

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
July 25, 2016 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, July 25, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman, Jason Chappell, Chairman Mike Hawkins, Page Lemel and Kelvin Phillips. Also present were Library Director Anna Yount, County Attorney Tony Dalton and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Manager Jaime Laughter was not in attendance due to the recent birth of her son. Ms. Yount facilitated the meeting in her stead.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derrick McKissock

There were approximately 15 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairman Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the audience for participating in their County government. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance. Chairman Hawkins announced that in the absence of the County Manager due to the recent birth of her son, Library Director Anna Yount would be facilitating the meeting. At the request of Chairman Hawkins, Ms. Yount gave a short bio of herself prior to presenting the business of the agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

Ms. Yount requested to move Item V.A Resolution In Recognition of Kris M. Stephens under Recognitions/Presentations to Item V.E under the Consent Agenda. Ms. Stephens was unable to attend the meeting this evening.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioner Chapman commended the Clerk to the Board for the quality of the minutes she prepares after each Board meeting. He also reminded citizens that meetings are recorded and archived online. Commissioner Chapman also applauded the effort that went into developing the annual work plan, noting that County employees do tremendous work for the citizens. Commissioner Lemel expressed her appreciation for the specificity of the work plan and was impressed by the

measurable targets identified in the plan which will help to note our successes. Chairman Hawkins noted that the work plans will be reviewed on a biannual basis for accountability purposes. He thanked the Manager and staff for their work on developing the plan. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, July 11, 2016 and following met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed. The minutes of the July 11, 2016 regular meeting and sealed closed session were approved.

DISCOVERY, RELEASE AND MONTHLY SETTLEMENT REPORT

Each month the Tax Administrator has a listing of proposed releases for that month. The Board of Commissioners has the responsibility of approving the releases. For the period June 28-30, 2016, no tax dollars were released and refunds totaled \$315.80. Commissioners approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Report as submitted.

CANCELLATION OF AUGUST 8 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

There is no pressing business for Commissioners' to consider on August 8. Staffs are working on several projects and those items will be brought to Commissioners beginning with the second meeting in August. Typically after the budget process is complete, Commissioners cancel a summer meeting. Staff requested Commissioners cancel the August 8 meeting. Commissioners approved cancelling the August 8 regular meeting and instructed the Clerk to post proper notice to the public.

ANNUAL WORK PLANS

Commissioners adopted a County Strategic Plan in January 2016. The Strategic Plan included a draft annual work plan designed to be used annually with the budget to represent the intended outcomes in the coming fiscal year that will help support movement forward under the strategic plan.

The draft work plans were prepared by departments and submitted with their requested budgets during the budget process. The Manager worked with department heads to finalize the work plans based on the adopted budget and feedback provided by Commissioners when the plans were first presented during a regular meeting on May 23. Staff will provide mid-year and end-of-year reports to show accountability for how the organization intends to use public funds in FY 17. This will support Commissioners and citizens in understanding how funds are used to serve the public throughout departments and how they support the strategic direction of the County.

Commissioners approved the Annual Work Plan for FY 2017 as submitted.

(The Annual Work Plan for FY 2017 is on file in the office of the Clerk to the Board.)

RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF KRIS M. STEPHENS

Kris M. Stephens will retire from Transylvania County effective August 1, 2016. She has been an employee of the Transportation Department since 1994. Commissioners approved Resolution 24-2016 In Recognition of Kris M. Stephens.

(Resolution 24-2016 In Recognition of Kris M. Stephens is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

RECOGNITIONS/PRESENTATIONS

RECOGNITION OF CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

In July 2015, the Board of Commissioners approved a recommendation by Commissioner Lemel to implement a recognition program for the purposes of expressing our appreciation to citizens who volunteer their time and expertise on the County's many citizen advisory councils. Commissioners intend to recognize our citizens on a semi-annual basis. This period will cover January 1-June 30, 2016. Each person in attendance was presented with a certificate of appreciation and a coffee mug. The Clerk will mail certificates to those citizen volunteers that were unable to attend or have moved out of the County. The following citizen volunteers were recognized:

Citizen Advisory Council	Citizen Volunteer
Agricultural Advisory Board	Shelley Heath
Juvenile Crime Prevention Council	Kelley Eyster Ricky James
Parks and Recreation Commission	Jeff Andersen Scott Saulsbury Nicola Karesh
Personnel Board	Nancy Stricker
Planning Board	Mark Tooley
Transportation Advisory Committee	Dana Hawkins
Workforce Development Board	Noah Tuttle

The audience applauded these citizens for their volunteer service. Commissioners reminded citizens there are many opportunities to serve and encouraged citizens to apply for a citizen advisory council in which they may be interested.

NEW BUSINESS

REGIONAL BROADBAND INITIATIVE – LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Chairman Hawkins asked for this item to be on the agenda. He invited Land of Sky Regional Council Executive Director Justin Hembree to report on bringing broadband efforts to counties represented by the regional council.

This is a summary of his presentation:

Regional Broadband Initiatives – Enhancing Our Region's Economic Competitiveness

Regional Broadband Efforts

Recent press coverage focused on efforts to enhance the broadband networks in Buncombe, Henderson and Haywood Counties.

The purpose of this presentation is to outline a proposal for enhancing the broadband networks in other parts of the region.

The HUB Alliance

The HUB Community Economic Development Alliance (the HUB Alliance) is a forum for discussing and promoting actions that will improve Asheville and Buncombe County's future by taking advantage of the area's unique assets. The HUB Alliance strives to develop and support efforts that will attract, create, and expand business opportunities while improving the well-being of County and City citizens.

The HUB Alliance (quasi-governmental advisory board for City of Asheville and Buncombe County) consists of: Buncombe County Commission Chair, Asheville Mayor, Asheville Council Member, Economic Development Coalition Representative, UNC-A Chancellor, Warren Wilson President, A-B Tech President, school systems superintendents, five members appointed by Buncombe County, five members appointed by Asheville, and at-large members appointed by the HUB Alliance.

An Issue Identified

In 2015, the HUB Alliance began exploring options for introducing and enhancing ultra-high-speed internet service (greater than one gigabyte) in Asheville and Buncombe County. The drive behind this effort stemmed from a desire to meet the needs of businesses and the “creative class”.

NCNGN

The HUB Alliance invited Dr. Mark Hoit, NC State University’s Vice Chancellor for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, to make a presentation concerning the North Carolina Next Generation Network initiative. Dr. Hoit described the success of the NCNGN project in the Raleigh area and indicated that, through a data-driven analysis, the Asheville area had been identified as a possible candidate for the NCNGN project.

What is NCNGN?

NCNGN is a regional initiative for the greater Raleigh area focused on stimulating the deployment of next generation broadband networks. The coordinated effort is led by six municipalities and four research universities in the Research Triangle and Piedmont regions.

NCNGN’s goal is to encourage private sector providers to deliver ultrafast bandwidth at highly affordable prices to ensure the region remains competitive and at the forefront of developing the next generation applications essential to all sectors of the economy.

Last-mile broadband issues were not included in this project, although it remains an issue across the State.

NCNGN Actions

In 2013 legislation was passed that prohibited local governments from actively owning and operating broadband systems. Local governments pulled together to find a way to engage the private sector to provide the services that were needed to ensure economic competitiveness in the US and around the world.

On February 1, 2013, NCNGN, through the Triangle J Council of Governments, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) inviting one or more private companies to build and operate the desired networks. The RFP was not based on exchanging funds for providing services; rather the communities in the Raleigh area agreed to provide incentives to broadband companies that would greatly enhance the timeframe that they could deploy broadband services in that region. They set up systems to streamline permitting processes that made it much easier for companies to gain rights-of-way and most importantly the ability to lease publicly owned strands of fiber at rates well below market level. Eight responses were received by the April 1st deadline. Initial discussions were held with all responders, followed by detailed negotiations with more than one possible provider. A final recommendation was made to enter into an agreement with AT&T to provide gigabit internet services to NCNGN communities.

NCNGN Results

AT&T is actively installing a fiber network in all six NCNGN communities. As of December 2015, AT&T has service offerings in limited areas with plans to have services available on a large scale by the end of 2016. As a result, competition was introduced into the marketplace by other providers moving in and offering services for competitive prices.

Land of Sky's Involvement

After examining several options, including working through the City of Asheville and UNC-A, the steering committee approached Land of Sky on April 13, 2016 to serve as the project manager for the WestNGN Broadband Project. Land of Sky agreed to serve in this capacity with an understanding that, since all member jurisdictions are not part of WestNGN Phase I, the participating communities (Asheville, Biltmore Forest, Fletcher, Hendersonville, and Laurel Park) would pay all costs associated with project management work, estimated to be \$35,000.

Land of Sky recognized the same need for affordable, high-speed internet service in the other areas of the region and began designing a proposed project that could build upon work being done in the more densely populated areas of the region and also address last mile connection issues.

WestNGN Broadband Project Phase 1

The WestNGN Broadband Project is comprised of two phases. Phase I is currently underway. For Phase I, the participating communities will develop and assemble data to develop community profiles for a broadband RFP, which in a sense, is a marketing tool the region will use to highlight assets for future infrastructure investment. Phase I is solely focused on ultra-high-speed broadband deployment, not last mile infrastructure. It is anticipated the RFP development process under Phase I will be complete by October 2016.

WestNGN Phase II

Phase II of the project is proposed to formally begin in November 2016, after funding approval from the Appalachian Regional Commission, and will use the knowledge gained in Phase I to work with the rest of the region and address the unique needs associated with last mile infrastructure. Prior to November 2016, communities will be presented additional information including a project overview, detailed outcome measurements, and the project budget. Communities will be invited to assist in designing the project and, most importantly, be invited to participate as part of a coalition.

Phase II Overarching Goal

To assist communities in Transylvania, Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, and Madison Counties, through a strategic planning and RFP process, in the development of a high-speed broadband network with capabilities and pricing on par with the participating Phase I communities, and to address the last mile broadband challenges facing the more rural areas of the region.

Phase II ARC Grant Outcomes and Estimated Timeline

1. ARC Funding Approval (November 2016)
2. Memoranda of Understanding and Participant Agreements (January 2017)
3. Stakeholder Group Formation and Meetings (September 2016 – End of Phase II)
4. MCNC (Microelectronics Center of NC; NC Research and Education Network) Development of a Broadband Analysis (January 2017 – April 2017)
5. Compile Community Profiles and Development of RFP (January 2017 – April 2017)
6. Web Page Development with FAQs, Resources, and Project Information (December 2016 – Ongoing)
7. Administration of RFP Release and Response Process (May 2017 – July 2017)

Possible Next Steps for Transylvania County

1. Strategy discussions with Transylvania Economic Alliance, County leadership, municipal leadership, and other key partners
2. Regional strategy discussions with neighboring local government jurisdictions
3. Project "buy-in"
4. Formation of Phase II Steering Committee, if applicable

This concluded the presentation. Commissioners posed several discussions and a lengthy discussion was had. This is a summary (Q=Question; A=Answer; C=Comment):

- Q. Why was Waynesville included in Phase1? Waynesville is not a member of the Land of Sky.
- A. Mr. Hembree stated that the geographic area was determined by Dr. Hoit and the group from NCSU. One of the reasons Waynesville was included and Brevard was not was because Waynesville owns much of its own electrical utilities. One of the challenges dealt with in the Raleigh area was obtaining agreements with electrical providers to share utility poles in order to run fiber. That will be a challenge here as well. Mr. Hembree will research and provide additional data in order to answer this question more accurately.
- Q. Transylvania County currently has one service provider. They are expanding their services in the community. Where does that provider fall into this process? Would the provider offer a quote for the RFP?
- A. Mr. Hembree said the local provider would be involved on two levels. The first is when the study is being conducted in order to identify areas where fiber and broadband are in place and other sharing of data. Secondly, the local provider would hopefully be the first one to submit a proposal to offer these services.
- C. In the past, grants were considered more favorable if there was crossover between regions served by other councils of government. Haywood County fits in well with the demographics although they are not a member government of the Land of Sky. Haywood County is very similar in many aspects to Madison and Transylvania Counties.
- C. In 2014, the County's IT performed a pricing survey of broadband services. The survey indicated that mid-level service was lacking. Since then the local provider has rolled out cable/internet service to fill the gap. The report revealed though that just having the service is not enough; it must also be priced competitively. We are not competitive at all with surrounding counties with this regard. The local provider has invested a lot over the past couple of years in terms of rolling out new services. Introducing new players into the market is key.
- Q. Is the point of the initiative is to aggregate a market by communities acting as one in terms of putting out an RFP, developing common specs and common pricing expectations and allowing the market to compete to provide the services? In addition, for it to work the communities must have a common vision of what they want and we have to communicate what our needs our and correlate that into a shared goal?
- A. Mr. Hembree confirmed.
- C. This is an important issue and the initiative has great potential. There are challenges, but Transylvania County is willing to help in any way possible.
- A. The success of this initiative will hinge on the communities being able to stick together during the process. The strength will come from moving forward as a united coalition and in negotiations with the providers.
- C. Another challenge is that ultra-high-speed pricing is very different from last-mile. There is, however, the potential of the availability of grants for last-mile as an incentive to entice providers to bid on services. Despite these and other challenges, Commissioners are excited about the proposals that come forth over the next few months.
- A. Infrastructure is so important for businesses and households and even more as we plan for the future.

- Q. Do we have interaction with tech companies? Technology is constantly changing and it important to know where future technology is heading before investing millions of dollars in infrastructure.
- A. Putting fiber in the ground may not be the final solution. There are other technologies in other parts of the country that are using wireless and satellite capabilities that may end of being the best solutions for rural areas. Technology must be part of the conversation.
- C. Transylvania County is just as challenged in terms of non-wire capabilities as we are wire capabilities. An example is the Library bookmobile. Hot spots cannot be accessed remotely in many areas of the County. We are providing educational resources that cannot be accessed remotely which doesn't appropriately benefit our citizens.

Mr. Hembree announced that the Land of Sky is holding an open house even and it is open to the public. Information from the various departments will be shared with the public. A BBQ lunch will be provided. He invited Commissioners to attend.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Based on Section 28 of the FY 17 Budget Ordinance, certain budget amendments must be submitted to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Below is a summary of amendments that have been requested that require Board approval either because they increase the total General Fund budget by more than \$5,000 and are derived from funding sources that have not been previously approved by the Board and are not simply pass-through funds or because they decrease the total General Fund budget and reflect reductions in projected funding sources. The budget amendments were presented by Finance Director Gay Poor.

#2: \$45,150 from funds appropriated in FY 16 to be used in conjunction with funds appropriated in FY 17 for the up-fit of the Rogow Room A/V system

#3: \$53,500 from funds appropriated in FY 16 to purchase a replacement van for Child Development Transportation, which was not delivered by NC DOT until July 2016 (Note: 90% of this cost will be reimbursed through the Section 5311 Grant.)

#4: \$37,370 from remaining supplemental grant funds received in FY's 14, 15, and 16 to be used specifically for Emergency Management services and projects

#5: \$115,705 from funds remaining from FY 16 appropriations for the free day camp at Rosman (\$6,047) and the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan (\$19,658) and from funds appropriated for replacement of the playground at the Recreation Center (\$90,000), which has been delayed pending the results of the Strategic Plan

#6: \$104,099 from funds appropriated in FY 16 for the signage project at the Community Services Building (\$10,000) and window replacement at the DSS Building (\$29,900) and funds remaining from the FY 16 appropriations for the roof and gutter modifications and repairs at the DSS Building (\$64,199)

If approved, these amendments will increase the General Fund budget by \$355,824 bringing it to a total of \$48,752,996.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the requested budget amendments. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman. The motion was approved unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Yount reported the following on behalf of the Manager:

- The Library, Parks and Recreation and The Family Place will sponsor a free day of water fun. Family Splash Day will be held on Saturday, July 30 from 11am-2pm on the Library lawn. Activities will be structured for toddlers and preschoolers, but all ages are welcome.
- Crista Cali will serve as the Youth Delegate to the NCACC Annual Conference. She intends to speak briefly about her experience at the Annual Conference at the 2nd Commissioners' meeting in August. She will also be meeting with a County Commissioner prior to the conference and she has chosen to meet with Commissioner Lemel.
- Parks and Recreation staff conducted a survey of the participants in their sports camp and the results were very positive.
- Kudos to Planning and Community Development Director Mark Burrows. Commissioners received an email from JHPC member Lauren Wise thanking Mark for his hard work and contribution to our community.
- Kudos to Animal Services Director Elma Rae Greene and Animal Services staff. The Manager received an email from Aurelie Taylor explaining how professional and caring the staffs were in her dealings with them.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Lemel reported that the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Committee is working on finalizing the document and intends to develop a condensed version for easier consumption. She is pleased with the results so far. The Committee will bring this forth to the Board in the fall for consideration.

Commissioner Chapman attended the Relay for Life event at Brevard High School on Friday. It was an outstanding event and he thanked County staff and others who organized and participated in such an emotional event. Commissioner Chapman, along with Commissioners Chappell and Lemel, attended the groundbreaking ceremony this afternoon for the new emergency department at Transylvania Regional Hospital. It will be a significant investment in the community and will be extremely important for our citizens.

Commissioner Chappell reported there was another waterfall fatality in the County over the weekend. Headwaters Outfitters is encouraging others to remind everyone, citizens and visitors alike, to be cautious around waterfalls and while exploring our County. He thanked emergency services personnel for their dedication, especially during these times, because they can easily suffer the repercussions of tragedy.

Chairman Hawkins reported that he and Commissioner Chapman met with one of the candidates for the NC General Assembly. It was a good opportunity to discuss the various things that are important to the County. He stressed to the candidate that attending County Commission meetings would be valuable in learning how to best represent the County should he take office. Chairman Hawkins expressed his disappointment with the candidate not being in attendance tonight, but noted another candidate was in attendance and attends all meetings. It is paramount that the people who want to represent us at the State level understand how best to represent counties in the General Assembly.

Chairman Hawkins reminded everyone the next meeting is cancelled. Commissioners will not meet again until August 22.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Lemel moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously carried.**

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board