

**MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 28, 2015 – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, September 28, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building.

Commissioners present were Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman, Chairman Mike Hawkins, Page Lemel and Kelvin Phillips. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Tony Dalton and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derek McKissock

There were approximately 50 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairman Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the audience for participating in their County government. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Briggs: Mr. Briggs is chair of Friends of the Animals/Animal Shelter. He stated he was disturbed by the recent WLOS report and other media coverage concerning the Transylvania County Animal Shelter. He said the newscast was one-sided and did not show the tremendous progress the shelter has made over the last two years. He believes most of the errors reported were in the recording of events, not in carrying out procedures. Mr. Briggs said Director Paul Vis is a caring and compassionate person and is making an extra effort to adopt out animals and instituting programs to reduce the stray and unwanted animal population. Mr. Briggs believes Mr. Vis and his team are excellent employees and fully capable of taking the animal shelter forward.

Dr. Clyde Brooks: Dr. Brooks spoke about the recent animal shelter violations. He noted that the errors cited by the State are administrative only and none were cited about the mishandling of animals. He reminded everyone that the new shelter replaced a 60-year-old run down shelter. The new shelter also inherited an antiquated recordkeeping system. The new shelter director was hired one week after the new shelter opened and he had no personnel assigned to him to assist with the administrative workload or transition. The new director developed a new record and computer software system and implemented new training requirements for staff. Dr. Brooks believes the director has shown tremendous compassion to animals in his charge and in doing such has implemented many outreach and animal socialization programs and has worked with volunteer animal organizations to reduce the euthanasia rate and increase adoptions.

Connie McClellan: Ms. McClellan reported that she has volunteered an afternoon a week for the last year and a half at the animal shelter. She said she is very impressed with the animal shelter staff and officers and for what they do in the community to help abused and neglected animals. She said the staffs are very gentle and kind to animals and it is unfair that the media reported only one side of the story with regard to the State violations. Ms. McClellan believes the staff deserve much better.

Sandy Briggs: Mrs. Briggs is a volunteer and volunteer coordinator at the animal shelter. She said she has seen firsthand how caring staffs are with the animals in their care. The media and others are unfairly treating the director and his staff as villains. Compared to the old shelter and prior management, much progress has been

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made, especially with regard to the euthanasia rate. Mrs. Briggs noted that Director Paul Vis had much to overcome when the new shelter opened two years ago, in addition to carrying on the daily duties as shelter manager. She believes the WLOS report was one-sided which is very unfair to the staffs and the public.

Kathy Riddle: Ms. Riddle volunteers with a local animal rescue group called Charlie's Angels which pulls adoptable animals from shelters. She reported the group has had issues with the current shelter director and as a result met with County officials to attempt to bring problems to light; however nothing has changed. Charlie's Angels is concerned with the deceptions, accountability and lack of integrity and professionalism and overall unwillingness to be a team player in getting animals adopted and spayed/neutered. Ms. Riddle believes poor attention to detail and failing to follow up on the spay/neuter status of adopted animals is a reflection of staffs' attitudes. She stressed that Charlie's Angels cares about animals and the shelter and they want a good working relationship with the County. The organization has financially supported the shelter, held adoption events, and advertises pictures of adoptable animals in the local newspaper, all in an effort to boost adoptions at the shelter and reduce the euthanasia rate.

Kathleen Barnes: Ms. Barnes said she was surprised to learn about the horrible things going on at the animal shelter. She believes these violations occurred due to a failure of supervision. She pointed out that the fine being paid to the State is taxpayer dollars and she believes the money could have gone to better use. Ms. Barnes asked Commissioners to renew their commitment into looking into these issues and seeing that the animal shelter is run properly and with proper supervision.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

The Manager reported on the agenda modifications. She requested to add Item V-A Animal Control Presentation under Presentations/Recognitions. She also requested to add Closed Session Item XI-A per North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11 (a) (6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, condition of appointment of a public officer or employee.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the agenda as modified, seconded simultaneously by Commissioners Chapman and Chappell and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Chappell moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

The following items were approved:

DISCOVERY, RELEASE AND MONTHLY SETTLEMENT REPORT

Each month the Tax Administrator has a listing of proposed releases for that month. The Board of Commissioners has the responsibility of approving the releases. Total tax dollars released was \$768.08 and refunds totaled \$2,050.81. Commissioners approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Report for August 2015.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

ANIMAL CONTROL PRESENTATION

In light of a recent violation report by the NC Department of Agriculture Veterinary Services Division on the Transylvania County Animal Shelter and Animal Control, the Manager made a presentation to the Commissioners and public to address their questions and concerns. She began by stating she is saddened that this conversation is being had. As an organization, Transylvania County government is accountable for the services it provides and is responsible for protecting citizens and animals. She stressed that the County does not back away from those responsibilities.

This is a summary of her presentation:

- Public servants are responsible for services beyond the customer experience
 - Must maintain public trust
 - Responsible for public finances
 - Requires high standards of integrity
- There is positive in any situation
- Staff is working with experts to formulate and move a plan forward
 - Dr. Patricia Norris-State Veterinarian who issued violation report; discussed incidents in-depth and the serious nature of each; discussed how to move forward
 - Dr. Clyde Brooks-advised County on action and helped County understand next steps
- State law prohibits the County Manager from commenting publically about the personnel matters in regards to any individual. It is the County's responsibility and duty to abide by State law.
- The case involving a dog named Soldier is part of a lawsuit filed against the County that was voluntarily dismissed this year. However, that case has one year to re-file from that date. Therefore, County staff cannot comment on that case in the interest of not interfering with the legal process.
- Timeline
 - Investigation into Animal Control/Animal Shelter conducted late July/early August, but also reviewed in spring of 2015 and specifically the euthanasia report only found issues related to the dates on the manuals within the shelter; these issues were found to be corrected two months following; State noted they were impressed with compassionate nature of the staff
 - Some feedback immediately provided and staff began making changes immediately
 - Letter issued last week with more detail of actual scope of what was found in the investigation
 - Voluntarily released press release to all local media Friday with action steps
- Action steps
 - Meetings with Dr. Norris about findings
 - Requested her review and feedback of the new operating procedures manual
 - Requested follow up voluntary inspection at shelter in October
 - Meeting with Dr. Brooks for review and guidance of new operating procedures
 - Reorganization of the Animal Shelter, including:
 - Regular oversight and monitoring of all operations and paperwork
 - Reorganization and addition of new staff trained to new standards and operating procedures
 - Staff certifications and requirements met in a timely manner and monitored by the Shelter Director
 - Development of new Animal Shelter operations policy, now being used and reviewed by Dr. Norris with the State Department of Agriculture for feedback on how to improve; new policy goes above and beyond the State regulations for hold times to insure they are met
 - Working closely with the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Veterinary Division to insure that Transylvania County ordinances, operations and practices are up to date and compliant with State policies; invited the State to inspect the Animal Shelter and its new policies, practices and procedures in October 2015
 - Renewed emphasis and requirement for regular staff training and professional development
 - Continuing to work with Friends of the Animal Shelter (FOTUS) and local animal welfare agencies to improve the lives and outcomes of Transylvania County animals
 - Working with local veterinarian Dr. Brooks to insure quality in animal control services and receive guidance on practices and procedures
 - Working with local animal groups to increase adoption rates; in the last month, live releases have risen from 67% to approximately 98%
- FY 16 Animal Control Goals
 - Promote responsible pet ownership for a safe and welcoming community environment

- Provide education opportunities to increase understanding and support for responsible pet ownership
- Provide education that connects irresponsible pet practices with community safety concerns
- Enforce rules and regulations that support responsible pet ownership
- Increase public awareness of animal issues to facilitate an informed and safe community
- Provide education opportunities regarding rabies risk factors and preventive measures
- Enforce rabies rules and regulations that support rabies prevention
- Cooperation with nondiscriminatory breed rescues and breed specific rescues
- Identify opportunities to communicate and collaborate on shelter needs
- Identify opportunities to communicate and collaborate on community needs

The Manager pointed out these goals were identified before the investigation occurred; however, the County has a renewed commitment to meeting State regulations and being the kind of animal shelter that is compassionate and makes achievements beyond State measures. She invited the public, Commissioners and the various animal rescue groups in the community to work with the County to improve animal control services.

Commissioners thanked staff for their rapid response in dealing with this issue and for working to ensure that local government is more accountable and responsive to the needs of its citizens and animals.

APPOINTMENTS

BREVARD BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AND APPEAL

Judy Mathew's term on the Brevard Board of Adjustment and Appeal expires at the end of September. She is willing to serve another term and it is the recommendation of the City of Brevard Planning Department to reappoint her. There are no other applications on file. The alternate member remains vacant.

Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint Judy Mathews to a full term on the Brevard Board of Adjustment and Appeal, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

ADOPTION OF THE 2016 REAPPRAISAL SCHEDULE OF VALUES

David Reid presented on behalf of Tax Administrator Annette Raines. NC General Statute 105-317 requires the schedule of values, standards, and rules to be reviewed and approved by the Board of County Commissioners before January 1st of the year they are applied. A public hearing was held as required on September 14, 2015 and the schedule of values has been made available for inspection since August 25, 2015. NC General Statute 105-317 specifically requires the Board of Commissioners to approve an order adopting the final schedules, standards, and rules and notice of this order must be published once a week for four successive weeks in a newspaper having general circulation in the County.

Commissioner Chappell moved to approve an order adopting the 2016 Reappraisal Schedule of Values and instructed staff to advertise the order in accordance with NC General Statute 105-317. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lemel and unanimously approved.

HIGH DOSE FLU VACCINE FEE CHANGE

Health Director Elaine Russell reported that the Health Department charges \$52 for a High Dose Flu Vaccine. These vaccines are for seniors ages 65 years and up. Medicare has since increased the accepted billing amount for this vaccination to \$60. Ms. Russell requested the Board approve increasing the fee to \$60; otherwise, the County could lose up to \$1,120 depending on the actual number of vaccines given. The Transylvania County Board of Health endorsed the new High Dose Flu Vaccine fee at its September 8, 2015 meeting.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the request to adjust the High Dose Flu Vaccine fee amount to \$60. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

GOLDENLEAF LETTER OF INTENT

Planning and Community Development Director Mark Burrows presented this item. The Golden LEAF Foundation announced earlier this summer that they were seeking letters of interest from different organizations throughout Western North Carolina for their Community Based Grant. (Golden LEAF was created as a way to help States impacted by tobacco legislation. States were to establish trust funds and use the money to benefit citizens and communities in their respective states. North Carolina uses the dollars to help communities that were hurt by the loss of tobacco jobs. Transylvania County lost over 3,000 jobs in the tobacco industry.) Staff obtained information about the grant and invited representatives from Blue Ridge Community College, Brevard College, Brevard Music Center, Transylvania County Schools and the Transylvania Economic Alliance to brainstorm different ideas. Following several meetings, the group identified a project that focused on an integrative grant that:

1. Supports Transylvania County Schools through targeted STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematic) efforts in grades 8 -12;
2. Provides apprenticeship and internship opportunities at Blue Ridge Community College by retrofitting the Applied Technology Building, purchasing industrial sized 3D printers for rapid proto-typing of parts and instructing students how to use and service these new machines;
3. Creates new manufacturing space to house an existing outdoor sports related manufacturer and a new technology manufacturer, with a global presence, interested in expanding their footprint to Transylvania County and Brevard; and
4. Creates 20 new manufacturing jobs.

Mr. Burrows pointed out this project covers the spectrum from the high school level to community college and actual job creation, and also helps to provide more manufacturing space which the Board has identified as a need. This grant in the amount of \$1.5 million allows the County and other partners to build a 50,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility. There is a 20% local match required. The specific amount is unknown at this time. Golden LEAF stipulates that if the grant recipient intends to use the funds to build a new facility, there needs to be at least 20 new manufacturing jobs created. Mr. Burrows believes between the existing company wanting to grow and a company wanting to expand its presence in Transylvania County there is the potential for more than 20 new jobs to be created.

Mr. Burrows requested permission for the County to be the organization submitting the grant application. Golden LEAF requires the Chairman's signature and submittal of the documents by the County Manager.

In response to questions by Commissioners, Mr. Burrows stated the application submittal deadline is October 1. He pointed out that the group worked with Frances Bradburn, a Transylvania County citizen, who is affiliated with Golden LEAF and was very helpful in the process. Mr. Burrows expects to hear back in three to four weeks whether or not Golden LEAF is interested. If so, they will seek further information about the project. The Golden LEAF Board will meet later this year and the County should know some time in April if it will be awarded the grant. If the County is awarded the grant, monies should be included in next year's budget to cover the match.

Responding to an inquiry from Chairman Hawkins, Mr. Burrows reported that the manufacturing space would be located at two sites. One would be using existing space in the Applied Technology Building on the campus of Blue Ridge Community College. The group is working with the Transylvania Economic Alliance to identify property for an additional 50,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility.

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the groups coming together to work on this project and focusing on STEM and utilizing existing resources like the Applied Technology Building to help an existing business and a new business to get a needed product..

Commissioner Lemel moved to authorize the Chairman of the County Commissioners to sign the Golden LEAF Community Based Grant Letter of Intent and authorize the County Manager to submit the grant

as required by Golden LEAF. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

FINANCING OPTIONS FOR COURTHOUSE

Before beginning this presentation, the Manager reported that the City Manager has requested a joint meeting of Brevard City Council and the Board of Commissioners per the instruction of the Brevard City Council to discuss the Courthouse location.

The Manager and Finance Director Gay Poor presented this agenda item. The County debt caps include two different measures in the State of North Carolina. One form of cap is on total debt which is based on property valuations. For Transylvania County, that would be almost \$485 million based on last year's budget. The second is a cap on annual debt service as a 15% ratio to the budget. This equates to \$7.5 million as a cap on annual payments in total with a \$50 million budget. In FY 2016, the budget payments for debt service were at \$2.3 million. Debt service on the old detention center will be approximately \$126,000. Next year's projected debt service, minus some of the debt payments that are dropping next year, would be just under \$1.4 million. The Local Government Commission must approve all debt.

The Finance Director prepared a comparison list of financing options. The County is limited in its options for financing. There are four financing methods available. They include:

1. Installment Financing Agreement (with a private lender)
 - a. Requires public hearing and approval by Local Government Commission (LGC)
 - b. Timeline 1-3 months
 - c. Parties involved are County, lending institution and LGC
 - d. Simplest option
 - e. Lower interest rates but shorter terms
 - f. Lower fees and issuance costs
 - g. Limited term and limited amount that can be borrowed
2. Certificates of Participation (COPs)
 - a. Not widely used
 - b. Rockingham County is an example of a local government that recently used this method; raised tax rate by \$0.05/\$100 valuation to service the debt
 - c. Maximum term of 20 years
 - d. Minimum of 4 months to complete
 - e. Must hire financial advisor, bond counsel and others
 - f. Large amount can be financed
 - g. Shorter timeline than USDA loans and bonds
 - h. Easier authorization process than bonds
 - i. Most complex option due to documents and number of parties involved
 - j. Highest in fees and issuance costs
 - k. Higher interest rates than bonds
3. USDA Loan
 - a. Generally 6 months to issue
 - b. Requires LGC authorization
 - c. Term up to 40 years
 - d. Longest term available and helps minimize annual debt service
 - e. Can finance a large amount
 - f. Lower fees and issuance costs than COPs and bonds
 - g. No prepayment penalty
 - h. Long timeline for approval and intensive in paperwork
 - i. Federal restrictions
 - j. Potential difficulty in refinancing
4. General Obligation Bonds

- a. Requires LGC approval
- b. Local Board introduction of a bond order
- c. Public Hearing
- d. Local Board adoption of bond order
- e. Referendum/voter approval
- f. Timeline is a minimum of 6 months
- g. Maximum term is 20 years
- h. Several parties involved
- i. Longer term of up to 20 years
- j. Can finance a large amount
- k. Lower interest rates than USDA and COPs, but higher issuance costs
- l. Not as complex as issuing COPs, but long timeline

The Finance Director ran some scenarios based on borrowing \$16 million and using the financing options of a 10-year installment purchase, 20-year COP and 40-year USDA loan at the rates she could find comparable. She also ran the figures for borrowing \$22 million. The tables below show what this would look like for the County:

Amount Borrowed	\$16,000,000	\$16,000,000	\$16,000,000
Type of Financing	Installment Purchase	Certificates of Participation	USDA Loan
Term in years	10	20	40
Interest Rate	2.310% ⁽¹⁾	3.810% ⁽²⁾	3.625% ⁽³⁾
Annual Payment	\$1,810,237	\$1,157,586	\$763,829
Payment over Term of Loan	\$18,102,374	\$23,151,719	\$30,553,168
Total Payment as % of Amount Borrowed	113.1%	144.7%	191.0%

Amount Borrowed	\$22,000,000	\$22,000,000	\$22,000,000
Type of Financing	Installment Purchase	Certificates of Participation	USDA Loan
Term in years	10	20	40
Interest Rate	2.310% ⁽¹⁾	3.810% ⁽²⁾	3.625% ⁽³⁾
Annual Payment	\$2,489,076	\$1,591,681	\$1,050,265
Payment over Term of Loan	\$24,890,765	\$31,833,614	\$42,010,607
Total Payment as % of Amount Borrowed	113.1%	144.7%	191.0%

The Manager emphasized the importance of being cognizant of other capital needs as well when considering borrowing funds. She provided figures for the longest term loan scenarios if the full amount of ongoing and future projects is financed. Included projects were the old detention center renovation, new Courthouse, Champion pool remodel and EMS Main Station. Not all projects were included in the scenarios, such as Silvermont, possible results from the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, water and sewer infrastructure,

economic development or school capital needs. The Manager then provided scenarios based on 10-year private loans and USDA full term and full amount financed. She pointed out that the County would not reach the 15% debt to budget ratio, but again noted there are other projects not included in the scenarios.

The Manager asked Commissioners to consider the information presented and discuss which options they would like to explore further. This is a summary of the questions and comments by Commissioners and responses from staff.

1. A key factor is the annual payment. Given the current tax base, one cent on the tax rate totals roughly \$600,000. One way to look at the different options, for example, is if the County decided to use the COPs financing method, it would take 2.5 cents increase on the tax rate to cover the annual debt service of \$1.6 million.

The Manager pointed out the limiting factor is going to be the 15% budget to debt service ratio. She stated that going with a long term USDA loan would be less than the 15% ratio, but it would not preclude the County from prepaying prior to term. The prepayment amounts could be factored into the annual budget. She also noted the County could back off the prepayments and return to the normal payment schedule should there be one or more bad economic years. The Manager also pointed out that USDA loans should be used on buildings that are expected to have a lifespan of 50 plus years and would not be recommended as a financing option for renovation projects.

2. Could the County consider the full amount of what is needed in terms of capital projects with a USDA loan or do they only consider single projects?

The Manager stated that each project must be submitted as a single application, but in her conversations with USDA officials she learned that local governments can put forth more than one project. They typically like larger projects. The key is timing. The federal fiscal year begins October 1.

3. It appears the County would have to hire legal assistance for any of the financing options; otherwise the preparation and application process appears to be a staff function.

Ms. Poor stated that the County would need to hire outside legal bond counsel for both the bonds and the COPs. The County Attorney may serve as legal counsel for the installment financing option and USDA loan. Because of the complicated nature of the bonds and COPs, it would take more than staff to complete what was necessary for the transaction to occur, although staff would be heavily involved.

4. Why are the COPs not a popular method of financing? How do they vary from bonds other than the voter referendum requirement?

The process is cumbersome and there are a lot of parties involved. Bonds are bid competitively whereas COPs are sold under negotiation and requires the assistance of an underwriter and others. COPs are issued to a nonprofit corporation which is established solely for the purpose of going through the transaction. A corporate trustee has to be designated, and then the nonprofit corporation assigns its rights of payment to the trustee. The government actually pays the trustee and the trustee in turn disburses prorated shares of those payments to the certificate holders. This method is the most complex method of borrowing money. The advantage, however, is that the County can borrow a larger amount over a longer term.

5. One of the cons listed for the USDA loan is difficulty in refinancing. Why is that?

Other counties have had difficulties refinancing under this method. The Local Government Commission generally will only approve financing for up to 20 years. For example, if the County were to secure a 40-year USDA loan and at 25 years remaining wanted to refinance, the LGC would allow the County to refinance for a

period of only 20 years, potentially making the payments higher and losing part of the savings that would have been gained from refinancing.

6. Are the USDA loan borrowing rates fixed?

Yes. The rate is fixed for the entirety of the loan period. The likelihood of seeing a better rate is very small.

7. The payback amount on some of the methods over the life of the loan is almost double the amount of the loan. This needs to be factored into the Board's decision.

This is true; however, the inflation rate must be factored in as well. There is a time value to money. If the interest rates were higher there may not be an offset, but given the historic lows a long term loan is a great option and gives the County flexibility. The County does not have to secure a loan for the maximum 40 years and there is no prepayment penalty so the County can decide to pay additional in debt service during years of growth and back off to the normal debt payment in times of slower growth or recession. By that point, it is the hope that inflation will have outpaced the pain of paying the actual payment. The biggest criticism of USDA loans is the amount of paperwork and reports required upfront and throughout the life of the loan.

8. It was noted in the agenda packet backup information that Rockingham County hired an outside firm to conduct a financial feasibility study for them. What did the firm actually do for Rockingham County?

The Manager did not know the specifics of what the firm did for Rockingham County, but said she would research that information for the Board. She noted that the construction of their new court facility occurred at a time when interest rates were not as low as they are now. Rockingham County used the COPs financing method and they raised their tax rate by \$0.05 prior to going through the financing process. Ms. Poor noted their financial advisor was a separate person from their bond counsel and underwriter.

9. Would the USDA be willing to consider more than one project? Has the USDA actually granted a loan to a local government entity for more than one project?

The applications must be separate. USDA loans are competitive, so being allowed to borrow funds for more than one project would depend on the applicant pool. The Manager stated that if the Board of Commissioners wants to pursue this financing method and for more than one project, it would be prudent to identify projects now and begin working with the USDA on this process. The Manager was unaware if the USDA had loaned funds to a local government for more than one project, but said she would find out.

Chairman Hawkins briefly summarized the presentation regarding the financing options available, noting there are nonfinancial factors to consider as well. It would also be best for Commissioners to think strategically about other issues that need to be addressed now and in the future. He noted that the Manager intends to present a draft strategic plan for the Board to discuss and consider at the first meeting in November.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Great news from our Health Department; several staff received awards at the State level:
 - Patricia Hawkins, REHS: NCPHA Rankin Award for outstanding career contributions in Environmental Health (the top award for Environmental Health)
 - Jim Boyer, REHS: NCPHA Public Health All-Star
 - Anita Glance: NCPHA – Communicable Disease Response for Ebola Preparedness
 - Sharon Cameron, RN: NCPHA – Communicable Disease Response for Ebola Preparedness
 - Cathy Nicholson, RN: NCPHA – Communicable Disease Response for Ebola Preparedness
 - Kathy Kelly, RN: NCPHA – Communicable Disease Response for Ebola Preparedness
 - Beth Hyatt & WIC Staff: State WIC Conference – Highest Percentage Rank In Breastfeeding Initiation Among Women in WIC (76.5% for Transylvania WIC, overall state is 58.6%)

- Beth Hyatt & WIC Staff: State WIC Conference – Highest Percentage Rank in Breastfeeding Up To 6 Months of Age Among Infants in WIC (31.8% Transylvania WIC, overall state is 20%)
- There have been no US confirmed avian flu reports since June, per Cooperative Extension staff
- Parks and Recreation is working with the Friends of Silvermont to prepare for Revenge of the White Squirrel coming in October
- Register of Deeds, Cindy Ownbey, has been elected to the executive committee as Historian for the NC Association of Register of Deeds; this will put her in line to be president of her association in the future
- Documentary of a German gentleman's genealogy research will feature our local Register of Deeds to air sometime this fall on National Geographic; more information to come on exact dates and times.
- Library is hosting Hometown Teams Smithsonian Exhibit until October 24
- Information Technology is working on connecting Parks and Recreation to fiber which is also critical in our emergency management plans; Commissioners can now see public presentations at the dais and staff is working on a presentation online where citizens can see the PowerPoint presentations online while streaming the Commissioners' meetings
- Mountain State Fair Ice Cream eating contest update: Manager participated with other local government officials; her daughters both won in their age groups

PUBLIC COMMENT

Reid Wood: Ms. Wood commented that the County's website asks for citizen input on the Courthouse, but there is no link to actually provide comments. Commissioners thanked her for the information and stated that staff will ensure there is a method to provide feedback.

Ann Hollingsworth: Ms. Hollingsworth is a Brevard City Councilwoman. She reported that at their last meeting, Brevard City Council voted unanimously to request a joint meeting with Board of Commissioners and she extended an invitation to Commissioners to participate in a joint workshop and have a dialogue about the Courthouse options.

Heath Seymour: Mr. Seymour is the Executive Director of the Heart of Brevard. He said the Heart of Brevard would be interested in more public discussion on the Courthouse. He believes moving the Courthouse out of downtown would be a big change for the community and impact the economy.

Sheryl Wynn (Clerk unsure of spelling): Ms. Wynn said she does not feel Commissioners understand the problems going on at the animal shelter. She also does not understand why Commissioners feel the media report was one-sided. She believes it is going to be up to the private organization to fix the problems going on there.

Davis Whitfield-Cargile: Mr. Whitfield-Cargile asked the Board of Commissioners to consider more options for keeping the Courthouse downtown. He does not feel the architect was given the opportunity to explore other options. He believes the financing options as presented earlier will be a big commitment for the people of this County. Mr. Whitfield-Cargile said the Courthouse provides an economic boom for both the County and the City and residents and businesses both benefit from it being located downtown.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman agreed with earlier statements that the media presented a one-sided story on the animal shelter violations. He assured the public that the Board is committed to resolving issues there. Commissioner Chapman reported that Brevard and Rosman High Schools have started a Marine Corps JROTC program. They are seeking community-based projects for the young cadets to be involved in and he encouraged people to contact the JROTC program if they know of any civic organizations that could assist in this area.

Commissioner Lemel reported on her County Commission duties since the last meeting. She attended the NC Committee for Business Education luncheon in Asheville at which the Governor attended. There was a good mixture of business professionals, education professionals and community advocates in attendance that were committed to improving the quality of public education at all levels in the State. Although she was the only County Commissioner in attendance, she felt it was a good opportunity to network with other counties. Commissioner Lemel reported she received additional documents from Smoky Mountain Center (Network Development Plan; Community Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis). She looks forward to them making a presentation at a County Commission meeting soon. Commissioner Lemel said she plans to visit local providers to understand what services are being offered in Transylvania County. She also intends to request more information from Smoky Mountain Center that documents how dollars are being spent in this County with regard to mental health, substance abuse and developmental disability services. This is an area Commissioner Phillips is a strong advocate for as well.

Commissioner Chapman announced he would be attending the Board of Directors meeting of the NC Association of County Commissioners on Thursday. He asked Commissioners to inform him of any issues he needs to bring forth while there.

Commissioner Phillips inquired about an update from the NC Department of Transportation on the NC 280 improvements. He thought officials were to follow up with the County sometime this fall. The Manager will follow up and report back to Commissioners.

Chairman Hawkins stated that he will work with the Manager and Commissioners to determine an agreeable time to meet with Brevard City Council in reference to the Courthouse project. Chairman Hawkins reported that he recently attended a board meeting of Gorges State Park. It was announced during the meeting that their summer visitation was up 85% over the same period last year. He has since learned that Dupont State Recreational Forest is on track to have over 600,000 visitors this year. This clearly shows Transylvania County is becoming an essential destination for our outdoor recreation asset. Chairman Hawkins announced that Rosman Heritage Day will take place on Saturday in Rosman and he encouraged everyone to attend. Lastly, he congratulated the County Manager on her recent nuptials which was met with applause by the audience.

Chairman Hawkins moved to enter into closed session per NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, condition of appointment of a public officer or employee, after a 5 minute recess. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, condition of appointment of a public officer or employee, closed session was entered into at 9:00 p.m. Present were Chairman Hawkins, Commissioners Chapman, Chappell, Lemel and Phillips, County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Operations Manager David McNeill, County Attorney Tony Dalton and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. Commissioners held the closed session meeting in the Arthur C. Wilson, Jr. Conference Room.

The Manager updated Commissioners on a confidential personnel matter.

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, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Hawkins moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Lemel and unanimously carried.

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board