sales tax accounts

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the six budget amendments as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed

Pyrotechnics Approvals

Mr. Wooten presented the pyrotechnics to be approved by the Board. NC General Statute 14-413 requires the Board of Commissioners to approve public pyrotechnic/fireworks shows. The Building Inspections Dept. has received permit applications for aerial fireworks displays on July 4 from the following:

1. Camp Timberlake: Show date is 7/04/2026. Located at 707 Dink Cannon, Marion, NC 28752
2. Camp Lake James: Show date is 7/4/2026. Located at 3100 Campbell Trace, Nebo, NC 28761
3. Town of Old Fort: Show date is 7/4/2026. Located at 195 Ted Smith Road, Old Fort, NC 28762
4. The Moose Lodge: Show date is 7/4/2026. Located at 999 Bill Cook Drive, Nebo, NC 28761

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a vote of 5-0, the motion passed.

Polling Place Approval

The Board of Elections has asked to move the precinct location for Marion 5 to the Recreation Center. Parks and Recreation Director, Aikman Kazee, has reviewed the request and does not believe the proposal would impact recreational plans in March and November of each year. The Board of Commissioners does not typically approve changes in precincts, but this is before the Board since it involves a County-owned building.

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the request as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a 5-0 vote, the motion passed.

Adjournment

Commissioner Walker made a motion to adjourn at 11:55 am, seconded by Commissioner Ellis. By a 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned.