

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 23, 2026 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in a regular meeting on Monday, February 23, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place in the Multipurpose Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, North Carolina.

Present were Vice-Chair Larry Chapman, Jason Chappell, Jake Dalton, Chair Teresa McCall, and Chase McKelvey. County Manager Jaime Laughner and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan also attended. County Attorney Megan Silver participated via Zoom.

There was no media representation present.

Approximately 30 people were in the audience, including staff presenters.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Teresa McCall presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairwoman McCall welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Commissioners and staff in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comments represent the opinions or viewpoints of the speakers.

Chairwoman McCall reminded the public that written comments may be submitted to the Board at any time; however, public comment during meetings must be made in person.

David Morrow announced that the Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas will open for the 2026 season on March 3, with updated exhibits and regular public hours.

Destini Pettit encouraged the County to restore funding for Styrofoam recycling, citing the previous partnership with Feed Me Foam LLC. She noted the program reduced landfill use and suggested either reinstating the partnership or investing in a County-owned densifier to expand recycling efforts and preserve landfill capacity.

Jeanne Lytle expressed concern about a potential shift away from planned sewer expansion in the Azalea Avenue and Rhododendron neighborhoods. She emphasized ongoing septic system failures, risks to public health and groundwater, and the potential loss of affordable housing. She urged the Board to prioritize the project and utilize available state funding in partnership with the City.

Doug Powell encouraged Commissioners to remain mindful of their oath of office and the principles of the United States Constitution and the North Carolina Constitution. He offered to assist elected officials in strengthening their understanding of constitutional governance.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Dalton, and it was unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Chappell moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey, and unanimously approved.

The Board approved the following:

DISCOVERY RELEASE & MONTHLY SETTLEMENT REPORT - JANUARY 2026

In accordance with N.C.G.S. §§ 105-312(b) and 105-381(b), the Tax Administrator submitted the January 2026 Discovery, Release, and Monthly Settlement Report. Releases totaled \$3,828.17, and refunds totaled \$2,047.96. The Board approved the report as presented.

PROCLAMATION - SOCIAL WORK MONTH

The Board recognized the important role social workers play in serving vulnerable populations, including children, families, older adults, and individuals facing significant challenges. Social workers provide essential support through professional expertise, sound judgment, and compassion, often in difficult and unseen circumstances. The Board expressed appreciation for their contributions to the community and approved a proclamation designating March as Social Work Month in Transylvania County.

Proclamation #05-2026 Proclaiming March as Social Work Month

WHEREAS, social workers in the Transylvania County Department of Social Services dedicate their professional lives to serving the citizens of Transylvania County with compassion, integrity, and respect; and

WHEREAS, these professionals provide essential services that strengthen families, protect vulnerable children and adults, support older adults and individuals with disabilities, assist those facing economic hardship, and connect residents with critical resources; and

WHEREAS, social workers serve on the front lines of our community, often in challenging and complex situations, working to ensure the safety, stability, and well-being of individuals and families throughout Transylvania County; and

WHEREAS, the work of social workers requires not only professional expertise and sound judgment, but also empathy, resilience, and a steadfast commitment to public service; and

WHEREAS, during times of crisis and everyday need alike, the social workers of Transylvania County demonstrate dedication to improving lives and strengthening our community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners hereby recognizes March 2026 as National Social Work Month in Transylvania County and expresses its sincere appreciation to the social workers of the Department of Social Services for their invaluable service to our citizens.

ADOPTED this 23rd day of February 2026.

S://Teresa K. McCall, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PROCLAMATION - NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRAINING MONTH

The Board recognized March as National Athletic Training Month and highlighted the important role athletic trainers play in supporting student health and safety. Athletic trainers help prevent injuries, provide immediate care, and support recovery to ensure students can safely participate in athletics. The Board also acknowledged Pardee UNC Health Care for providing athletic trainers to support programs at Rosman and Brevard High Schools. Chairwoman McCall will present the proclamation at an event in Hendersonville on March 6. The Board approved the proclamation as presented.

**Proclamation #06-2026
National Athletic Training Month**

WHEREAS, athletic trainers are highly trained healthcare professionals who specialize in the prevention, evaluation, management, and rehabilitation of injuries and illnesses related to physical activity; and

WHEREAS, athletic trainers serve student-athletes and physically active individuals throughout Transylvania County, helping to ensure safe participation in sports and recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, these professionals work collaboratively with physicians, coaches, school administrators, and families to promote injury prevention, emergency preparedness, and overall wellness; and

WHEREAS, athletic trainers play a critical role in responding to injuries during practices and competitions, often serving as the first healthcare professional on the scene; and

WHEREAS, the presence and expertise of athletic trainers in our schools and community contribute to the health, safety, and success of student-athletes in Transylvania County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners hereby recognizes March 2026 as National Athletic Training Month in Transylvania County and expresses its appreciation to the athletic trainers who serve our schools and community for their dedication to protecting the health and well-being of our citizens.

ADOPTED this 23rd day of February 2026.

S://Teresa K. McCall, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

RESOLUTION APPROVING DONATION OF SURPLUS FIREARMS SIMULATOR TO BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Sheriff's Office requested approval to donate a surplus Meggitt FATS 100 LE Firearms Simulator, which is no longer usable because the manufacturer is no longer in business and the equipment cannot be supported or updated. In accordance with N.C.G.S. § 160A-280, staff posted the required public notice prior to Board consideration. The Board adopted a resolution authorizing the donation of the surplus simulator to Blue Ridge Community College.

Resolution #04-2026
Approving Donation of Surplus Firearms Simulator
to Blue Ridge Community College

WHEREAS, The Transylvania County Manager has declared a Meggitt FATS 100 LE Firearms Simulator in the Sheriff's Office as surplus and it has been removed from service; and

WHEREAS, The company, Meggitt Systems, is no longer in business and therefore the equipment can no longer be supported or updated; and

WHEREAS, N.C.G.S. § 160A-280 allows a county government to donate to another governmental unit or nonprofit entity, any personal property that the governing board deems to be surplus, obsolete or unused, following posting its intent to donate for a period of at least five days prior to the adoption of a resolution approving the donation; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County has met the posting requirements outlined in N.C.G.S. § 160A-280; and

WHEREAS, the Sheriff's Office recommends the conveyance of the surplus firearms simulator to Blue Ridge Community College at no cost;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners does hereby approve the donation of a surplus Meggitt FATS 100 LE Firearms Simulator to Blue Ridge Community College at no cost.

This the 23rd day of February 2026.

S://Teresa K. McCall, Chair
 Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

RECOGNITION OF CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Board recognized citizen volunteers (Dee Dee Perkins, TCTDA; Stephen Matadobra, Transylvania Natural Resources Council) whose terms on advisory councils ended during the period July through December 2025, with a certificate of appreciation and an insulated mug with the County logo.

SEMI-ANNUAL DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS - FY 2027 BUDGET KICKOFF

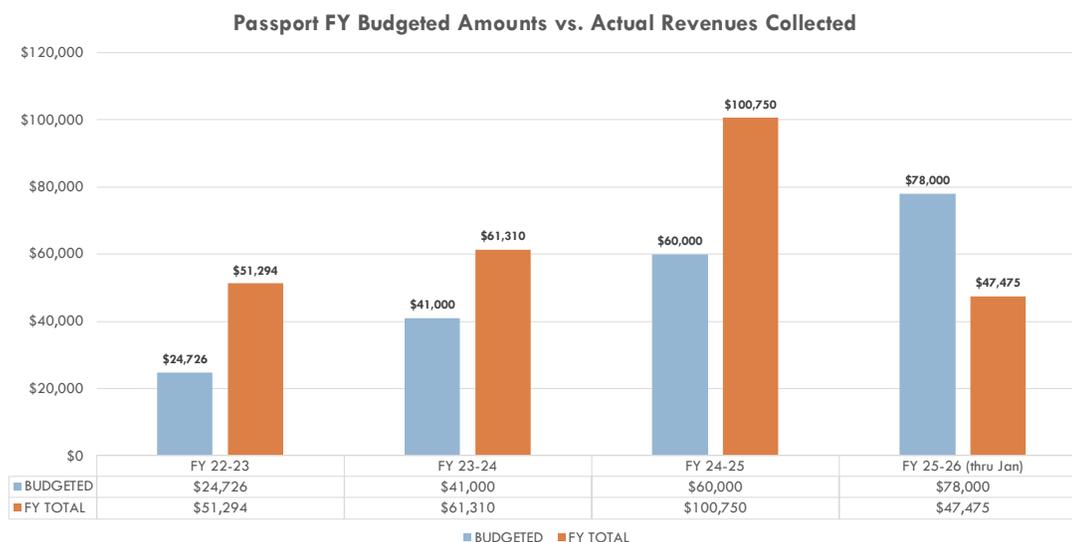
The Board began its budget planning process with presentations from County departments highlighting accomplishments, trends, and upcoming needs. Departments were given a limited time to present, and Commissioners were asked to submit follow-up questions after the meeting to allow all presentations to stay on schedule.

Register of Deeds – by Register Beth Landreth

Accomplishments

- The Property Fraud Alert program remains a key service, with registrations increasing by 58% over the past year and now nearing 1,100 users. The program helps protect property owners from fraudulent activity.
- The “Thank A Vet” program continues to grow, with 365 veteran ID discount cards issued since its launch and 25 participating local businesses.
- Staff continue to update vital records indexes daily and provide online access for research related to real estate and genealogy.

- The office successfully transitioned to the statewide NCDAVE system for birth and death records and completed required training. Staff also met new state requirements related to adoptee birth records and have already processed initial requests.
- Marriage license services have been streamlined with both in-person and online application options.
- Digitization efforts continue through the GT/GT project, including the addition of older condominium plans (1950s–1980s). A new GIS link now connects directly to online deed records for easier access.
- Staff created a direct link from GIS to the Register of Deeds online lookup page.
- Electronic recording continues to grow, with over 1,900 registered submitters and more than 70% of documents filed electronically.
- Passport services continue to meet strong demand. The office expanded to four service days per week and added part-time staff to support demand. The program remains self-supporting and continues to receive positive feedback from customers.



Trends

- Demand for electronic services continues to increase across both real estate and vital records.
- The office remains self-supporting, generating approximately \$335,000 more in revenue than expenses in FY 2024-2025, with similar performance expected this year.
- Passport services remain steady, with consistent demand that could support expansion to five days per week without increasing costs.

Goals

- The office plans to expand passport services to five days per week using existing staff.
- Staff will continue digitization efforts, expand electronic recording participation, and grow both the Fraud Alert and “Thank A Vet” programs.
- Additional goals include increasing online service options, updating the department website, continuing training on the NCDAVE system, and promoting statewide access to birth and death records.
- The office will also maintain a strong focus on customer service and staff training.

Tax Administration – by Administrator Jessica McCall

Accomplishments

- Tax Administration continues to perform at a high level, maintaining one of the top collection rates in North Carolina, with 99.75% of 2024 taxes collected as of June 30, 2025.
 - Collection efforts included thousands of customer contacts, payment plans, and enforcement actions such as bank attachments and wage garnishments.
- Payment options continue to improve, including the use of payment coupons, e-statements, and the Invoice Cloud system, which allows online payments through multiple platforms and supports paperless billing and scheduled payments.
- Staff completed required audits of Present Use Value properties, identifying over \$27,000 in additional taxable value.
- The office also manages occupancy taxes, collecting \$1.8 million in FY 2024-2025, and implemented online filing to improve efficiency.
- The License Plate Agency continues to perform well, serving 30,000 customers in 2025 and generating over \$134,000 in net compensation, an increase from the previous year. Monthly audit scores remained above 91.
- The 2025 reappraisal process was completed, with notices mailed in February 2025. Staff handled a high volume of appeals, including:
 - 1,860 informal appeals
 - 264 Board of Equalization and Review appeals
 - 14 appeals to the Property Tax Commission (with several resolved and others pending)
- Staff continue to expand cross-training and maintain professional certifications, while also completing ongoing safety training.

Trends

- The County's tax collection rate remains above the state average, with approximately 90% of taxpayers paying on time.
- The sales ratio indicates property values are slightly below market value, suggesting accurate appraisals.
- The License Plate Agency continues to perform consistently with strong audit results.
- Ongoing staff cross-training and professional development remain a priority.

Goals

- The department will continue to prioritize strong customer service and maintain a collection rate of at least 99.5%.
- Staff will continue improving payment options and maintaining accurate tax records across all property types.
- The office will continue the timely processing of appeals and required reviews of Present Use Value and exempt properties.
- The License Plate Agency will maintain high service standards and audit performance.
- Staff will continue training, certification, and safety programs to support long-term efficiency and service quality.
- The department is also preparing for the 2026 tax billing cycle, with bills expected to be mailed in July 2026. Will be mailed late July 2026

Building Inspections – by Director Jason Massey

Accomplishments

- Building Inspections continued to see strong activity in 2025, with high numbers of permits issued, fees collected, and inspections performed.
- Staff maintained a high level of customer service, consistently responding to requests within 24 hours.
- The department supported staff development and advancement. One employee is progressing toward full Level III certifications across trades, and two internal promotions were completed, including the appointment of a new Building Services Director and Senior Code Enforcement Officer.
- The department also filled two vacant Code Enforcement Officer positions to maintain service levels.

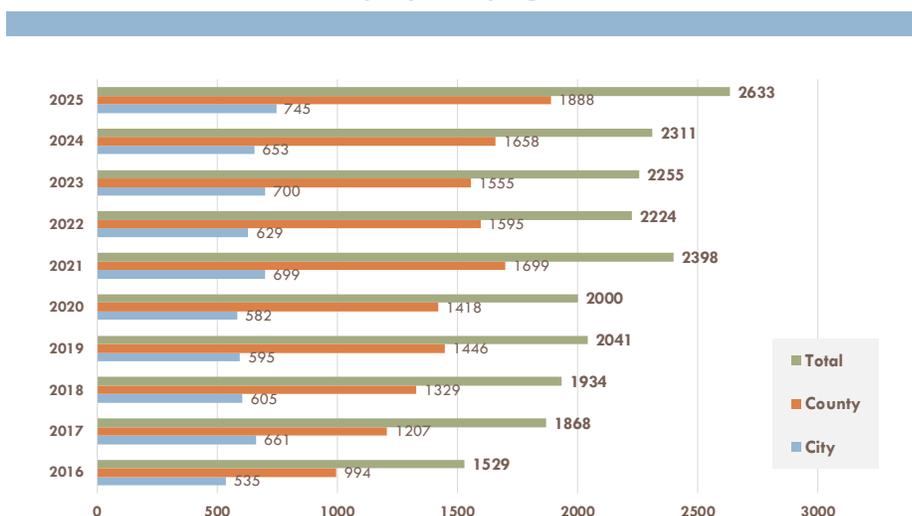
Trends

- Collaboration between contractors, local governments, and agencies has been important in helping residents connect with available resources.
- Rising construction costs are leading more homeowners to act as their own general contractor, which has increased the time needed for inspections and staff assistance.
- Larger commercial projects are also increasing the number and complexity of inspections required.

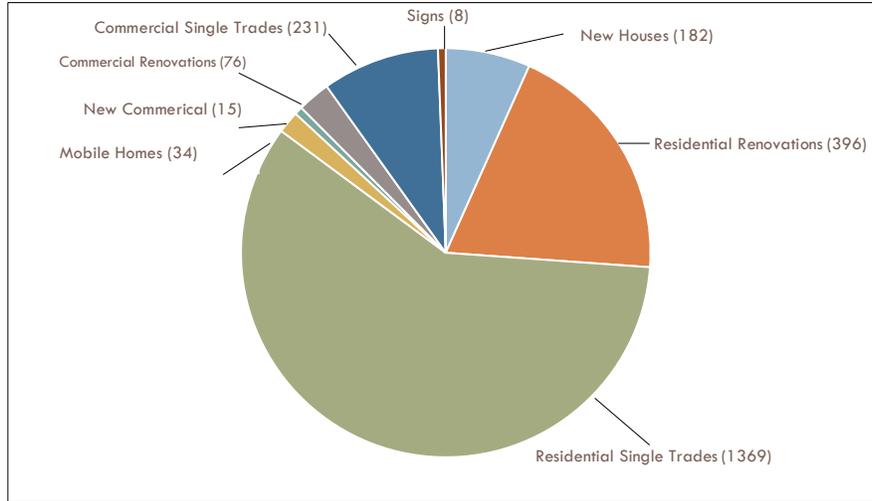
Goals

- The department will continue enforcing building codes to protect public safety and ensure compliance with state requirements.
- Staff will focus on retaining qualified inspectors and providing training on new state building codes expected to take effect next year.
- Additional priorities include improving staff training for Code Enforcement Officers, ensuring accurate property identification before issuing permits (including floodplain considerations), and continuing to provide high-quality inspection services.
- The department also aims to maintain current staffing levels and minimize turnover.

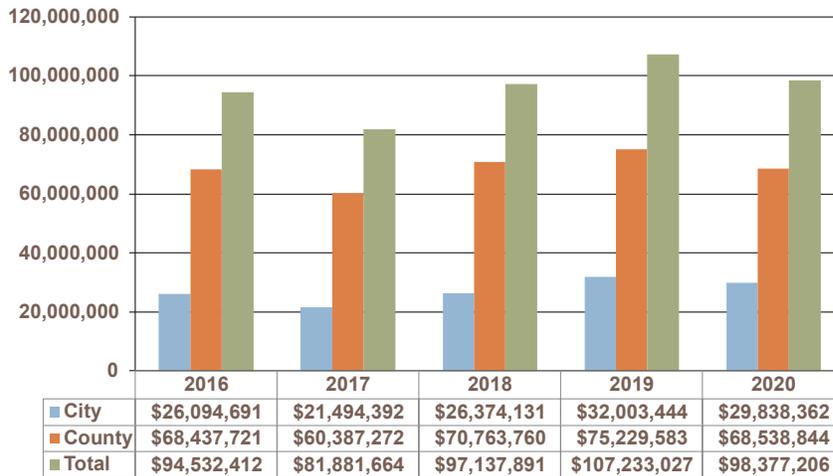
Total Permits Issued 2016 - 2025



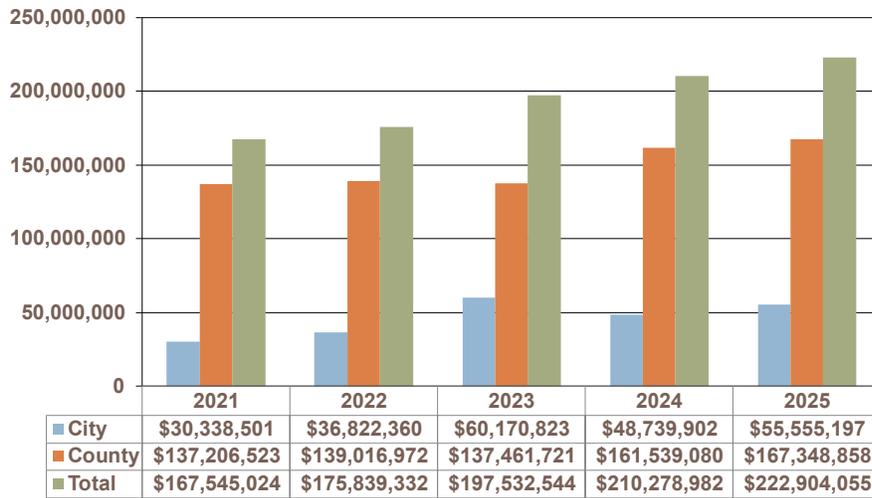
2025 Permits by Type



Total Construction Value 2016 - 2020



Total Construction Value 2021 - 2025



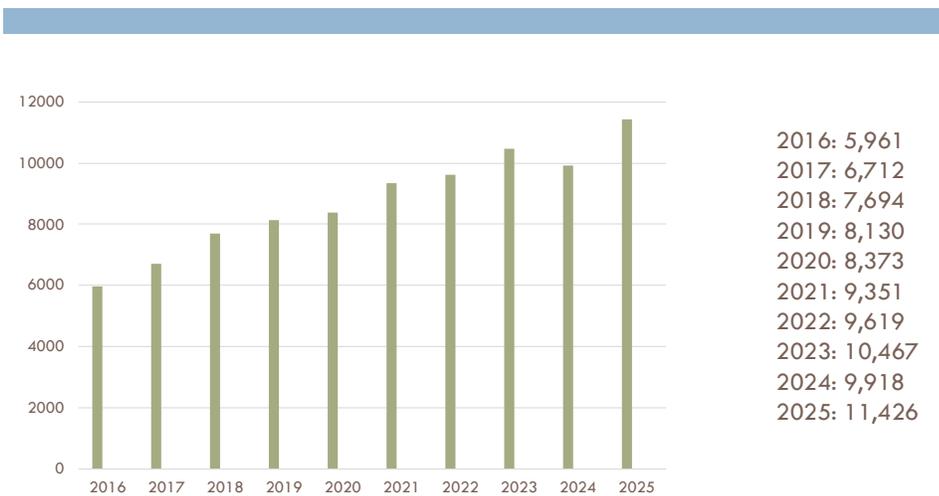
Total Fees Collected 2016 - 2020



Total Fees Collected 2021 - 2025



Number of Inspections 2016 – 2025



Soil and Water Conservation – by District Director Joann McCall

Accomplishments

- Recognized as Area 1 SWCD of the Year for 2024-2025 based on the annual program report.
- Administered four agricultural contracts totaling \$169,412, preventing 77 tons of soil from entering surface waters.
- Partnered with NRCS on four additional agricultural contracts totaling \$92,980.
- Collaborated with Resource Institute on 6,310 ft. of streambank stabilization, reducing 590 tons of sediment entering streams.

- Conducted 39 classroom presentations with 860 contest participants, producing seven area-level winners and one state-level first-place winner.
- Hosted 220 seventh graders at the 52nd annual Conservation Field Days.
- NC Agricultural Cost Share Program - 6-month progress:
 - 45 tons of soil protected through plan contracts.
 - Ongoing installation of best management practices from previous year's contracts.
 - Exceeded departmental goal of 40 acres affected by conservation BMPs (actual 45 acres).
- Rental Equipment - 6-month progress: Lime spreader rented to two farmers for two days, covering 48 acres.
- Began applications for Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) and State StRAP program to assist landowners affected by Hurricane Helene.
- Education Programs: Achieved 83% of the goal with 25 presentations reaching 500+ students; the theme for the year was *We All Live in a Watershed*.

Goals

- Complete Hurricane Helene recovery applications through EWP & StRAP programs.
- Continue administering NCACSP and other available funds to reduce sedimentation in streams.
- Promote rental equipment and maintain availability for farmers.
- Increase participation in middle and high school Conservation Education Programs.

Department of Social Services & New Adventure Learning Center – by Director Amanda Vanderoef

Accomplishments (DSS)

- Surpassed state guidelines in Child Welfare & Adult Services per TCDSS/NCDHHS Memorandum of Understanding.
- Finalized five adoptions since July 2025, achieving permanency for 13 children; expecting five more by year-end.
- Consistently meet the monthly Medicaid report card.
- Veritas HHS, a contract agency providing Child Support Services in Transylvania County, ranked consistently 10th–15th statewide.
- 15 licensed foster homes; ongoing recruitment efforts.
- Four staff completed the Rise Up mentorship program in 2025; seven enrolled for 2026. Six internal promotions in 2025, five completed Rise Up.
- Facilitated sponsorships for 46 children and disabled adults during Christmas.
- Dogwood Health Trust grant supported four interns; one full-time hire completed.

Trends (DSS)

- Adult Services: High demand for affordable housing; mental health provider shortages; 200+ awaiting services at Blue Ridge Health.
- Food & Nutrition Services: Over 1,500 active cases; \$500,000+ in monthly benefits.
- Emergency Assistance & 200% Programs: ~175 applicants July 2025-January 2026; CIP funding of ~\$75,000 used for heating/cooling crises.
- Medicaid: 730 applications received July-December 2025; 1,816 adults enrolled under Medicaid Expansion (10.8% of adults 19–64); 7,597 total citizens receiving Medicaid.
- Child Welfare: 6 children taken into custody since July 2025; 14 children achieved permanency (35.7% adoption, 35.7% reunification, 7.1% custody, 7.1% guardianship, 14.3% aged out).

Goals (DSS)

- Recruit foster and respite care providers, including kinship placements.

- Invest in professional development for leadership and staff.
- Improve communication with stakeholders and the workforce.
- Recruit and retain qualified Child Welfare Social Workers.

Accomplishments (New Adventure)

- Staff advancing Early Childhood Education degrees.
- Maintained a Superior Sanitation rating and a 5-star license.
- All staff are compliant with regulatory training; the substitute pool has increased by one.
- Hired permanent part-time Kitchen Aide.
- Opened a second three-to-five-year-old classroom after a three-year closure.

Trends (New Adventure)

- Recruitment of qualified staff remains challenging; the applicant pool is limited.
- Strong community, parent, and caregiver relationships.
- Open more frequently than comparable daycare centers.
- Partnership with Transylvania County Schools allows high school students in EDU 119 (Blue Ridge Community College) to gain classroom experience.
- Waitlist of 135+ children persist.
- Increase in challenging behaviors observed among children.

Goals (New Adventure)

- Improve security with keyless entry.
- Increase substitute and volunteer pools.
- Enhance parent, family, and community involvement.
- Expand staff development trainings.
- Complete training on the New Environmental Rating Assessment System.

Fire Marshal – by Fire Marshal Scott Justus

Accomplishments

- Completed 447 periodic fire and life safety inspections this past year, meeting the three-year mandate for all business and commercial occupancies per the 2018 NC Fire Code. Inspection frequencies vary from six months to three years.
- Transitioned the Fire Marshal's Office and all fire/rescue departments from Emergency Reporting to ESO, continuing to optimize the system's features.
- Completed 45 commercial plan reviews meeting Fire Marshal review standards.
- Investigated 32 fires (structure, vehicle, recreational units), including joint investigations with insurance companies, Sheriff's Office, Brevard Police Dept, NC SBI, and US ATF for incendiary/arson cases.
- Over 175 training hours completed, covering fire investigations, code updates, and emergency management.
- Active in Safety Committee, Vision Program, School Site Safety Surveys, Local Emergency Planning Committee, and other elements of the County's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- Provided fire prevention education training to daycare centers, county departments, and community groups upon request.

Trends

- Number of inspected occupancies grew from 1,825 to 1,962, reflecting new commercial development.

- Adoption of fees in 2025 reduced repeat inspections; most re-inspections occur for three-year periodic visits requiring additional attention.
- Fire and life safety service companies are requesting integration with Brycer Compliance Engine, a no-cost platform for the county that streamlines service report tracking, widely used by surrounding jurisdictions.
- 2024 Fire Code added inspections/permits for food trucks/trailers/vendors, commercial vacation/timeshare properties (17 new properties added last month), glamping sites, retreats, subdivisions, apartments, and other commercial developments.
- Fire Marshal receives frequent requests for pre-permitting site visits and plan reviews to guide new and future development projects.

Goals

- Maintain high-quality inspections, non-emergency and emergency responses, and fire prevention education.
- Assist Balsam Grove Fire Department with station expansion or new facility planning within 6 months.
- Update contractual agreements with the City of Brevard and Town of Rosman to comply with NCGS 160D-1102, 160D-1104, and 160D-1107 for fire code inspections; researching models from surrounding local governments to present recommendations to Administration and the Board.

Cooperative Extension – by Director Addison Bradley

Accomplishments

- Impacts
 - Over 215,000 contacts through educational programs, phone consultations, emails, and farm visits.
 - More than 4,000 volunteer hours donated.
 - \$23,000 in grant funding received to support educational programs.
- Staff Collaborations & Programs
 - Living in the Mountain Series: Introduction to Life in Transylvania County
 - 3rd Annual Agriculture Week: Partnered with Farm Bureau to teach agriculture lessons to elementary and middle school students; annual Ag. Breakfast attended by over 40 farmers and producers.
 - Continued collaboration with Vision Transylvania, The Sharing House, community centers, and the Transylvania County Library.
- 4-H Youth Development
 - Total participants: 819
 - 133 in chartered clubs
 - 667 in school enrichment programs
 - 57 attended camp
 - Popular programs (sewing, cooking, gardening) are full with waitlists.
- Family and Consumer Science
 - SHIIP Program: Assisted 452 clients, saving an estimated \$250,000 in healthcare costs.
 - Monthly nutrition column and education programs serve 644 participants across 89 classes. Programs frequently reach capacity with waitlists.
- Agriculture
 - Master Gardener Volunteers: 2,700 volunteer hours, maintaining gardens at Silvermont, the Library, Pisgah Forest Ranger Station, and Allison Deavor House.
 - Over 50 new certifications issued, including pesticide licenses and Beef Quality Assurance certifications.

- Provided farm visits and ~ \$40,000 in direct assistance for Hurricane Helene recovery.

Trends

- Homeschool clubs have the highest participation (30–40 members); demand is growing for after-school and summer programs to support childcare needs.
- Aging population increases demand for nutrition and disease prevention education, Medicare assistance, diabetes prevention, gut health, and toddler feeding guidance.
- Agriculture challenges include diverse agronomic pests and diseases (e.g., Avian Flu, New World Screwworm), loss of farmland due to aging farmers, and development pressures.

Goals

- Maintain a high level of service to all clients.
- Support farmers with regulatory compliance, farmland retention, and profit growth.
- Assist county advisory boards.
- Support SHIP and 4-H programs.
- Promote healthy lifestyles through Family & Consumer Sciences.
- Continue collaborations to benefit county residents.

Emergency Management/Communications/Animal Services – by Director Kevin Shook

Accomplishments (Emergency Management)

- Staff completed numerous in-person and virtual training courses, meeting EMPG requirements.
- Continued coordination with Emergency Services stakeholders, including Red Cross, Volunteer Departments, Public Health, and Social Services.
- Supported all emergency service agencies during incidents.
- Coordinated with NC State Emergency Management Hazard Mitigation Branch to assist citizens with Hurricane Helene-related mitigation applications, including property acquisition, home elevation, and soil stabilization. This process involves state and federal approvals and can take 3–5 years.

Trends (Emergency Management)

- Ongoing integration of non-traditional agencies into emergency response.
- Growing need for technical response capabilities (high-angle, water, wilderness rescue, haz-mat).
- GIS and specialty software integration (SarTopo) is increasing.
- Supporting commercial GIS updates for private citizen use through Google and ESRI.
- Slight decrease in road naming/address requests,
- Number of calls for service dropped slightly but call service hours increased.
- Continued recovery efforts from Hurricane Helene, including debris removal and infrastructure support.

Goals (Emergency Management)

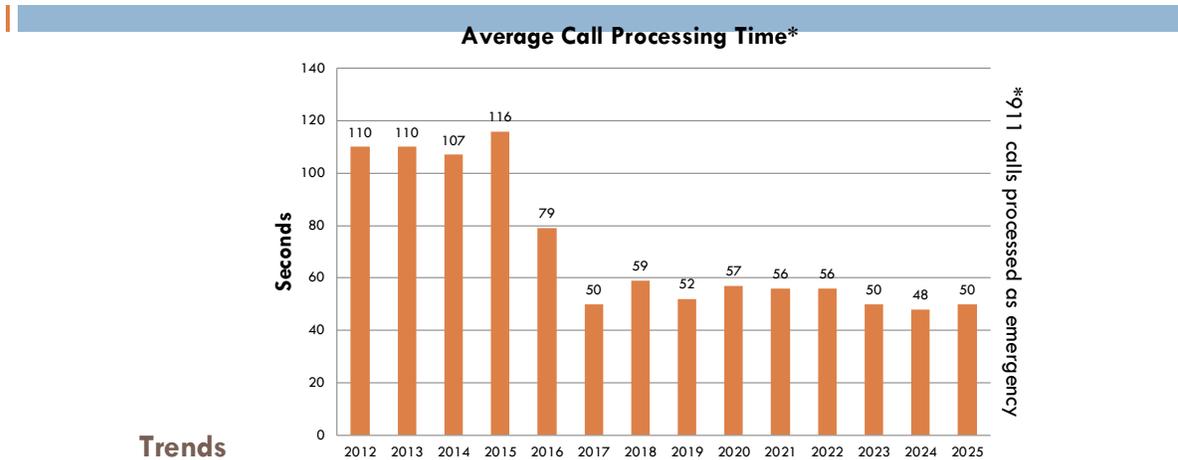
- Maintain coordination with local emergency agencies and volunteer departments.
- Update Emergency Operations Plan and County ordinances.
- Implement Emergency Response Teams for technical incidents.
- Expand centralized GIS programs for efficiency and public benefit.
- Continue Hazard Mitigation efforts from Helene.

Accomplishments (Communications)

- Completed remodel of the 911 Center and installed a new dispatch radio console system.
- Director appointed to NC Statewide Interoperability Committee.

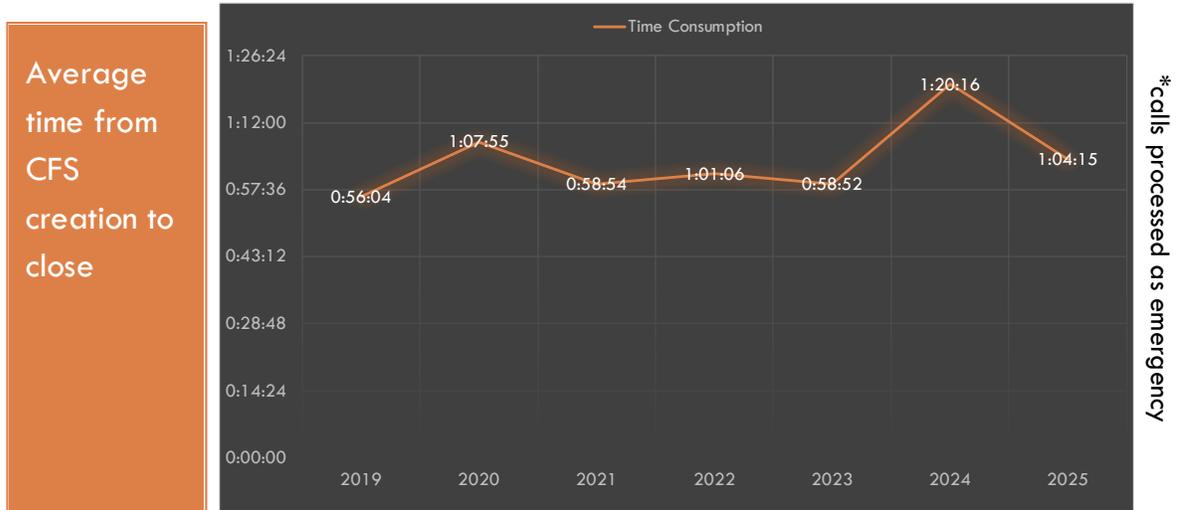
- Hosted statewide communications exercise at Dupont State Recreational Forest with ~100 participants.
- Began construction of a replacement public safety tower in Lake Toxaway.
- Staff received advanced certifications in Incident Tactical Dispatch, IT Services, Homeland Security Cybersecurity, and Communications.
- Provided technical support for major events, including wildfires, search and rescue, and law enforcement operations.

Trends (Communications)



Call processing time continues to hold true under our goal of 60 seconds, 90% of the time.





Goals (Communications)

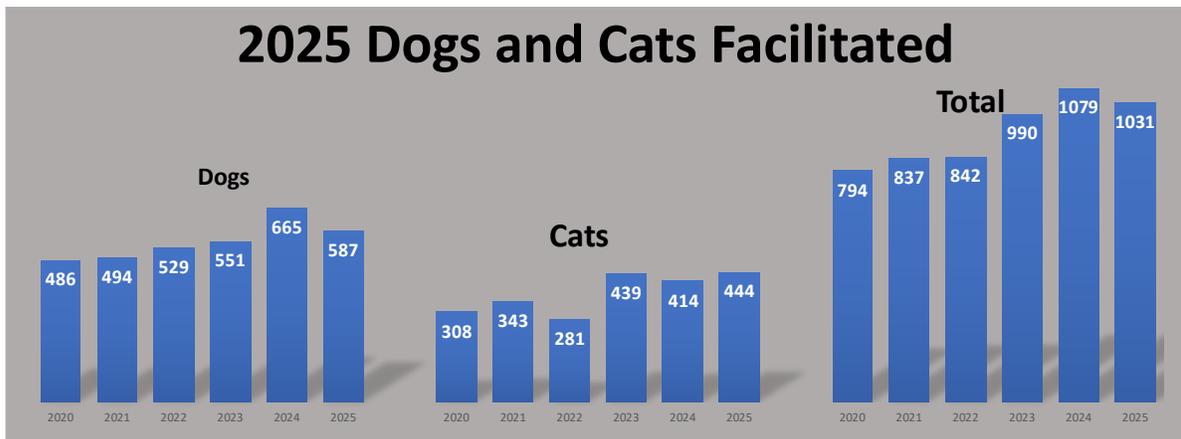
- Continue telecommunicator training, certification, and re-certification.
- Expand and improve the VHF simulcast radio system.
- Upgrade towers and buildings to meet current/future communications needs.
- Enhance the countywide GIS platform to improve transparency, staff efficiency, and responder capability.
- Strengthen partnerships with state and local agencies for field operations support.

Accomplishments (Animal Services)

- Sheltered displaced animals during spring wildfires, including exotic species (e.g., 300 lb. tortoise, tegu lizard, exotic birds).
- Maintained a live release rate of over 90% (achieved 92% in 2025).
- Provided public education on animal welfare and care.
- Assisted law enforcement with animal cruelty investigations and court cases.

Trends (Animal Services)

- Increased owner surrenders and stray intakes.
- 6% rise in service requests and 36% increase in animal bites/exposures.
- Most calls involve animals at large or livestock not properly contained.



Goals (Animal Services)

- Maintain high live release rate (90%+).
- Increase public awareness of spay/neuter programs and leash/containment laws.

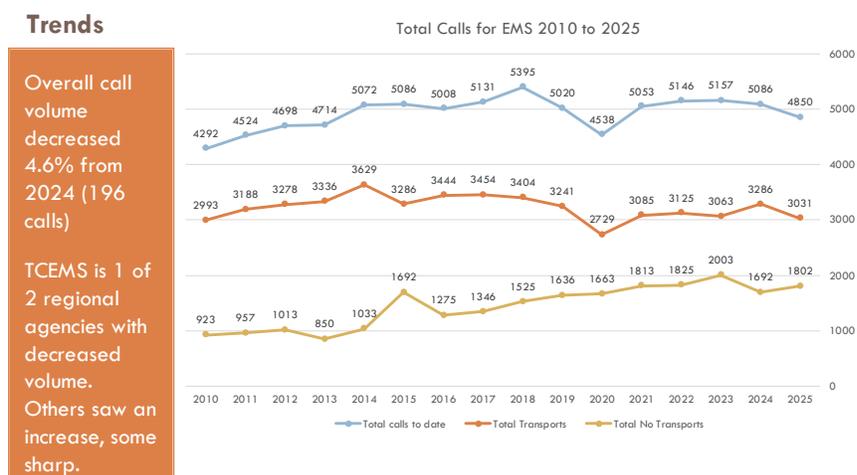
Emergency Medical Services (EMS) – by Director Kim Bailey

Accomplishments

- Continued collaboration with community partners to address staffing challenges, with an increase in full-time and part-time applications.
- Coordinated with local, state, and federal partners to maintain medical services during the March/April 2025 wildfires.
- Continued development and promotion of the Transylvania County Peer Support Team, with active committees for procedures, education, and resources.
- Procured essential equipment and software and implemented updated EMS protocols and Standard Operating Guidelines.
- Ongoing collaboration with Mission Health/HCA to reduce out-of-county transports, resulting in a significant decrease since 2016 and improved ambulance availability for local 911 calls.
- Pursuing designation as a teaching institution through NCOEMS and partnering with guest instructors for continuing education and leadership development.

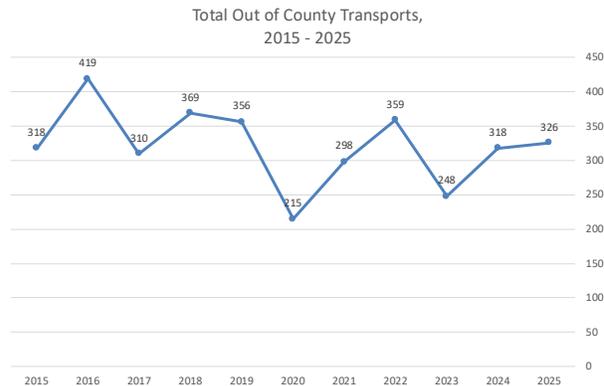
Trends

- Recruitment and retention remain ongoing challenges locally and nationwide, though recent pay adjustments, facility improvements, and updated equipment have positively impacted efforts.
- Healthcare reform impacts:
 - Anticipated increase in EMS call volume due to insurance-related changes and increased Emergency Department usage.
 - Delayed medical care may result in more severe patient conditions and increased out-of-county transports.
- Turnaround times exceeding 15 minutes remain consistent due to hospital volumes, staffing shortages, and diversions. Out-of-county transports can occupy an ambulance for up to three hours.
- Increased need for mental health support, including stress management, PTSD awareness, and suicide prevention.
- Continuing education requirements are increasing, contributing to overtime.
- Rising incidents of violence against EMS personnel nationwide.



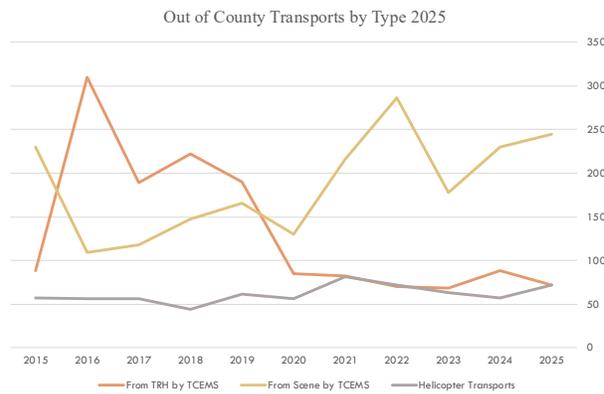
Out-of-county transports can tie up an ambulance for up to 3 hours.

In 2025, 33.1% of these transports (108) occurred between the hours of 2100-0900 when TCEMS is limited to 2 fully staffed on-duty ambulances.



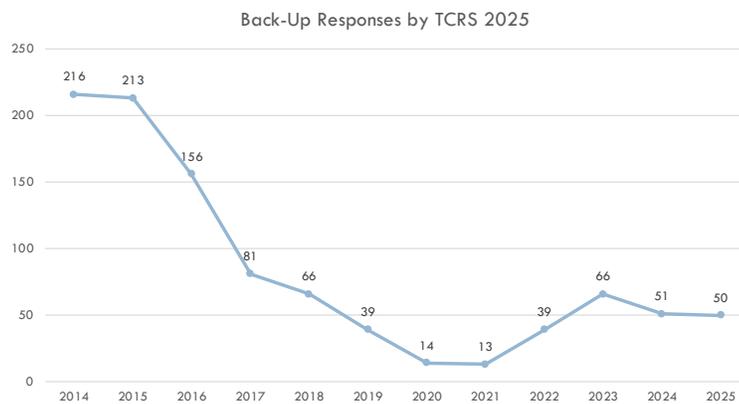
* Note: new protocol for requesting non-emergency transports started in September 2016

If a helicopter is unable to transport critical patients, ground transport is used.



* Note: new protocol for requesting non-emergency transports started in September 2016

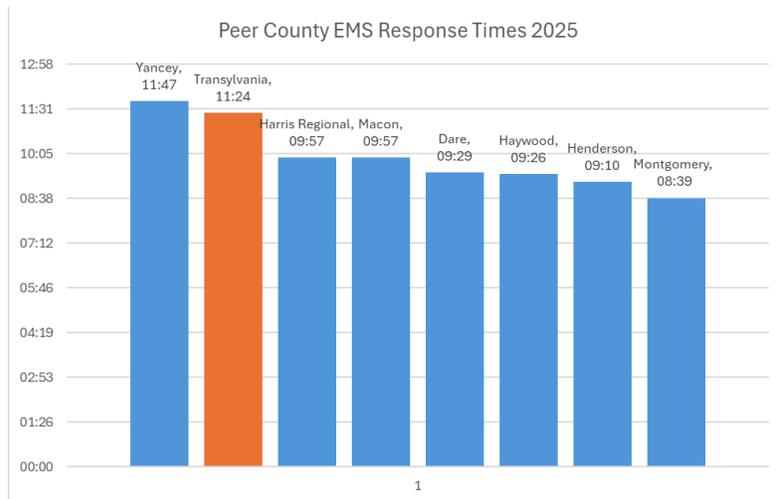
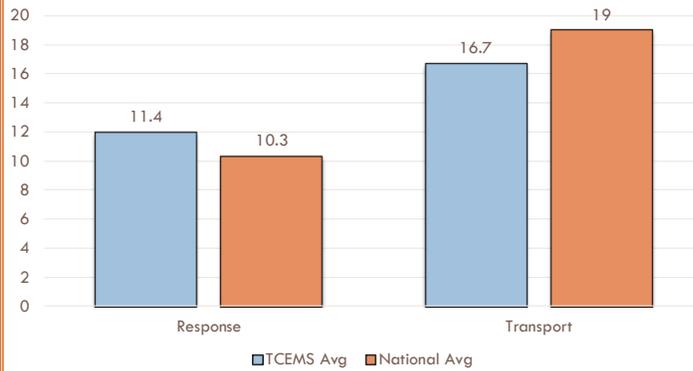
As primary back up ambulance, Transylvania County Rescue Squad responded an ambulance 50 times in 2025 with 14 transports. This is a decrease from 51 times in 2024 with 29 transports.



The total average TCEMS response time is 1.1 minutes greater than the national average (Note: Includes urban, suburban and rural in the average)

The total average TCEMS transport time is 2.3 minutes less.

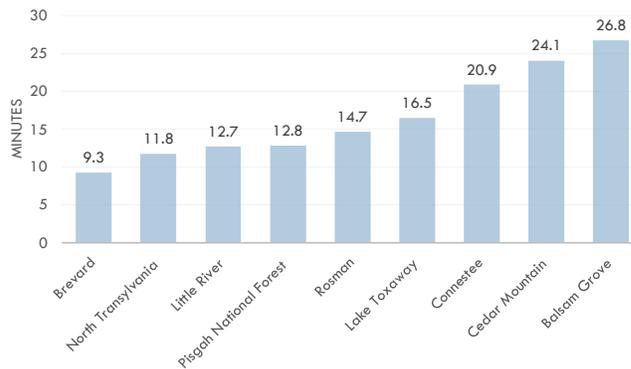
Response and Transport Times National vs TCEMS Averages, 2025



National Average response time is 10.3 minutes.

The total average TCEMS response time was 11.4 minutes in 2025.

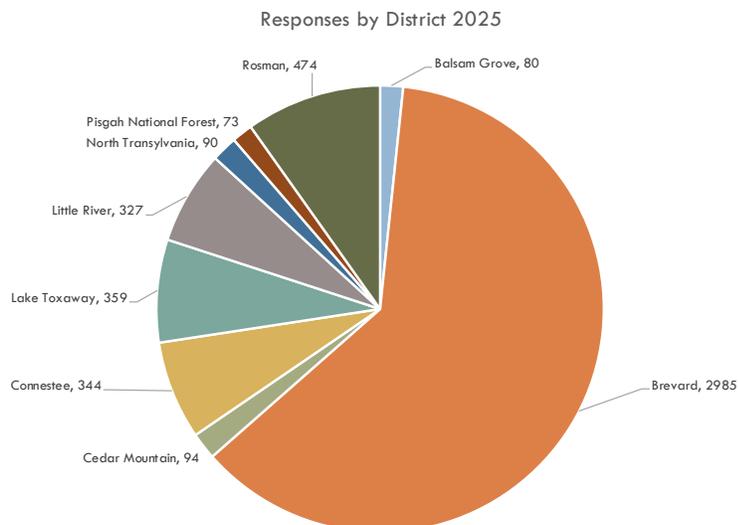
Average Response Time by District, 2025



* EMS Resources located in Brevard and Quebec

Trends

The majority of responses are in the more urbanized areas of the county with the majority of calls in Brevard, Rosman, Lake Toxaway, and Conestee.



Goals

- Continue collaboration with partners to improve recruitment and retention.
- Expand mental health support and awareness initiatives for emergency services personnel.
- Reduce response times, particularly in outlying areas with moderate call volumes.
- Replace and maintain critical equipment.
- Continue mass violence response training in coordination with Blue Ridge Community College and the Sheriff's Office.
- Work with Mission Health to further reduce out-of-county transports.
- Collaborate with Transylvania Regional Hospital to reduce diversions and maintain adequate EMS coverage.

Operations/Parks and Recreation – by Director Chad Owenby

Accomplishments (Housekeeping)

- Maintained safe, clean, and professional environments across County facilities.
- Continued collaboration with external partners, including TVS and community service work programs.

Trends (Housekeeping)

- Increased use of contracted services for specialized cleaning (floor care, carpets, windows, mold/mildew, tile, and grout).
- Ongoing support from TVS clients and probation/community service programs for cleaning and supply delivery.

Goals (Housekeeping)

- Streamline supply inventory to reduce costs and waste.
- Improve efficiency through updated schedules, equipment use, and contracted services.
- Maintain high standards of cleanliness and safety in all facilities.
- Continue staff training using NEOGOV and partner resources (BRAME, Spartan).

Accomplishments (Safety)

- Continued Safety Committee efforts, resulting in fewer incidents.
- Reduced workers' compensation claims and vehicle incidents.
- Strong evaluation from the NCACC, resulting in a 3% insurance premium credit.

Trends (Safety)

- Increased departmental safety meetings, many held monthly.
- Continued decline in workers' compensation claims.
- Expanded use of electronic safety and risk management training (NEOGOV).
- Improved safety metrics, including reduced incident and DART rates.

Goals (Safety)

- Continue use of the Accelerate/Velocity EHS system for tracking safety data.
- Promote monthly safety meetings across departments.
- Monitor workers' compensation trends and implement prevention strategies.
- Ensure compliance with OSHA and NCDOL reporting and prepare for inspections/audits.

Accomplishments (Maintenance)

- Added new evidence storage lot at the Public Safety Facility.
- Resurfaced tennis courts at Silvermont.

Trends (Maintenance)

- Aging facilities and equipment are increasing maintenance demands and costs (HVAC, elevators, roofs, parking lots).
- Several buildings require roof repairs or replacements, with additional needs anticipated over the next five years.
- Continued reliance on contracted services for specialized repairs (HVAC, elevators, asphalt, boilers, mowing).

Goals (Maintenance)

- Improve facility appearance, scheduling, and service efficiency.
- Continue HVAC replacement program, including phasing out R-22 systems.
- Complete work orders in a timely manner using the MUNIS EAM system.
- Evaluate and manage service contracts (pest control, elevators, roofing, landscaping, etc.).
- Maintain grounds contracts to support mowing and facility upkeep.
- Explore HVAC service contracts to reduce repair costs.

Accomplishments (Parks and Recreation)

- Youth Sports & Camps:
 - 458 youth sports participants across multiple programs (up from 298 in 2015).
 - 811 summer camp participants across multiple sites (up from 95 in 2015).
- Pre-K & Miscellaneous Programs:
 - 1,024 Pre-K participants and 402 participants in other programs, both showing significant growth since 2015.
- Senior & Community Programming:
 - 976 regular participants at Silvermont through senior programs and activities.
 - Transylvania Youth Council grew to 65 members.
 - Continued partnerships supporting programs like Factory Strong for Special Olympics athletes.

- Community Events:
 - Light Up the Night (~3,000 attendees) and Super Soaked Saturday (1,300 attendees) continue to grow.
 - Strong partnerships with local organizations and departments support programming success.
- FY 2026 projected program revenue of \$100,000 and rental revenue of \$8,000, both trending on target.

Trends (Parks and Recreation)

- Increasing demand for summer camps; 2025 sessions filled within 11 hours.
- Staffing and facility availability limit program expansion.
- Growing need for childcare, youth programs, and Pre-K offerings.
- Record participation in senior programming at Silvermont.
- Increased demand for gym space, currently at full capacity.

Goals (Parks and Recreation)

- Continue expanding and adapting programming to meet growing community needs.
- Maintain high-quality recreational opportunities across all age groups.

Solid Waste – by Interim Director Chad Owenby



Current placement of waste January 2026



Photo overlooking new cell construction in relation to current cells 1 -6.

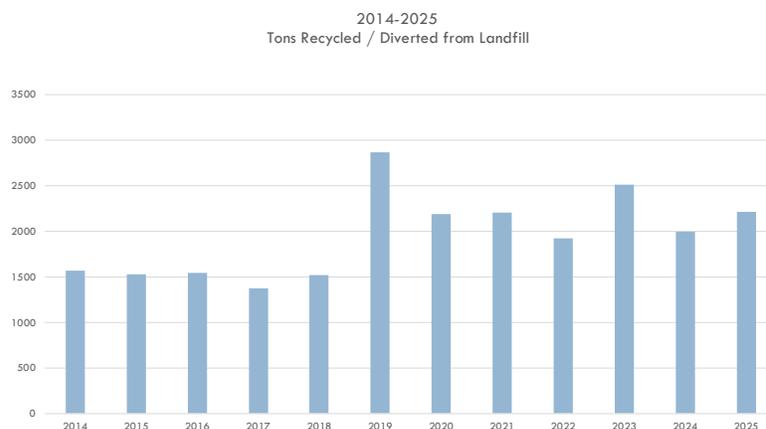
Overview and Operations

Staff provided an update on the Phase 7 landfill cell expansion, which is approximately 60% complete with an anticipated completion date of June 8, 2026, weather permitting. The project has a total budget of \$9.9 million, including construction, professional services, and contingency, with \$7 million funded through a state grant. The new cell is permitted for approximately 536,000 cubic yards and is expected to provide an estimated six years of capacity.

Landfill lifespan continues to be influenced by compaction rates and incoming waste volumes. Based on recent estimates, the current cell is projected to reach capacity around mid-2026, though this timeline is adjusted annually. Staff noted that compaction efficiency, waste type, and operational practices significantly impact available airspace and overall lifespan.

Tonnage and Regional Context

Annual municipal solid waste tonnage for Transylvania County remains significantly lower than neighboring counties, with approximately 30,700 tons in 2025 compared to much higher volumes in surrounding jurisdictions. As a smaller landfill operation, this results in higher disposal costs per ton. Staff also noted that some neighboring counties accept out-of-county waste or utilize transfer systems, which influences their operational models.

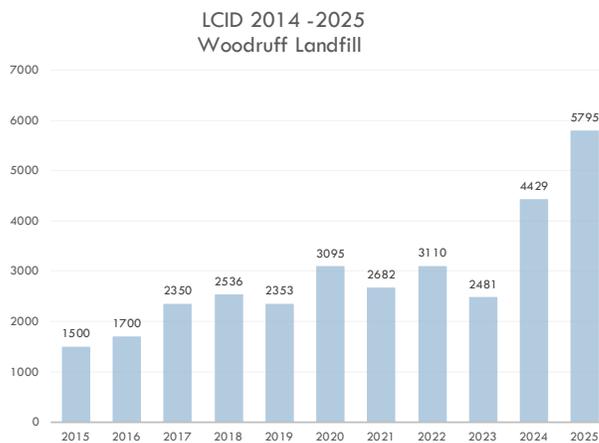


* LCID: Land Clearing
And debris

* Hurricane Helene impacted Sept 2024 through the end of 2025

Increased grinding cost and large quantities of mulch to manage

Staff comparing disposal cost in surrounding area



Totals for 2025:

Rainfall 85.73 inches

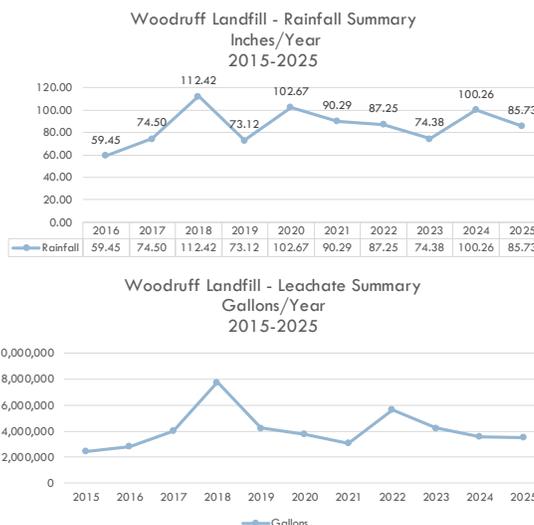
Leachate 3,535,300 gallons

Compare to 5 Year avg :

90.97 inches

4,052,840 gal

Leachate Pre-Treatment



Planning and Future Considerations

Staff highlighted the need for long-term planning, noting that landfill permitting, design, and construction can take 5–7 years. Upcoming studies will evaluate solid waste disposal options and funding strategies, including potential alternatives such as transfer stations, incineration, or continued landfilling. These studies will consider a 20–25-year planning horizon, including capital and operational costs, revenue potential, and impacts on service levels or fees.

Goals

The department’s goals include completing the Phase 7 expansion on schedule, maximizing available landfill capacity, evaluating long-term disposal and funding options, assessing closure strategies for older landfill cells, and maintaining strong compliance with state inspections, noting a seven-year history of minimal deficiencies.

The Board received the first half of departmental presentations as part of the FY 2027 budget kickoff. The remaining presentations are scheduled for March 9.

NEW BUSINESS

REQUEST BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO REALLOCATE CAPITAL FUNDS

The Board considered a request from the Board of Education to reallocate unused funds within the Education Capital Fund from prior-year projects that will not move forward. The Board of Education approved this request on February 16, 2026.

The request includes reallocating \$105,000 from a FY 2021 Brevard Elementary air handler project that was never completed, along with \$9,897.70 remaining from a FY 2024 systemwide capital repairs line, for a total of \$114,897.70. If approved, the funds would be used to outfit the remodeled Old Gym for spectator use, including retractable bleachers, electronic scoreboards, and wall mats.

The County Manager noted that County and School System staff have been working collaboratively to review the Education Capital Fund, identify completed or inactive projects, and reallocate available funds to current needs.

The Board discussed the importance of ensuring previously funded projects are completed as intended and avoiding a recurrence of past issues where funds remained unused. Members acknowledged the improved working relationship between the County and the School System and supported the effort to better utilize available resources.

Commissioners also expressed appreciation for efforts to enhance the functionality of the Old Gym rather than pursuing new construction. It was noted that the facility will soon begin hosting events.

Commissioner Dalton moved to approve the request by the Board of Education to reallocate funds within the Education Capital Fund, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, and unanimously approved.

REQUEST TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FROM SHERIFF'S OFFICE TUITION ASSISTANCE RESERVE

The Board considered a request to appropriate \$14,000 from the Sheriff's Office Tuition Assistance Reserve to fund the upfit of an undercover vehicle for the Narcotics Unit.

Staff explained that the Tuition Assistance Reserve, established in 2016 and funded through jail commissary proceeds, has accumulated a balance exceeding program demand. The fund is expected to total over \$90,000 at the close of FY 2025, while anticipated tuition reimbursement requests for FY 2026 are minimal. Historically, excess funds have been used for capital needs within the Sheriff's Office.

Although sufficient funds are available to purchase the vehicle, the current vehicle upfit budget does not cover the associated costs within this fiscal year. The requested transfer would allow completion of the upfit while maintaining adequate reserves for future tuition assistance needs.

The Board discussed recruitment and retention challenges, noting that while the tuition assistance program remains a valuable incentive, current participation is limited. Staff emphasized the importance of continued investment in compensation and workforce development to remain competitive.

Additional discussion included vehicle procurement timelines, upfit delays, and efforts to improve vendor performance and efficiency. Staff also confirmed that remaining reserve funds will carry forward into future fiscal years.

Commissioner Dalton moved to approve the Sheriff's request and amended the budget to utilize the Sheriff's Office Tuition Assistance Reserve Fund to fund the upfit of a new undercover vehicle, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager announced the appointment of Ashley Minery as the County's new Planning and Community Development Director. Ms. Minery has been with Transylvania County for five years and brings experience in planning, ordinance enforcement, GIS, housing initiatives, and regional collaboration efforts.

The Manager also expressed condolences on the passing of Environmental Health Program Specialist Brian Johnson, noting his dedication to public service and the impact of his loss. Due to the resulting staffing challenges, the public was asked for patience with Environmental Health services, and inquiries should be directed to the Environmental Health Supervisor.

In response to public comment, the Manager clarified that \$700,000 has already been allocated for the Azalea/Rhododendron infrastructure project, and there has been no discussion of rescinding those funds. She encouraged the public to rely on credible sources for information regarding County projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comments represent the opinions or viewpoints of the speakers.

Anna Ferguson, a candidate for NC House District 119, expressed appreciation for the level of professionalism, planning, and service delivery demonstrated by Transylvania County, noting the County sets a high standard compared to others in the region.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman expressed appreciation for staff and the quality of departmental presentations, emphasizing the importance of public input in shaping services and budget priorities while maintaining a balance between service levels and tax rates.

Commissioner Chappell expressed condolences to the Stroup family for the loss of a community member who made a lasting impact on the County. He also highlighted the importance of long-term planning in capital projects, noting that prior investments in public safety infrastructure have allowed the County to generate additional revenue and better meet service needs. Similar considerations were noted for future facility planning.

Chairwoman McCall also responded to public concerns regarding the Azalea Avenue project, clarifying that funding has already been allocated to support the City of Brevard's project and that no shift in priorities has occurred. She encouraged the public to rely on accurate and credible sources of information. She also congratulated the US Hockey Team for winning gold in the Olympics and recognized her great-niece as the first lady wrestler to win a state championship for Brevard.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Chappell moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously carried.**

Teresa K. McCall, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board