

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
April 26, 2021 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, April 26, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Larry Chapman, Chairman Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman Jake Dalton, David Guice and Teresa McCall. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Attorney Julie Hooten participated remotely via Zoom meeting software.

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

There were approximately 25 people in the audience, including staff presenters.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jason Chappell presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

WELCOME

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

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.

Judith West: Ms. West is the Chair of the Social Services Board. She formally introduced the new Director of the Department of Social Services, Amanda Vanderoef. She also explained the process the DSS Board conducted in their director search.

Ms. Vanderoef spoke briefly stating she was very excited to be part of this community.

Chairman Chappell read into the record the following comments that were submitted in writing and summarized below by the Clerk to the Board.

Rev. Jackie Jenkins: Rev. Jenkins wrote that many are concerned about the ongoing divisions across the country, including this County. She strongly felt that to combat this problem citizens must first listen to others who may not share their same views. She shared that three groups have joined in the County to provide an initial first step of holding a listening project via Zoom. She invited Commissioners to join the three-part series to listen to a diverse group of residents as they share their personal stories of faith traditions and what civic responsibility means to them. Rev. Jenkins thanked the Board for all they do for Transylvania County.

Ian Cowie: Mr. Cowie wrote that he was bothered by Henderson County's decision last week to lift mask restrictions in county-owned buildings. He felt it was a wrong move based on politics and not sound science. He pointed out that while Henderson County has experienced a downward trend in the last 14 days, Transylvania County has had a 13% increase in cases. Additionally, in comparison, Henderson County is only 28% vaccinated and Transylvania County is 33%. Mr. Cowie acknowledged that North

Carolina is among the few states with the least number of deaths and job losses. He pointed out Governor Cooper does not intend to lift social distancing, capacity and mass gathering restrictions for another month, and thus he urged the Board not to lift mask restrictions and to continue to heed the advice of health experts.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

Chairman Chappell asked to add Item A under Presentations/Recognitions, moving all other items down in succession, to swear in Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan as President of the North Carolina Association of County Clerks.

Commissioner Dalton moved to approve the revised agenda, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Guice moved to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted, seconded by Commissioner McCall and unanimously approved.

The following items were approved:

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 March 2021, tax dollars released totaled \$38.18, and refunds amounted to \$1,350.05. The Board approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Report for March 2021.

SCHEDULE PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER DRAFT CEDAR MOUNTAIN SMALL AREA PLAN

In accordance with the Transylvania County Small Area Plan Process, the Board of Commissioners are directed to receive the Draft Cedar Mountain Small Area Plan and hold a public hearing. Tentatively, the Cedar Mountain Small Area Plan Committee will receive and approve the draft Cedar Mountain Small Area Plan at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 27. The Planning Board scheduled a special meeting on April 29 to receive the draft plan as outlined in the process. Staff anticipated being prepared to present the draft plan for a public hearing on May 10 barring no delays or major changes to the plan by either the Committee or the Planning Board. Otherwise, the next date staff will be available to present is June 14.

AGREEMENT WITH GRANICUS FOR PEAK AGENDA MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE PROCLAMATION-NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

In late 2013, the Board transitioned from paper agenda packets to using iPads and electronic agenda packets in pdf format. Staff has improved processes somewhat over time with upgrades in software and laptops. The process still involves the Clerk to the Board creating a paper packet, manually scanning and bookmarking pages, then loading the packet to each Commissioner's google drives and forwarding by email to pertinent staff and all those who have requested a copy of the full packet. This process, although much less cumbersome than making several paper packets, remains time-consuming.

The Clerk to the Board uses Granicus software to manage the appointments and rosters of the County's 25 citizen advisory councils, a process that was once managed by using several different spreadsheets that

required manual entry of all information on members multiple times. The software has simplified the management of appointments and requires very little data entry. The Clerk can also easily pull data to include in monthly or quarterly reports.

Granicus also has an agenda software product/solution called Peak Agenda Management. Peak is a completely cloud-based application that helps to streamline and improve drafting, approval, and publishing processes. The software allows the Clerk and staff to submit agenda items electronically and automatically complete files/packets and supporting materials for upcoming meetings. Use of this software will save time and paper by automating agenda approval and meeting minutes management, thus freeing up the Clerk and staff to work on other important projects and initiatives. The Board and Clerk can access the meeting materials on any device and can edit agenda items in real time. This solution also offers citizens and interested parties' digital access to meeting agendas, agenda packets and minutes in a central searchable portal.

Many other counties and cities across North Carolina and the nation use this product and they have found it saves their organization tens of thousands of dollars annually in staff time and paper costs. If approved, the Clerk will begin training with a Granicus representative to learn how to use the product and then she will train department heads on how to submit agenda items and work through the approval process. Finally, she will teach Commissioners how to access their meeting materials, make notes, etc. This process should take a couple of months before going live, hopefully by early July. The financial impact is \$10,200 and monies have already been included in the budget for this purpose. The Board approved the agreement with Granicus for Peak Agenda Management Software as requested.

PROCLAMATION-NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Celebrated the first full week in May, Public Service Recognition Week is a time set aside to honor the men and women who serve our nation as federal, state, county, and local government employees. For the past few years, Commissioners have recognized and honored employees by hosting an employee appreciation event. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, Human Resources and Administration staff are planning some alternate ways to recognize employees. More information will be forthcoming. Commissioner Guice asked Chairman Chappell to read aloud this proclamation to recognize government employees as being on the frontlines of fighting the pandemic. Commissioners approved Proclamation #13-2021 proclaiming the week of May 2-8 as National Public Service Recognition Week.

PROCLAMATION #13-2021 NATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

WHEREAS, public servants at the local, state, and federal levels work selflessly to provide for the needs of citizens on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, government employees are committed to carrying out their duties, responsibilities, and oaths not only in times of prosperity and calm but also in times of duress and uncertainty; and

WHEREAS, the onset of a global pandemic has revealed the critical nature of work performed by our local public servants who have ensured continuity of services by transforming operations that were once routine and predictable through agility, adaptation, creativity, and innovation; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County's employees have collaborated across departmental lines to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our citizens by providing essential services such as emergency response, public health, social services, solid waste services, sanitation of facilities, childcare, and transportation services; and

WHEREAS, we have witnessed our public servants display their courage and humanity in these unprecedented times; placing service before self in their dedication to our community and in their support of each other; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County's employees are doing important work that positively affects all of us every day, and they work to address the incredible challenges our citizens are facing; and

WHEREAS, public servants deserve thanks for working diligently on our behalf - government service is public service.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners to recognize the week of May 2-8, 2021 as National Public Service Recognition Week and to encourage citizens to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of government employees at all levels.

This the 26th day of April, 2021.

S://Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PROCLAMATION-OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

Sylvia Petit with the Department of Social Services chairs the County Council on Aging. Each year the Council on Aging requests that the Board of Commissioners approve a proclamation declaring May as Older Americans Month to recognize the many contributions of our senior citizens.

When Older Americans Month was established in 1963, only 17 million living Americans had reached their 65th birthday. About a third of older Americans lived in poverty and there were few programs to meet their needs. Interest in older Americans and their concerns was growing. A meeting in April 1963 between President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens led to designating May as "Senior Citizens Month," the prelude to "Older Americans Month."

Historically, Older Americans Month has been a time to acknowledge the contributions of past and current older persons to our country, in particular those who defended our country. Every President since Kennedy has issued a formal proclamation during or before the month of May asking that the entire nation pay tribute in some way to older persons in their communities. Older Americans Month is celebrated across the country through ceremonies, events, fairs, and other such activities.

The 2021 Older Americans Month theme is *Communities of Strength*. Transylvania County can foster communities of strength by creating opportunities to share stories and learn from each other, engaging older adults through education, recreation, and service, and encouraging people of all ages to celebrate connections and resilience.

Commissioners approved Proclamation #14-2021 Older Americans Month 2021.

PROCLAMATION #14-2021 OLDER AMERICANS MONTH 2021

Whereas, Transylvania County includes a growing number of older Americans who have built resilience and strength over their lives through successes and difficulties; and

Whereas, our community benefits when people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds are included and encouraged to share their successes and stories of resilience; and

Whereas, Transylvania County recognizes our need to nurture ourselves, reinforce our strength, and

continue to thrive in times of both joy and difficulty; and

Whereas, Transylvania County can foster communities of strength by:

- creating opportunities to share stories and learn from each other;
- engaging older adults through education, recreation, and service; and
- encouraging people of all ages to celebrate connections and resilience.

Now, therefore, the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County does hereby proclaim May 2021 to be Older Americans Month and urges every resident to recognize older adults and the people who support them as essential contributors to the strength of our community.

Dated this 26th day of April, 2021

S://Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PROCLAMATION-HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

May has been deemed National Preservation Month or Historic Preservation Month since the 1970's. The historical nonprofit organizations in Transylvania County have planned to celebrate Transylvania County's history in the month of May with different events planned throughout the month which includes approval of a proclamation by the Board of Commissioners. Commissioners approved Proclamation #15-2021 proclaiming the Month of May as Historic Preservation Month in Transylvania County.

PROCLAMATION #15-2021 PROCLAIMING MAY 2021 AS HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

WHEREAS, historic preservation is an effective tool for managing growth, revitalizing neighborhoods, fostering local pride, and maintaining community character while enhancing the livability of a community; and

WHEREAS, historic preservation is relevant for communities across the nation, both urban and rural, and for Americans of all ages, all walks of life, and all ethnic backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, it is important to celebrate the role of history in our lives and the contributions made by dedicated individuals in helping to preserve the tangible aspects of the heritage that has shaped us as a people; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County and the City of Brevard have two National Register Districts and 21 individual local landmarks.

WHEREAS, this May there will be a host of events that have been prepared by local historical organizations and cosponsored by the Transylvania County Joint Historic Preservation Commission who are appointed by the County Commissioners to help preserve the historical identity of all Transylvania County;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County does hereby proclaim and recognize the month of May 2021 as **HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH**.

This the 26th day of April, 2021.

S://Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PROCLAMATION-NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

The week of May 9-15, 2021 is National Police Week with Peace Officers Memorial Day designated on May 15. Sheriff Mahoney requested that the Board of Commissioners publicly recognize and salute the service of law enforcement officers in our community and in communities across the nation. This is an annual proclamation approved by the Board of Commissioners and is presented to both the Sheriff's Office and Brevard Police Department.

Note: Although the official week of National Police Week is May 9-15, 2021, in-person events in Washington, DC have been postponed until the week of October 13-17, 2021.

Commissioner Chappell asked Chairman Chappell to read aloud this proclamation because he felt that law enforcement officers across this nation are under assault and they need support more than ever. Commissioners approved Proclamation #16-2021 National Police Week 2021.

**PROCLAMATION #16-2021
NATIONAL POLICE WEEK 2021**

To recognize National Police Week 2021 and to honor the service and sacrifice of those law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty while protecting our communities and safeguarding our democracy.

Whereas, the week of May 9-15, 2021 has been designated as National Police Week, with Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15 in honor of all fallen officers and their families; U.S. flags should be flown at half-staff on Peace Officers Memorial Day; and

Whereas, there are more than 900,000 law enforcement officers serving in communities across the United States, including the dedicated members of the Transylvania County Sheriff's Office and Brevard Police Department; and

Whereas, those brave men and women selflessly confront danger to protect our families and defend our communities; and

Whereas, more than 100 law enforcement officers have been killed in the line of duty since January 1, 2021; and

Whereas, we honor all those in blue who have been killed or disabled in the line of duty and we are mindful of the tremendous sacrifices they made protecting their communities; and

Whereas, our nation's law enforcement officers serve with courage, dedication, and strength; they fearlessly enforce our laws, safeguarding our property, our liberty, and our lives;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County formally designates May 9-15, 2021, as Police Week in Transylvania County, and publicly salutes the service of law enforcement officers in our community and in communities across the nation. We owe them and their families our full and enduring support.

This the 26th day of April, 2021.

S://Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PROCLAMATION-NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

In 1988, both Houses of Congress adopted legislation declaring the first Thursday in May of each year as National Day of Prayer. Commissioners wished to proclaim May 6, 2021 as “A Day of Prayer in Transylvania County.” This year’s theme is based on 2 Corinthians 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”. Commissioners approved Proclamation #17-2021 National Day of Prayer 2021.

**PROCLAMATION # 17-2021
NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER**

WHEREAS, the 70th observance of the National Day of Prayer will be held on Thursday, May 6, 2021 with the theme based on 2 Corinthians 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty”; and

WHEREAS, a National Day of Prayer has been part of our national heritage since it was declared by the First Continental Congress in 1775 and the United States Congress in 1952 approved as a Joint Resolution, “That the President shall set aside and proclaim a suitable day each year, other than a Sunday, as a National Day of Prayer, on which the people of the United States may turn to God in prayer and meditation at churches, in groups and as individuals”; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress, in 1988 by Public Law 100-307, as amended, established, “An act to provide for setting aside the first Thursday in May as the date on which the National Day of Prayer is celebrated”; and

WHEREAS, leaders and citizens of our communities, cities, states, and nation are afforded the privilege of prayer with the joy of seeking divine guidance, strength, protection, and comfort from Almighty God; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the love of God, we citizens of Transylvania County treasure the freedom to gather in prayer, exercising reliance on God’s power in the face of present challenges and threats, asking for His blessing on every individual of our County; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County does hereby proclaim **May 6th, 2021** as **A DAY OF PRAYER IN TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY** and we commend this observance to all our citizens.

This the 26th day of April, 2021.

S://Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

SWEARING IN OF CLERK TO THE BOARD TRISHA HOGAN AS PRESIDENT OF THE NC ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY CLERKS

Chairman Chappell gave the oath of office to Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan who was elected as President of the North Carolina Association of County Clerks on Friday, April 23. Commissioners and the Manager then offered congratulatory comments, followed by brief comments by the Clerk.

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Public Health Director Elaine Russell provided the Board and public with an update on the COVID-19 vaccine program. This is a summary of her presentation:

- Percentage fully vaccinated 34.7% (11,932)
- Percentage partially vaccinated 39.3% (13,504)
- J&J released for use by ACIP and FDA
 - Confident in overall vaccine safety and ability to prevent COVID-19
 - Recommend continued use
 - Blood clot risk is extremely low, but monitoring will continue through VARES
 - The benefits of the vaccine for the population and the individual outweigh the risks
- Agency currently offering Moderna and J&J vaccines
 - Appointments at agency, location outreach for groups of 5+, and J&J clinic at Rogow Room this Friday and Health Department
 - For appointments contact call center at 884-4007 to schedule
- Slight upward trend cases in younger age groups, but continue to make progress in vaccinating those who wish to be vaccinated
- Question at previous Board meeting regarding the confluence of herd and vaccine immunity
 - Research based on State data indicates that 6.3% of County have a positive COVID test
 - If assume positive test provides some immunity, plus the partially or fully vaccinated, would put County total vaccination level at about 45.6%
- Asked Board to encourage citizens to be vaccinated
- State will be moving from an allocation system to an ordering system
 - Health Department has a significant amount of vaccine available

This concluded Ms. Russell's presentation. Commissioners thanked Ms. Russell and her department for all they are doing for Transylvania County and its citizens.

RECOGNITION OF CONNECT TRANSYLVANIA MEMBERS

Interim Budget and Management Analyst Kate Hayes presented this item. She reported that in the spring of 2019, County employees who attended Elevate realized there was not a clear way for employees to interact with others outside of their department and make interdepartmental connections or learn about all County services. The goal of Elevate is to improve County services and that group developed the outline for what would become Connect Transylvania. Connect was a 12-month pilot program aimed at helping employees learn about other departments, engage in leadership development opportunities, and create a connected community among County employees. Program members participated in discussions and hands-on activities with over 25 County departments, a historic walking tour of the downtown campus, and a leadership assessment tool during the program's orientation. The employees who participated in the program now have a comprehensive understanding of County services as well as connections in many other departments to provide coordinated customer service. By scheduling the program during working hours, it eliminated barriers for most of the participants. In the first year, 15 employees from 12 different County departments participated. In the fall of 2020, the second cohort of the program began with 11 employees from nine County departments and modified the schedule from 11 half-days into eight full days of programming. Although much of the last year had to be held virtually, the group was able to visit a few County departments in person while staying outside.

The Board of Commissioners recognized each person in attendance with a graduation certificate and a coffee mug with the County logo. Ms. Hayes will hand-deliver/mail certificates to those unable to attend. The following participants of the Connect Transylvania program were recognized.

Name	Title	Department	Years of County Employment
Abigail Cooley	Social Worker IAT	Social Services – Child Protective Services	2
Bonnie McCall-Kemper	Administrative Assistant	Social Services	2

Darby Terrell	County Planner	Planning and Community Development	1.5
Karin Smith	Deputy Register of Deeds	Register of Deeds	20
Laura Rinehart	WIC Director	Health Department	14
Maryann Mickewicz	Administrative Assistant	Cooperative Extension	13
Mike McKinney	IT Specialist	Information Technology	6.5
Missy Shipman	Operations Coordinator	Solid Waste	4.5
Sheila Galloway	Social Worker III	Social Services – Adult Services	2.5
Susan Chambers	Reference Librarian	Library	8
Tabitha Wiggins	Tax Collections Supervisor	Tax Administration	16

PRESENTATION OF MANAGER’S FY 2022 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

The Manager began the presentation by thanking the Board of Commissioners and staff for all the time and effort that went into developing the FY 22 Recommended Budget over the last four months. She especially thanked Kate Hayes, Brian Farmer, David McNeill, Sheila Cozart and Jonathan Griffin who have spent a large portion of the past few months navigating all the budget requests as part of the budget review team. A budget of this size covering more than 24 County departments, offices, and numerous outside agencies, along with a high volume of mandated services and local demands, makes the budget a complex and dynamic process.

State statutes require that the County Manager deliver the recommended budget to the Board of Commissioners by June 1 of each year; however, there is little time during the year that does not require that she talk about current and future budgets as priorities change and trends emerge. In truth, the budget document is not a standalone fixture, but a reflection of the Board’s priorities as the governing board elected to lead Transylvania County. It is as much policy and administrative guidance as it is revenue and expenditures.

Budget Process

The Manager reviewed the process that staff followed to develop the budget. Transylvania County follows a data-driven budget process intended to gear decision-making to meet rising service levels. County government in North Carolina is unique in that many services are mandated and particularly essential in a pandemic between emergency services and public health.

The budget is reviewed using a team approach with each department having the opportunity to submit justifications for their request and meet in-person with the budget team. The budget team considers trends for revenue and looks at resources that help suggest what to expect with those trends, that includes projecting revenue and projecting economic trends up to 18 months in advance, which can be a challenge.

FY 21 did not see the COVID-19 impact that was initially anticipated or feared at the time, but staff did see a higher demand for service. Currently, staff is unsure what the long-term demand on County services will be due to the pandemic.

Staff also gathers information from various sources on price changes and projections, including gas, utility rates, goods, services, economic predictions, etc. to provide the best information possible. Staff makes some assumptions and layers the reviews so that all staff are comfortable that the team approach and projections are reasonable. They seek to understand the Board of Commissioners’ priorities, community needs and funding partner needs throughout the process. They estimate service demands by examining the existing demands to determine what is growing or decreasing to ensure the budget is meeting those needs.

COVID-19 operations have been challenging and it remains unknown how the pandemic will impact infrastructure. Staff continues to navigate understanding the impacts.

The Manager reported that more than 86% of the County's budget is mandated services or those that are required to meet mandates. That percentage makes up the majority of the County's budget. The Manager expects this figure to increase over time, noting that during COVID the County has trimmed back nonessential service levels.

Staff always reviews the fee schedule during budget preparation. The budget is primarily formed around property tax, but there are some fees for services, so staff tries to ensure the fees are comparable to other counties.

Budget preparation requires consideration of the entire economy and economy outlook. Currently, it is difficult to assess because there are many differing opinions on economic outlooks and predictions for FY 22. Staff also factors in the County's long-term fiscal health. The annual budget impacts the Board's long-term decision hence why staff incorporated a capital workshop into the budget planning process. Budgets are math and statistics problems, but also establish policy and reflect priorities.

Highlights for FY 22

FY 22 is a reevaluation year. State law requires the County to publish the revenue neutral rate. Typical County services are funded in the recommended budget under the revenue neutral rate of \$0.5592/\$100 valuation. However, for the past two years fire and rescue contracts have been supplemented from the general funds balance. Therefore, staff recommended Commissioners add \$0.024 cents to the tax rate to fund fire and rescue services, bringing the total tax rate to \$0.5840, assuming an across the board \$0.05 district rate. Other than the increase for fire and rescue services, the recommended budget remains revenue neutral. The recommended budget assumes Solid Waste Enterprise changing to become self-sustaining. The total recommended budget is \$67,891,202, including the transfer for fire and rescue services.

The Manager noted there was approximately \$4 million in budget requests that were not funded in the recommended budget. Staff understands the County must manage public funds very conservatively and that any time a tax increase is proposed, it impacts citizens. The Manager stated the recommended budget is a conservative approach.

In comparing FY 21's Budget to the FY 20 Revised/Final Budget, staff made drastic cuts in many categories to achieve last year's budget. As staff reviewed this year's budget under a different revenue climate, they restored some of those cuts, but spending is still down in several categories, with slight increase in human services and education. The large increase in economic/physical development was due to the acceptance of occupancy tax, which is then paid out to the TDA, which inflates the budget figures.

Service Type	Requested Change from FY 20 Revised	FY 21 Rec. Change from FY 20 Revised	FY 22 Rec. Change from FY 20 Revised
General Government	-9%	-13%	-6.26%
Public Safety	-9%	-17%	-0.46%
Economic Dev/Physical Dev	1%	-1%	49.10%
Human Services	7%	2%	1.77%
Culture/Recreation	-11%	-17%	-5.43%
Education	11%	0%	1.47%

Next the Manager highlighted some items that are included in this budget. The budget prioritizes maintaining existing staffing levels with existing benefits. The classification and compensation study

conducted recently aligns employees with the current market rates, but the benefit structure is slightly below the market. Protecting the package is important for recruitment and retention of employees.

FY 21 budget reductions were also prioritized for restoration because severe cuts in response to the pandemic were noted as being not sustainable long-term. Staff recommended several vehicle replacements, including an ambulance, in the following departments: Sheriff's Office (nine), Environmental Health, Social Service and Animal Control. Commissioners lifted the capital freeze mid-year and funds were released in FY 21 to fund some capital expenditures for maintenance, but for not for vehicle replacement at that time.

Staff recommended the Board authorize advertising for the positions that were included in the soft freeze – the 4-H position in Cooperative Extension and history librarian in the library. No new positions have been included in the budget, although there were two new positions requested. The budget includes reclassifications of positions in Social Services and making the DSS Paralegal full-time. These requests were considered and approved by the Board at their last meeting. The Manager noted there is a net additional school nurse from the Health Department that is being funded through CARES monies. After one year, there is no revenue allocated to support the position.

The policy for FY 22 is that all out-of-state travel must be approved by the Board of Commissioners prior to registration for any conference or event. This is intended to ensure staff is evaluating that travel expenses are necessary to County business.

The Manager intends to move cell services to a centralized model. Staff is currently performing a cell phone audit for any County-issued cell phones or other devices that carry a data plan. Staff will be implementing a policy change to require Administration-level approval for new lines of service and device replacement to control costs.

Most partner agencies in FY 21 were held harmless with either flat funding or slight increases. FY 22 reflects some increases overall to partner agencies, as highlighted below:

- Nonprofit contracts- slight increase
- Community centers- keeps funding for capital improvement grants and free Wi-Fi at nine centers
- Rescue Squad- flat funding
- Transylvania County Schools operational funds- increase for personnel driven by State decisions
 - Withhold funds to fund balance pending final approval by State
 - County staff estimating 2% salary increases for teachers by State
- Transylvania County School capital- slight increase
 - Can also leverage lottery funds
- Blue Ridge Community College funded as requested
 - Net flat
- Maintains existing staff infrastructure to be able to respond to pandemic demands

Qualified expenses under the American Rescue Plan include infrastructure (water and sewer) projects. Staff expects to receive additional guidance from the Treasury in May, so expenditures are not yet allocated in the FY 22 Budget. There may be elements of the budget that qualify for expense of those funds.

Staff continues to explore operational efficiency and best practices throughout County services. Staff review comparable categories with like counties on a regular basis and look for ways to achieve savings while continuing to provide services to our citizens.

Staff intends to apply for funding from the TDA to support a community appearance initiative which would be operating under Planning and Community Development. This program could be reignited if approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Other initiatives include continued efforts on workforce housing and economic development through infrastructure opportunities with funding support from the American Rescue Plan. Staff also continues the work for Get Set Transylvania in partnership with Sesame Street in Communities to include providing topic-based toolkits to children, along with other resources in the form of services provided by County departments and participation in the Family Connects program. All these programs are being integrated in County-level services, but they are not costing County taxpayers due to the availability of grant funding.

Staff continues to manage the construction of the water and sewer line that will provide expansion support to Gaia Herbs and extend service by the Town of Rosman along the US 64 corridor. Staff also supports the Board in their long-term capital planning, including being able to meet the needs for court functions/courthouse.

Additional highlights to the FY 22 Recommended Budget include \$50,000 to support the Rosman pool and \$16,000 to the Town to maintain Rosman park, funds to pave the Silvermont walking trail, upgrade restrooms, and manage stormwater at a level of \$200,000, funding the leachate agreement with the Town of Rosman, issuance of \$68 million in school bonds, funds to expand to limited Saturday transportation services, and several capital replacements (R-22 HVAC units, security cameras and access controls, paving, communications and jail upgrades, UTV at Sheriff's Office, and allocations of funding for equipment in Elections pending the outcome of lawsuits).

Fiscal Policy Goals

The Manager highlighted several fiscal policy goals that are reflected in the budget:

- Continue long-term capital planning using a combination of debt service and pay-as-you-go strategies
 - Budget includes \$2.4 million at year's end being transferred into assigned fund balance based on the Board's priorities
- Identify revenue to fund capital needs
 - Economic development and infrastructure support includes Ecusta Road project lease payments that are held in fund balance for the Board to use toward future economic development
 - Education facilities bond; tax collections in fund balance needed to make payments once bonds are sold
 - Fee schedule market changes include Child Development, EMS, and Environmental Health septic
- Work towards multi-year budget planning in General Fund
 - Vehicle prioritization, computer replacement schedule, long range maintenance evaluation
 - Stabilize tax rate while still moving forward to address capital needs
- Implement performance-based budgeting with outcome measures
 - Annual work plan according to strategic plan is in third year of implementation
- Based on individual meetings with Commissioners, consensus was reached on the Manager's recommended budget, apart from restoring the soft freeze on some positions

Process with Changes Implemented this Year

The Manager stated that despite the pandemic, the budget review process remained mostly unchanged from the previous year.

Revenue Projections

The Manager noted the Board should notice some shift in ad valorem taxes compared to prior years, which is largely due to some funds that now come in as revenue but that are also shown as remittances.

The County's primary revenue is property tax. Sales tax has grown, but several articles must be earmarked for certain expenses which is based on statutes. The Manager pointed out the counties do not have creativity in terms of its revenues. Revenue streams are dictated by statutes. The budget also reflects some revenue losses stemming from Medicaid Hold Harmless funds, but those losses are being offset by broadening of the sales tax that was approved by the State several years ago. The budget predicts revenue for holding inmates will be down and it is uncertain when or if the County will return to housing inmates for other counties and State programs.

Expenditures

There is a slight increase in the Sheriff's Office budget which is mostly due to catching up on vehicle replacements that were not funded in the current year's budget. There is also an increase within the Emergency Management budget due to approval of the contract with the City of Brevard for the County to take over their dispatch. An increase in the Ag and Economic Development budget is due to the remittance to the TDA of occupancy taxes. An increase in Education expenses is based on decisions at the State level on personnel, which is inline with County operations. The County budget's operations expenses are expected to increase by 1%, as well as Education expenses. Transfers reflect the bond and other fund transfers.

Expenditures by type reflect that a mast majority of the County's budget is spent on personnel. To provide services, there must be people to provide them. The nature of most of local government services, such as public safety, health and human services, etc., are person-to-person services.

Remittances are at 21.6% which reflects the booking of occupancy taxes and Register of Deeds conveyance. Maintenance and repairs reflect a 13.1% increase mostly due to restoring cuts from last year. Education spending reflects a 20.1% increase due to the bond payment. Education operational expenses increased by only 1%.

General Fund Summary

The Manager summarized the General Fund budget recommendation as follows:

- Balanced budget of \$67,891,202
- Recommended budget includes \$2.4 million in capital pay-as-you-go slated for assigned fund balance to support capital planning, includes courthouse
- Recommended budget includes \$6.2 million in FY 22 to pay school bond debt service; taxes collected assigned to fund balance to make bond payments
- Any additional increases in spending will need to be offset with expenditure cuts, fund balance appropriation or tax increase; staff recommended against putting further pressure on fund balance at this time
- Recommended budget includes supplemental funds for fire departments earmarked at last year's approved contract levels resulting in 2.4 cents; any increases will require additional tax levy
- Recommended budget restores capital funding to replace vehicles and maintain assets
- Recommended budget includes establishing self-sustaining fee schedule for solid waste fund

Solid Waste Enterprise Fund Summary

Next, the Manager explained further the recommendation to establish a self-sustaining Solid Waste Enterprise Fund.

- Balanced budget of \$4,117,960
- In the fall 2020, Commissioners approved moving forward with expansion of the landfill to keep solid waste disposition in-county; discussion centered around revenue to stop need for funding from property tax
 - Tipping rates are just under region with little room to gain revenue to self-sustain
 - Pay-as-You-Throw Sticker Program began over 20 years ago and has not increased from the \$1.50 per sticker price despite increasing operational costs; to offset operations with same program would require over \$12 per bag
 - No change in solid waste revenue that would result in \$1.2 million required from property tax not in recommended budget
 - Convenience sites- increase cost to provide as a service, but are popular with residents
 - Improved parcel fee has become more common approach (Ashe, Cherokee, Clay, Dare, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Rutherford, Scotland)
- Proposal would implement improved parcel fee in tax bill, provide disposal tag to all improved parcels allowing convenience site disposal for no additional fee, recycling free
- Stop sticker program January 1- all others go to landfill and pay tipping fee

Fire Department Budgets

- Current budget has placeholder for last year's contracts; currently \$0.024 is needed in addition to a \$.05 district rate
 - Old funding method with last year's approved contracts results in four of eight districts with rates above \$0.10 and would require those districts to see a tax increase of \$0.045-\$0.10 if return to that methodology
 - Consulted with Fire Chief's Association and there remains opposition to a flat tax
 - This proposal takes same position as last year with the difference being instead of the making up the shortfall with the fund balance, it would be done using the property tax method
- Includes continuing to have an audit contract to audit all departments with County contract to ensure standardization and that comparable information is provided to the County's Finance Office on all departments
- Budget requests range from \$206,000-\$1.5 million, an increase ranging from \$0-\$302,000
 - Lower budget figures are the higher tax district if funded purely from district taxes due to property valuation spread
- Requests include capital, personnel, and operating expense increases; personnel requests are significant
- Commissioners have received details on the fire departments' budget requests and staff will review them during the upcoming budget workshop
- Commissioners will need to consider funding level for each district and adjust budget accordingly

In keeping with State law, the revenue neutral rates for the fire districts must also be made public. They were calculated based on a formula that does not include the supplement from the County's general fund:

- Sylvan Valley II \$0.0418
- Rosman \$0.0462
- Little River \$0.0436
- Conestee \$0.0445
- Cedar Mountain \$0.0487

- Lake Toxaway \$0.0506
- Balsam Grove \$0.0480
- North Transylvania \$0.0436

Risks/Opportunities

The Manager discussed risks and opportunities the County faces as it moves forward with this recommended budget.

- COVID-19- vaccination futures, variants, and any future policy changes
- Fuel pricing and inflation impact to goods/services
- Training opportunities may continue to offer remote options
- ARP funds at State level and possible funds available
- ARP funds coming directly to the County; awaiting Treasury guidance
- Construction costs are rising quickly
 - Economic predictions show supply costs should stabilize and possibly decrease again later this year unless there are further impacts unforeseen to supply chain
- Over 50% of the County's landmass is located within State and national forests with additional lands in conservancy such as the sale of the rail line under the Conserving Carolina umbrella; decreasing tax base while County services are required across the entire mass requires costs to be higher for taxable parcels
- Health care cost national trends
 - County runs a self-funded program and promotes health programs to help minimize costs
 - Experience in County plan under market experience

This concluded the formal budget presentation. Next, the Manager explained the process and format for future discussion of the budget, including the budget workshops. She asked the Board to identify topics that do not have consensus for further discussion and to inform her of those topics by the end of this week. She also asked the Board to inform her if additional data or backup are needed for any of the recommended budget items.

The Manager will serve as the facilitator of the budget workshop. She intends to present details about each item and then open the floor for discussion. Once it appears there is consensus, she will move onto the next item. Otherwise, following 15 minutes of discussion, she will poll the Board for consensus and move forward.

Tentatively, public hearings on the budget are scheduled for both June meetings, with the Board expected to vote on the budget at the June 28 regular meeting.

The Manager asked Commissioners to discuss topics they want to discuss during the budget workshop on May 10.

Commissioner Chapman asked the Manager to review the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund proposal for clarification. The Manager explained the proposal is to impose a \$200 parcel fee on each improved parcel. Vacant land is not considered an improved parcel. The proposal would allow residents to obtain a tag that could hang on their rearview mirror to access the convenience center sites and dispose of trash without additional bag fees. Anything disposed of at the landfill using scales would require payment of a tipping fee. The sticker program would be eliminated, which minimize cash-handling at the convenience center sites and subsequently frees up staff to offer more assistance to residents at each site. There is also the potential to reduce the number of employees on site at any given time. Recycling would remain free and would be open to anyone wishing to dispose of accepted recycling materials.

Commissioner Chapman asked how staff would monitor vehicles coming in with or without tags. The Manager explained that most of the sites have access control so the site attendants would make sure vehicles had tags in their possession. She noted that staff considered using stickers instead, but many people do not want to place stickers on their vehicles, and tags could be more easily transferred between multiple vehicles in a household.

The Manager emphasized that the County must manage solid waste forever, which means it will be a perpetual cost to citizens/residents. Even once the landfill is closed, the County must maintain it per State and federal environmental laws.

Commissioner McCall asked how the program would impact residents within the city limits who already pay for trash disposal. The Manager acknowledged that the City of Brevard imposes a fee on its residents that is typically geared toward the tipping fee. If the City is willing to remove their fee for citizens, then the County would waive the tipping fee for the City. This would reduce the costs to homeowners because they would also be assessed the improved parcel fee. Otherwise, the County could opt not to assess the fee on parcels within city limits, but the City of Brevard would then be charged tipping fees. The same would be true with the Town of Rosman. The Manager pointed out that these conversations have not been had with either municipality.

Commissioner Guice inquired further about the definition of an improved parcel. He pointed out that not all citizens own property in this community, but all of them create and require disposal of trash. The Manager informed that the property owner would be the person receiving the tag. For a rental property, the owner would need to pass along the tag to the renter. If there are multiple rental properties, staff have proposed having the ability for property owners to purchase additional tags. Short-term rental managers would have to provide some sort of trash disposal to their temporary guests. She further pointed out the definition of an improved parcel is one that has a residence or business structure on it.

Commissioner Guice felt this item needed further discussion. He was supportive of addressing the future of solid waste management and being able to fund it. He pointed out that no matter the solution, it will be an additional burden on citizens.

Commissioner Guice acknowledged that staff shared a school nurse being funded through CARES Act funds that would no longer be available after a certain time. He was concerned about being able to meet the national averages in terms of the nurse to student ratio. He felt that this position was very important in the school system to help meet some of the challenges students face. He was interested in further discussion, and he acknowledged the State owes the County a position that has yet to be funded. The Manager stated the funding for the CARES Act funded position expires June 30, 2022 and is therefore included in the budget. She agreed there needed to be discussion to advocate for funding at the State level.

Piggybacking on the school nurse position, Commissioner McCall asked the Board to be cautious in adding positions even if needed if it overlaps with discussions at the State Legislature level about potential funding. If the County funds a position, we are sending a signal that we do not need State dollars.

Commissioner McCall asked for staff recommendations with regards to fire departments' budgets.

Commissioner Chapman asked for further discussion on what would be needed to fund a new courthouse. The Manager stated that \$1.2 million is being assigned to fund balance for this purpose currently. Use of the funds is at the Board's discretion, i.e., operations, renovations, new construction, etc. At the end of this fiscal year, another \$1.2 million will be transferred to assigned fund balance for the same purpose, for a total of \$2.4 million. The same goes for the end of fiscal year FY 22. Not included in the budget is additional personnel to operate a second courtroom because those figures are still being refined. The Manager informed that it may require another cent on the tax rate for a new courthouse for the

construction payments on a 40-year UDA loan. Additional increases in funds would be needed for operational costs. The Manager stated that if the existing courthouse were vacated, Commissioners could consider a use that generates some income.

Commissioner McCall agreed that these discussions need to be had, to include the cost of maintaining the existing building. The Manager pointed out there are no funds specifically earmarked in this budget for the courthouse pending the decision by the Board. Staff continues to work on temporary and mid-term solutions and staff will be bringing back cost recommendations to the Board in the very near future.

Commissioner Chapman inquired about the status of the County operating a tag office and passport office. The Manager informed that the Board will likely have an item on their next agenda related to the passport office. The County is required to have the elements in place for an office before making application. If the County is approved, the revenues should offset the upfront costs. Because these funds are not included in the recommended budget, it would not be an item for discussion during a budget workshop. The Manager informed that staff has also applied to operate a tag office within Tax Administration. Staff has not received a response at this time.

Commissioner Guice stated that the capital workshop the Board recently held reflected all the challenges the County faces regarding capital needs in County government and Transylvania County Schools. He supported the Board identifying and prioritizing some of those capital items to address soon. He suggested some of the ARP funds could go toward tackling some of these projects.

The Board identified the following topics for the May 10 budget workshop:

- Fire department budgets, with recommendations from staff
- Solid Waste Enterprise Fund
 - Improved parcel fee
 - Removal of sticker program
 - Other options

A separate workshop/meeting will be held in the future to discuss use of federal and State monies based on the guidance from the Treasury on spending restrictions.

APPOINTMENTS

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

The terms of Leslie Logemann and William Leroy Newell expire at the end of April. Both have served two three-year terms and are not eligible for reappointment. The Clerk advertised for the upcoming vacancies and staff made recruitment efforts as well, resulting in three applications to fill the two upcoming vacancies. Cooperative Extension Director Bart Renner and the members of the Agricultural Advisory Board reviewed the applications and recommended the appointment of Cynthiana Cain and Jeff Bradley to fill these positions effective May 1.

Commissioner Chapman moved to appoint Cynthiana Cane and Jeff Bradley to fill the upcoming openings on the Agricultural Advisory Board effective May 1, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

BREVARD PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD

There are two vacancies on the Brevard Planning and Zoning Board due to resignations. The Clerk to the Board advertised on numerous occasions and was assisted by the City's recruitment efforts as well. She received two applications to fill the two vacancies. Both applicants live in the ETJ, a requirement to serve as the County's representative.

Chairman Chappell moved to appoint Peter Chaveas to fill a vacancy on the Brevard Planning and Zoning Board, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

Chairman Chappell moved to appoint John Schommer to fill a vacancy on the Brevard Planning and Zoning Board, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The terms of Tracie Trusler and Alice Hardy expire at the end of June. Both are eligible for reappointment and are interested in serving a 2nd term. It is the recommendation of the Library Board of Trustees to reappoint Tracie Trusler and Alice Hardy to a 2nd term.

Commissioner McCall moved to reappoint Tracie Trusler and Alice Hardy to a 2nd term as recommended, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

2ND COURTROOM UPDATE – MID-TERM OPTIONS

Transylvania Court officials continue to express concerns that the current available courtroom space is inadequate. Over the last couple of years, the County has entertained a second courtroom option based on needs expressed by court staff. The Manager presented second courtroom options to the Board for consideration at their last meeting, to include options for additional space so staff begin scheduling court use beginning in May.

At the previous meeting, the Board inquired about upfitting the Elections Center and instructed the Manager to gauge feasibility and cost to meet the specifications provided by court officials. The architect indicated the former jail spaces and construction of the building are not conducive to a meeting space that would meet those specifications and that renovations would be costly, not including the added cost of relocating the Board of Elections staff and equipment storage areas. The architect recommended this option be the least optimal under consideration.

At the last Board of Commissioners' meeting, Clerk of Superior Court Kristi Brown and Chief District Court Judge Mack Brittain indicated the Elections Center meeting rooms would be sufficient for a mid-term solution while a permanent courthouse is being built and that they would be agreeable to making that option work. Following the meeting, the Manager and Chairman Chappell met with Mrs. Brown and Court Sergeant Benny Frady to confirm minimal court space needs for interim space.

At this stage, there are two options that appear the most viable.

Option 1

The Elections Center meeting rooms could be used to provide court space beginning in August. Court staff confirmed this space would suffice as second court space with minimal impact to court cases while a permanent courthouse is being designed and built, which is expected to take approximately three years from the time a decision is made. This space will require two additional Sheriff's Office security personnel to be available for court days on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Staff is currently evaluating whether additional metal detector equipment will be necessary. Recommendations and cost are forthcoming and will be the same for all options. The Rogow Room at the Library would be made available to accommodate voting polls.

Option 2

A second option would be to renovate the old administration building for a second courtroom space to meet court officials' specifications, to include: courtroom seating for approximately 100, jury room with restroom facility, staff restroom, inmate holding with restroom, small space for attorneys to meet with each other and clients, two separate entrances for court officials and public, and proximity to current

courthouse. The architect estimated renovations at \$1.5 million. This site would also require the addition of two Sheriff's Office security personnel. Staff is currently evaluating whether additional metal detector equipment will be necessary. Recommendations and cost are forthcoming and will be the same for all options. Should Commissioners decide to proceed with this option, it would be used as a second courtroom function, but it could be repurposed later as event/meeting space. This option also involves relocating the Veterans History Museum thus disrupting their operations. The Manager contacted museum officials about touring the Family Resource Center space as an option for them, but they have not responded yet.

The Manager stated that these two options provide the most practical solutions for Commissioners' consideration with the lesser price tag compared to other options that staff have evaluated.

The financial impact is dependent on which option is selected by the Board of Commissioners. There are funds in assigned fund balance that would support either option including the additional personnel required to meet the second courtroom needs. The Manager asked for guidance on the provision of a second courtroom space so that staff can continue to prepare for those resources to be available for court.

Chairman Chappell stated that it caused him concern when he learned that it would take a year and half to remodel the old administration building, so he did not feel as strongly as he did previously about renovating it for court space. He was pleased to find out though that the Elections Center could accommodate a second courtroom with minimal changes to the building itself. He did not support any further remodel to that building that was done so specifically for elections functions.

Chairman Chappell challenged the Board to decide on a location for the new courthouse by the end of the calendar year. He also proposed that beginning in FY 23 and for the next three years, that the Board raise the tax rate ½ cent for each one of those years for the purpose of paying for a new courthouse to supplement the funds going into assigned fund balance for the same purpose. He supported using assigned fund balance to accommodate the increase in operational courts.

Commissioner Chapman supported Chairman Chappell's comments. He said his comments verify the needs that have been identified for nearly 20 years. He supported the Board deciding by the end of the year. He urged the Board to make the right decision for the citizens, noting that further delay only causes the price tag to rise. Commissioner Chapman was against spending funds to renovate the old administration building, irrespective of the Museum being located there currently.

Commissioner McCall also agreed with the previous comments and supported Chairman Chappell's funding plan over the next three years. She stated that this is an issue that is not going away. She was discouraged that costs continue to rise while a decision is delayed, and she fully supported the Board deciding by the end of the calendar year. She said lack of a decision is holding up the Board moving forward on other needs in the County and costing taxpayers more in the meantime. She intends to make a decision that is the most cost-effective to the County. She also wanted the Board to consider uses of the current facility that would produce some revenue for the County. In addition, she asked the Board to have meaningful discussions about operations of a new courthouse facility and how it compares to current operations.

Commissioner Chapman asked the Board to consider bringing forth the lease extension request by the Museum for consideration at the next meeting since the old administration building is off the table for renovations.

Commissioner Dalton concurred with all comments made thus far but noted that the courthouse discussion has been going on for 30 years, not 20. He was also very concerned about the burden to the taxpayers with the understanding that it remains a dire need. He agreed with the short-term solution of

using the Elections Center for district court operations if the goal is for the Board to decide on a location for a new courthouse by the end of the year.

Commissioner Guice stressed that the concerns of court officials are real as they relate to the safety and security of the courthouse. These issues can be resolved with a new facility, particularly because courthouses are built differently than they were in the past. To him, there is no question that a new facility is needed; the question is how to go about doing it. The hard decision before the Board is the location. He said not only should cost be a consideration, but Commissioners should consider its centerpiece to the City of Brevard and the legitimate concerns expressed by people regarding its location, as well as operations and doing so in a way that is safe but open to the public to do their business. Commissioner Guice concurred with the proposals thus far to decide on a location by the end of the calendar year, to begin funding the construction beginning next year, and use of the Elections Center on a temporary basis for district court. He stressed that the temporary solution does not resolve the issues and challenges court officials face daily. Lastly, Commissioner Guice expressed his support of the Veterans History Museum but said he will always seek answers to unpopular questions because he is trying to make decisions that are best for the entire community in the management of taxpayer dollars.

There were no further comments from the Board. The Manager informed that staff would proceed with establishing a second courtroom in the Elections Center conference room. She will come back before the Board if this action requires additional monies. Staff will also begin planning for workshops on this year sometime between now and the end of the year.

NEW BUSINESS

CAPITAL PROJECT: ANIMAL SHELTER DOG KENNEL REFURBISHMENT

Finance Director Jonathan Griffin presented this item. On March 31, 2021, staff from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services conducted a random site inspection of the County's Animal Shelter facility at 1124 Old Rosman Highway.

Several days prior to this inspection, the County had an abuse case that required the capture and holding of 27 dogs and several exotic birds, so at that time of the inspection the animal shelter's resources had been stretched thin. The current incremental cost incurred by the County of seizing, holding, and treating animals related to this case since late March has totaled \$26,530 and is currently being addressed through a transfer from general fund contingency budget.

During the inspection, the Animal Welfare Services division inspector noted several deficiencies with the dog kennels at the shelter and has asked for a timeline for addressing the flaking paint, crackled walls and need for additional sealants of the block interior kennel walls. Recognizing the unfortunate timing of the inspection with the other issues at the animal shelter, the State conditionally approved the inspection but asked for a timeline on the resolution regarding repairing the dog kennels.

Maintenance and operations staff proceeded with creating a scope of work to address this need and attempted to solicit competitive bids. So far, they have received one bid and are expecting a second on the project. The total estimated cost to refurbish kennels and adjacent hallway is \$47,000.

Given the need to address the whole dog kennel area, the Finance Office has identified a funding stream that would allow for the entire project to proceed rather than trying to address some kennels this year and some kennels in the next budget.

Prior policy had been to hold any donations received over budget in assigned fund balance, and approximately \$22,000 is in General Fund assigned fund balance for this purpose. Additionally, the Board has held \$200,000 annually in assigned fund balance for emergency maintenance projects, of

which \$91,000 has not been needed in the current fiscal year. Staff recommended pulling the remaining need of \$25,000 from this source.

Upon approval, staff will move forward with addressing this issues immediately. In response to concerns expressed by Commissioners, staff reported that the animal shelter is governed by a State regulatory agency and sometimes their perception of what is considered acceptable changes. Ultimately, the County must respond accordingly and foot the bill.

Commissioner Guice moved to appropriate \$47,000 of assigned fund balance for the Animal Shelter and emergency maintenance and authorize staff to proceed with resurfacing 22 dog kennels and hallway in the Animal Shelter, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Unauthorized letter was sent out by a representative of National Fire Safety Council on County letterhead requesting donations
 - Confirmed that this action was not authorized by County
 - County typically sends out a letter that the NFSC provides educational materials through the Fire Marshal's office
 - County attorney requesting retraction and refund of donations
- Invited everyone to wear blue on April 27, a day of kindness and respect, in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month
- Kudos to Jennifer Galloway in Finance for moving surplus items and finding some possible reuse of items to help save county dollars
- Kudos to Kevin Shook for his work on the FEMA reimbursement that the County received from COVID expenditures
- Congratulations to Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan for being elected as the President of the NC Association of County Clerks on Friday, April 23

PUBLIC COMMENT

Rick Bellini: Mr. Bellini thanked the Board for their comments on courthouse because it has been a topic of discussion for too many years. He agreed with their comments about the challenges with rising construction materials. For this reason, he urged the Board to consider constructing a new facility on county-owned property, rather than adding to the cost by purchasing additional property.

Kristi Brown: Mrs. Brown is the Clerk of Superior Court. She thanked Chairman Chappell and the Manager for meeting with her. She clarified her statements about accepting a temporary solution for court functions in the Elections Center while a new courthouse is being built because as a taxpayer, she does not want to be burdened either. For this reason, she did not support remodeling the old administration building. She stated she and other court officials look forward to working with the Board to find a permanent solution. She thanked everyone for their cooperation. Mrs. Brown understood that the decision before the Board is not easy, but she wants to help them make the best decision for the County and its citizens.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman encouraged Commissioners to visit new courthouses across the State during their travel. Counties have done an impressive job.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner McCall moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.**

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board