

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 26, 2020 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, October 26, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Jason Chappell, Jake Dalton, David Guice, Chairman Mike Hawkins, and Vice-Chairwoman Page Lemel. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Attorney Bill Bulfer participated remotely via Zoom meeting software.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derek McKissock participated remotely.

There were 11 people in the audience, including staff. To maintain social distancing and mass gathering requirements, the conference rooms in the Administration Building were used as overflow space.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairman Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting participating both in person and remotely. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance.

PUBLIC HEARING

2021 REAPPRAISAL SCHEDULE OF VALUES

Tax Administrator Jessica McCall presented this information for the purpose of the public hearing. Per NC General Statute § 105-317(c), the Board of County Commissioners shall review, approve, and adopt the 2021 Reappraisal Schedule of Values. The Schedule of values outlines the standards and rules that will be used to appraise all real property in Transylvania County. The proposed 2021 Schedule of Values is available for public inspection at the Tax Administration Office, Library and County Administration and can be viewed online on the County's website. A public hearing is required prior to adoption. Staff has calendared the approval at the Board's November 9 meeting.

Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing open at 6:07 p.m.

There were no comments from the public.

Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing closed at 6:08 p.m.

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.

Susan Sunflower: Ms. Sunflower stated there is cause for celebration due to the announcement in *The Transylvania Times* today that we are one of two counties considered to be the most environmentally

sound. It led her to talk about the possibilities of upcycling polyethylene plastic waste. She reminded the Board of the excellent presentation Solid Waste Director Kenn Webb gave to the Board in September on the County's landfill options. She supported his recommendation to keep the landfill open and consider it as an economic asset. Ms. Sunflower highlighted some of the ways the County could turn its trash into an economic asset while lessening the amount of trash that goes into the landfill. She asked the Board to seriously consider these ideas.

Larry Chapman: Mr. Chapman thanked the Board for considering a proclamation during this meeting to recognize and honor veterans. He also thanked the County for continuing the tradition of organizing a Veterans Day Ceremony on November 11. He appreciated the value and respect the County has for its veterans. He also noted that Transylvania County has one of the best Veteran Service Officers in the State and he hopes the Board will continue to value his service.

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 Guice, and unanimously approved.

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners held a workshop on July 14, 2020 to receive a presentation on the options for consolidating health and human services agencies. The Board also met in regular session on July 27, 2020. 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 September 2020, tax releases totaled \$3,630.82 and refunds amounted to \$1,159.31. Commissioners approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Report for September 2020.

PROCLAMATION – VETERANS DAY 2020

In 2009, the Board of Commissioners established a Veterans Day Committee that is responsible for developing a program to honor the veterans of our community on Veterans Day. For many years, former Commissioner Larry Chapman served as chair of that committee. This year, Emmett Casciato, Curator for the Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan are heading up the planning for the event. The Board of Commissioners has traditionally approved a proclamation honoring Veterans Day. The proclamation will be presented and read at the Veterans Day Ceremony on Wednesday, November 11 at the Courthouse Gazebo. Chairman Hawkins read aloud the proclamation for the benefit of the public. This year's featured speaker at the Veterans Day Ceremony will be Janis Allen,

author of *"We Shall Come Home Victorious.": Stories of WWII Veterans*. Her speech is titled "Honor, Educate, and Preserve". Commissioners approved Proclamation 31-2020 Veterans Day 2020.

**PROCLAMATION # 31-2020
VETERANS DAY 2020**

WHEREAS, the freedoms we enjoy as Americans have been purchased and maintained at a high price throughout our history; and

WHEREAS, since the establishment of the original 13 States, Americans have been willing to fight and die to preserve their individual rights as guaranteed in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, we owe a great debt to those who have served in defense of this nation; and

WHEREAS, throughout the generations, their sacrifices have preserved our unique form of government dedicated to human rights and respect for the individual; and

WHEREAS, for many, that sacrifice had ended in permanent injury or death, yet their spirit remains in continued preservation of our freedoms and the promise of liberty established as an example for all the oppressed persons of the world; and

WHEREAS, in honor of these dedicated men and women, we pledge our continued defense of our nation so that their sacrifice will stand before the entire world as a tribute to the spirit and determination of people dedicated to the principles of freedom and democracy;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County does hereby call upon the citizenry of Transylvania County to participate in services and to observe the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month with expressions of gratitude to all veterans known to them and to further extend this gratitude to the families of the deceased veterans and to solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve our heritage of freedom, and let us re-consecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain.

This the 26th day of October, 2020.

S://Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

BAD DEBT WRITE OFF – HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Department of Public Health's bad debt policy identifies the process for handling aging accounts with no payment activity greater than 180 days. Pursuant to this policy, Public Health Director Elaine Russell recommended to the Board of Health to write off bad debts totaling \$587.80 for the period July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. Balances greater than \$50 (\$450.20) will be sent to the NC Debt Setoff program for possible collection. The Board of Health approved the recommendation during their October 13, 2020 regular meeting. Commissioners approved the write-off of bad debt as submitted.

GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD IMPLEMENTATION

This item was placed on the agenda for information purposes only. No action was required. Below is the agenda memo that Finance Director Jonathan Griffin included in the Board's agenda packet for their information:

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) periodically issues statements - a policy document that provides instructions or clarity to local governments. When it does so, it frequently sets a date by which it expects governments to implement these standards. The purpose of GASB is to ensure that governments conduct financial accounting in a standardized format and that the financial statements of governments are all presented in comparable ways.

The COVID-19 pandemic led to GASB resetting its expectations. It issued an updated schedule that pushed out many statements to the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. However, this had the side effect that many statements will have to be implemented during FY 2021. In FY 2021, there will be a requirement to make several changes in the County's accounting system and financial statements.

The statements that follow are effective at some point in calendar years 2020 and 2021:

- Statement No. 83, Certain Asset Retirement Obligations
- Statement No. 84, Fiduciary Activities
- Statement No. 87, Leases
- Statement No. 88, Certain Disclosures Related to Debt, including Direct Borrowings and Direct Placements
- Statement No. 89, Accounting for Interest Cost Incurred before the End of a Construction Period
- Statement No. 90, Majority Equity Interests
- Statement No. 91, Conduit Debt Obligations
- Statement No. 92, Omnibus 2020
- Statement No. 93, Replacement of Interbank Offered Rates
- Statement No. 97, Certain Component Unit Criteria, and Accounting and Financial Reporting for Internal Revenue Code Section 457 Deferred Compensation Plans

Statements underlined will apply to the County in 2021 or sometime sooner. The other statements currently do not appear to affect the presentation of the County's financial position in the short-term or the long-term but are disclosed for information to the Board.

A brief overview of these statements, what they do and what their intended effect is, follows:

Statement No. 83: Certain Asset Retirement Obligations

Many existing laws or regulations would require state and local governments to take specific actions to retire certain tangible capital assets, such as to decommission a nuclear reactor, remove wind turbines that have reached the end of their useful life or dismantle a sewage treatment plant. Older GASB statements were issued for the purposes of instructing governments on how to account for post-closure care and liability related to landfills, but that standard has not been applied uniformly to other assets with similar legal restrictions.

GASB 83 applies the standard uniformly – any physical asset with an externally imposed disposal date must be reported as such in that government's financial statements and a long-term liability must be calculated and disclosed as an "asset retirement obligation" or ARO.

Transylvania County has no such assets that meet these criteria. Our solid waste facility's reporting requirements are disclosed under Statements 18 and 49. However, as the Board has frequently discussed whether it should get into the business of providing water and wastewater services to citizens, it is important to note that this standard would come into play if we were to construct or come into possession of any of those facilities.

Statement No. 84: Fiduciary Activities

Many activities that governments undertake have previously been defined as fiduciary activity – where the state or local government acts as a trustee or custodian of an asset on a time-limited basis. This is a major pronouncement by GASB because it impacts a wide variety of financial activity which in the aggregate represents trillions of dollars held by governments across the United States.

GASB Statement 84 amends and clarifies certain elements of GASB Statement 34, which established the comprehensive framework of financial reporting for governments. GASB 34 was the first statement to truly segregate financial activity into governmental and proprietary (business-type) activities, but it was mostly silent on the question of fiduciary activities.

Many governments currently do not report revenues and expenditures related to fiduciary activities, instead reporting them as effectively just a balance sheet item. If the government received some cash to be held on behalf of some other entity, it would simply report an increase in assets and an increase in liability. Similarly, when it passed those monies on, it would be a decrease in assets and a decrease in liability.

Statement 84 essentially does away with this method of reporting, under the logic that if someone turns over an asset to a government for safekeeping, it is understood by all parties that they are turning it over to a government. Therefore, it is a governmental activity. Similarly, most fiduciary activities, if not for that time-limited aspect, will now be reported in some other way.

Many of the County's activities which have been previously classified as fiduciary and reported purely on its balance sheets will now need to be reported as revenues and expenditures and then budgeted annually to comply with the Fiscal Control Act.

Statement No. 87: Leases

The objective here to improve accounting and reporting of leases by local governments. Many governments lease property for governmental or proprietary purposes (lessees), or act as a lessor to lease out real or personal property for a period for a private purpose. These types of activities are currently reported in financial statements as revenues or expenditures, without regard to their long-term impact on the financial position of the government.

This will enhance comparability of financial statements among governments by requiring lessees and lessors to report leases under a single model. Transylvania County will report leased property as both a current outflow of resources (the current year expenditure) and a deferred outflow of resources (the remaining value of expenditures for the remainder of the lease term). Similarly, the County will need to report the current inflow of resources (current year revenue) and the deferred inflow of resources (the remaining value of the lease) where the County is acting as the lessor, for example, in the case of the facility leased to the Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas. The County will then report the total net value of all financial arrangements where it is both a lessee and lessor.

This will require the County to adopt a lease control policy. The possibility that leases might go unreported and their financial impact to the County not assessed annually would create a material risk that the County's assets and liabilities are understated. Relatedly, the long-term financial impact of leases will impact the County's net position and may impact fund balance (possible increase in restricted fund balance to meet the needs of future lease payments).

Statement No. 88: Certain Disclosures Related to Debt, including Direct Borrowings and Direct Placements

This statement expands the required disclosures related to debt by state and local governments in their annual financial statements. The primary impact is that additional information must be included in any discussion of debt in the notes to a government's financial statements. These new requirements are implemented:

- a) Amounts of unused lines of credits must be reported.
- b) Assets pledged as collateral for a debt must be disclosed in any discussion of that debt.
- c) Terms specified in debt agreements in the event of default, termination or acceleration must be disclosed.
- d) Information on direct borrowings and all other debt must be presented and discussed separately.

Transylvania County currently does not have any material lines of credits to report but does have several assets pledged as collateral in limited obligation debt issuances, for example the renovation of the Board of Elections or the 2010 agreement to construct a career and technical education facility for Rosman High. These disclosures are required by FY 2021.

Statement No. 90: Majority Equity Interests

Statement No. 90 adds additional reporting standards if the government owns a majority stake in a legally separate entity. If government does have a majority stake, certain additional disclosures related to the financial value of that stake is required, and the government is then required to present the financial position of the separate organization in its financial statements.

The County does not currently have any relationships with legally separate entities. Some counties have majority stakes in their private economic development corporations, but the text of the agreement with the Transylvania Economic Alliance prevents the County from exercising control of the organization and therefore does not require the County to implement any additional financial reporting under Statement 90.

Statement No. 91: Conduit Debt Obligations

Third parties sometimes seek this kind of tax-exempt financing for projects such as the construction of a not-for-profit hospital, a not-for-profit university library, or a qualifying private business's headquarters building. If so, the nature of the agreement might be that the hospital is constructed and operated under another entity, but the state or local government issues the debt.

In current accounting practice, there is no standard procedure for this type of arrangement. Some governments might currently recognize this debt obligation or omit it from their financial statements entirely. Statement No. 91 instructs governments to omit these arrangements from their statements of financial position and directs that they disclose them only in the Notes to the Financial Statements segment. It does not impact Transylvania County because we do not have any of these relationships.

Statement No. 92: Omnibus 2020

Omnibus 2020 is generally a list of clarifying changes made in financial reporting that impact provisions related to discrepancies between later statements and earlier statements of GASB. These impact leases, asset retirements and similar later documents discussed earlier. For example, it was determined that some language in the Asset Retirement Statement (No. 83, above) disagreed with language regarding landfill accounting established by earlier statements. This would simply clarify some of the other items that are presented here or that have been previously implemented. Generally, this does not impact Transylvania County in any significant sense but is included for the sake of disclosing all known changes in financial reporting.

Statement No. 93 Replacement of Interbank Offered Rates

The London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) was at one point the world's most used benchmark for short-term interest rates. However, earlier this decade, banking regulators determined that it had been manipulated by banking entities for the purpose of increasing their profits. As a result, alternatives were proposed and implemented, and it is generally expected that LIBOR will cease to exist sometime soon. In the United States, it is expected that SOFR (secured overnight financing rate) and EFRR (effective federal funds rate) will be the key replacement.

However, many governments have financial arrangements or agreements that reference LIBOR in the text for the purpose of determining interest calculations and will need to amend or otherwise change the underlying financial agreements to reflect this new normal. This statement clarifies how that information should be presented and how any plans to transition to a different benchmark should be disclosed in a government's financial statements. This does not impact Transylvania County as we do not have any agreements which use LIBOR as the basis of the agreement.

Statement No. 97, Certain Component Unit Criteria, and Accounting and Financial Reporting for Internal Revenue Code Section 457 Deferred Compensation Plans

Statement 97 has two primary purposes and for the sake of presenting them in the most straightforward fashion, they are presented out of order:

The first component of Statement 97 is that 457 Deferred Compensation Plans are now classified as, and should be accounted for, as a post-employment benefit. GASB has, over time, been gradually stepping up reporting requirements on various post-employment benefits that are offered by governments (such as retiree health insurance, defined payment pension plans) and in the process they determined that previous documents had excluded 457 deferred compensation plans. Statement 97 clarifies this by formally declaring that a contribution to a 457 plan is a post-employment benefit.

457 plans are a specific type of retirement plan authorized by the tax code to be offered by state and local governments and certain tax-exempt plans. Employees and employers, through reductions in gross pay, contribute to an account that has a tax-deferred status. This statement will subject this plan to the actuarial valuation requirements of other types of post-employment benefits and will add additional deferred outflows of resources (liabilities) to the County's financial statements.

Transylvania County, when it implemented its post-employment retiree health benefit, also implemented a 457 deferred compensation plan as an alternative for future employees. It is worth noting that at the time of implementation, one of the selling points to this employee benefit was that it was not subject to any pension accounting rules in place at the time; this will end that special advantage that it had. The expense to have the actuarial liability of this plan identified is not currently budgeted for.

The second component of Statement 97 is an expansion on the definition of component units in governmental accounting specifically targeting pension plans. If the monies held to fulfill a future pension obligation were held in an irrevocable trust, then the government should consider that pension trust to be a component unit. Basically, if the County had elected to permanently set aside money for pension obligations, then for all intents and purposes we would need to consider that money to be assigned to a component unit. It could be structured in a variety of ways, either with an advisory board overseeing the pension fund or with the Board of Commissioners as the board directly overseeing it.

This would not apply to the County because the County has not elected to accumulate funds for future pension obligations through a permanent trust; rather, it pays for benefits annually and sets aside funding for future needs in a committed fund balance. As the Board can commit and uncommit funds as it sees fit, there is no need to establish a component unit to oversee the County's pension funding.

This document summarizes the new accounting standards that will go into effect during 2020-2021 and will contextualize forthcoming recommendations from staff concerning fiscal policies that need to be adopted.

APPOINTMENTS

REGIONAL COUNCIL ON AGING

There are two vacancies on the Regional Council on Aging due to resignations. The Clerk to the Board has advertised for the vacancies on several occasions to recruit applicants. The Clerk received two applications which she forwarded to Area Agency on Aging Director LeeAnne Tucker. Ms. Tucker contacted both applicants and recommended the appointment of Sandra Canty to fill the Community Member slot, as well as the Alternate for the Senior Tar Heel Delegate position, and Betty Rogge to fill the Senior Tar Heel Delegate position.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Sandra Canty to the Community Member/Alternate Senior Tar Heel Delegate position and Betty Rogge as the Senior Tar Heel Delegate, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

FUTURE LANDFILL/SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Solid Waste Director Kenn Webb presented this item. He recapped information presented at previous meetings.

Solid Waste staff has been working with LaBella Engineering to explore options for providing solid waste disposal for the citizens of Transylvania County. On September 2, the Board of Commissioners held a workshop where they received an extensive presentation on the options available to them. On September 28, staff presented a recap of the information presented during the workshop. The information indicated that the current landfill is set to expire under current conditions in May 2027. While many options were presented to the Board, two of them presented themselves as the most reasonably economic options:

1. 25-year expansion of the landfill at the current site. There are more than 25 years of expansion capabilities at the site. The estimated cost of the 25-year expansion is \$131 million.
2. 25-year transfer station model estimated at \$141 million

The option to expand the landfill site would include the following components:

- Life-of-site permit application (involves NCDEQ, USACOE, consultant)
- Site suitability study (some items already started)
- Hydrogeologic study (wells and probes for groundwater review)
- Prepare bid for contractors
- Request for proposal
- Bid award
- Construction of new cell
- Quality assurance overview during Construction
- Mitigation of wetlands and streams damaged during construction

Cost estimates include operations, professional engineering services, capital, post-closure care, and offsite transportation and disposal.

If staff begins these steps in FY 2022 (July 2021), they would be completed by December 2026, six months before capacity is reached, based on the May 2027 survey.

The option to construct a transfer station would include the following components:

- Location of transfer station property (search would need to begin in FY 2021)
 - May be difficult to find suitable property
- Acquire transfer station property
- Permitting (NCDEQ) – not as detailed as landfill expansion
- Prepare bid for contractors
- Request for Proposal
- Bid award
- Construction of transfer station
- Quality assurance overview during construction

If staff begins this process by FY 2025 (July 2024), it should be completed in December 2026, leaving six months before capacity is reached at the landfill, based on the May 2027 survey.

Mr. Webb previously requested the Board decide prior to December 1 so staff can begin the necessary work. This concluded his presentation. Chairman Hawkins called for questions and comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Lemel asked whether the six-month window from the time of completion to capacity considered the potential construction boom going on in the County right now. Mr. Webb responded yes, but he noted one of the landfill's significant accounts found another disposal avenue about two years ago causing a decrease in the amount of demolition debris being brought to the landfill.

Commissioner Lemel stated she was surprised to learn about the difference in the carbon impacts of both options. Mr. Webb agreed. He added that bringing waste to a location, whether to a transfer station or a landfill, balances each other out. However, the carbon footprint increases when being shipped from, for example, Transylvania County to another location. From here, the closest place to ship waste is in South Carolina. In addition, the County has no control over the capacity of another facility, or the fees/taxes imposed to accept waste.

Commissioner Lemel was supportive of expanding the County's landfill at the existing site. Doing so provides the County with control over what goes into the landfill and opens possible opportunities to market cell space to other entities for future revenue.

Commissioner Chappell was appreciative of staff bringing forth a wealth of excellent information to help the Board make what will be a generational decision. He was also supportive of expanding at the current site to allow the County to control its own destiny. He credited previous Boards for selecting the location of the current site which has afforded the County many years of use. Commissioner Chappell expressed some concerns about the timeframe, noting that this year has taught us that the best-laid plans can change with no notice. Thus, he expected staff would work as diligently as possible.

Commissioner Lemel moved to direct staff to begin the process to expand our landfill on existing property that we own, seconded by Commissioner Guice. Commissioner Guice thanked previous Boards of Commissioners for their decision because it gives this Board the opportunity they have now. He also commended staff for their work to continue looking for improvements. Chairman Hawkins stated

that while both options present a significant cost, the landfill expansion gives the best opportunity to generate revenue. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

LEASE APPROVAL FOR SOLID WASTE EQUIPMENT

Solid Waste Director Kenn Webb presented this item. The Solid Waste Department currently rents a hydraulic excavator from Carolina Tractor on a time-limited basis for the purpose of construction and maintaining sediment ponds at the Solid Waste Facility. Generally, this is the only type of equipment the Solid Waste department has that meets this specific and critical need.

The Solid Waste Department proposed converting the existing time-limited rental into a longer-term lease with a purchase option, including a \$101 balloon payment. Continuing to rent on an annual basis would cost \$68,340, while converting the rental into a 48-month lease purchase would reduce the cost and spread it over a 48-month period with \$43,908 due in year one. 50% of prior payments made over FY 2019 and FY 2020 would be credited against the lease-purchase agreement as a down payment. These are favorable terms for the County.

Any long-term financial impact would be handled exclusively through use of the Solid Waste's net position/fund balance, and not through any transfers from the General Fund (use of property tax revenues). The continuing cost of either rental or lease is not currently budgeted in the Solid Waste Fund. The nature of the agreement, in that it exceeds one year, obligates future Boards, and includes a purchase option at the end of the lease term that qualifies it as debt under the rules of governmental finance and thus requires Board approval.

This financing agreement is exempt from a public hearing requirement because it is classified as personal property rather than real property (buildings and land). Similarly, because it is personal property for the County, it is exempt from requiring separate approval by the Local Government Commission, which approves nearly all other forms of debt financing.

Commissioner Chappell asked if the conversion impacts warranty coverage. Mr. Webb stated there is no impact as the County is responsible for the maintenance. There are some items that are factory-warranted; otherwise, there is no impact.

Commissioner Guice asked if there were any advantages to exploring another type of equipment or of a different size. Mr. Webb stated the department has experimented with various equipment rentals and settled on the one that meets the department's needs.

Commissioner Guice inquired about the life expectancy of this equipment. Mr. Webb stated that the department normally gets about three years of life expectancy out of a piece of heavy equipment before an overhaul is needed. Refurbishment of the equipment costs between 40% to 50% of the purchase price and gives another three to four years of life. Historically, the department has been able to extend the life of the equipment even further due to having a mechanic onsite.

Commissioner Lemel moved to enter into a lease-purchase agreement using \$43,908 from the Solid Waste Fund to allow for the purchase of this hydraulic excavator, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

REVIEW OF MASS GATHERING ORDINANCE

The Manager reported that the County's Mass Gathering Ordinance has recently generated a lot of questions from citizens stemming from an outdoor concert event series being held at the former Glen Cannon golf course.

The Mass Gathering Ordinance was first adopted in 2007 to provide a permitting process for events greater than 300 people. The permit review process includes involvement from Public Safety, Public Health and Solid Waste. The ordinance currently allows for some organizations to be exempt.

At the request of the Board of Commissioners, the County Attorney reviewed the ordinance and suggested updates. Staff asked the Board to consider the proposed changes suggested by the County Attorney and advise staff on how the Board would like to proceed.

County Attorney Bill Bulfer reviewed the suggested changes. He noted that the ordinance was enacted to affect mass gatherings; it is not a pandemic-centric document. Nonetheless, when certain events arise, the County must understand their rights and responsibilities. Mr. Bulfer advised there are three components that should be updated to enforceability and applicability purposes:

1. Nonprofits were initially excluded from the ordinance. While the good intention of trying to avoid having nonprofits pay to have large gatherings might be of significant value to the County, they were also removed from a degree of oversight that the County might otherwise provide. The first recommendation is to effectively continue to exclude nonprofits from the ordinance from a payment standpoint but allow the County to have a degree of oversight that they would with any other mass gathering.
2. Language in the State statute defines mass gatherings in the range of 2,000 to 5,000 people and that while counties can regulate them, they cannot prohibit mass gatherings.
3. Reduced the number of documents required in the application process. The current ordinance requires seven-page application. Mr. Bulfer proposed a more efficient application that can be submitted electronically.

Chairman Hawkins summarized the three components as changing the nonprofit exemption to exclusion from fees only, a technical component that is required by the State, and technical changes to allow for electronic copies of the application. He called for discussion by the Board.

Commissioner Lemel pointed out the current ordinance states that an ineligible mass gathering is defined as an event that has an adverse impact on the areas adjoining the mass gathering or other Transylvania County communities. She felt this statement was nebulous and subjective and wondered if it was necessary to maintain it within this document. Mr. Bulfer stated the lack of clearly defined terms is sometimes challenging. However, there are times when those situations that cannot be anticipated need to be accounted for. The intent of the ordinance is to give those people that have responsibility for the health of this community some level of discretion and oversight to ensure the public health and safety of the community is maintained. Because any number of events could come up where adjoining property can be affected, there is value to having some discretion within the ordinance. How the Board uses its discretion will be how the County is judged moving forward.

Commissioner Chappell was concerned with restricting and permitting religious activities and the unintended consequences of doing so. He recalled annual events where there are routinely more than 300 people participating. Mr. Bulfer pointed out the ordinance was not crafted to prohibit events, but to allow the County to regulate an event when there might be a health or societal concern. He did not see the events described by Commissioner Chappell as having cause for concern. However, if any religious or nonreligious organization were to have an event that would create a health hazard for the community, the

ordinance would allow the County to review and insist that certain protective measures be put in place. The problem arises if the County were to regulate an event because of religion rather than regulating the gathering itself. Chairman Hawkins understood Commissioner Chappell's concerns, but said he viewed religious events like all other types of events.

Chairman Hawkins inquired as to what might be an unintended consequence to these revisions. The Manager stated she expected to see more applications because nonprofit-sponsored events previously held throughout the County did not require a permit. They will have to consider issues they normally had not previously as well, such as traffic safety. She pointed out the ordinance would not apply within the City's jurisdiction unless the City decided to opt in. Mr. Bulfer added that the reasons for making these changes are to address loopholes and to provide a level of consistency across application of the ordinance that reduces the County's risk.

Commissioner Lemel asked how the County decided on 300 people being the definition of a mass gathering, whether it was a State definition or an arbitrary number. Mr. Bulfer reported the number was chosen when the ordinance was first written; otherwise, he had no knowledge of how the figure came to be. He pointed out if the concern is there are routinely groups of 300 to 400 people at events, the Board may want to consider increasing the mass gathering definition.

Commissioner Guice pointed out the purpose for reviewing the ordinance is to resolve an issue that has arisen without creating any other obstacles. He was concerned about events that are not routine and the strain on infrastructure and the impact on the surrounding community.

Mr. Bulfer asked the Board to consider what they are trying to accomplish. The proposed changes are consistent with making the document more enforceable and applicable but taking the time to consider the County's needs and interests is equally important.

Chairman Hawkins felt the purpose of the ordinance would be to regulate large events that would cause strain on public health, law enforcement and sanitation. He was amenable to reviewing the mass gathering definition of 300 people and upping the figure to something the Board would be comfortable with.

Commissioner Guice emphasized the importance of the ordinance being clear in its intent to avoid undue strain on the community and infrastructure. He was very much concerned about the upcoming concert series because it places additional stress on the Health Department and other departments in the middle of a pandemic.

Mr. Bulfer pointed out the Board will need to consider that the ordinance will not apply to the City automatically which adds to the consideration of the impact on infrastructure.

The Manager stated some of the language makes it harder to permit and enforce.

Commissioner Dalton pointed out that neither Blue Ridge Community College nor the Town of Rosman is included in the exemption list. Mr. Bulfer said from a review perspective, he tried to be consistent with listing the municipalities and institutions that were otherwise already accepted, but he did not attempt to add or remove any entities from the list. If Commissioners think there are certain groups to add or remove from the list, then the logical next step would be to include them in the ordinance.

Commissioner Lemel asked if the Board should try to generate a specific list of entities that would be exempt or just a blanket category that an entity might fall under. Mr. Bulfer stated the original list that was created during the 2007 revision might be contributing to the issues the County is experiencing now.

If the goal is in perpetuity to allow certain types of establishments, organizations, or municipalities to have those exceptions, then classifying them more broadly makes sense. If the goal is to be more limiting, then the list should be more specific.

Chairman Hawkins felt the current ordinance has weaknesses that could potentially be exploited to the detriment of public health under normal circumstances. He felt the Board needed more time to determine what they intended to accomplish with these changes and think about potential alternatives that would address their concerns.

Commissioner Guice pointed out if the ordinance were written differently, the event planned for this weekend would not be exempt from regulations. He was concerned about how it might impact the community, especially during this pandemic.

Chairman Hawkins did not agree that nonprofits should receive a blanket exemption, and certainly not ones based outside of Transylvania County. He asked if that issue could be rectified with changes to the ordinance. Mr. Bulfer responded that such a provision would alter the applicability and he would therefore need additional time to review whether the provision is legally sound.

Chairman Hawkins inquired about procedural issues and whether the ordinance would go into effect immediately if passed. Mr. Bulfer stated that typically these types of ordinances would be reviewed at more than one meeting before being acted on. Based on the lengthy discussion and questions, he advised the Board to take time to consider the issues that have been brought to light. It would also allow his team to vet the legality of any proposals. Commissioner Chappell stressed that he would not be amenable to voting on changes to any ordinance without holding a public hearing.

Chairman Hawkins stated the ordinance is clearly a flawed document and it needs to be updated as quickly as possible. He asked Commissioners to submit their comments, questions, concerns, and possible alternative solutions to the Manager by the end of the week to allow time for review by the County Attorney and placement on the November 9 meeting agenda.

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF BREVARD – DOG PARK ACCESS

The City of Brevard has acquired property that backs up to the County's Recreation Center with the intent of developing a dog park. City Manager Jim Fatland requested the County grant access to the property from the adjacent County-owned parcel. An interlocal agreement would articulate the access agreement and outline the responsibilities of both parties for a perpetual term if the property is in use as a dog park, unless terminated by either party.

The Manager proposed that she be given authorization to consult with the County Attorney to finalize the language in the agreement with the City of Brevard and obtain the necessary signatures to implement the agreement. Initially, the City requested an easement, but easements do not consider the long-term or any changes of use that may occur in the future.

Commissioner Chappell suggested changes in the language to ensure the agreement could be terminated if granting access is no longer practical even if the use remained the same. The Manager agreed to work with the Attorney to wordsmith that section of the ordinance.

Commissioner Guice was concerned about the proximity to Jameson's Joy Park because it is used by the public a great deal. He was worried about creating additional traffic congestion. He was also concerned about the potential comingling of park users and dogs.

Commissioner Guice asked if other access to the park exists. The Manager stated the park property adjoins the City's park and the bike path. To address the parking concern, staff included in the agreement that parking for the dog park would be on the municipal property side. Staff asked the City to place signage directing dog park users to a separate lot. She pointed out there is a risk that parking for all uses could be comingled in an already busy lot.

Following some additional comments, **Commissioner Lemel moved to authorize the Manager to finalize the language in the agreement with the City of Brevard and obtain the necessary signatures for the interlocal agreement regarding dog park access, seconded by Commissioner Guice and approved unanimously.**

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH TOWN OF ROSMAN AND SHARING HOUSE ON DISBURSEMENT OF CARES ACT FUNDS FOR RENTAL AND UTILITY ASSISTANCE

In response to COVID-19 CARES Act funds received at the State level, the Legislature previously allocated funds to counties for COVID-related expenditures and required counties to submit a spending plan by June 15 for use of Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF). Statewide, \$150 million was allocated in the spring with an additional \$150 million held for the hope that the CARES Act would be modified to allow for revenue replacement. Those funds were released in August. Transylvania County initially earmarked \$100,000 in the first plan to meet the supply needs for the City of Brevard and Town of Rosman. So far, orders for hand sanitizer stations and supplies have been made and distributed. The initial allocation was \$809,455.24 to the County to fund response. The Legislature has now allocated the remaining funds to counties with the requirement that 25% of all funds be spent on municipal CARES Act eligible expenses. The estimate for Transylvania County totals \$1,476,797.48 resulting in the corresponding increase to municipalities to an estimated total of \$369,199. The funds were evenly split between the two municipalities. Both had to submit a plan on how they intended to spend their funds under the categories allowed in the Act, as listed below.

These funds are subject to federal CARES Act spending rules and are subject to claw backs with penalties for other federal and State funding should a county (or municipality within) fail to comply with the rules. Specifically, funds can be used under the following categories:

- Medical expenses including the COVID-19 related expenses of public hospitals and clinics, establishment of temporary medical facilities, COVID-19 testing, and public telemedicine capabilities.
- Public health expenses such as the acquisition of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies, disinfection of public areas and other facilities such as nursing homes, and expenses for public safety measures, including expenses for quarantining.
- Payroll expenses for public safety or healthcare employees whose services are substantially dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 emergency.
- Expenses of actions that facilitate compliance with COVID-19 related public health measures such as teleworking, distance learning, food delivery, paid sick and family and medical leave for public employees, expenses for maintaining prisons, and expenses for protecting the homeless population.
- Expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Funds must be expended by December 20.

The Town of Rosman has been working with staff on their share of the allocation of funds. The Town identified their needs as being utility and rental assistance, so \$100,000 was earmarked for this use. The

Sharing House has been supporting many in the community, including Rosman, to meet growing needs for rental and utility assistance due to COVID. Staff helped to negotiate a partnership between the Town of Rosman, the County and the Sharing House that would allow for that \$100,000 to be used for rental and utility assistance to support the community. This agreement makes the Rosman \$100,000 funds available to fund some of the needs Sharing House has already worked to cover related to COVID. The Town of Rosman will vote on this agreement November 10.

The agreement articulates the responsibility of each party. The agreement requires that they report the number of Rosman residents or members of the community who receive funds; however, the funds may be used for anyone who meets the criteria of having a COVID-related loss in which they are at risk of not being able to pay their rent or utilities. Some of these funds will be able to displace private donations that the Sharing House has already received and spent on expenses by spending these funds before December 20 and reallocating those funds in the future to help folks after the December 20 spending deadline.

The Manager requested the Board to approve the agreement so that the Town of Rosman can vote on it at their November 10 Board of Aldermen meeting.

Commissioners thanked staff for exploring ways to have the biggest impact on citizens in our community. They also were grateful to the Town of Rosman and Sharing House for helping to create such a wonderful partnership.

Commissioner Lemel moved to authorize the Manager to finalize the agreement language with Transylvania Christian Ministry (Sharing House) and the Town of Rosman, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and approved unanimously.

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF BREVARD FOR PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

Communications Director Cameron Sexton presented this item to the Board. He made several requests on behalf of the department.

He reported that Transylvania County operates a primary public safety answering point in which the County dispatches all emergency services in the County except for the Brevard Police Department. The Brevard Police Department has its own dispatch center. In July, Brevard City Manager Jim Fatland reached out to the County about the potential takeover of their dispatch. Staff worked with City staff to establish an agreement to this effect.

Mr. Sexton stated the County's dispatch center should expect to see a significant increase in call volume due to Brevard having the most active law enforcement agency in terms of responding to traffic stops, traffic enforcement, motor vehicle collisions, etc. To accomplish the increase in call volume, the department requested the addition of one new telecommunicator per shift.

Brevard City Council approved the interlocal agreement in a regular meeting last week. The agreement has the support of the Chief of Police and City Manager.

The County answers calls because it is the primary public safety answering point, but incidents occurring in the City must be rerouted to their dispatch resulting in duplication and potential delay in response. Merging the two departments should reduce response time and improve dispatch efforts for incidents that occur within City limits.

In addition, Mr. Sexton reported there has been some delays with the installation of their simulcast radio system due to the pandemic. The system is a four-channel system which dispatches Sheriff's Office, Fire

and EMS. The department has been working on having a countywide operations channel as the fourth frequency, but the VHF radio spectrum is very cluttered and thus staff has had difficulty accomplishing this goal. With the merger, they will be able to add the Brevard Police Department to the system.

Lastly, Mr. Sexton proposed a trauma intervention program that allows the department to bring in a crisis-trained professional onto their emergency scenes. For instance, during an unintended death, EMS or law enforcement remains on scene to continue serving the family. This program, once a scene has been cleared and is deemed safe, will send a representative on site that provides local information and resources for family members and others during their crisis. It also allows frees up responders so they can go onto the next call.

Commissioner Guice moved to approve county staff to enter the agreement to provide telecommunications services for the Brevard Police Department, hire the required staff, and acquire necessary equipment using funding as outlined in the supporting documentation, seconded by Commissioner Lemel. Commissioner Chappell asked if staff felt comfortable that the agreement would cover the cost of this request. Mr. Sexton reported that the entire cost was not passed onto the City of Brevard. Since the County will be hiring the additional staff, they will likely be utilized in many different capacities. Some of the costs will be covered by 99 funds as well. Commissioner Guice pointed out that the documentation provided by staff was exceptional. He was particularly interested in the trauma intervention program and felt it was an important component to add to the County's emergency services. Chairman Hawkins echoed the comments made by Commissioners. He felt the agreement would be positive for both the City and the County. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Finance Director Jonathan Griffin presented the budget amendments through September 30, 2020. A summary of the amendments submitted for approval is as follows:

BUDGET CARRYFORWARDS

When the Board of Commissioners adopts an annual budget, it authorizes staff to plan for the execution and carry-out of various capital projects or to acquire fixed assets necessary to allow the County to carry out its work. It is occasionally not possible for such projects to be carried out and completed within the strict July 1 to June 30 fiscal year time frame. Additionally, some vendor contracts are executed and signed but the delivery of goods or services does not occur within the budget period.

Under the principles of governmental accounting, however, expenses are recorded in the time frame where the County incurs the obligation to pay. As a result, it is necessary often to reappropriate certain funding levels because purchase orders or contracts may have been issued prior to June 30, but for one reason or another the work continued, or items were delivered after July 1.

General Fund

#2 carries forward \$275,000 to continue phased implementation of the Community Services Building HVAC renovation project. This accounts for the expenses associated with phase 3 (\$45,000), phase 4 (\$42,000), phase 5 (\$28,000), phase 6 (\$54,000) and phases 7 and 8 (\$108,000). These have all been approved by the Board as separate independent agenda items, but for the purposes of simplifying the budget, are presented as a single carryforward appropriation.

#17 is a carryforward of additional appropriations made in the General Fund to cover expenditures undertaken in FY 2020 that could not be undertaken until FY 2021.

The first of these is an invoice received by the EMS Department for \$16,733 of supply purchases. Transylvania Regional Hospital is one supply source for the EMS Department; however, during the

transition from Mission ownership to HCA ownership, they failed to properly bill EMS for supply purchases. These are all supply purchases that occurred during FY 2020, but HCA did not acknowledge the sale occurred until August 2020 which falls under FY 2021. The invoice was for almost \$17,000, nearly the entire annual operating supply budget for the EMS department.

The second expenditure is \$1,200 for a marketing contract for the Public Transportation division of Planning and Community Development. This was requested by interim Planning and Community Development Director Allen McNeill and Transportation Coordinator April Alm to continue their work planning for a rebrand of Public Transportation services.

The third line-item expenditure is \$46,772 for a Sheriffs' Office vehicle that was ordered in FY 2020 but not delivered until August 2020. \$43,272 is for the purchase of the vehicle that was delivered in August 2020. The remaining \$3,500 is to cover the fees to install the equipment. As this expenditure was budgeted for in a prior year, it is recommended that these appropriations roll forward, so they do not adversely impact the limited capital outlay already planned for the Sheriff's Office in FY 2021.

The fourth line item is a reappropriation of \$446,902 to continue the contract with Codan Communications to upgrade the County's VHF radio system. As of June 30, the contract had only met approximately 50% of its timeline and additional installment billings for this must be re-budgeted in 2021 for the contract to continue.

The fifth line item is to reappropriate \$188,754 in capital land improvements for Parks and Recreation. These are for projects already approved to proceed by the Board, but the final invoices and notifications of satisfaction with work performed were not received until after July 1. Of this, \$136,501 is related to the Jameson's Joy Memorial Fitness Park, and \$52,253 is for the continued installation of court surfacing at the pickleball courts adjacent to the Activity Center.

Solid Waste Fund

#18 reappropriates \$55,888 in the Solid Waste Fund to account for two ongoing projects - repaving at the Woodruff Landfill completed in July and an ongoing contract with Labella to engage in various engineering studies related to the future of the Woodruff Solid Waste facility.

New Intergovernmental Revenues

#3 recognizes new grant revenues from the NC Department of Health and Human Services that are COVID-19 response related. This is the remaining activity eligible under the agency agreement for the "North Carolina Cooperative Agreement for Emergency Response: Public Health Crisis Response." Some activity for this award was undertaken in FY 2020, which is the full award of \$66,471 and is not being budgeted again in FY 2021.

#4 recognizes new grant revenues from the NC Department of Health and Human Services that are related to an additional level of funding for WIC. The recommendation from Public Health staff is to budget these new revenues for computer and printer equipment purchases that would be reimbursable under the WIC program.

#8 recognizes new grant revenues from the NC Department of Health and Human Services that are COVID-19 response related. This activity is funded under a sub-award from the CARES Act through NCDHHS through the "CK19-1904 Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Prevention and Control of Emerging Infectious Diseases."

#10 recognizes additional profit distributions paid by the Brevard ABC Board to the Public Health Department for alcohol abuse education. These revenues are typically used to offset some costs of the Public Health Department's CARE Coalition activities.

#13 is to add additional revenues and expenditures to the Public Health Department to reflect the new US DHHS Health Resources and Services Administration Rural Opioid Response Planning grant. The full award is for approximately \$181,000 of direct County expenditures through FY 2022. As the grant award crosses fiscal years, this budget amendment is an estimated prorated amount of expenditures and reimbursements through the end of FY 2021 (approximately \$12,000 per month).

#14 is to add additional COVID-19 related expenditures in the Public Health Department funded by federal subawards from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of this award is to allow the Public Health Department to spend funds that enhance COVID-19 detection activities.

#15 is add additional COVID-19 related expenditures in the Public Health Department funded by federal subawards from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of this award is related to infection prevention and is a subaward through the US Treasury's Coronavirus Relief Fund.

Recommended Reductions in Expenditures

#9 is a recommended amendment to the budget of the Transylvania County Public Library. When the budget was initially drafted and adopted, we anticipated some return to normal activities in room rentals, fines and fees and copier use. Given current pandemic conditions, we do not anticipate near to mid-term improvement in these revenues and are cutting part-time hours at the Library to compensate for these losses.

Other Appropriations Recommended

#16 In the spring of 2020, the Sheriff's Office lost a 2018 Ford patrol vehicle. The County's insurance policy reimburses the total cost of the lost vehicle, including the equipment installed on the vehicle; however, rapidly escalating costs mean that an insurance check for a two-year-old vehicle is not entirely sufficient to offset the cost of a replacement vehicle. This recommended amendment pairs \$46,000 in actual revenues with \$23,000 of fund balance to fully replace and outfit one vehicle for the Patrol Division.

#19 On August 24 and September 14, the Board of Commissioners made further amendments to the Disaster Response Fund to reflect activity undertaken through June 30. The County received an additional allocation of CARES Act Funding. The County's most recent total allocation by the General Assembly is \$1,476,797, of which approximately \$600,000 had been spent between the County and the municipalities of Transylvania County. \$667,342 had been allocated after July 1 by the state, and it was this distribution that was not budgeted at any point in FY 2020. This appropriates remaining expenditures by the County and those on behalf of its municipalities.

It should not be necessary to further amend any financial plans, as these funds expire on December 20. Further amendments will be necessary for any additional FEMA-PA or NCDOT CARES Act allocations; however, since those are reimbursement-style grants, it will not be necessary to make any budget adjustments until we must determine the size of the reimbursement.

If approved, these amendments will increase size of the General Fund budget by \$1,374,974, the size of the Solid Waste Fund budget by \$55,888 and the Disaster Response Fund to a total of \$1,707,466.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the requested budget amendments and accept the written report, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Veterans Day Ceremony on Wednesday, November 11 at 11:00 a.m. at the Courthouse Gazebo. Please wear a mask and practice social distancing! This year's speaker will be Janis Allen, author of *"We Shall Come Home Victorious.": Stories of WWII Veterans*. Her speech is titled "Honor, Educate, and Preserve".
- Check out the Transylvania County Facebook Page to take a quick survey and weigh in on the options to name the transit system by tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m.
 - Transylvania In Motion (TIM)
 - Transylvania Pathfinder
 - Transylvania Explorer
- Watch *WLOS Carolina Moment* to see a spotlight showing how two of our Finance staff, Teresa Curto and Jennifer Galloway, have turned training for employee 5K into a fundraiser to support research for ALS.
- Update on drive-in concert proposed over Halloween weekend at Glen Cannon
 - County's mass gathering ordinance adopted in 2007 does not apply due to exemption for not-for-profit sponsored events
 - The exemption does not mean exemption from Governor's Executive Orders
 - Sheriff, Fire Marshal, and Health Director have all given the organizer guidance on how to best protect public health and safety during the event
 - County staff have asked the State to give direct guidance on how Executive Orders apply and they have discussed with the concert organizer and provided the County copies of the guidance given
 - The Executive Order requires participants to stay in their vehicle for all purposes except for use of the restroom for the event to be qualified as a drive-in
- Kudos to Marcy Thompson, Local History Librarian, for receiving the Award for Outstanding Contribution to North Carolina Genealogy from the North Carolina Genealogical Society. This award "recognizes an individual whose longtime genealogical contributions have greatly enhanced the study of family history in North Carolina and the region."
 - Marcy will be retiring from the Transylvania County Library where she has served for 14 years as the first official keeper of local history. We wish her well. Her last day with the County is at the end of this week.
- Kudos to the staff in Register of Deeds, specifically Deputy Register of Deeds Karin Smith for being acknowledged in the credits of local historian Keith Parker's most recent book To Stand on Solid Ground. Mr. Parker spent a lot of time doing research on properties and individuals. Karin was a wonderful help to him during his extensive research.
- County continues to receive citizen complaints about trash alongside our highways
 - After receiving two complaints, Clerk to the Board contacted NCDOT officials at the Division 14 Office
 - On October 13, NCDOT Transylvania Maintenance picked up 75 bags of trash along US 64
 - NCDOT teamed up with the Rosman High School Volleyball Team who picked up 36 bags of trash
 - NCDOT planned to pick up another 75+ bags on US 64 on October 14

- NCDOT encourages citizens to participate in their Adopt A Highway program to assist the State with periodic litter pickup
- Kudos to NCDOT and Rosman High School Volleyball Team for their quick response to this need
- Reminded the public the County is prohibited from owning and maintaining roads, so we communicate to the proper State departments when the County receives these types of complaints
- Happy Birthday to Chairman Hawkins!

PUBLIC COMMENTS

David Morrow: Mr. Morrow reported today he received in the mail from the State Board of Education information on “Make Your Vote” count. They indicated as of October 27, voters will need to have their application for mail in ballot to Transylvania County Elections office by 5:00 p.m. Otherwise, voters’ only option will be to vote early or on Election Day. With today’s numbers, he expects that over 50% of registered voters have voted early either by mail or in-person.

COMMISSIONERS’ COMMENTS

Commissioner Chappell said he has heard nothing but positive comments about how smoothly early voting is going and how wonderful staff and volunteers are. He thanked the members of the Board of Elections, Elections staff and all the volunteers for their work.

Commissioner Chappell informed citizens that Blue Ridge Community College has been granted approximately \$212,000 in CARES Act funds to be used for scholarships. The application process is simple. It pays up to \$750 per person with no requirements, no questions asked, and no payback provisions. There will be press releases forthcoming; otherwise, citizens may find out more information and apply by visiting the College’s website. He felt it was a great opportunity for citizens.

Chairman Hawkins wished the Clerk to the Board happy birthday tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Lemel moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously carried.**

Jason Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan
Clerk to the Board