

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
January 28, 2019 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, January 28, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in Commissioners' Chambers at the County Administration Building located at 101 S. Broad St., Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Will Cathey, Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman David Guice, Chairman Mike Hawkins, and Page Lemel. Also in attendance were County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Misti Bass and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derek McKissock

There were approximately 60 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding certified that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairman Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance.

PUBLIC HEARING

POTENTIAL OF PROPERTY PURCHASE FOR COUNTY PARK

The Manager presented information for the benefit of the public regarding the potential purchase of property on Gallimore Road/US 276 for a County park. The property is currently under contract for the purchase price of \$440,000 for +/- 50 acres. The due diligence period on the contract expires in two weeks. The tax value is \$515,750. The property was appraised at \$460,000.

The Transylvania Economic Alliance presented information to the Board of Commissioners over the course of two meetings, on November 13 and 29. The Alliance requested the County consider purchasing the property for a park since it is unsuitable for economic development purposes. The Alliance presentation also suggested Commissioners consider relocating the ballfields on Ecusta Road to free up the property for industrial development at that location. Commissioners are considering the purchase and whether it makes sense under the County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. At this stage, the Board is being asked to consider only the purchase of the property.

The Manager noted the Alliance feels there is potential to convert the property on Ecusta Road, thus making an addition to Jennings Industrial Park. Lack of product is an ongoing issue for the community for economic development purposes.

The Manager reported that Transylvania County has a history of using funds acquired through the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant to add to its park system. Conserving Carolina has offered to assist in writing a grant proposal for 2019. Due to this, the Alliance contacted Brevard College with an offer to extend the due diligence period to follow the PARTF application process/grant cycle until as late

as October 31, 2019, should Commissioners decide that PARTF grant funding is an avenue they want to pursue.

A majority of the property is located within the floodway or floodplain. There are methods to remove property from both floodway and floodplain. Those methods involve engineering studies to meet a no rise certification and major costs due to adding fill to the property.

Commissioners have set aside part of a two cents tax increase from FY 2016 each year for Parks and Recreation capital improvements. The balance of the reserve is currently \$750,000. Having this amount in reserve allows the Board to consider covering the full transactional cost of the property. The property contains an estimated \$150,000 in streambank restoration credits that could help offset the purchase price.

The Board of Commissioners has adopted several plans that indicate the need for additional land for parks and recreation purposes and that support expansion of County operated parks and recreation opportunities. One of those plans is the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that was adopted in 2016 which recommends land acquisition for additional parkland and a community park, sports complex, greenway acreage, multi-generational indoor center and neighborhood parks, as well as for blue-way expansion to utilize the river as a local asset. In addition, the Transylvania County Strategic Plan identifies several strategies for continuing to improve access to parks and recreation facilities, including to plan, advocate and provide for infrastructure to support economic development and make the community a desirable place to live and work, and to protect the community sense of place by balancing growth and maintaining high levels of community social infrastructure like parks, quality education, tourism, etc.

The purpose of this public hearing is to allow Commissioners to hear from the public on whether they support the purchase of the property for a County park. Commissioners have been presented with several different master plan options illustrating what the property could look like if developed; however, the public hearing tonight does not focus on the approval of any one specific master plan.

This concluded the Manager's presentation. She called for questions from Commissioners prior to the Chairman opening the public hearing.

Commissioner Lemel inquired further about the potential to receive a PARTF grant. The Manager stated that an upcoming PARTF grant cycle would allow for awarded grant funds to help with the property acquisition. If received, the PARTF grant would require a 50% match. The timeline requires application in May, with notification in August or September. The PARTF grant allows counties up to 50% of the cost in terms of land acquisition. Applicants are also eligible to receive up to \$500,000, also requiring a 50% match, for the purpose of making capital improvements.

Commissioner Lemel asked for confirmation that there remains the opportunity for streambank credits. The Manager replied yes and stated the amount of streambank credits available on the property is approximately \$150,000. Should Commissioners pursue a PARTF grant application for only the purchase of the property, the County's out-of-pocket purchase price would be reduced to approximately \$70,000 once the streambank credits are realized.

For the benefit of the public, the Manager explained streambank credits. Streambank restoration credits are essentially where the purchaser agrees to protect an area forever and is given credit for a project that may have negative environmental impacts on a streambank. The process is similar to purchasing air quality permits. The process would require the County to issue a request for proposals for a company to help the County broker those credits.

Commissioner Cathey inquired about the cost of engineering and the fill material. The Manager said the cost would depend on the master plan approved by the Board of Commissioners. Currently, there are several different master plan ideas. The cost would depend on the facilities selected and at what level the County wanted to fill. For instance, the cost would be different if raising the property to a 100-year floodplain than out of the floodplain entirely.

Commissioner Hawkins pointed out there are different types of potential uses for the property running the gamut from a passive use with fields, walking paths and river access to theoretically putting structures on the property. He stated Commissioners are not being asked to make a decision on a master plan for the property during this meeting, but rather to hear from the public on their thoughts about the feasibility and opportunity for this property to become additional public land.

In response to Commissioner Cathey, the Manager confirmed that the potential purchase price could be as low as \$70,000 if the PARTF grant is awarded and the streambank credits are realized. Any development costs would be separate.

Commissioner Hawkins declared the public hearing open at 7:17 p.m.

The comments made by the public represent the individual speaker's opinion or point of view. No attempt was made to vet their statements for accuracy or modify them based on facts.

The Manager noted the Board has received written comments. Staff had not planned to read those into the record unless the Board elects to do so.

Larry Wilson: Mr. Wilson stated he is not against parks, but he is against purchasing this property because it floods frequently and there is debris left behind when the flood waters recede. He also thought the purchase price was too high. Mr. Wilson thought the County could do better. He stated the purchase of this property will not create any new jobs. He urged Commissioners to use incentives to attract viable businesses to the County. He asked Commissioners to cease further interest in this property.

Gerry Hunsicker: Mr. Hunsicker agreed with the previous speaker's comments. He thought for the County to purchase the property just to have to invest millions to make it usable was unreasonable. He was concerned that citizens were going to lose their property due to tax increases. (Mr. Hunsicker also complained about the proposed roundabout for the Pisgah Forest intersection, to which he was opposed. This topic was irrelevant to the public hearing.)

John Gustafson: Mr. Gustafson said he grew up overlooking the airport located on this property and joked that as a teenager he even canoed the runway during one of the floods. He was against the purchase of the property, noting one of the tracts has flooded four times over the last month and heavily over the past few years. While it seems to drain well, he said the property is really just a mud hole. He wondered if the County would even be allowed to raise the property. Mr. Gustafson said he has been involved with several recreational teams over many years and noted that the upkeep of fields not located in the floodplain or floodway is already difficult. He thought the County could do better and he did not think the County should spend money to purchase the property.

Rick Bellini: Mr. Bellini said he frequently walks by the current sports complex. He suggested instead of using taxpayer dollars to purchase the property on Gallimore Road, Commissioners should make improvements to the current sports complex or add amenities to the Rosman Community Park or areas in the upper end of the County. He suggested purchasing property elsewhere. He stated the PARTF grant should be used for such expenditures as he suggested.

Don Gentle: Mr. Gentle is on the Board of Directors for the Boys and Girls Club which is adjacent to the property being discussed for potential purchase. He said he understands the property is challenging, but he thought the opportunity to open up parks and recreation opportunities as well as economic development space was advantageous. The purchase of this property allows Commissioners time to decide how to make it work.

Davis Whitfield-Cargile: Mr. Whitfield-Cargile reported that he lives near the property on Sugar Loaf Road and drives by it every day. His original opinion when he first learned of the County's intent was the same as first four speakers, but after hearing the Alliance's presentation and the intent of using the property for park space, he thought the purchase was a good idea. He pointed out a lot of land in this County floods, but it is still usable and functional. He thought the property could be used well and said it makes sense as a park with it being located between two schools. He stated if the County can purchase the property for as low as the Manager suggested with grants and streambank credits, it becomes doable. Mr. Whitfield-Cargile said if the County-owned property can be used as space for economic development to bring jobs into the County and the ballfields can be relocated to this property, the purchase makes sense to him, if it can be done. He challenged the Board to find a way to make it work.

Jimmy Perkins: Mr. Perkins pointed out that most projects take balance and weighing pros and cons. The con that is obvious about this property is the flooding issues. He said it should be taken under consideration that the previous year was one of the wettest in the County's history. He stated he has visited several parks and recreation facilities across Western North Carolina over the course of many years that were located in the floodplain. The upside to the project is the economic development component. Mr. Perkins stated the Brevard College property is affordable and a tremendous asset to the community. To use the current parks and recreation property to create jobs makes this purchase a win-win for the community.

Allen Mercaldo: Mr. Mercaldo submitted written comments as well. He is also a resident of Sugar Loaf Road. He pointed out he has not heard any public demand for a new park. He was curious if there were studies available about the traffic impact and noise pollution. He pointed out one of the reasons he lives here is the quality of life. This area of the County is farm country and he does not want to see the peacefulness of the area disrupted, especially when the long-term impacts and costs have not been determined. Mr. Mercaldo reported that in the four years he has lived here the property has flooded. He has property along the river that gets silt and debris on it that must be cleaned after flood waters recede. This will occur to the ballfields too, and there will be ongoing costs for the upkeep. He urged Commissioners to reject the proposal.

Edwin Jones: Mr. Jones reported that he traveled extensively to Japan during his working career. He noted during his visits there that land was so dear that all of their sports complexes and many of the golf courses were built in floodplains.

Karen Stark: Ms. Stark said she likes the idea of having parks in the County, but she agreed with the first four speakers that parks should not be located in the floodplain. She noted that the Board appears to be excited about the ability to purchase the property for \$70,000, but she pointed out it is not a given that the County will be able to achieve this purchase price if the PARTF grant is not awarded. Add to that the cost of developing the property and it becomes an expensive venture. Ms. Stark did not feel the Board should move forward until they were sure the funds would be awarded. Otherwise, she did not think Commissioners should purchase the property.

Dee Dee Perkins: Ms. Perkins is a member of the Transylvania Economic Alliance Board of Directors member. She reminded Commissioners that the Alliance was challenged by the County with finding opportunities for economic development. One the major things Transylvania County is missing is

product. The Alliance took on the challenge to find some creative solutions to bring economic development opportunities. She pointed out several of the Commissioners attended the grand opening ceremony at the new industrial building on Ecusta Road. She thought this building was a great accomplishment, but noted it is only one small step toward resolving the County's lack of product. She again stressed this is a great opportunity and the purchase of the property gives the County the chance to look at creative ways to increase economic development. She pointed out the County has found creative ways to purchase the property by bringing the cost down with grants and has brought together the appropriate partners to move through the due diligence process which allows time to explore grants for development. The property can provide more park options and frees up other lands to bring industry and jobs here which has been one of the County's top goals. Ms. Perkins encouraged Commissioners to take advantage of this opportunity.

There were no further comments. **Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing closed at 7:42 p.m.**

Chairman Hawkins thanked all of the speakers for their intelligent, eloquent and respectful comments because he understands this is a controversial issue with many having differing opinions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The comments made by the public represent the individual speaker's opinion or point of view. No attempt was made to vet their statements for accuracy or modify them based on facts.

Steve Pulliam: Mr. Pulliam will be retiring as CEO of the United Way of Transylvania County effective January 31, 2019 where he served for nearly 20 years. He thanked Transylvania County and Board of Commissioners for their many years of support. He was proud of the organization's accomplishments: overcame loss of bulk of campaigns when factories closed, grew campaign from \$190,000 to more than \$500,000, educated agencies to move from output measurements to outcome measurements and working collaboratively, established first collaborative in 2001 to help displaced workers, created the 2-1-1 helpline (first small county in the State), implemented charity tracker software as part of the TRAIN Network (first county in the State), etc. He state that collaboration is key and 82% of the agency's funding goes toward this effort. Mr. Pulliam introduced Louis Negron as his successor.

Louis Negron: Mr. Negron said he looks forward to partnering with Transylvania County and the community and continuing the legacy that Mr. Pulliam and the United Way has established in Transylvania County.

Lucia Gerdes: Mr. Gerdes spoke to Commissioners about the small area plan that is on the agenda for this meeting. She asked Commissioners to consider the small area plan for communities in Transylvania County. She pointed out that residents of Cedar Mountain, of which she is as well, want to ensure new businesses coming to their community become part of the community, that their lighting and signage are appropriate for a mountain setting, that their land use is not going to cause further flooding, that their building aesthetics are synonymous with the community and terrain, and that the headwaters from the Little River are protected. She stated the recent addition of Dollar General to their community was a turning point. Residents were thankful that Dollar General was very receptive to the community's concerns. A small area plan will help to establish those guidelines for future businesses and will help to protect the community, as well as protect businesses that want to invest in our mountains. Ms. Gerdes pointed out that Dollar General was very gracious, but she was certain that the changes they made at the request of the community were costly. She felt it would be beneficial for businesses to know upfront a community's expectations. While all citizens value private property rights, they also want simple protections to those things that they love about their community. Mr. Gerdes felt it was important for Transylvania County to have a plan to help with future growth and guidelines for developers and future

development, as do most communities. The Cedar Mountain community has been working with the County's Planning and Community Development department to determine what is possible for their community. She hopes the Board of Commissioners will support them in trying to keep the community a place in which they love and using County resources to create stability for future businesses and a sensible plan for future growth and expansion.

Robert Lawson: Mr. Lawson is the co-chair of Cedar Mountain Community Center's Small Area Planning Committee. He said early on the committee became involved with the Planning Board which gave the committee an opportunity to inform the County of their work, express what was important to their community, and determine how to facilitate developing a plan that would be workable and enforceable. He thanked the members of the Planning Board and County staff for allowing the committee members to attend the Planning Board meetings and share their findings. The result was a draft small area plan. Mr. Lawson shared that the residents of Cedar Mountain support this process and they look forward to an opportunity to be one of the first communities to execute this plan, if approved.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications from Commissioners or staff.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, September 24, 2018 and following met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed. Commissioners approved the minutes as submitted.

DISCOVERY, RELEASE AND MONTHLY SETTLEMENT REPORT

Per NC General Statute § 105-312 (b), it is the duty of the Tax Administrator to see that all property not properly listed during the regular listing period be listed, assessed and taxed. The Tax Administrator shall file such reports of discoveries with the Board of Commissioners. Per NC General Statute § 105-381 (b), it is the duty of the Tax Administrator to provide a monthly report to the Board of Commissioners of the actions taken by the Tax Administrator on requests for release or refund, which shall be recorded in the minutes. For the November 2018 Report, total tax dollars released was \$75,103.69 and refunds totaled \$153.46. For the December 2018, total tax dollars released was \$17,439.22 and refunds totaled \$663.33. Commissioners approved the Discovery, Release & Monthly Settlement Reports for November and December 2018 as submitted.

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS CAPITAL FUND BUDGET AMENDMENTS

The FY 2019 budget ordinance included new restrictions on appropriations made to Transylvania County Schools, powers that are granted to the Board of Commissioners under the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act (NC General Statute § 115C-433). The \$1,850,000 appropriation made to the Capital Projects Fund of Transylvania County Schools would be restricted by project as outlined in the County Manager recommended budget which was based on capital needs submitted by the Board of Education for FY 2019.

The restrictions apply to projects which fall only under Category 1 and 2. The appropriation remains tied to a specific project until such time as the Board of Education requests the County Commissioners allocate it to a different project. If the Board of Education's priorities change and the appropriation needs to be reallocated, it would require procedures under NC General Statute § 115C-433 which reads:

(b) If the board of county commissioners allocates part or all of its appropriations pursuant to G.S. 115C-429(b), the board of education must obtain the approval of the board of county commissioners for an amendment to the budget that (i) **increases or decreases expenditures from the capital outlay fund for projects listed in G.S. 115C-426(f)(1) or (2)** or (ii) **increases or decreases the amount of county appropriation allocated to a purpose or function by twenty-five percent (25%) or more from the amount contained in the budget ordinance adopted by the board of county commissioners**; provided that, at its discretion, the board may in its budget ordinance specify a lesser percentage, so long as such percentage is not less than ten percent (10%).

According to the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act, these restrictions commit the Board of Education to the projects outlined in their budget June 30, 2019. If the listed projects were not completed on time or were under budget as of that date, the restriction would stay in place and create a restricted portion of fund balance that would require County approval to re-allocate to a different project. Funds currently in the Transylvania County Schools capital fund balance would not have these restrictions as this policy had not been previously applied.

Transylvania County Schools submitted the following budget amendments for approval; however, the Board of Commissioners has no legal authority to approve or disapprove these amendments related to new revenues or appropriations of fund balance which had no prior restrictions. Staff submitted the budget amendments for information only and advised against taking any action.

1. Purchase of 2 school buses by the State of NC - \$189,941: Purchase or lease of vehicles is a Category 3 expenditure under the law. For Category 3, County Commissioners have limited authority. Most capital expenditures that fall under this category occur with funding arrangements between the local Board of Education and the State of North Carolina.
2. Payment of retainage on Brevard Middle School roof replacement - \$6,674: Since the approved payment is an appropriation of fund balance, this amendment does not require County Commissioner approval.

AUTHORIZE COUNTY MANAGER TO EXECUTIVE AGREEMENT WITH NC DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES – COVE CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Soil & Water Conservation contacted the Transylvania County Soil and Water Conservation district about being a partner to receive pass-through funds from the US Forest Services' Good Neighbor program for the Cove Creek Restoration Project. The Transylvania County Soil and Water Conservation District expressed interest in assisting with and overseeing the project.

The Cove Creek Restoration Project involves removing a low water ford on the Davidson River and replacing it with a bottomless arch culvert that would support higher water flow and an aquatic organism passage. The construction budget for the project would be \$215,895. The County would receive \$13,150 for administering the project.

Because the Transylvania County Soil and Water Conservation District is one of many quasi-independent agencies organized under the umbrella of county government in North Carolina and due to their financial

and administrative affairs being closely integrated with county government, the appropriate individual to sign the agreement would be the Transylvania County Manager.

No matching funds would be required from the County's annual budget, only the time and effort of certain County employees to assist the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in facilitating the bidding, oversight and final reporting of the project. Commissioners authorized the County Manager to execute the agreement with the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on the Cove Creek Restoration Project.

2018 DELINQUENT TAXPAYER LIST

Advertisement of delinquent taxes is required per NC General Statute § 105-369 (a). Commissioners must approve the list before it is advertised. Any delinquent taxes paid prior to the date of advertisement will not be advertised. Commissioners approved the 2018 Delinquent Taxpayer List and ordered Tax Administrator Jessica McCall to advertise the list.

CONSIDERATION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY PURCHASE PRIOR TO LEASE TO CITY OF BREVARD

Boards of Commissioners and County Government in North Carolina are responsible for providing local funds to purchase property and provide school facilities. For this reason, the statutes require that when a Board of Education and public school system determine that property is no longer useful, the property be declared surplus and offered to the Board of Commissioners for purchase before it can be sold or leased to another party. The statutes additionally require that proceeds from a sale be used to pay down capital debt for schools, which is a local expense funded by local tax dollars.

On November 21, *The Transylvania Times* posted an article covering the Board of Education's meeting where a resolution was adopted to surplus property on Ecusta Road (PIN 8596-49-2895), which is currently being used as a baseball field by Transylvania County Little League and is adjacent to the City of Brevard park and Transylvania County park. The article reported that the Superintendent was to first offer the property to the Board of Commissioners for purchase and then lease the property to the City of Brevard to maintain as baseball fields. The County Manager contacted the Superintendent immediately to inquire further about the plan and the response she received was that the Superintendent would forward a copy of the resolution.

On November 26 Superintendent Jeff McDaris forwarded a copy of the resolution that was adopted by the Board of Education. Upon being asked what just compensation the Board of Education would request, the Superintendent responded indicating that if the County were interested in purchasing the property, the Board of Education would likely withdraw the offer.

The Manager also provided copies of correspondence with Brevard City Manager Jim Fatland. The intent as expressed by Superintendent McDaris and Manager Fatland is that the School System would lease the property to the City for \$1/year and that the City would continue to maintain the property. The City's insurance carrier is concerned about maintaining the property without a lease or owning it outright. The City would maintain the fields under their contract with Transylvania Little League and retain any revenue received for City government purposes. The correspondence also mentioned the City's ability to apply for and receive grant funding.

As Commissioners deliberate about whether to purchase this property, the Manager asked them to consider the following:

1. Potential for the long term use of the property to change resulting in potential revenue that would have been used to offset capital debt on behalf of taxpayers

2. County has the ability seek grants and lease the property in the same manner as the City
3. County could hold a lease with the City

At the January 8 meeting, the Board of Commissioners voted to request that the Board of Education modify the resolution to cover a few precautionary provisions, including:

1. That the lease state that if the property ceases to be used as a ballfield for more than one season, the lease is void;
2. That all revenue received on the property is to be used to offset the capital debt for education; and
3. That should the lease be voided, the Board of Commissioners shall again be given opportunity to consider purchase of the property.

The Board of Education agreed to the County's recommendations and modified the resolution at their January meeting. Due to their willingness to modify the resolution, the Board of Commissioners declined to purchase the property at this time and expressed agreement with the Board of Education's plan to lease the property as indicated in the resolution.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

Vicki Eastland, the Rural Planning Organization Coordinator with the Land of Sky Regional Council, presented an update on the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for Transylvania County.

The Rural Planning Organization (RPO) works with the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and the Buncombe, Haywood, Madison, and Transylvania Counties on all aspects of transportation planning. Comprehensive Transportation Plans are required by NC General Statute § 136-66.2. A CTP is defined as a long range transportation plan which identifies major transportation improvement needs and develops long term solutions for the next 25 to 30 years. Some elements of the CTP include a facilities inventory, problem statements, and project recommendations.

The CTP is developed through a team effort involving Transylvania County, the City of Brevard, the Town of Rosman, NCDOT and the RPO. Local government officials and the public are involved as well. All of these entities work together to identify future transportation needs using available information, such as population trends, economic indicators, traffic trends, environmental constraints, and patterns of land development. Ms. Eastland stated that when developing the plan it is important to keep in mind that it is about the system, not just about individual projects. It also covers all modes: highways, public transit, bicycle/pedestrian, aviation and ferry projects. The main objective of the CTP is to increase connectivity to activity centers, emergency centers and routes, institutions and economic generators.

Once the CTP is developed, the local governing bodies and the NCDOT Board of Trustees adopt the plan and RPO endorses it. The Transylvania County Transportation Advisory Committee is considered the delegated gatekeeper and meets quarterly to discuss different transportation issues. NCDOT Division 14 staff would also be heavily involved in the development of the CTP. Workgroup members include resource advisors, citizen advisors, and local government staff. Key staff represents the RPO, the NCDOT Transportation Planning Division, and NCDOT Division 14.

A project being identified in the CTP is the first of many steps required for the project to be funded and eventually constructed. The CTP is the starting point to identify transportation needs.

For tonight's meeting, Ms. Eastland sought approval from the Board of Commissioners for the working group handbook, which includes a list of the proposed workgroup members, as well as the public survey.

Once approved, any necessary edits will be made and the survey will be released for a minimum of 30 days. RPO staff will compile the survey results and schedule the first workgroup meeting.

This concluded Ms. Eastland's presentation. Chairman Hawkins called for questions and comments from Commissioners prior to approval of the handbook and public survey.

Commissioner Lemel noted that Haywood County is not represented by the Land of Sky Regional Council and asked why they are included in their transportation planning efforts. Ms. Eastland stated her counterpart of the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO). Those boundaries are set based on census data. The 2000 Census pulled in Haywood County as a commuted as members of the FBRMPO; therefore, the RPO represents the rural areas of Haywood County.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the public input survey as presented and the working group handbook to initiate the development of the Transylvania County Comprehensive Transportation Plan, seconded by Guice. Chairman Hawkins commended Ms. Eastland for the wonderful work she does on behalf of Transylvania County. **The motion passed unanimously.**

For the Board's information, Ms. Eastland gave copies of the State Transportation Improvement Plan to the Manager for distribution.

ROBERT G. PARRISH INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AWARD

Justin Hembree, Executive Director of the Land of Sky Regional Council, reported that each year the organization gives three awards to individuals that make the region a better place to live, work and play. One of those awards is the Charles H. Campbell Regional Leadership Award, named after long-term Mayor of Brevard. Mr. Hembree noted that the second recipient of the award was State Representative Bill Ives, father of Commissioner Lemel. Another award is given in honor of Robert "Bob" Shepherd who became the Executive Director of the organization in the early 1970's. This year's recipients of those awards were Jack Cecil for his commitment to this region and his leadership in economic development efforts and John Connet, the Hendersonville City Manager and immediate past President of the City/County Manager's Association, respectively.

The third award, the Robert G. Parrish Intergovernmental Relations Award, was established in 2000 in the name of Mayor Parrish, the first Mayor of the Town of Fletcher and past Chair of the Regional Council. This award is intended to recognize those who promote regionalism and regional solutions to local challenges. Mr. Hembree announced that this year's recipient of the Robert G. Parrish Intergovernmental Relations Award is Transylvania County Board of Commissioners Chair Mike Hawkins.

Chairman Hawkins has served on the Land of Sky Regional Council Executive Committee for a number of years. Mr. Hembree stated that Chairman Hawkins has a true desire to seek win-win solutions to local and regional issues and that he knows no boundaries. Chairman Hawkins understands that what is good for Transylvania County is good for the region and, in turn, what is good for the region is good for Transylvania County. Additionally, when it comes to working with different people, whether politically or ideologically, Chairman Hawkins is respected across the State for being honest, having the best interest of the community and region at heart, being willing to listen, and having the desire to find the best solutions to whatever issues are before him.

Mr. Hembree read:

Robert G. Parrish, Sr. Intergovernmental Relations Award, dedicated in 2000 to annually honor a leader who has improved intergovernmental cooperation in the Land of Sky region
Presented to Michael Steven Hawkins

For his selfless contributions to our region and unwavering support of Land of Sky Regional Council Mike's steadfast belief in and commitment to the people of Western North Carolina is second to none. His leadership has been and will continue to be invaluable.
Presented by Land of Sky Regional Council.

Mr. Hembree presented the award to Chairman Hawkins, which was met with applause from the Board and audience. He personally thanked Chairman Hawkins, the members of the Board of Commissioners, and County staff for being a member of the Council. He said they Council enjoys working with Transylvania County and values our membership.

Chairman Hawkins thanked Mr. Hembree for the great honor of being presented with this award.

APPOINTMENTS

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW

The terms of John Decker and Gay Phillips expire at the end of January. Both are eligible and willing to serve another term. There also remains one vacancy on this board. The Clerk continues to advertise, but has yet to receive any applications. Applicants must have lived in Transylvania County for one year prior to appointment and must own property in Transylvania County.

Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint John Decker and Gay Phillips to another term on the Board of Equalization and Review, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

Commissioner Chappell stated that the roles and responsibilities of this board can be difficult at times and he expressed appreciation to the members for their service and expertise.

JUVENILE CRIME AND PREVENTION COUNCIL

Steve Pulliam, Director of the United Way of Transylvania County will be retiring effective January 31, 2019. He has served on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council in his official role since February 1999. Mr. Pulliam introduced incoming Director Louis Negrón during public comment. It is his desire and the wishes of JCPC Chair Jeffrey Patterson to ensure no interruption to the important business of the council by appointing Mr. Negrón to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Louis Negrón to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council to replace Steve Pulliam, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

PLANNING BOARD

The terms of Daryle Hogsed and Richard Kimsey Jackson expire at the end of January. Both are eligible to serve a second term. Mr. Jackson would like to serve a second term and submitted updates to his application. Mr. Hogsed will not be continuing his service on the Planning Board. In addition to Mr. Jackson's, there are three additional applications on file.

Commissioner Guice move to reappoint Richard Kimsey Jackson, seconded by Commissioner Cathey and unanimously approved.

Commissioner Chappell nominated and moved to appoint Arleca Chapman, seconded by Commissioner Cathey. The motion failed by a vote of 3 to 2, with Chairman Hawkins and Commissioners Guice and Lemel voting against.

Being there were no other nominations, Chairman Hawkins declared this item as tabled until the Clerk receives additional applications for consideration.

REGIONAL COUNCIL ON AGING

Patricia Roberts serves as the Senior Tar Heel Delegate on the Regional Council on Aging. She recently completed a partial term and wishes to be reappointed. Her reappointment is recommended by Land of Sky's Aging and Volunteer Services Director LeeAnne Tucker. Mrs. Roberts has been very active in her short time on the council and she regularly provides the Clerk to the Board with reports of her trips to the State Legislature to share with the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint Patricia Roberts to the Regional Council on Aging as the Senior Tar Heel Delegate, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

WESTERN CAROLINA COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There is a vacancy on the WCCA Board of Directors. Alan Wilson reached out to the Clerk recently to inquire about volunteering in the community and through their conversation she learned he already volunteers extensively in the community delivering meals to the elderly and with the WCCA. Knowing there was a vacancy on the WCCA Board of Directors, the Clerk encouraged Mr. Wilson to apply. WCCA Executive Director David White welcomes his appointment to the WCCA Board of Directors.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Alan Wilson to the WCCA Board of Directors, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESSPROPOSED VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT AND ENHANCED VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

The Manager invited Cooperative Extension Director Bart Renner to review the proposed Voluntary Agricultural District and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance. She reminded Commissioners that a public hearing has been held to receive input and tonight's request is for the Board to take action with regards to the proposed ordinance revisions.

Mr. Renner reported that a Voluntary Agricultural District is essentially an agreement between the County and a farmer in which the farmer voluntarily decides to keep his or her land as farmland for a period of 10 years in exchange for certain benefits. Those benefits include increased protection from nuisance lawsuits and additional considerations and protections from utilities rights-of-way. This agreement is designed to preserve the rural heritage of Transylvania County and create awareness of farming practices among community members. It is completely voluntary and the farmer can leave the program at any time, unless they are participating in the enhanced program, which is an irrevocable 10-year agreement.

In response to Commissioner Chappell, the County Attorney reported she was satisfied with the ordinance revisions with respect to ensuring all the legal bases were covered.

Commissioner Lemel moved to adopt the Voluntary Agricultural District and Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District Ordinance as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

POTENTIAL OF PROPERTY PURCHASE FOR COUNTY PARK

The information for this item is the same as the Manager presented for the public hearing. The Manager requested to clarify some information that was stated during the public hearing so that citizens were clear on all of the information presented. In response to comments made by the public, she clarified that the County has put no earnest money down on this purchase. Also, there is \$750,000 in reserve for Parks and Recreation purposes, but the Board does not intend to spend the full amount in reserves on this property.

Staffs asked for Board direction. The Manager pointed out the due diligence period ends soon under the current contract extension, although there is the possibility to request another extension if the Board so chooses.

Commissioner Cathey asked if consideration had been given to allowing the property to lie fallow rather than making improvements. Commissioner Lemel responded this is an option to consider. She said this is a discussion in which the Parks and Recreation Commission would add value and allow the public to have more input into this process. Commissioner Cathey said he is not interested in spending a lot of money to develop the property, but he thought it would be a value for the County if it could be purchased out-of-pocket for \$70,000. Commissioner Lemel added that it would be a benefit to get an extension on the due diligence period which would allow the opportunity to consider many different options.

For clarification purposes, Chairman Hawkins asked the Manager to explain the issue around the possibility of extending the due diligence period. The Manager explained if the Board wants to pursue the PARTF grant application, they would need to request an extension on the due diligence period to allow for the application and potential award notification process. If so, she would recommend an extension through at least October 31. If the PARTF grant is a factor in whether or not the Board would purchase the property, an extension would be appropriate.

Commissioner Cathey moved to extend the due diligence period on the contract through October 31, 2019, seconded by Commissioner Lemel. Commissioner Lemel requested and moved the following amendment to the main motion: To allow for the application of the PARTF grant; within this process, our Parks and Recreation Commission and the general public will be engaged as stakeholders and that we thank Brevard College for their willingness to be a strong community partner in this opportunity. The amendment was seconded by Commissioner Cathey.

Commissioner Guice commented that he has studied this matter extensively, spoken with several citizens in the community, and met with the members of the Parks and Recreation Commission and Transylvania Economic Alliance staff and Board members. He stated that part of the reason he requested a public hearing on this purchase stemmed from comments he heard from members of the public and the fact that they wanted to have input. He pointed out the County's Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a detailed study that involved input and participation from the public and it is available for everyone to review. It describes a need for additional recreation assets as well as passive recreation opportunities.

Commissioner Guice said he learned during this process that the Parks and Recreation Commission had not had adequate input, so this amendment is extremely important because it involves that group and the community being involved in the PARTF grant application process and identifying how the park can be developed. He stated he has been unable to find any other area that is located at the entrance to the City of Brevard that would provide this kind of opportunity that would allow for river access and passive recreation (trails, picnic areas, etc.). The PARTF grant is critical in that it helps buy down the cost of the purchase and the continued use of the reserve funds to accomplish other prioritized parks and recreation improvements. Commissioner Guice saw the purchase as a win-win for the community. He understood the flooding challenges, but as one of the speakers during the public hearing pointed out many areas of this County floods regularly but the lands remain usable. The discussion of moving current parks and recreation assets to the park property will occur at a later time. Commissioner Guice was very appreciative of the Alliance's work and noted that there is lots of work going on in this community to improve the lives of others. Commissioner Chappell expressed serious concern about the purchase of this property. He agreed with the concept of freeing up space for economic development purposes, but stated that the ideas for developing the park continue to change. Nonetheless, however it is developed will be a significant cost to the County, as well as the ongoing upkeep. Although he felt PARTF grants were great resources if awarded, he was concerned about using it for this purchase because it limits the County's ability to be awarded funding in future cycles. He preferred to use PARTF grants to improve and enhance the County's existing facilities. He also pointed out that none of these dollars has been awarded and

therefore the exact purchase price is unknown. He said most people who spoke during the public hearing were under the impression the intention is to relocate ballfields and free up space for economic development, but those conversations about the intention of the property purchase continue to evolve. Commissioner Chappell reported that he too has spoken with citizens and members of the Parks and Recreation Commission and that many share those same concerns. Commissioner Guice added that in his conversations about the PARTF grant it was shared with him the County could also apply for funds to cover those costs that have already been incurred. He thought the purpose of the public hearing was to give the Board time to listen to people who felt like they have been left out of the process. The PARTF grant application process would accomplish that and allow for public involvement in determining how the property can best be used. He continued to think the purchase was a tremendous opportunity. **The amendment to the motion carried by a vote of 4 to 1, with Commissioner Chappell voting against.** Commissioner Cathey restated his desire to allow the property to lie fallow for river access and possible trails, as opposed to making major developments. Chairman Hawkins pointed out this action allows the County through October 31 to examine this and other questions. He was confident the final decision will be based on facts and involvement from a large group of people in order to make a good decision. There were no further comments. **The main motion passed by a vote of 4 to 1, with Commissioner Chappell voting against.**

AWARD RFP FOR COMPENSATION AND CLASSIFICATION STUDY

Human Resources Director Sheila Cozart presented this item. She reported that in November 2018, the Board of Commissioners permitted staff to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a comprehensive employee compensation and classification Study. Notice was published on December 10, 2018 and RFPs were issued on December 21, 2018. The deadline to submit RFPs was January 11, 2019. Staff received six proposals which were all deemed responsive and responsible bidders according to NC General Statute §142-129. The bid amounts for two of the proposals substantially exceeded the range staff anticipated and were therefore dismissed. The other four proposals ranged between \$32,000 and \$46,500. Staff further reviewed these proposals to ensure the requested criteria were met and that they complied with local policy and State statutes and to check the references for each.

Ms. Cozart, staff and the Personnel Board recommended Commissioners award the bid to Evergreen Solutions in the amount not to exceed \$46,500. It is staff's hope to get the process started very soon so that the study and recommendations will be completed for inclusion in the FY 2020 Budget.

Commissioner Cathey moved to award the RFP to Evergreen Solutions, seconded by Commissioner Lemel. For specificity, **Commissioner Lemel moved to amend the motion that the award be in an amount not to exceed \$46,500 and to authorize the County Manager to sign the appropriate contract for services, seconded by Commissioner Guice, and unanimously approved.** Commissioner Lemel commented that Evergreen Solutions has been around for quite a while and they have a very impressive track record with other organizations. She became familiar with the firm during her research of efficiency studies for other counties. She was impressed with their qualifications and experience. They have a substantial list of clients with whom they work closely. Evergreen Solutions seems to be in tune with the County's needs and she looks forward to them finding a progressive solution to effectively recruit and retain employees. Commissioner Chappell agreed with Commissioner Lemel's comments and said he believes strongly that Evergreen Solutions will deliver a good product. He commented that he was surprised at the difference in the bid amounts. He asked if the Manager felt comfortable that Evergreen Solutions will be able to meet what the County's needs in terms of a full classification and compensation study. The Manager responded yes, from both the staff level and the Personnel Board. Ms. Cozart added that the references were stellar. Commissioner Lemel said a big takeaway for her was that the system maintenance section of their proposal states their goal is to produce recommendations that are effective and can be maintained and updated as needed by their respective clients. Ms. Cozart agreed, noting the long term success of the plan will be how it is implemented and maintained for the future. The

Manager reminded Commissioners of the expected timeframe for completion and implementation. Staff's goal is to include the recommendation in the FY 2020 Budget. The Personnel Board will be assisting staff and the consultant through this process. The Manager intends to communicate with Commissioners throughout the study. She noted that compensation can be very challenging to talk about, especially in the public sector. County government provides services to the citizens and it is important to the community that they are done so effectively. Commissioner Guice added that employees are the County's greatest asset, but it has been a number of years since employees have seen raises. He believes the study will be extremely important to addressing compression issues and in the recruitment and retention of quality employees. The Manager interjected that Commissioners have given some cost of living increases which employees appreciate. She noted that the face of local government is changing with a significant number of new hires and retirees. This has accelerated the competition for quality employees which is a factor that outpaces the cost of living. There were no further comments, and **the motion passed unanimously.**

APPROVAL OF SMALL AREA PLANNING PROCESS

The Manager invited County Planner Joy Fields to present this item. She noted that if Commissioners approve the process they should also direct the Clerk to the Board to advertise in the local newspaper seeking applications to serve on a small area planning committee.

Ms. Fields introduced the members of the Planning Board in attendance. She reported that the Transylvania County 2025 Comprehensive Plan identified a future action step to facilitate community-based workshops to address local concerns and seek possible solutions to those concerns. Each workshop would be different and tailored to the specific community in Transylvania County. Representatives from the communities of Cedar Mountain, Dunn's Rock, Glen Cannon, and Lake Toxaway have visited the Planning and Community Development department over the last two years to seek ways to move forward with a small area plan for their respective communities. Staff offered presentations to residents of the Cedar Mountain community and they are ready to move forward, but they want to know the process to do so. The department currently does not have a document or process on how to guide them. With guidance from the Manager, the Planning Board drafted a small area planning process that would ensure community members, as well as County Commissioners, were engaged as communities sought to implement small area plans and maintain their community character. The draft process Ms. Fields referred to was included in the Board's agenda packet for their review. Ms. Fields stated that as the Planning Board reviewed the process, members from the Cedar Mountain and Dunn's Rock communities were in attendance and provided input.

Chairman Hawkins called for questions and comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Cathey stated that a plan to put affordable housing in the Lake Toxaway community is not realistic and will not work. He expressed his disdain for zoning.

Commissioner Chappell agreed with Commissioner Cathey's comments. He also had questions about the process, specifically with the small area planning committee – the makeup of the committee, community-specific, longevity, etc. The Manager responded the committee would be specifically tied to this project, noting that any community that desires to have a small area plan should have a tailored committee to meet the needs of the community. She recommended the Board seek applications and then determine the manageable makeup of the committee. Planning staff would provide support and act as a resource. The Board of Commissioners would be responsible for adopting any related ordinances.

Commissioner Guice reported that he spoke with the Chair of the Planning Board this afternoon and he shared that he supported the plan because it gives communities the opportunity to initiate the process. He noted that the Planning Board Chair has been historically opposed to zoning. Commissioner Guice stated

that the process gives communities the opportunity to focus on specific concerns or needs that are unique to their community. Every request must come before the Board of Commissioners for approval. Commissioner Guice said while he is also opposed to countywide zoning, he is supportive of this plan because it is important for communities to have a say about their own communities.

Commissioner Lemel saw the small area planning process as supporting communities. She stated that land use planning in individual communities gives the residents and neighbors there an opportunity to support one another by defining and protecting what they value most about where they live. She supported any community that wants to engage in this exercise and was happy to see Cedar Mountain leading the way.

Commissioner Lemel moved to accept the Small Area Planning Process as presented by the Planning Board and direct the Clerk to begin accepting applications for the Cedar Mountain Small Area Plan, seconded by Commissioner Guice. Chairman Hawkins valued Planning Board Chair Daryle Hogsed's endorsement of this plan. Chairman Hawkins concurred that this is a good and logical process for the different communities in the County. **The motion carried 3 to 2, with Commissioners Cathey and Chappell voting against.**

PROFESSIONAL SEARCH FOR LIBRARY DIRECTOR

The Manager shared that Transylvania County's Library Director Anna Yount has announced her retirement with her last working day being May 31, 2019. She has served Transylvania County for 25 years and has been one of the shining stars in her profession with her leadership of the Library and ability to envision and adapt our services there. She has laid a solid foundation for those that will follow her. In order to ensure a smooth transition, the Library Foundation has generously offered up to \$25,000 to fund a consultant that specializes in the recruitment of library directors to assist in the search. The Manager requested authorization to enter into a contract with a consultant to begin the search process.

Commissioner Lemel moved to authorize the County Manager to enter into a contract with Bradbury Miller Associates to conduct a professional search for a Library Director, seconded by Commissioner Guice. For clarification, the Manager explained that the consultant will assist her in vetting candidates, along with the Library Foundation and Board of Trustees. Being that the Library Director reports to the County Manager, she will have the ultimate say in who is hired to replace Ms. Yount. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Kudos to Jessica West in the Solid Waste department for earning her Associates Degree from Blue Ridge Community College in December.
- Kudos from TVS to Transportation Coordinator April Alm for helping connect with them van vendors
- Sherry Shelton is retiring after 25 years with the Department of Social Services. Best of luck to her in retirement!
- Library Director Anna Yount is retiring in May with 25 years of service
- March 21 - Early Educators Conference and Kindergarten Readiness Rally with Get Set Transylvania; Sesame Street will be returning for that event
- Emergency Management has been meeting with groups post-winter storm 2018 for coordination purpose, including Duke Energy and Haywood Electric
- Manager will be presenting at the NC Manager's Association Conference next week on Collective Impact Models and sharing the County's work establishing Get Set Transylvania

- Welcome to Allen McNeill, Budget and Management Analyst

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gerry Hunsicker: Mr. Hunsicker stated there is not enough attention paid to the affordable housing issue in this County. He also felt the County lost out on many opportunities to bring new industry to the County. Most of the current jobs are not considered living wage. He said he has been opposed to many of the County's high cost projects over the years and to raising taxes, but noted that Transylvania County's tax rate still remains low. He is concerned about those who own inherited or generational property and their ability to hold on to the property due to ever-increasing taxes.

Edwin Jones: Mr. Jones asked if the Board anticipates any conflict over the Voluntary Agricultural District's pulling land out of the market for 10 years and the Transylvania Economic Alliance's efforts to search for product. He noted that a lot of agricultural land in Transylvania County could be used for economic development purposes.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Lemel reported she spent Friday evening and Saturday attending the Vaya Health Board of Directors' meeting. She recently joined their Board of Directors and felt it was important for Transylvania County to be represented. She reported in the Medicaid Transformation process the State is going to be wrapping its physical health with mental health. There is a lot of competition happening with different providers across the State. The first group that will be managed in this care will be under standard plans. This group is considered the healthiest Medicaid recipients. Recipients will be required to select their own insurance plan, similar to the Medicare plan. The announcement of the potential providers is slated to be released on February 4. Those who have substantial needs will be cared for under tailored plans. These plans remain in design phase. Commissioner Lemel noted that the Deputy Secretary of the NC Health and Human Services over the Mental Health and Developmentally Disabled department is a Brevard College graduate. She felt that our community should be proud to have someone so highly placed at NCDHHS.

As a follow up to the Manager's comments on the March 21 event, Commissioner Lemel explained it will be a collaborative effort on behalf of Brevard College, Get Set Transylvania, the NC Department of Health and Human Services, and Sesame Street in Communities. The event will host NCDHHS Secretary Mandi Cohen as the keynote speaker. The Sesame Street Team will speak about their outreach efforts. Get Set Transylvania will also present. Brevard College's new program on birth to kindergarten licensing for early educators will be highlighted as well. In addition, the Kindergarten Readiness Rally will be held at Parks and Recreation that afternoon. The Sesame Street Team will conduct parent and provider training sessions on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. Earlier in the week, the NC Child Abuse Prevention Program will conduct training as well. Commissioner Lemel was proud of the media coverage and support for the County's early childhood efforts and support of families.

Commissioner Guice, in response to public comments, talked about the County's economic development efforts. He said a lot of work has been done in this community over a period of several years. For instance, in February 2013, J. Goldsmith and Company completed an Economic Development Readiness Assessment. McGill Associates, in April 2014, completed an evaluation of economic development options in Transylvania County. Commissioner Guice said it is no longer good enough to say the County is not doing anything without doing the research to see what is actually happening in the community. In July 2015, Transylvania Economic Alliance developed an Economic Development Strategic Plan, another valuable document. Commissioner Guice revealed he is currently reading a document that evaluated the Ecusta property in great detail, but it is sensitive information and cannot be shared. He wanted the public

to know that people in this County are working on economic development efforts. Another study looked at properties across the entire County to determine what might be available for development and identified properties with steep slopes and those located in flood areas. Commissioner Guice noted that the County faces some struggles that it has no control over, but he again stressed that the County and others are working on these issues. He hopes that the community will work together to create a pathway forward to achieve success.

Commissioner Cathey announced he has a conflict with the next daytime meeting dates because he will be trying cases in court. He preferred the Board to look at changing the meetings to a nighttime meeting schedule. Chairman Hawkins noted that he has circulated an email among Commissioners in an attempt to change the date of the meeting. The meeting will be a workshop and is expected to last several hours, which is not conducive to a nighttime schedule. Nonetheless, he is working to change the date.

Commissioner Chappell publicly expressed appreciation to Congressman Meadows and his staff. They are always extremely receptive to discussing the needs of our citizens. Congressman Meadows was in attendance to award a local fire department grant over the weekend. Commissioner Chappell shared that in his meetings with Congressman Meadows and his staff, they always compliment us for having an amazing County Manager. She is known across the region and statewide for her work. Commissioner Chappell wanted the public to know we have a jewel in Manager Laughter and Transylvania County is blessed to have her.

Chairman Hawkins moved to go into closed session per NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, after a 5 minute recess, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, closed session was entered into at 9:27 pm. Present were Chairman Hawkins, Commissioners Cathey, Chappell, Guice and Lemel, County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Misti Bass, Attorney Mary Ann Hollocker, Finance Director Jonathan Griffin, Budget Management Analyst Allen McNeill, Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Commissioners received an update on the negotiation efforts for the potential purchase of property and directed staff on how to proceed.

Chairman Hawkins moved to leave closed session, seconded by Commissioner Cathey and unanimously approved.

OPEN SESSION

Commissioner Chappell moved to seal the minutes of the closed session until such time that opening the minutes does not frustrate the purposes of the closed session, seconded by Commissioner Cathey and unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to become before the Board, **Commissioner Lemel moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously carried.**

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board