

**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 24, 2026, 6:00 PM**

The Transylvania County Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on Monday, August 24, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, North Carolina. There were approximately 30 people in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Teresa McCall, presiding, declared that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order.

WELCOME

Chair McCall welcomed those in attendance and introduced the Board members and staff.

Present: Chair Teresa McCall, Vice-Chair Larry Chapman, Commissioner Jason Chappell, Commissioner Jake Dalton, Commissioner Chase McKelvey.

Staff: County Manager Jaime Laughter, Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan, County Attorney Julie Hooten (attending via Zoom).

PUBLIC HEARING

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM APPLICATION

Chair McCall opened the public hearing. The County Manager introduced Ashley Minery, Planning, Community Development, and Transportation Director, to present the application.

Ms. Minery explained that the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) receives Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding to support public transportation systems, and that Transylvania County's Public Transportation Department is a sub-recipient of this funding through NCDOT's Integrated Mobility Division. The unified grant application is submitted annually in October for the following fiscal year, with the current application covering FY 2028. Funding is formula-based and considers factors including land area, population, growth, and the number of low-income households.

The application includes three funding categories. The 5311 Administration category requests \$166,689 to subsidize administrative costs of operating the transportation system, with a \$25,003 local match from the General Fund. The Combined Capital category requests \$125,000 for maintenance of the fleet of publicly supported transit vehicles and other capital needs, with a \$12,500 local match from the General Fund. The 5310 Operating category requests \$110,000 to support out-of-county transportation for elderly and disabled residents and transportation from unincorporated areas of the County to incorporated areas. The required \$55,000 local match for this category will be provided through NCDOT's ROAP funding.

Ms. Minery noted that Transylvania County Transportation complies with all NCDOT and FTA requirements and reporting requirements associated with the funding.

Chair McCall explained the public hearing procedures, noting that no sign-up was required and that each speaker would be allowed three minutes. No members of the public came forward to speak.

Commissioner Chappell commented on the relatively small local match required for the program.

Commissioner Dalton noted that the program provides transportation services to elderly residents and other County residents through the TIM buses.

With no additional speakers, Chair McCall declared the public hearing closed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair McCall reviewed the public comment procedures and noted that five speakers had signed up to speak. The comment period was limited to 15 minutes, with each speaker allotted three minutes.

Samantha Jones addressed the Board regarding the death of her son and another young man approximately two years earlier. Ms. Jones expressed concern that the investigation was incomplete and stated that the state trooper who conducted the initial investigation acknowledged to her that failing to go to the house where the young men had originated was a mistake. She said Sheriff Owenby had advised her that the investigation fell under the state trooper's jurisdiction because an ATV was involved, but she believed a parallel county investigation should also have been conducted. Ms. Jones also questioned the delay in the 911 call following the discovery of the young men. She asked the Board for assistance in obtaining answers regarding the investigation.

Ashley Hart addressed the Board regarding the Flock Safety automatic license plate reader (ALPR) system used by the Transylvania County Sheriff's Office. Ms. Hart stated that she supports law enforcement but does not believe that support requires endorsing all surveillance technology. She expressed concerns about the collection and retention of information regarding vehicles and their locations, including information about individuals who are not suspected of criminal activity. She also raised questions about Transylvania County's participation in a data-sharing network with other law enforcement agencies, the lack of a public transparency portal, and who has access to information collected through the system. Ms. Hart said she had been unable to determine whether the cameras had contributed to solving crimes and asked the Board to review the materials she provided and reconsider the use of Flock cameras.

Robert Jazowski spoke further regarding concerns about ALPR systems. He argued that the technology can function as a vehicle-tracking system and may capture identifying characteristics beyond license plate numbers. Mr. Jazowski cited examples of individuals he said had been detained or otherwise affected as a result of ALPR misidentification and referenced public concerns regarding the use of Flock cameras in other communities. He raised Fourth Amendment concerns regarding the technology.

Doug Powell spoke in anticipation of Constitution Week, September 17–23, 2026. Mr. Powell provided historical background regarding the origins of the Fourth Amendment, including James Otis's 1761 arguments against writs of assistance and John Adams's later reference to those proceedings. He discussed the responsibility of elected officials to protect individual rights and cited statements attributed to Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin regarding the balance between liberty and safety.

Karen Gleasman referenced a prior statement by Commissioner Dalton that she understood to mean that a data center would not be located in Transylvania County. In light of Commissioner Dalton's upcoming departure from the Board, Ms. Gleasman requested a formal written statement from the Board confirming whether that position represented the official position of the Board of Commissioners.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Chair McCall noted that the proclamations recognizing Constitution Week and National Preparedness Month would be read aloud following approval due to their significance.

Vice Chair Chapman moved to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Dalton. The motion was unanimously approved.

The following items were approved as part of the Consent Agenda:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

June 22, 2026, sealed closed session minutes.

July 13, 2026, regular meeting minutes.

DISCOVERY, RELEASE & MONTHLY SETTLEMENT REPORT - JULY 2026

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 105-312(b), the Tax Administrator is required to report discoveries of property not properly listed during the regular listing period. Pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 105-381(b), the Tax Administrator is also required to provide the Board with a monthly report of actions taken on requests for releases or refunds. For July 2026, tax dollars released totaled \$13,072.44, and refunds issued totaled \$7,310.26. The Board approved the July 2026 Discovery, Release & Monthly Settlement Report.

PROCLAMATION DECLARING SEPTEMBER 17-23, 2026, AS CONSTITUTION WEEK

The Board approved Proclamation #29-2026 declaring September 17–23, 2026, as Constitution Week in Transylvania County. The proclamation recognizes the 239th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution and encourages residents to learn more about the Constitution and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Vice Chair Chapman read the proclamation aloud.

PROCLAMATION # 29-2026 CONSTITUTION WEEK

WHEREAS, September 17, 2026, marks the two hundred and thirty-ninth anniversary of the signing of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution remains the foundation of our nation’s democratic republic system of government, safeguarding the rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, Constitution Week provides an opportunity for citizens to reflect on the enduring principles embodied in the Constitution and to increase their understanding of the rights and liberties it protects; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 915 authorizes and requests the President of the United States to annually proclaim September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week; and

WHEREAS, observing Constitution Week encourages civic education, public engagement, and renewed appreciation for the vision and dedication of the Framers who established our constitutional government;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaims **September 17–23, 2026, as CONSTITUTION WEEK** in Transylvania County and encourages all residents to celebrate this

observance by learning more about the Constitution, honoring the freedoms it secures, and reaffirming their commitment to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

This the 24th day of August 2026.

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

PROCLAMATION DECLARING SEPTEMBER 2026 AS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

The Board approved Proclamation #30-2026 declaring September 2026 as National Preparedness Month in Transylvania County. The proclamation encourages residents, businesses, and organizations to prepare for emergencies by developing and practicing emergency plans, assembling emergency supply kits, staying informed about potential hazards, and participating in community preparedness efforts. Commissioner Chappell read the proclamation aloud.

**PROCLAMATION # 30-2026
DECLARING SEPTEMBER 2026 AS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH IN TRANSYLVANIA
COUNTY**

WHEREAS, National Preparedness Month is observed each September to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies that can occur at any time; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina communities continue to face a variety of hazards, including severe weather, hurricanes, flooding, wildfires, landslides, power outages, public health emergencies, and other natural and human-caused disasters; and

WHEREAS, preparedness helps save lives, reduce suffering, and strengthen the ability of individuals, families, businesses, and communities to recover more quickly from emergencies and disasters; and

WHEREAS, emergency preparedness begins with personal responsibility, including creating emergency plans, building emergency supply kits, staying informed about local hazards, and maintaining communication with family members, neighbors, and coworkers; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County recognizes the vital role of emergency management personnel, first responders, public health professionals, community organizations, volunteers, and citizens who work together to build a resilient and prepared community; and

WHEREAS, the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners desires that every household, property owner, business, and visitor in Transylvania County be prepared for potential emergencies and take proactive steps to protect life and property;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim September 2026 as NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH in Transylvania County and encourages all residents, businesses, and organizations to take steps to prepare for emergencies by developing and practicing emergency plans, assembling emergency supply kits, staying informed of potential hazards, and participating in community preparedness efforts.

This the 24th day of August 2026.

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

COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE POLICY UPDATES

The Computer and Internet Use Policy is periodically reviewed and updated to address changes in technology, cybersecurity, legal requirements, and County operations. The recommended revisions clarify requirements related to federal, state, and grant-funded communications, branding, funding acknowledgments, and disclosures, and distinguish official County communications from personal, campaign, or privately managed social media accounts of elected officials. The Board approved the recommended revisions to the Computer and Internet Use Policy.

REVISED BYLAWS OF THE TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

The Board approved revisions to the Bylaws of the Transylvania County Council on Aging. The revisions add an annual election of a secretary and formally designate a County staff liaison to support the Council in carrying out its responsibilities. Additional administrative revisions clarify and modernize the bylaws and improve readability. The Board originally approved a restructuring of the Council in August 2022 to improve its effectiveness while reducing quorum requirements and potential conflicts of interest.

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM APPLICATION

The Board authorized Transylvania County Transportation to apply for FY 2028 Public Transportation Program funding, enter into an agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, and provide the required assurances and local match. The Board also approved the program resolution required as part of the application process. A public hearing regarding the application was held at the beginning of the meeting.



UNIFIED GRANT APPLICATION

5311 CERTIFICATION FORM

Resolution No. 32-2026

Resolution authorizing the filing of applications with the North Carolina Department of Transportation— Integrated Mobility Division for grant years FY2028 – FY2032, for federal transportation assistance authorized by 49 U.S.C. 5311, United States Code, other federal statutes administered by the Federal Transit Administration or state statutes administered by the State of North Carolina.

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation has delegated authority to award federal financial assistance for transit projects as allocated throughout North Carolina by County;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

1. That the County Manager is authorized to execute and file an application for federal assistance on behalf of Transylvania County with the State of North Carolina for federal assistance authorized by 49 U.S.C. Chapter 5311 United States Code, other federal statutes or state statutes authorizing a project administered by the Federal Transit Administration.
2. That the County Manager is authorized to execute and file with its applications the annual certifications and assurances and other documents the State of North Carolina requires before awarding a federal assistance grant or cooperative agreement.
3. That the County Manager is authorized to execute grant and cooperative agreements with the State of North Carolina on behalf of Transylvania County.

The undersigned duly qualified Chair, acting on behalf of the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners, certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Board of Commissioners, held on August 24, 2026 [If the Applicant has an official seal, impress here.]



[Signature]
(Signature of Recording Officer)

Chair, Board of Commissioners
(Title of Recording Officer)

8/24/2026
(Date)

08/24/2026

ST. PHILIP'S GRANT FOR SENIOR MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The Board authorized Transylvania County Transportation to apply for \$10,000 from the St. Philip's Episcopal Church Women's Grant to support the Silver Squirrels Medical Transportation voucher program. The funding would assist residents age 65 and older with out-of-pocket medical transportation expenses for trips within and outside Transylvania County.

APPROVAL TO USE SOIL & WATER SPECIAL PROJECT FUNDS TO SUPPLEMENT EWP ENGINEERING COSTS

The Transylvania County Soil & Water Conservation District received Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) funding for four streambank restoration projects following Hurricane Helene, including \$30,000 for engineering and professional services and \$284,681 for construction. Because the EWP funding may not be sufficient to cover the anticipated engineering costs, the District requested authorization to use up to \$25,000 budgeted for Special Projects in FY 2027 if needed. The District also has other State and federal funding available for special projects. The Board approved the request to use a portion of the \$25,000 Special Projects allocation to supplement EWP engineering costs if those costs exceed the 10% amount allowed under the EWP funding.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT BAD DEBT WRITE-OFF

Public Health Director Elaine Russell recommended writing off \$286.20 in bad debt for accounts with no payment activity for more than 180 days, consistent with the Health Department's Bad Debt Policy. The Board of Health approved the request on August 11, 2026, and authorized it to be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for final approval. Accounts totaling \$245.20 with balances greater than \$50 will be forwarded to the NC Tax Debt Setoff Program for potential recovery. The Board approved the request as submitted.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT FLU VACCINE FEE ADJUSTMENT

The Health Department requested adjustments to its flu vaccine fees to better recoup vaccine acquisition costs. The standard flu vaccine fee will increase to \$25, and the high-dose flu vaccine fee will increase to \$125. The Board approved the fee adjustments as recommended by the Board of Health on August 11, 2026.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO DONATE SURPLUS AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT TO TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY SCHOOLS

The Board authorized staff to post the required statutory notice of intent to donate surplus audiovisual equipment to Transylvania County Schools. The equipment was decommissioned as part of the upgrade to the audiovisual system in the Commissioners' Multipurpose Chambers. The Board intends to consider approval of the donation by resolution at its September 28, 2026, meeting.

PARK-AND-RIDE MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT WITH NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The North Carolina Department of Transportation plans to construct a park-and-ride facility as part of intersection improvements at US 64/US 276/NC 280 north of Brevard. NCDOT will be responsible for planning, environmental documentation, right-of-way acquisition, traffic controls, and roadway improvements. Upon completion, Transylvania County will assume liability and maintenance responsibilities for the park-and-ride facility. The Board approved the agreement with NCDOT.

REQUEST TO CLOSE SOCIAL SERVICES OFFICE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Board approved the Department of Social Services' request to close its offices on Thursday, September 24, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. for professional development and team-building activities. The department will provide public notice and maintain staff availability to respond to emergencies during the closure.

REQUEST TO USE THE COMMISSIONERS' MULTIPURPOSE CHAMBERS FOR COURT

Because the Elections Center Conference Room will be dedicated to early voting and other election operations for the 2026 General Election, the Clerk of Superior Court requested use of the Commissioners' Multipurpose Chambers for court proceedings on October 27 and 29 and November 3, 5, and 6. The Board approved use of the Commissioners' Multipurpose Chambers for court during this period. If the scheduled Civil Superior Court session concludes before the second week, use of the Chambers during that week will no longer be necessary.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The County Manager introduced Daniel Sellers of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Planning Office and Vicki Eastland of the Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (RPO) to present the draft Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

Mr. Sellers explained that the CTP is a planning-level document established by State law to identify anticipated transportation deficiencies and propose projects to address them. The plan establishes a coordinated vision among local governments, NCDOT, and regional planning organizations and is intended to help avoid duplication of planning efforts and support coordinated grant applications. Public input was incorporated through workshops and surveys. The draft plan includes proposed highway, bicycle and pedestrian, and transit projects and is accompanied by an appendix containing maps, tables, and individual project sheets.

Mr. Sellers noted that the City of Brevard removed Project 17, the Railroad Avenue Connector, during its adoption process and substituted Project 64, the Wilson Road Extension. The Wilson Road project would provide a two-lane community connector from the end of Wilson Road to US 64 south of Brevard. The Town of Rosman subsequently adopted the plan with the same modification. If approved by the Board, the plan will proceed to the Land of Sky RPO for consideration in September and the NCDOT Board of Transportation in October.

During discussion, Vice Chair Chapman expressed frustration regarding the length of time required to advance transportation projects. Ms. Eastland explained that NCDOT projects must compete for funding through the State's prioritization process, and some projects may not receive funding. She provided updates on several local projects, noting that the Pisgah Forest intersection improvement was submitted in 2016, added to the State Transportation Improvement Program in 2017, and is currently under construction with completion expected in fall 2028. She noted that the Wilson Road project is expected to be advertised for construction in September 2028 and the Asheville Highway project in October 2029. A Cedar Mountain project that was not funded through the regular prioritization process advanced more quickly and is currently under construction, with completion expected by summer 2027. Ms. Eastland also noted that transportation projects historically took an average of approximately 17 years to advance and stated that the Pisgah Forest project timeline represents an improvement over that average.

Commissioner Chappell asked about public involvement in the decision to replace the Railroad Avenue project with the Wilson Road Extension. Mr. Sellers said no specific public comments regarding the Railroad Avenue project had been received during the CTP engagement process, other than comments concerning appropriate safety signage for vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians if the project were constructed. Ms. Eastland said Railroad Avenue had consistently ranked as the most opposed project in public surveys when submitted for prioritization. She explained that the Wilson Road alternative was discussed at the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) level and incorporated into the plan following discussion by the City of Brevard. Ms. Eastland described the Wilson Road project as a smaller-scale, two-lane community connector intended to provide an alternative route through the Brevard area rather than a full-scale bypass. She noted that the

project was developed in consideration of construction cost, funding availability, and potential impacts to the built and natural environment.

At the County Manager's request, Ms. Eastland also provided an update on the Downtown Brevard Circulation Study. The study, funded 90 % by NCDOT, is examining improvements to the existing Broad Street and Caldwell Street corridors to improve the movement of vehicles, freight, pedestrians, and cyclists through downtown. Focus group meetings had recently been held, and a public meeting was scheduled for August 31, 2026. A local officials meeting was scheduled immediately prior to the public meeting to provide an opportunity for officials to meet with the consultants and review the study data.

Commissioner McKelvey asked whether the TAC, City of Brevard, and Town of Rosman were in agreement with the modified CTP. Ms. Eastland confirmed that the Wilson Road project was discussed at the TAC level and subsequently introduced and incorporated by the City of Brevard as a replacement for the Railroad Avenue project.

Commissioner Dalton asked about the status of the proposed US 64 widening from Israel Road toward Brevard. Ms. Eastland reported that the project remains unfunded and received a score of 19 during the most recent prioritization cycle, below the competitive threshold of 35. She offered to provide the Board with a presentation on the State's transportation project prioritization process, which Vice Chair Chapman welcomed.

Chair McCall asked about the prospects for funding the Wilson Road Extension. Ms. Eastland explained that the project's new-location status creates significant cost and permitting considerations but noted that it could provide an alternative route for a portion of traffic currently traveling through downtown Brevard. She emphasized that the project is intended as a community connector rather than a full-scale bypass.

Ms. Eastland noted that since the previous CTP was developed in 2007, approximately 45% of the projects identified in that plan have been constructed.

The Board was informed that action on the Comprehensive Transportation Plan would be considered under New Business.

TRANSYLVANIA ECONOMIC ALLIANCE ANNUAL REPORT

The County Manager introduced Burton Hodges, Executive Director of the Transylvania Economic Alliance (TEA), who presented the organization's annual report. TEA Board Chair Sheila Carland and staff member Heather Banther were also recognized.

Mr. Hodges described TEA as a nonprofit, professional economic development organization serving Transylvania County and its municipalities. TEA is a public-private organization funded through County appropriations and private-sector investments. Its Board of Directors includes representatives from the private and public sectors, appointees of the Board of Commissioners, an ex officio County Commissioner, and representatives from the City of Brevard, Blue Ridge Community College, and Brevard College. TEA has two staff members.

Mr. Hodges explained that TEA's primary areas of work include business retention and expansion, recruitment of new industry, workforce development, and development of available buildings and sites for prospective businesses. TEA primarily targets advanced and niche manufacturing, biotechnology, outdoor gear products, and professional, technical, and scientific services, while also assisting with urban and commercial redevelopment projects. He emphasized that retaining and supporting existing businesses is an important component of economic development and that the organization works to strengthen the local tax

base, encourage higher-wage employment, and develop a long-term workforce and inventory of marketable properties and sites.

Mr. Hodges highlighted several accomplishments during the past year. TEA is nearing completion of agreements among Pisgah Labs, the City of Brevard, and Transylvania County to extend public infrastructure to the company's facility and support its long-term growth. He thanked the Board for its support of the project. Custom Tube Products in Rosman announced an expansion expected to create 15 new jobs.

In workforce development, TEA expanded its programming to engage nearly 100 upperclassmen from the County's two public high schools in targeted field trips to local industry partners to demonstrate real-world applications of classroom learning.

In new industry recruitment, TEA received more than 110 project leads through its marketing efforts. Mr. Hodges identified the limited availability of Class A and B industrial buildings of 150,000 square feet or more as the primary constraint on attracting new industry. He reported that the recently completed 40,000-square-foot expansion at the Sylvan Valley Center was under a letter of intent with a prospective tenant expected to create up to 27 jobs, with an average annual wage of more than \$87,000 and approximately \$13.5 million in machinery and improvement investments. The target lease commencement was October 2026.

Mr. Hodges also provided an update on the Rural Development Authority. TEA had led efforts over the previous three years to establish the authority as a partner in redevelopment efforts in Transylvania County, including assisting with its formation and obtaining startup funding. Administration of the organization was subsequently transferred to the Land of Sky Regional Council, which TEA determined to be a more appropriate partner to operate the public authority. TEA and the authority will continue to work together on development of real estate assets for prospective economic development projects, with a focus on redevelopment of the former Ecusta property.

Regarding TEA's 10-year history, Mr. Hodges reported that TEA had used the IMPLAN economic impact modeling system to estimate the broader economic effects of its work. Based on the model, TEA's activities during its first 10 years were associated with approximately \$2.6 million in taxable investment value, nearly 1,500 direct, indirect, and induced jobs, and approximately \$68 million in payroll distributed to the local workforce. He noted that federal Bureau of Labor Statistics data showed a 13.2% job growth rate in Transylvania County over the same period. Mr. Hodges stated that TEA is interested in engaging a third party to conduct a more detailed economic impact analysis.

Mr. Hodges also reported that, based on TEA's announcements and economic impact estimates during the previous two years, approximately \$33 in new tax revenue was associated with each \$1 of County taxpayer funding provided to TEA. He noted that the jobs created during that period represented approximately 20% of the County's unemployed population and said TEA's efforts are intended to expand higher-wage employment opportunities and address economic disparities.

During discussion, Vice Chair Chapman asked about the potential for data center development in Transylvania County. He noted that data centers already exist locally and that he had recently attended an NCACC conference presentation regarding their economic impact. Mr. Hodges explained that while data centers are a significant national industry, Transylvania County currently lacks the large-acreage sites and utility infrastructure capacity generally required by major data center operators, which limits the County's competitiveness for that type of development.

Commissioner Dalton expressed appreciation for TEA's work and emphasized the importance of promoting the diversity and sophistication of existing local industries, including aerospace, pharmaceutical, agricultural, and high-technology companies. He noted that many people may not be aware of the range of industries

operating in the County and the community's efforts to rebuild its economic base following the loss of several major employers.

Chair McCall expressed appreciation to Mr. Hodges and TEA for their work on behalf of the County.

MONTHLY CAPITAL UPDATE

The County Manager introduced Beecher Allison, Project Manager for the school capital projects, who provided an update on the Fixing Transylvania County Schools projects. The County Manager then provided a broader update on County capital projects.

Mr. Allison reported on progress across several school capital projects.

Fixing Transylvania County Schools

- Brevard High School Additions & Renovations Grant Project: A schematic design package was released in June, followed by a complete renovations package in July. Blum Construction provided formal pricing on August 19, which is currently being reviewed by the County, school staff, and LS3P. The team is working to refine the design to remain within budget before proceeding to the design development phase. The project will be coordinated with the Brevard High School Scope 2 project.
- Brevard High School Infrastructure Project: Drawings are complete, and final review by the project partners is underway. The project is targeted for bidding and construction to begin in fall 2026.
- GMP 1 Summer Work: Blum Construction began work on June 8 at Brevard Middle School, Brevard High School, and Rosman Elementary School. At Brevard Middle School, roof replacement is underway, with completion anticipated by mid-September. At Brevard High School, gutters, downspouts, and metalwork at the auditorium and multiple wings have been completed. At Rosman Elementary School, geofoam injections to address foundation cracks were successfully completed, with installation of a replacement music room door remaining.
- Rosman High School Fuel Storage Tank Replacement: The new underground fuel tank has been installed and is operational. Bus drop-off and pick-up operations returned to normal in time for the first day of school, and the project is nearing close-out.
- Remaining Bond Work: Owner review for the Rosman Area Schools project was scheduled for the following day, with construction anticipated to begin in late October or November at the Rosman Middle and High School campuses. Remaining work at the Brevard Area Schools is projected for early 2028. Brevard High School Scope 2 will be completed concurrently with the grant-funded additions project. All bond work is expected to be completed by the end of calendar year 2028.

The Board commended the project team for the volume and quality of work completed during the summer, the management of projects within budget, and the coordination among County staff, Board of Education, project management team, design professionals, and construction manager at risk. Commissioners emphasized the significant investment being made in local schools and noted the priority given to infrastructure, safety, and security improvements over cosmetic enhancements. The Board expressed appreciation to everyone involved in advancing the projects and noted the long-term benefits of the improvements for students and staff.

The County Manager provided an update on broader capital projects and related grant funding.

Creating Jobs and a Safe Community

- Communication Towers: Two new communication towers, supported by a combined \$2.3 million in grant funding, are in the early stages of site-securing. A related budget amendment was included on the agenda for approval.

- Courthouse Public Safety Complex: Bids are being advertised, with the bid release scheduled for this week.

Protecting Transylvania Natural Resources

- Landfill Leachate Pretreatment: Following comments from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the project has been placed on hold while the County considers future options for the landfill. The grant-funded study is being closed out.
- Azalea/Rhododendron Sewer Expansion: Based on State guidance, the City of Brevard must undertake construction of the project. Design remains under contract through private foundation grant funding, and the County will continue to track the design portion of the project.
- Calvert Road Water and Sewer: The Town of Rosman must undertake based on State guidance, design and construction. The project will therefore be removed from the County's capital project list.
- Landfill Cell Expansion: The project remains on schedule for completion by the end of September. Staff is working with DEQ, the contractor, and the engineer to address several stormwater-related issues.
- Watershed Study: The study remains underway using grant funds.
- Boys & Girls Club/Gallimore Road Sewer Extension: Construction is underway and expected to be completed shortly.
- Pisgah Labs Water and Sewer Extension: A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) has been issued, and the County is working to execute a contract.
- Brevard System Housing Projects: The Housing Assistance Corporation extension, Habitat extension, and Azalea design projects are in the process of having their engineering contracts reassigned.
- Brevard High School Sewer Line and Pump Station: Engineering is underway. A portion of the construction funding remains secured through State funding, and staff is working to identify the remaining funding needed to complete the project.
- Streambank Restoration: Four projects have been confirmed for Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) funding. The County will supplement engineering costs if needed.

Capital Grants Update

The Manager noted that multiple grants are supporting the County's capital program. Three infrastructure projects associated with the \$10 million allocated to the County through S.L. 2023 remain to be funded. Based on State guidance, the City of Brevard and Town of Rosman will apply directly for construction funding for the Azalea Sewer Extension and Calvert Road Sewer Extension, respectively. State Representative Anna Ferguson has been in direct contact with both entities regarding potential funding options. These projects will be removed from the County's capital project list in September.

The Azalea Sewer Extension includes an affordable housing component, and the County will continue to fund the design through the previously allocated Dogwood Grant. The engineer's proposal is under review, while construction funding remains to be secured. The Brevard High School Pump Station project also needs approximately \$1 million in additional construction funding. County staff is working with Representative Ferguson to identify potential funding sources and determine the path forward.

The County has also been awarded several new grants or allocations to support the capital program, including:

- \$2 million in reallocated funds for EMS and Fire included in the current adopted State budget; the County is awaiting grant parameters from the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) regarding next steps.
- \$2 million for the Transylvania Campus of Blue Ridge Community College; the County is awaiting additional information from OSBM and has met with BRCC President Dr. Leatherwood regarding the funding.

- \$2.5 million in Statewide Resiliency Assistance Program (StRAP) funds for riverway work and four EWP streambank restoration projects.
- \$2.3 million in combined USDA and Department of Justice grant funding for two new communication towers.

Vice-Chair Chapman emphasized the need for long-term planning for the County landfill. He said planning for future solid waste needs should begin now and referenced a session at the recent NCACC conference addressing solid waste challenges at the State and national levels. Chair McCall agreed that the County cannot continue relying on the same solid waste solutions.

Commissioner Chappell noted that, although the Board had not met in a month, substantial work and communication had continued behind the scenes, particularly regarding grant issues and ensuring that the County's municipal and other project partners had the information needed to make decisions.

Commissioner Dalton asked about addressing blockages in the French Broad River. The County Manager explained that StRAP funds and the County's annual Soil and Water Conservation District budget can be used for this type of work and encouraged anyone aware of a blockage to contact the Soil and Water Conservation District office.

Chair McCall highlighted the Manager's report of approximately \$8.8 million in new grant funding. She expressed confidence that the County's ability to secure additional grant funding reflects its effective management and use of previous grant awards.

2026 DIGITAL COUNTIES SURVEY AWARD & TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES AWARD RECIPIENT

The County Manager introduced the County's IT department to be recognized for receiving the 2026 Digital Counties Survey Award from the Center for Digital Government and the National Association of Counties. Transylvania County ranked 7th nationally among counties with populations under 150,000, recognized for excellence in the strategic use of technology, including cybersecurity, resilient infrastructure, disaster recovery, and operational continuity. IT Director Nathaneal Carver recently accepted the award at the NACo annual conference.

Board members offered extensive praise, with Commissioner Chappell citing ongoing cybersecurity upgrades and website improvements, Commissioner Dalton noting IT's work at the Lake Toxaway Community Center, Vice Chair Chapman noting that the County's level of professional recognition across multiple departments reflects the overall quality of county Staff, and Commissioner McKelvey expressing personal gratitude for IT's transparency, resourcefulness, and commitment to taxpayers.

Chair McCall called for a 10-minute recess at 7:50 p.m. The Board reconvened at 8:00 p.m.

APPOINTMENTS

PERSONNEL BOARD

There are currently three vacancies on the Personnel Board due to expired terms, changes in members' employment status affecting their eligibility to serve in their current roles, and other circumstances. As preparations begin for the upcoming salary and compensation study, the Personnel Board will play an important role in supporting this work and providing input throughout the process. Human Resources has been actively recruiting qualified applicants to fill the vacant positions to ensure the Board has the appropriate membership to effectively fulfill its responsibilities. Human Resources Director Sheila Cozart recommended the following appointments to fill the vacant positions:

- Member-at-Large: Lisa Sheffield, a former Transylvania County employee with prior Personnel Board experience, including a previous salary study.
- Member-of-Business: Amber Webb, employed with First Citizens Bank with over 20 years of leadership and human resources experience.
- Employee: Shane Hooper, a current Transylvania County employee interested in supporting the County's workforce competitiveness.

Commissioner Dalton moved to accept all three recommendations from Human Resources Director Sheila Cozart, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey and unanimously approved.

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

The terms of Kae Parker, Brenda Skeffington, Mary Shore, and Debra Yunker expire at the end of August. All four are eligible and willing to serve another term on the Transylvania County Council on Aging. Staff recommended their reappointment.

Vice-Chair Chapman moved to reappoint Kae Parker, Brenda Skeffington, Mary Shore, and Debra Yunker to the Transylvania County Council on Aging, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION ADDING REVIEW OFFICER FOR TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

The Board considered Resolution #31-2026 appointing Sierra Lawing, County Planner with the Transylvania County Planning and Community Development Department, as a Review Officer for all lands within the County's planning jurisdiction. The appointment is pursuant to N.C.G.S. § Chapter 47-30.2, which requires counties to designate qualified individuals experienced in mapping or land records management to review and certify maps and plats presented to the Register of Deeds for recording. The resolution notes that the technical review can be incorporated into the County's existing subdivision review process, avoiding an additional layer of development review and helping streamline the review of proposed subdivisions and land development.

Commissioner Chappell moved to accept the recommendation as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION #31-2026 APPOINTMENT OF REVIEW OFFICERS FOR TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

WHEREAS, Chapter 47-30.2 of the North Carolina General Statutes requires the Board of Commissioners of each county to designate by name one or more persons experienced in mapping or land records management to be appointed as a Review Officer to certify the maps or plats presented to the Register of Deeds as complying with all statutory requirements for recording; and

WHEREAS, the review of statutory requirements is of a technical nature; and

WHEREAS, one of the services that Transylvania County staff provides to the community is a similar technical process for subdivision plat review in order to verify compliance with the County's development regulations; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County is committed to streamlining the review procedures for proposed developments and subdivisions of land; and

WHEREAS, it appears most efficient for Transylvania County to avoid adding another layer of development review by providing for the certification of statutory compliance for all maps or plats to be presented to the Register of Deeds for recording within the context of subdivision review procedures;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY:

Section 1. The addition of the following person is recommended to be appointed by the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners to serve as a Review Officer for all lands within Transylvania County's planning jurisdiction in order to certify each map and plat presented to the Transylvania County Register of Deeds for recording satisfies the statutory requirements for recording

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION/TITLE</u>
Sierra Lawing	County Planner, Transylvania County Planning and Community Development

Adopted and approved this the 24th day of August 2026.

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

NCACC STEERING COMMITTEE AND LEGISLATIVE GOALS COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

The NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) has invited counties to take an active role in NCACC's policy-setting process by submitting nominations for both the Association's steering committees and the Legislative Goals Committee. Chair McCall has been nominated to serve on the Tax and Finance Steering Committee.

Commissioner Chappell moved to affirm the nomination, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey, and approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

PROPOSED CONTRACT AMENDMENT WITH CONNESTEE FIRE RESCUE

The County Manager introduced Finance Director Meagan O'Neal to present a proposed amendment to the County's contract with Conneestee Fire Rescue (CFR). At its June 22, 2026, meeting, the Board received information about CFR's third-party audit, which resulted in a disclaimer of opinion because documentation for transactions was insufficient. The County's contracts with its fire departments require compliance with annual audit and record-retention requirements because the departments receive public funds.

At the June meeting, the Board directed the County Attorney to prepare a notice of contract termination with the intent of working with CFR to establish sufficient fiscal policies and internal controls and develop revised payment terms. Since that time, County staff have held two meetings with CFR representatives. The third-party auditor participated in the first meeting to clarify documentation requirements, and County staff provided sample policies and discussed ways to tailor the policies to CFR while maintaining appropriate fiscal controls.

At the most recent meeting, CFR board members reported progress with an external bookkeeping firm, implementation of policies based on the County's templates, and development of a process for CFR's board to review and approve transactions initiated by the department. Ms. O'Neal reported that CFR's policies were being finalized and that she would conduct a full review before the amendment is executed. CFR's board planned to adopt the new policies at its September 16, 2026, meeting.

Ms. O'Neal recommended temporarily replacing the quarterly payment schedule with monthly reimbursement based on documentation submitted to the County. Each monthly reimbursement package would include bank and credit card statements, supporting documentation for each transaction, and corresponding approvals, including invoices, receipts, travel/per diem requests, or reimbursement forms. CFR's new policies would establish spending and approval limits and identify who is authorized to incur expenditures. Bank statement documentation would also include an outstanding check register.

For payroll transactions, the monthly documentation would include timesheet approvals, payroll processing reports, and tax and other deduction reports. CFR would also submit a general ledger activity report from its bookkeeping firm showing the appropriate allocation of revenues and expenditures.

The parties discussed potential cash-flow issues associated with larger debt-service payments. To address this, debt-service coupons or invoices could be submitted in the month before payment is due and included in that month's reimbursement, with County staff verifying that the payment was made during the month it was due. Ms. O'Neal recommended that the monthly reimbursement process remain in place for a minimum of 18 months and that CFR obtain an unmodified audit opinion demonstrating that the new processes and internal controls had been implemented successfully. The base contract would remain consistent with the County's other fire department contracts, with quarterly payments resuming after the amended requirements were satisfied.

Commissioner Chappell emphasized the importance of ensuring that taxpayer funds are properly documented and asked whether one unmodified audit opinion would be sufficient. Ms. O'Neal explained that, given the timing involved, one audit opinion was a realistic requirement and that she would monitor CFR's compliance on a monthly basis. The County Manager added that the requirement would provide an opportunity to confirm that the new processes were functioning as intended.

Commissioner McKelvey asked whether CFR could complete the audit process sooner than 18 months. Ms. O'Neal explained that CFR was still working to provide documentation for its FY 2025 audit and could not begin the FY 2026 audit until the FY 2025 audit was completed. To remain on schedule, CFR would need to complete two audits within approximately nine months before beginning its FY 2027 audit. Because documentation and tracking systems were not in place in prior years, staff did not expect CFR to be able to provide all documentation necessary for the FY 2025 or FY 2026 audits. Commissioner McKelvey agreed with the 18-month recommendation based on the information presented.

Chair McCall confirmed that FY 2027 would be CFR's first full year operating with its new accounting firm and revised processes. Ms. O'Neal stated that the FY 2027 audit would provide the best opportunity to demonstrate that the new processes and controls were in place and functioning effectively.

Commissioner Dalton asked about the effect of the reimbursement process on CFR's cash flow. Ms. O'Neal explained that the County had made CFR's first quarterly payment on July 1, 2026, in accordance with the existing contract. She had advised CFR that, once the amendment was approved, the Finance Department could process reimbursements for the July and August documentation as soon as the required packages were ready. She also noted that CFR has a fund balance available to assist with cash flow.

Vice Chair Chapman expressed appreciation for the County's proactive approach to addressing the issue and noted the State Auditor's attention to similar matters involving public funds. Chair McCall noted that CFR representatives had been cooperative throughout the process and had suggested improvements themselves.

Commissioner Chappell moved to accept the proposed contract amendment with Connestee Fire Rescue with the parameters presented by staff, seconded by Vice-Chair Chapman. Chair McCall confirmed that the parameters would be provided to the County Attorney for preparation of the formal

contract amendment, which would be returned to the Board for approval at its September 28, 2026, meeting. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The County Manager noted that the Board had received the full presentation from NCDOT and the Land of Sky RPO earlier in the meeting and that the action item was to formally adopt the draft Comprehensive Transportation Plan as received or as modified by the City of Brevard and Town of Rosman, substituting the Wilson Road Extension for the Railroad Avenue Connector.

Vice-Chair Chapman moved to adopt the Comprehensive Transportation Plan as modified by the City of Brevard and the Town of Rosman, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey and unanimously approved.

FY 2026 4TH QUARTER BUDGET AMENDMENTS

The County Manager introduced Jennifer Wright, Director of Budget and Internal Projects, to present the fourth quarter budget amendments for FY 2026.

Ms. Wright explained that the amendments fall into four categories: recognition of new revenues and related expenditures, appropriations of fund balance, transfers, and establishment of new funds.

A summary of the amendments for approval is below:

- Budget Amendment 60: Reallocated \$49,495 within the Solid Waste budget at the request of the Solid Waste Coordinator. Effective 4/6/26.
- Budget Amendment 61: Budgeted a \$10,000 Youth Sports Grant awarded to Parks & Recreation for bike racks and a water fountain. Effective 4/16/26.
- Budget Amendment 62: Reallocated \$4,637 within the Investigations budget at the request of the Sheriff's Office. Effective 4/21/26.
- Budget Amendment 63: Reallocated \$10,000 within the EMS budget at the request of the EMS Director. Effective 4/24/26.
- Budget Amendment 64: Reallocated \$30,000 within the Environmental Health budget at the request of the Public Health Director. Effective 4/27/26.
- Budget Amendment 65: Adjusted final expenses between project budget lines at the conclusion of School Bond Step 1 BHS SOI Scope 1 (no budget change). Effective 4/17/26.
- Budget Amendment 66: Reallocated \$1,500 within the Planning budget at the request of the Planning and Community Development Director. Effective 5/6/26.
- Budget Amendment 67: Reallocated \$3,000 within the Solid Waste budget at the request of the Solid Waste Coordinator. Effective 5/7/26.
- Budget Amendment 68: Reallocated \$1,664 within the Soil & Water budget at the request of the Soil & Water Director. Effective 5/12/26.
- Budget Amendment 69: Budgeted a \$42,764 StRAP grant, repurposing funds from Tropical Storm Fred to Hurricane Helene streambank restoration projects under the Soil & Water Dept. Effective 5/15/26.
- Budget Amendment 70: Reallocated \$950 within the Library budget at the request of the Library Director. Effective 5/25/26.
- Budget Amendment 71: Reallocated \$53,000 within the Solid Waste budget at the request of the Solid Waste Coordinator. Effective 5/28/26.

- Budget Amendment 72: Adjusted budgets as needed pre-end-of-year, including moving funds within the EMS budget at the request of the director, budgeting a new Elections software subscription, and carrying forward a Veterans' Services grant. Effective 6/5/2026.
- Budget Amendment 73: Transferred \$ 571,478 from Assigned Fund Balance for the cost of two ambulances ordered in 2023 and delivered/paid in 2026. Effective 6/15/26.
- Budget Amendment 74: Configured a new fund, the Enterprise Capital Fund for Solid Waste capital projects, and moved the landfill cell project budget into this fund (no budget change). Effective 6/30/26.
- Budget Amendment 75: Completed cleanup actions at the end of FY2026, including allocating the funds from the sale of a vehicle back to the Sheriff's Office, updating the final budget lines for the Brevard-Rosman Water/Sewer Interconnect Project (no budget increase), and adjusting budget lines in the Disaster Response and Opioid Settlement Funds. Effective 6/30/26.
- Budget Amendment 76: Completed annual cleanup actions at the end of FY2026, including allocating the Pay Increase line out to department personnel budgets for COLA and increased longevity, allocating contingency and insurance as needed, and splitting out budgets for interest on subscriptions and leases. Effective 6/30/26.
- Budget Amendment 77: Reallocated \$19,485 within the Automation Enhancement Fund budget and \$3,500 within the Narcotics Special Revenue Fund budget at end-of-year. Effective 6/30/26.

Commissioner Chappell moved to approve the budget amendments as presented, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

FY 2026 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Finance Director Meagan O'Neal presented the unaudited financial summary for the fourth quarter of FY 2026. She noted that, while the report reflects activity through June 30, 2026, final totals will not be confirmed until completion of the FY 2026 audit. The quarterly report includes summary information and supporting worksheets for the General Fund, tax revenues, Enterprise Fund, and Education Capital Fund.

General Fund

General Fund revenues totaled approximately \$76.6 million, including \$49.4 million in property tax revenue. Current-year ad valorem taxes accounted for \$47.1 million, with the remaining \$2.2 million consisting of prior-year taxes, late fees, interest, and motor vehicle tax revenues. Other General Fund revenues include sales tax, investment earnings, permits, fines, and service fees.

General Fund expenditures totaled approximately \$72.7 million. Personnel expenditures were \$33.9 million, representing 94% of the budgeted amount. Education funding for Transylvania County Schools and Blue Ridge Community College totaled \$16.5 million through the end of the fiscal year. Debt service totaled slightly more than \$5.5 million and included payments for school bonds, the Elections Center renovation loan, and the EMS base loan.

Ms. O'Neal explained that final year-end adjustments would include necessary interfund transfers, including transfers to support the Self-Insurance Fund and Solid Waste Fund, as well as final cost allocations from other sources, including the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority.

The quarterly financial packet now includes a more detailed breakdown of major tax-related revenues. Property tax revenues are separated by current-year and prior-year collections, interest, late lists, advertising costs recovered, and motor vehicle tax categories.

Sales tax revenues are also detailed and include Medicaid hold harmless revenue and the municipal hold harmless expense. Because sales tax is collected on a two-month delay, 87% of the budgeted amount had been

received, which was approximately 4% ahead of the level expected at that point in the fiscal year. The County had received the majority of the anticipated Medicaid hold harmless revenue, with one additional smaller payment expected in August to be accrued to FY 2026.

Solid Waste Enterprise Fund

The Solid Waste Enterprise Fund had approximately \$3.5 million in revenues. Landfill scale sales accounted for slightly more than \$2.3 million, or 107% of the budgeted amount. Sticker sales totaled more than \$643,000, or 99% of budget. Miscellaneous fees, including recycling, bulk items, and television fees, totaled approximately \$81,000, and the Solid Waste investment account had earned slightly more than \$365,000 by the end of the third quarter.

Solid Waste expenditures totaled approximately \$2.7 million, primarily for personnel, operating expenses, and contract services. The Enterprise Fund showed a net gain of approximately \$730,000 at the end of the fourth quarter. Ms. O'Neal cautioned that the final year-end position is expected to reflect a loss without a transfer from the General Fund because of expenses that must be accrued after June 30 for landfill closure and post-closure liabilities, as well as overhead, capital outlay, and depreciation. Depreciation is currently higher than usual due to the purchase of a new truck and dozer in FY 2025. These items will be recorded as part of the audit process.

Education Capital Fund

Ms. O'Neal reported that more than \$130 million in active funding is associated with current Education Capital projects. Projects that had been fully completed or expended in prior fiscal years were excluded from the quarterly report.

Final invoices had been received for the Brevard High School Old Gym roof and the Education Center Wing, and project closeout documents were being completed for submission to school finance staff and the respective boards. The Centegix project was fully closed out, and associated lottery funds were drawn down during the quarter. The first phase of the bond-funded security projects progressed during the summer, with less than \$500,000 remaining encumbered for that phase.

A quarterly reconciliation of the needs-based grant project was underway to facilitate regular drawdowns. Ms. O'Neal noted that several budget amendments and encumbrance changes in the Education Capital Fund remained in process, so the reported totals represented a snapshot at the time the report was prepared and remain subject to change.

Hurricane Helene and FEMA Projects

The County's FEMA-funded Hurricane Helene projects continue to progress. The remaining projects include completion of the temporary road repair project, mitigation work at the airport property building, and repairs related to the flooded compactors at the Pisgah Forest Convenience Site.

Ms. O'Neal reported that the State Auditor's Office had issued a data request to Helene-impacted counties and municipalities seeking information on all funding expended in connection with Hurricane Helene response, recovery, repair, mitigation, or other disaster-related activities, regardless of funding source. The request includes federal and State funding, grants, insurance proceeds, nonprofit assistance, and other disaster recovery resources.

She explained that the County has received multiple types of Helene-related funding, ranging from FEMA funding to private foundation assistance for temporary road repairs following the storm. The request may also encompass StRAP funding being used for streambank restoration and other grants in which the County has participated. The initial response deadline was October 13. Following a meeting with the State Auditor's Office during the NCACC conference, Ms. O'Neal reported that an extension may be provided because of the

timing of the request and the current audit season. Western North Carolina entities are coordinating with the State Auditor's Office and NCACC to submit technical questions and clarify the reporting requirements. County staff will begin compiling the requested information and will continue to monitor guidance from the State Auditor's Office.

Capital Fund Reporting

Ms. O'Neal explained that the County-level Capital Fund summary was not included in the quarterly packet because changes to grant funding and related project allocations were still being finalized. The County is also establishing a new Enterprise Capital Fund and will move the landfill cell expansion project into that fund to comply with audit requirements. Because of the ongoing changes, staff did not want to provide financial information that could be incomplete or inaccurate. A more complete update is expected with the next quarterly report.

Finance Department Update

Ms. O'Neal recognized Christy Stansel for 40 years of service with Transylvania County and the Finance Department, which she celebrated on July 1.

The Finance Department moved directly from the FY 2025 audit into the FY 2026 audit and completed interim fieldwork during the week of August 3. Auditors completed most of the compliance testing for federal and State programs, as well as testing of cash receipts, journal entries, and payroll. Final audit fieldwork is scheduled for the week of October 26.

Ms. O'Neal also reported that the County is preparing for the two- to three-month process of financing the courthouse through limited obligation bonds. The process includes meetings with the Local Government Commission, rating agencies, underwriters, bond attorneys, and financial advisors. Assuming all milestones and required approvals are achieved, the County is currently scheduled to secure the financing on December 1, 2026.

The County Manager clarified that the approximately \$4 million General Fund surplus at the end of FY 2026 was anticipated as part of the County's 10-year capital payment plan. The funds are planned to be transferred to the assigned fund balance as part of the audit process, with the formal action to be brought back to the Board for approval.

Regarding the State Auditor's request for information related to Hurricane Helene funding, the Manager reported that County staff had met with the State Auditor's Office during the NCACC Conference. The State Auditor's Office indicated that it would follow up on concerns raised by counties and municipalities regarding the timing and scope of the request, as well as the need to provide context regarding how decisions were made and what information was available to local governments when those decisions were made. The County Manager planned to participate in a call with NCACC and other county managers the following day to discuss the next steps.

Vice-Chair Chapman asked about the timeline for courthouse financing, noting that previous plans anticipated a groundbreaking in the fall and asking whether current circumstances could delay construction until spring. The County Manager explained that requests for bids had been submitted and that staff was continuing to proceed as planned. She noted that, depending on the bids received and any concerns that arise regarding financing, the County could pause the project until spring. At that time, however, staff was proceeding with the existing schedule.

The County Manager also reminded the Board that \$18 million in school bond funding remains to be issued for the next phase of school projects and must be sold by fall 2028. Because the current projects are scheduled for completion in 2028, the Joint School Bond Project Committee will need to begin planning for the next

phase of work. This will include reviewing the Axios reports to identify projects beyond Step One that may be considered for funding through the second bond issuance. The Manager said this work is expected to begin in 2027.

Commissioner Chappell moved to receive the FY 2026 4th Quarter financial report as presented, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.

TYLER TECHNOLOGIES (COUNTY FINANCIAL SOFTWARE) ONE-TIME SERVICE AND SUBSCRIPTION TO OPEN FINANCE

Finance Director Meagan O'Neal presented two related requests involving the County's Tyler Technologies financial software.

The first request was to convert two annual accounting funds to multi-year fund designations for a one-time fee of \$8,000. The funds are the Disaster Response Fund, which tracks multi-year COVID-19 and FEMA activities, and the Opioid Settlement Fund, which will receive payments over an 18-year period. Converting the funds to multi-year designations will eliminate the need for annual rollover budget amendments and reduce the risk of accounting inaccuracies at year-end.

The second request was to implement Tyler Technologies' Open Finance platform, a public-facing financial transparency portal that synchronizes in real time with the County's Munis financial system. The platform will allow the public to search County expenditures dating back to 2019 by vendor, function, account, and other criteria. Limited redactions will be available for confidential transactions, including inmate medical invoices and foster care payments. The one-time implementation fee is \$5,600, with an annual subscription cost of \$16,000. Ms. O'Neal reported that this was the only platform identified that provides real-time synchronization without third-party data syncing or manual updates. Surry County, North Carolina, currently uses the platform and was provided as a reference.

Ms. O'Neal noted that Open Finance is expected to reduce staff time spent responding to public records requests for financial information, potentially eliminating an estimated 40 to 80 staff hours annually for invoice-related requests alone, while improving response times for the public.

The total FY 2027 budget amendment requested was \$29,600 from unassigned fund balance. The County Manager emphasized that the Open Finance implementation represents an important investment in financial transparency. She noted that the project had been planned before Hurricane Helene but was delayed due to the demands of disaster recovery.

Board members expressed support for the requests, citing the benefits of increased financial transparency and administrative efficiency.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve \$29,600 in funding for the Tyler Technologies financial software upgrades, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey. The motion was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATION TOWER CONSTRUCTION AND EQUIPMENT GRANTS

The County Manager introduced Communications Director Cameron Sexton to present the item.

Mr. Sexton provided background on the County's public safety radio system and the challenges created by the mountainous terrain. Radio waves generally travel in straight lines and can be obstructed by mountains and dense tree cover. The County's existing system includes five towers, and coverage gaps have been addressed incrementally through antenna adjustments. The need for additional towers has been identified in the County's Capital Improvement Plan for several years.

Mr. Sexton noted that construction costs have increased substantially since 2019, when estimates were approximately \$500,000 per site. He attributed the increases to COVID-19-related supply chain disruptions, changes in building codes, and increased steel costs. He provided an example of a comparable county where the estimated cost of a tower project increased from \$1.9 million to \$2.9 million during that period.

The County Manager has applied for multiple grants to support construction of two additional public safety communication towers. The County recently received notice of two grant awards:

- USDA Rural Development: \$1.5 million for construction costs, including site work, towers, and buildings at two new public safety sites, obtained through Congressman Edwards' office.
- Bureau of Justice Assistance Discretionary Funds: \$800,000, or \$400,000 per site, for communications equipment, obtained through Senator Tillis' office.

The total estimated project cost is \$2,697,860. The \$2.3 million in grant funding leaves a required County contribution of \$397,860 from assigned fund balance. The County Manager confirmed that these funds had been specifically designated for this purpose. The new towers are expected to improve communications coverage for first responders throughout the County.

Commissioner Chappell asked whether the towers could also support HAM or GMRS communications for the public, noting the need for different types of communication during COVID-19 and other emergencies. Mr. Sexton said he was exploring the most efficient and cost-effective way to make such use possible without affecting public safety communications. He had discussed the possibility with public safety partners, particularly members of the GMRS community. He also reported that staff was exploring an opportunity to partner with the North Carolina State Highway Patrol to place equipment for the statewide VIPER interoperability system at one of the sites, which could provide additional public-safety use for the tower.

Commissioner Dalton asked about the proposed tower locations. Mr. Sexton said the sites are expected to be located on existing public lands, but agreements with the appropriate entities had not yet been finalized. He explained that, following Board approval, staff would proceed with the necessary agreements and permitting. Exact locations and additional project updates would be provided to the Board once those matters were finalized.

In response to Commissioner Chappell, Mr. Sexton estimated that the project would take two to three years to complete due to site agreements, permitting, and construction requirements.

Commissioner Chappell moved to accept the grant award amount of \$2.3 million and allocate the remaining project cost from assigned fund balance totaling \$397,860, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The County Manager presented the following updates:

- SNAP Cost Impact: Federal legislation (HR1) removed the federal government's share of SNAP administrative costs and introduced a state error rate-based benefit cost penalty. The North Carolina General Assembly further passed on a portion of this cost to counties by withholding local sales tax revenue. However, North Carolina's error rate has dropped from 10.21% in FY 2024 to 7.36% in FY 2025, reducing the State's share of benefit costs from 15% to 5%. Transylvania County's revised estimated annual impact is approximately \$381,000 (\$172,640 in administrative costs and \$208,741 in benefit costs), with an estimated property tax impact of 0.31 cents—down from the previously cited one cent. Chair McCall noted the concern that county-level error rates are not individually

considered; high-error counties bring down the state average and financially impact well-performing counties like Transylvania.

- The Downtown Brevard Circulation Study is entering its public input phase. A public meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 3 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM in the Rogow Room at the Library, preceded by a local officials meeting at 4:00 PM. Chair McCall encouraged all County residents, not just those in the City, to attend and provide input, noting the study will inform a real decision about how traffic moves through downtown.
- County Manager congratulated Commissioner Chappell on his appointment to the National Association of Counties Rural Action Caucus, where he will represent the interests of rural counties at the national level.
- The meeting marked the first use of the County's new AV system, intended to address prior audio issues and improve the remote viewing experience.
- The Board's September 14 regular meeting has been canceled; the next meeting is scheduled for September 28 at 6:00 PM.
- Chair McCall, Vice Chair Chapman, Commissioner Dalton, the County Manager, and Clerk to the Board attended the NCACC conference. Topics included property tax and levy limits being considered by the legislature, the SNAP impact on local budgets, fire protection trends toward paid staffing, rural health care access, data centers and zoning, FEMA and emergency management changes, and landfill challenges statewide.
- County Manager congratulated Vice Chair Chapman on being recognized for his Laureate status in the Local Elected Leaders Academy (LELA), the highest achievement level in the program.
- With the second anniversary of Tropical Storm Helene approaching and September being National Preparedness Month, County Manager encouraged residents to prepare for 72 hours without power or the ability to leave home and directed residents to ready.gov for guidance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ashley Hart: Ms. Hart commended the courage of the mother who spoke during the first public comment period and urged the Board to take action on her behalf.

No additional speakers came forward.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Vice Chair Chapman offered a contextual note on a Benjamin Franklin quote used during the first public comment period, sharing research suggesting that Franklin's original use of "essential liberty" referred to a collective legislative right regarding taxation rather than individual civil liberties as commonly interpreted today. He then seconded the earlier call for the Sheriff to come before the Board to present how Flock cameras are being used in Transylvania County, including data-sharing arrangements and operational safeguards, emphasizing that both the benefits and limitations of the technology should be understood before any policy decision is made.

Commissioner Chappell took a moment, in advance of the September 11th anniversary, to read President George W. Bush's address to the nation delivered the evening of September 11, 2001, stating that he has done so at every meeting preceding the anniversary for many years.

Vice Chair Chapman added that he had received a call indicating that a paraglider had been taking off and landing at the Gallimore Road airstrip, a use that is not permitted, and that the incident had resulted in a confrontation with another citizen. He asked the County Manager to follow up with the Sheriff's Office to ensure enforcement.

Commissioner McKelvey reflected on the public comments received during the meeting regarding Flock cameras. He stated that he had heard from numerous constituents through calls, emails, and in-person meetings expressing concern. He agreed with Vice Chair Chapman that hearing from the Sheriff would be appropriate, and expressed that based on his personal values regarding liberty and the Constitution, he would be predisposed to vote against any Flock camera expansion if it came before the Board.

Chair McCall asked the Board to keep County Attorney Bill Bulfer in their thoughts and prayers following the passing of his father-in-law.

Chair McCall moved to enter into a closed session per N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11 (a) (3) To consult with an attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, per N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11 (a) (4) To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, and per N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, following a 10-minute recess. Commissioner Dalton seconded the motion, and it was unanimously carried.

CLOSED SESSION

A closed session was entered into at 9:30 p.m. Present were Chair McCall, Vice Chair Chapman, Commissioners Chappell, Dalton, and McKelvey, County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Julie Hooten (via Zoom), Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Burton Hodges, IT Director Nathanael Carver (for IT support), and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

The Board received information regarding a potential economic development project, consulted with the County Attorney on the matter, and then directed staff on how to proceed with negotiations.

Chair McCall moved to leave the closed session, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

OPEN SESSION

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Chair McCall moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.**

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

ATTEST:

S://Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board