

Unsealed by Board of Commissioners on 01/13/2020.

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
May 21, 2018 – CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §143-318.11 (a) (5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, options, exchange or lease, closed session was entered into at 10:15 p.m. Present were Chairman Chapman, Commissioners Chappell, Hawkins, Lemel and Phillips, County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Misti Bass, Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse, Transylvania Economic Alliance Board of Directors Chair Jeremy Owen and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. The meeting was held in the Arthur C. Wilson, Jr. Conference Room.

The Board of Commissioners received an update on negotiation efforts for potential property acquisition. Commissioners had authorized staff to make an initial offer for contract on the old airport property currently owned by Brevard College of \$275,000 with negotiations up to \$300,000. Brevard College declined the County's high offer of \$300,000. This was counter to indications from initial meetings with Brevard College officials.

As reported to the Board on April 23, 2018, the Manager had ordered an appraisal on the two large tracts consisting of 50+- acres and it valued the property at \$385,000. The total amount of acreage for sale is 55 acres. The City of Brevard is interested in a small third tract for connection to Hap Simpson Park/greenway space. The tax value is \$50,000. A fourth tract across Sugar Loaf Road has a tax value of \$15,000.

As reported to the Board on March 26, 2018, the Transylvania Economic Alliance was working with an engineering firm to understand if the plans for converting the property to parks and recreational use were realistic. The engineering report was to include a wetland stream delineation and modeling to determine flood rise and when flooding is expected to occur on certain points on the property. Any of these factors could change the layout of the design. Transylvania Economic Alliance reported that the hydro-engineer, Clement Riddle, had completed the study and the results were surprisingly optimistic. With some mitigation and by moving around some of the features, the property can still handle major components of the master plan. Overall the report was very encouraging.

Brevard College also had an appraisal completed on the entire property and it came in at \$479,000. The Transylvania Economic Alliance would prefer the County make an offer closer to that figure because they felt it was critical to gain access to the property from an economic development perspective.

The Manager noted that another factor to be considered is that Brevard College may be negotiating a right-of-way across one of the larger tracts with the City, based on discussions with City officials, prior to the property being sold.

Transylvania Economic Alliance shared with Brevard College officials the value of the County's appraisal at \$385,000 in order for negotiations to continue. There is other interest in the property, but it appears Brevard College is waiting for a more viable offer from the County because they were supportive of the County's ideas for collaboration and partnerships. Transylvania Economic Alliance felt that \$385,000 was a good offer and the information in the appraisal documentation supported such an offer. It was noted that the County is not making an offer on the entire property.

Transylvania Economic Alliance is trying to figure out a solution for product development. If the County does not have property for economic development, then it cannot be successful. By transitioning the current parks and recreation property to industrial use, the County can help create more opportunities for jobs and therefore generate more tax base and tax dollars. While this is a complicated project, they see it as having some of the best options. Transylvania Economic Alliance suggested making an offer in the range of \$385,000-\$415,000, and if accepted, entering into a due diligence contract for a minimum period of 60 days/maximum period of 90 days with no financial commitment. This should be a reasonable timeframe to determine if the project makes sense. The County has already spent monies on engineering studies so it warrants moving forward. The Transylvania Economic Alliance Board of Directors is very supportive and they felt if they were allowed to get this property under contract they could bring back a very good package for Commissioners to consider.

The Commissioners were in consensus with the recommendation, but it was noted that the Commissioners were not unanimous and that staff and the Transylvania Economic Alliance should be mindful of this fact during negotiations. The Manager reminded that the right-of-way needs to be disclosed prior to due diligence, if that is the College's intent, because it impacts the development of the property.

Chairman Chapman moved to leave closed session, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.

Larry Chapman, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board