

**MINUTES**  
**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**December 19, 2014 – SPECIAL MEETING-STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in special session on Friday, December 19, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. in the Arthur C. “Artie” Wilson, Jr. Conference Room at County Administration. The meeting was called for the purposes of holding a workshop to continue the Board’s strategic planning process.

Commissioners present were Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman, Jason Chappell, Chairman Mike Hawkins, Page Lemel, and Kelvin Phillips. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter, Facilitators Steven Strauss and Joe Durham of Developmental Associates, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Jeremiah Reed

Public attendance varied from two to five people throughout the half-day workshop.

**CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME**

Chairman Hawkins called the workshop to order at 11:36 a.m. He welcomed all those in attendance. Before moving forward with the business of the day, Chairman Hawkins asked Commissioners to review their committee assignments and to consider procedures for the new space in this building, including seating, comment periods, agenda presentation, etc.

**AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

The Manager informed Commissioners that a matter had come to light this morning in which staff needs to brief Commissioners on in closed session. **Chairman Hawkins moved to modify the agenda to add a closed session item, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously carried.**

**CLOSED SESSION**

**Chairman Hawkins moved to enter into closed session per NC General Statute 143-318.11 (a) (4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of business in the area served by this body. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.**

Present were Chairman Hawkins, Commissioners Chapman, Chappell, Lemel and Phillips, Manager Laughter, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

The Manager provided information to Commissioners about a potential economic development opportunity. Commissioners discussed the matter at length and directed the Manager on how to proceed.

**Chairman Hawkins moved to leave closed session, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.**

**OPEN SESSION**

**Chairman Hawkins moved to seal the minutes of the closed session until such time that opening the minutes does not frustrate the purpose of the closed session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell and approved unanimously approved.**

## STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

Chairman Hawkins reminded everyone that the Board of Commissioners began its strategic planning process in the fall of 2013. At that time, Commissioners noted several areas of importance to them and listed those things they wished to accomplish. Here is a list of many of those items:

- Court space needs
- Administration space needs
- Water evaluation study
- Economic development – evaluation and implementation of Independent Economic Development Task Force
- Recreation initiatives
- Highway 280 – protect from congestion and keep as I-26 connector
- Communications and transparency
- Grant opportunities
- Education – benchmarking for funding purposes
- General transportation – connectivity to local transit
- Ecusta Trail – keep an open mind and become a partner
- Highway 215 – resolution in support of improvements
- General collaboration
- Vision class as a resource
- Planning
- Evergreen Study – to consider and fund
- Rosman – focus on assistance
- General internal rules
- Staff development and continuing education
- Fire service study and next steps
- Regional presence
- Appointment process for boards and committees

These areas and others will help the Board of Commissioners, County departments and staff to be purposeful in all they do.

Mr. Strauss began the workshop by asking Commissioners to consider a particular structure for developing the County's strategic plan. A strategic plan should focus on outcomes and should include strategies for reaching the desired outcomes. Outcomes measure success and accountability.

Mr. Strauss had Commissioners participate in an exercise using a police department as an example. He provided a list of goal statements and asked Commissioners to determine if these goal statements were the best for this particular police department. (What would be the possible outcomes of these goal statements? Do the goals accomplish anything?) This exercise helped Mr. Strauss define Results Based Performance Management (RBPM). RBPM is a management system that relies on performance measurement to improve program delivery.

The key definitions of the RBPM are as follows:

- *Inputs* are anything that the organization uses to accomplish its purpose.
- *Processes* are the activities and programs that take place within the organization.
- *Outcomes* are the effect that the organization produces on people not working in the organization. Outcomes are the reasons organizations exist.

- *Early outcomes* are the short term results of activities.
- *Intermediate outcomes* represent the goals of stakeholders, such as citizens.
- *Later outcomes* are the broad results produced in the long term.

Later outcomes while nice are not helpful. They are too vague, too much out of control of individual government organizations, and too difficult to measure. Intermediate outcomes are the goals that are ultimately important to key stakeholders, especially the public. Most government organizations focus too early in the input-outcome chain. Such a focus often results in goal displacement; that is to say, even when the goals are met, the results may not prove beneficial to the most critical stakeholders.

Mr. Strauss gave examples of outcomes in the private sector as a comparison. The private sector is a different structure than government. Sometimes governments are unsure of their goals. Governments need measures and should track their results. It may help them be more creative and willing to try new things. For Transylvania County, he urged Commissioner to be clear about the end result so it is important to have a system where the focus is on being innovative and efficient.

Next Commissioners started brainstorming their hopes and possible outcome measurements for Transylvania County. This is a list of the areas they discussed:

- Lower unemployment rate by 2%
- Provide needed services in an excellent and efficient manner and set up structures to accomplish this
- Increase jobs
- Tax base increase by 5%
- Provide recreation services that will attract young families to come here
- Lower average age of residents; increase age diversity of population
- Increase sales tax receipts
- Attract business and increase the number of new businesses
- Diversity of business
- Increase tourist attraction to community
- Increase number of heads-in-beds (tourism) by 5% each year
- Assist in growth of Brevard College to increase to 1,000 students
- Education (discussion only)
- Financial impact to maintain tax rate (Mr. Strauss noted this locks local government into what it can provide.)
- Attractive to business and citizens
- Increase building permits
- Achieve balanced budget without using savings
- Cannot overtax citizens; lower tax rates are more business friendly assuming there is underlying infrastructure; tax rate alone may not be a broad enough description of what the Board wants to achieve.
- Economic development; should be goal #1
- Enhance revenues
- Natural resources – US Forest has impact on local economy
- Public Safety
- Public health and safety net resources
- Increase promoting awareness of County services

Commissioners took a break from 1:00 p.m. to 1:35 p.m. to have lunch.

After returning from break, Commissioners discussed each item at length. They determined which of the items on the list were considered a goal and which were considered a strategy. They then rearranged the list into subheading areas and noted the specific goals in each area. Commissioners then moved onto developing their strategies and determining who would be responsible for carrying out the strategy. This is a summary of the discussion. Following the summary, the minutes will reflect the list of goals and strategies Commissioners and staff developed:

#### *Education*

What do Commissioners want to accomplish with the funding provided by the County to the School System? The County provides money for capital expenses and does not have control over which programs are offered. Commissioners want children to have the best educational opportunities and to provide good facilities. Mr. Strauss pointed out Commissioners should have desired outcomes and expectations. Commissioners should communicate to the Board of Education what the County believes are good outcomes. The Board of Education will also have its own goals and there should be some discussion on how the County can help them achieve their goals.

Enrollment numbers are an appropriate measure of success for Blue Ridge Community College and Brevard College.

Commissioners discussed whether the same goals should apply to private schooling as well. Even though there are educational options available, the public school system is the bedrock of the education system and the County must not do anything to undercut their mission. They thought it would be interesting to know if private schools were achieving above public schools.

#### *Tourism/Visitation*

It is important that visitors make a connection with Transylvania County so they will come back here to visit, live or start a business. Unfortunately there are not enough beds for people lodging, especially during peak times. Being able to attract visitors may attract investors.

At the retreat in the fall of 2013, Commissioners agreed about the importance of promoting vibrant downtowns in Brevard and Rosman.

#### *Economic Development*

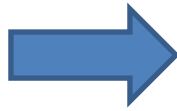
As agreed to at the fall 2013 retreat, Commissioners support small manufacturing firms but would also like to see a diversified economic sect.

#### *Quality of Life*

As in 2013, Commissioners support recreational amenities, and believe we should celebrate the river and showcase our culture of history. Commissioners also want to strive for a physically healthy community. They also support multi-modal transportation (auto, bicycles, and pedestrians).

Overall, Commissioners believe the spread of broadband and advanced technology will drive many of these areas.

Here is the list of goal areas with the headings and subheadings. The Manager will establish goals statements for each of these headings.

**Goal Areas****Strategies****Economic Development**

- Enhanced Tax Base
- Increased Sales Tax
- Show a net gain of businesses and diversify economic sectors (include agriculture)
- Lower unemployment/ increase jobs
- Achieve a higher rate of self-sufficiency (social service) Reduce % families using public assistance

- Technological edge
- Redevelopment of Renova Site

**Quality of Life**

- Increase age diversity
- Meet or exceed index standards for a healthy community (State annual ranking)
- Safe and secure community
  - Reduce crime rate
  - Enhance public sense of security

- Provide outstanding recreational opportunities
- Showcase culture of history
- Ease of multi-modal transportation

**Visitation**

- Increase heads in beds (and the beds) occupancy rate, occupancy tax
- Increase visits, time and investment by external partners (how many new businesses were external to community annually)

- Promote vibrant downtowns
- Promote vibrant economic nodes

**Value of County Government**

- Increase community awareness of role of county gov't and services
- Maintain excellence in county services by citizen satisfaction survey

- Tax Rate-Maintain a culture of fiscal responsibility
- Communicate better with our citizens

**Environmental**

- Preserve and enhance the active use of the forest are and public lands
- Maintain and enhance high quality water resources-French Broad River (drinking, access for recreation, cultural icon, watershed uniqueness)

**Education**

- Meet or exceed state standards for educational excellence/success (all levels, public or private)

- Enhance the educational environment for students (capital, operational responsibility)

Commissioners discussed their next steps with this process. Commissioners, along with the Manager will review these items carefully and determine what action needs to be taken and by whom. A number of these areas can be delegated to various sectors of the community, the Board of Education, department heads, etc. In terms of providing services, Mr. Strauss suggested a community survey every two years. The initial survey should serve as a baseline.

Commissioners took a 10 minute break from 2:40 to 2:50.

After the break, Commissioners discussed which groups and individuals should help them develop their strategies for accomplishing their goals. This is a report of their decisions after discussion:

### **Strategy Development Groups**

#### **Economic Development**

Transylvania Partnership for Economic Development, staff and Commissioners at the incentive policy workshop January 29, 2015.

#### **Quality of Life**

Provide outstanding recreational opportunities (master plan this summer)

- Parks and recreation strategic planning committee

Showcase culture and history

- TCARTS, Historical society, Brevard Music Center, 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration Committees

Ease of multi-modal transportation (bike, walk, drive, paddle, ride- interlocal and regional)

- Land of Sky/RPO Staff representative, Planning Board, City of Brevard Staff (from study/plan identification), Transportation Advisory Committee

#### **Visitation**

Promote vibrant downtowns

- TDA, Heart of Brevard, Chamber of Commerce
- Town of Rosman (offer facilitation) with focus on Rosman

Promote vibrant economic nodes

- TDA, Chamber of Commerce, TPED (Could co-produce with first bullet under vibrant downtowns)

#### **Value of County Government**

Tax Rate- Maintain a culture of fiscal responsibility, provide best quality efficiently

- Staff initiate some recommendations with Developmental Associates facilitation and assistance

Develop a recognition program for staff success

- Staff with some assistance from Developmental Associates facilitation

Communicate better with our citizens

- Communications Plan recommendations in January/February

#### **Environmental**

Preserve and enhance the active use of forest area and public lands

- TNRC- Transylvania Natural Resources Council, SORBA (Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association), Ben Hardy's bike club (Pisgah Something?), Wilderness Leadership Experiential Education (Brevard College), Federal and State Park or Forest Rangers

Maintain and enhance high quality water resources- French Broad River (drinking, access for recreation, cultural icon, watershed uniqueness)

- TNRC, French Broad Stewards, Land of Sky, River Keepers, Town of Rosman (co-produce with other topics), City of Brevard, Headwaters Outfitters, Camp Industry Representative, Agricultural Advisory Board, Soil and Water Conservation

### **Education**

Enhance the educational environment for students (capital, operational responsibility)

- Capital Plan underway for Board of Education; ask School System to define strategies for student success with clear measures

Developmental Associates will help facilitate these group discussions and will report back to the Board of Commissioners afterwards. Commissioners suggested one facilitated meeting with Town of Rosman with different subjects and two days of charrette-style meetings grouped by topic. The meeting with the Board of Education should be separate meeting. These meetings should occur in the next four to six weeks. Once this is complete, the Manager will review the newly added strategies with Commissioners and work to develop an action plan.

### *Critique of Strategic Planning Workshop*

Commissioners were pleased with the workshop and excited about moving forward. They felt this was an effective use of their time. They really liked using the new A/V equipment. Commissioners also thought the session held in the fall helped this process to be easier today.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Chapman moved to adjourn the workshop at 4:30 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.**

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Mike Hawkins, Chair  
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board

