

**MINUTES**  
**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**February 13, 2017 – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, February 13, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Chairman Larry Chapman, Jason Chappell, Mike Hawkins, Vice-Chairwoman Page Lemel and Kelvin Phillips. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Tony Dalton and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derrick McKissock

There were approximately 25 people in the audience.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Larry Chapman presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**WELCOME**

Chairman Chapman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the public for participating in their local government. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public.

**AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

There were no agenda modifications.

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Commissioner Phillips moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Lemel and unanimously approved.**

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on November 28, 2016, December 12, 2016, and January 23, 2017. Following the regular business of the January 23, 2017 meeting, Commissioners met in closed session to discuss items related to personnel, economic development and property acquisition. These minutes were sealed. Commissioners also met in special session on February 3, 2017 for the purposes of going into closed session to discuss a personnel matter. The closed session minutes were

sealed. The January 9, 2017 meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather. The minutes of the January 23, 2017 regular meeting will be on the next agenda for approval.

Commissioners approved the minutes of the November 28, 2016 and December 12, 2016 regular meetings, the sealed closed session minutes from January 23, 2017, and the February 3, 2017 special meeting and sealed closed session.

#### TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION TITLE VI COMPLIANCE PLAN

Federal Transit Administration regulations require that recipients of federal transit funds have a formal plan for addressing complaints of discrimination in its provided services. They also require that the governing board review and approve these documents every three years. Transylvania County's current plan has been previously approved by the Board, but must be approved again in order to remain compliant with FTA rules. Commissioners approved the Transportation Title VI Plan and Complaint Procedures as submitted.

### **PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**

#### WILDLAND FIRE RESPONSE REPORT-NC FOREST SERVICE & CONNESTEE FIRE RESCUE

The North Carolina Forest Service and Conneestee Fire Rescue provided an overview of the recent Wildland Fire Response in the Conneestee Fire Rescue District. The fire originated in South Carolina and crossed into North Carolina. This is a summary of their presentation:

##### **Conneestee Fire Rescue Department**

Chief Keith Owen presented on behalf of the Conneestee Fire Rescue Department. He presented a broad overview of the wildland fire response.

Mr. Owen was notified by a fire chief in South Carolina of the impending fire and to begin evacuations. The NC Forest Service became involved at this point which resulted in a meeting of the fire chiefs across the County to establish a game plan. Over 60 firefighters helped build fire lines to prevent the fire from spreading. Over the next several days, firefighters and volunteers continued to reinforce fire lines and the County's Emergency Management department and Sheriff's Office assisted with evacuation notices in the event that evacuations were necessary as the fire continued closer to the State line. Soon thereafter, the County declared a state of emergency to ensure additional resources were available if needed. Once the fire crossed into North Carolina, more crews were needed to fight the fire and a plan was made to have crews remain on scene to monitor the fire. Without the quick reaction, it could have been devastating to Transylvania County and its residents. Emergency Services agencies throughout the County came together to fight the fire. A welcome rain and another reinforcement of the fire lines helped to ensure the fire would not spread any further.

Mr. Owen stressed that during this time, the community came together to tend to the needs of the firefighters and other volunteers by providing meals and water and whatever was needed.

Unfortunately, there was little to no communication from South Carolina during this event.

North Carolina and Transylvania County followed textbook Incident Command procedures, all while providing services within their own districts. He thanked everyone who had a hand in fighting the fire and ensuring the safety of citizens of Transylvania County.

## **NC Forest Service**

County Ranger Frank Rogers presented on behalf of the NC Forest Service. This is a summary of the information which was presented via PowerPoint.

### *NC Forest Service staff who serve Transylvania County:*

- Frank Rogers – County Ranger
- James McJunkin – Assistant County Ranger
- Jimmy Patterson – FFEO, part-time employee
- Greg Smith – District Ranger

### *Pinnacle Mountain Fire*

- The Pinnacle Mountain fire started November 9 in a remote location just off the Foothills Trail in Table Rock State Park, SC
- At that time the fire was under the jurisdiction of the South Carolina Forestry Commission
- Fire danger, terrain, weather, and extremely dry fuels observed during this time made suppression efforts very challenging; the fire was started by a camp fire
- South Carolina called in a type 3 team from Utah; they took over the fire on November 20
- On November 23 the fire reached the North Carolina border near the Head of Laurel in the area of Dolly Masters Road in the East Fork Community
- The fire was contained on December 4; burned 10,560 acres; approximately 200 acres burned within North Carolina

### *State/Federal Personnel Involved*

- South Carolina had up to 316 personnel per day on the fire
- North Carolina had up to 40 NCFS personnel committed per day and worked cooperatively with firefighters and emergency responders from Transylvania County.
- Agency Representation:
  - NCFS - Transylvania County
  - NCFS - District 1
  - NCFS - DuPont RSF
  - NCFS - B.R.I.D.G.E – (Inmate Hand Crews)
  - Support from NCFS Statewide Severity Resources (150 personnel at a cost of \$2.48 million region wide)
  - USPS (US Park Service)- Montana
  - USFS (US Forest Service)- Various States
  - Oregon Department of Forestry
  - Oklahoma Forestry Commission

### *Transylvania County Emergency Personnel*

- All eight fire departments
- Emergency Management
- Transylvania Rescue Squad
- Transylvania EMS
- Transylvania Sheriff's Office
- NC State Highway Patrol
- NC Department of Transportation

Members from these departments were used to prep and construct fire line (over seven miles of fire lines in Transylvania County), directly fight fire, assist and support NCFS with burnout operations, prepare for emergency evacuation, standby for medical needs, and traffic control.

#### *In the County*

- A burn ban was in effect and NCFS was operating on a readiness plan 5
- Transylvania County additional initial attack was covered by Assistant County Ranger 1-91 James McJunkin and District 1 personnel
- NCFS Emergency Prearranged Firefighters worked standby with 1-91 during the day
- Up to seven Prearranged firefighters worked each day
- These Prearranged Firefighters were all Transylvania County residents trained in wildland fire fighting; they were away from their regular jobs and families to help
- Local USFS Pisgah District personnel assisted with initial attack and standby in the County; they also had resources from other districts and states all across the country
- There were no homes or structures damaged
- No injuries occurred during the incident
- NCFS and Transylvania County fire departments had an significant increase in call volume due to smoke and the burn ban
  - July 1, 2016-December 31, 2016 - 121 calls (approximately triple the normal call volume for this time of year)
  - During Pinnacle Mountain fire there were 56 dispatches for NCFS in Transylvania County
  - Burn ban put in affect from November 7, 2016 – December 2, 2016
  - Two citations were issued
  - Four warning tickets issued

#### *Great Communication and Cooperation With*

- All Transylvania County Fire Departments and Rescue Squad – (Connestee Fire & Rescue District)
- Transylvania County Emergency Management
- EMS
- Fire Marshal
- Transylvania County 911 Communications
- Transylvania County Sheriff's Office
- NC State Highway Patrol
- County Commissioners
- County Manager
- Transylvania County residents
- NCFS Severity Resources from across the entire State
- NCFS Liaison- Keith Money – from Region 2
- *The Transylvania Times* and other media reps

#### *Challenges During the Incident*

- Establishing good communication with South Carolina assigned Incident Management Teams
- Location and geographic conditions played a big role in the challenges with communication
- Numerous radio frequencies were being used by all of the responding agencies and resources (state, county, aircraft, etc.)
- The long duration of the event and long hours; Pinnacle Mountain fire lasted 20 days
- The actual fire location and progression and determining how close it was to NC

- SC Forestry Commission has limited hand crews and experience working with these resources in this area
- Air support was limited at times due to the large amounts of smoke in all of WNC

This concluded the formal presentation by the NC Forest Service.

Commissioners expressed their utmost gratitude to these agencies and others who worked so hard during this time fighting the Pinnacle Mountain fire and ensuring the safety of Transylvania County citizens and their homes.

Commissioner Lemel commented that this incident shows the value in preparation and training that these agencies work so hard to maintain. She noted that the Board of Commissioners was kept apprised of the communications challenges so she was proud of the agencies, staffs and volunteers in North Carolina and Transylvania County.

Commissioner Lemel said she was surprised to learn about the ways in which different types of wood burn and the challenges this brings to effectively fighting these fires.

Chairman Chapman asked if there is an estimate of the cost to the County. Departments across the board put in a lot of man hours and used lots of equipment. The Manager stated that the latest estimate was \$39,000.

Commissioner Hawkins inquired about the status of the FEMA reimbursement. Mr. Rogers stated that because the fire was a South Carolina fire there would be no reimbursement from FEMA. The Manager reported that the Land of Sky Regional Council informed her that the County may be eligible for funds, but the amount is so small that it may be difficult to justify. She is working with them on filing the necessary paperwork.

District Ranger Greg Smith reported that on November 30, 2016 the cost of the fire was estimated at \$4.57 at 10,560 acres. This equates to \$432/per acre suppression cost. With nearly 200 acres burned in North Carolina that equates to \$88,000. To put that into perspective, he pointed out that the County's contract with the NC Forest Service is a little over \$94,000.

## APPOINTMENTS

### COUNTY COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS

County Commissioners serve on various boards and committees in the County, region and State. At the previous meeting, staff requested Commissioners review their status and determine whether or not they want to continue serving in their same capacity and report back to staff at this meeting. Here is a breakdown of the boards and committees on which Commissioners currently serve:

<b>Larry Chapman</b>	<b>Jason Chappell</b>	<b>Mike Hawkins</b>	<b>Page Lemel</b>	<b>Kelvin Phillips</b>
<b>Juvenile Crime Prevention Council</b>	<b>Land of Sky Regional Council-alternate</b>	<b>Land of Sky Regional Council-primary</b>	Dupont State Recreational Forest Advisory Committee	<b>Board of Health</b>
<b>NCACC Board of Directors</b>	<b>Work First Planning Committee</b>	Gorges State Park Advisory Committee	<b>Joint Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Task Force</b>	

<b>NCACC Legislative Goals Voting Delegate</b>	<b>Personnel Board</b>	<b>Tourism Development Authority</b>	<b>VAYA Health County Commissioner Advisory Council</b>	
	<b>Rural Planning Organization</b>	Economic Development Partnership of NC	Early Childhood Initiative Task Force	
	French Broad River Metropolitan Organization		Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Task Force	
			REACH Task Force	
			Extension Advisory Council	

The boards in bold require County Commissioner appointment either by statute, resolution, memorandum of understanding, or bylaws.

Commissioners briefly discussed their roles and instructed staff to:

1. Contact Dupont State Forest and Gorges State Park and communicate that membership should be someone who has a vested interest in the forest and park; a better fit might be a member of the TNRC or TDA; these boards serve a supportive function by looking at overall management and advocacy and does not necessarily fall under the purview of the local elected government
2. Investigate whether or not the Land of Sky Regional Council primary and alternate members are required to be the chair and vice-chair of the local elected board; this has been the case in past years

#### PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

There are three vacancies on the Parks and Recreation Commission. The Clerk advertised for the vacancies with an application deadline of February 1. There are seven applications on file.

**Commissioner Lemel nominated and moved to appoint Carolyn Ashworth to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded by Chairman Chapman.**

**Commissioner Phillips nominated and moved to appoint Kellie Grindstaff to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins.** Commissioner Lemel pointed out that Ms. Grindstaff is a part-time employee of the Parks and Recreation department and for that reason she believes her appointment would be a conflict of interest. She pointed out there is no official policy stating this, but she feels it would be inappropriate to appoint an employee of the department. **Commissioner Phillips withdrew his motion with no objection.**

**Commissioner Lemel nominated and moved to appoint James Cody Owen to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell.** Commissioner Lemel pointed out Mr. Owen was very vocal during the parks and recreation master plan discussion regarding organized sports leagues for youths and he is very active in this area. Chairman Chapman pointed out he is also from the Rosman area so it helps ensure countywide participation.

**Commissioner Lemel nominated and moved to appoint James Newby to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded by Chairman Chapman.**

**The motions to appoint Carolyn Ashworth, James Cody Owen and James Newby were approved unanimously.**

## OLD BUSINESS

### MODIFICATION OF HEMLOCK RESTORATIVE INITIATIVE COST SHARE PROGRAM

County Extension Director Bart Renner presented this agenda item. The Hemlock Restorative Cost Share Program guidelines states that if a land owner chooses not to pursue treatment after an initial assessment is completed by a qualified contractor under provisions of this program the land owner's \$50 deposit will be refunded. This will place undue costs on the County and will reduce the County's ability to treat other, worthy parcels. The land owner will basically be receiving a professional report detailing effective treatments for free. By making the \$50 deposit non-refundable except when the initial application is deemed not to meet qualifying criteria, some of the cost of appraisal will be offset when a land owner decides not to pursue treatment.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to approve this modification of the guidelines and policies to reflect making the \$50 deposit non-refundable except then the initial application is deemed not to meet qualifying criteria, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.**

## NEW BUSINESS

### RECLASSIFICATION OF POSITION IN TAX ADMINISTRATION

Tax Administrator Jessica McCall presented this item. Currently there are two positions in the Tax Administration Office classified as Property Appraiser I, one of which is the position Jessica McCall held prior to being appointed Tax Administrator and the other is held by Debbie Walker, a long term employee of over 30 years.

After being appointed as Tax Administrator, Ms. McCall divided the daily duties of her prior position between two Tax Assessment Specialists. In addition, Ms. Walker assumed more responsibilities and provides oversight. Being that Ms. Walker is nearing retirement, Ms. McCall sees this area of the Tax Office as particularly vulnerable. She stressed the importance of having trained staff to work in the Business Personal Property section prior to Ms. Walker's retirement.

Ms. McCall proposed reclassifying a vacant Property Appraiser II position to a Property Appraiser I position resulting in there being three Property Appraiser I positions: two vacant and one held by Ms. Walker. The reclassification would ensure that we could hire and train two Property Appraiser I employees. Upon Ms. Walker's retirement, staff would review her position and determine the appropriate position needed within the department.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to approve reclassification of Property Appraiser II to Property Appraiser I. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell.** The reclassification causes no financial impact. Due to lapsed salaries and hiring new staff members at the lower end of salary ranges, the approved budget allows for the requested reclassification without any funding increase.  
**The motion was approved unanimously.**

### CHARGE TO PLANNING BOARD

One of the primary citizen boards critical to a local planning program in North Carolina is the planning board as they are used to help governing boards guide local development policies and procedures within state statutory guidelines. Most city councils and boards of commissioners in NC have established a planning board. Many of the planning board's duties and responsibilities are advisory with some local codes of ordinances including reviews or approvals to be completed by the board. The planning board is

generally responsible for working with planning staff to develop the jurisdiction's comprehensive plan. It may arrange for and recommend the preparation of special studies, land use plans and policies, and drafts of ordinances. Planning boards may also serve as boards of adjustment. This is true for our Planning Board because we have the Pisgah Forest Community Zoning Ordinance which was enacted in 2010.

The County ordinance establishing the Planning Board spells out the general powers and duties. These remain mostly advisory and to vet processes that are proposed by staff and with staff working collaboratively with the Planning Board on behalf of the Board.

As Commissioners consider the draft 2025 Comprehensive Plan, they will also consider how to implement the plan and what projects or policies they would like the planning board to work on alongside staff to continue to provide advisory support on the built environment in Transylvania County. The Manager asked Commissioners to discuss and provide directive to Planning Board and staff about those next steps.

Board discussion:

Commissioner Chappell reminded Commissioners there are vacancies that need to be filled. The Planning Board has a specific function and may have to serve as a quasi-judicial board in some instances, so it is critical that it has the membership to fulfill these duties. Chairman Chappell stated he intends to add these appointments to the February 27 agenda. He encouraged Commissioners to review the applications thoroughly.

Chairman Chapman stated that a key part of the comprehensive plan is the economic development aspect. He wanted the Planning Board to identify areas of anticipated growth; especially being that the available land mass is limited due to state and federal forest land, municipal jurisdiction, steep slope restrictions, etc.

Commissioner Hawkins stated if we want growth in Transylvania County, then we have to look at how the use of the land impacts the services the County has to provide-e.g., infrastructure and school resources. It is important to plan ahead for these things, not after growth has occurred. Instead of just charging the Planning with specific projects, it is important for the Board of Commissioners to relay that they understand the importance of growth, especially along the corridors, and that they would be receptive to planning solutions to help facilitate that growth. He believes the Board of Commissioners needs to do a better job of communicating to the Planning Board.

Commissioner Lemel referred to some of the backup material in the agenda packet, specifically the document providing an overview of planning in North Carolina. It states that the most important thing to remember about planning agencies and functions is that planning is an effort to promote efficiency, equity and quality of life in the community. It allows a community to get out in front of potential problems and prepare for growth; it is not an effort to remove rights or stifle growth. Commissioner Lemel stressed she does not want the County to have to endure another experience like the biomass plant issue. She sees a good solid planning board and their recommendations identifying growth areas as being constructive and helpful to this community. Commissioner Lemel reported that she attended a meeting today regarding the extension of water and sewer outside of the corporate municipalities. This will not occur without having knowledge of where the extension should occur and the purpose it would be serving. It is essential that we are able to identify these areas and by extending those services there will be a definitive result of a commercial or industrial development.

Commissioner Lemel pointed out that the document went onto state that regulations are intended to implement the will of the community as written into the comprehensive plan. They are designed to



protect people against the unwanted effects of land use on neighboring properties and the overall negative impacts, both fiscal and physical, to the community. She pointed out that the County's ordinance spells out the duties as making recommendations of principles and policies for guiding development of the area. So therefore it is imperative for the Planning Board to identify potential growth areas so the County can make investments in those areas. The County's ordinance also states the Planning Board's duties as determining whether specific proposed developments conform to the principles and requirements of the comprehensive plan for the growth and improvement of an area. In her opinion, the Board of Commissioners has not done a good job in asking to receive this information from the Planning Board.

Commissioner Hawkins said he sees the Planning Board's role as advisory to both the Board of Commissioners and Planning Department. Ultimately, he believes staff is responsible for any kind of planning initiatives that are suggested to the Board of Commissioners. He pointed out the comprehensive plan presentations have been based on the Planning Board's recommendations, but staff input is missing at this point.

Commissioner Phillips pointed out that one of the duties spelled out in the ordinance is for the Planning Board to prepare and recommend ordinances promoting orderly development. He saw this as a directive and did not feel the Planning Board should be recommending ordinances for the sake of recommending ordinances. He would like for Commissioners to consider reviewing the County's ordinance in the future.

Chairman Chapman stated the purpose of this item tonight was to bring this to the forefront of the Board's attention and to consider appropriate recommendations. There is no action required at this meeting.

Commissioner Chappell responded to Commissioner Hawkins, stating that he did not want to lose the unfiltered opinion of the Planning Board.

Commissioner Hawkins said it is important to show Planning Board members respect for the hard work they are doing by communicating to them how the County values planning so they can incorporate the Board's philosophy when considering recommendations in the future.

Chairman Chapman called upon Planning Board Chairman Mike West for input. Mr. West stressed to Commissioners that the Planning Board is out of compliance with the ordinance because it lacks the required number of members to act. He commended Planning and Community Development Director Mark Burrows for his efforts in complying with the ordinance and facilitating meetings. Mr. West pointed out the ordinance has not been revised in many years and he encouraged the Board to review it for any updates, but stated that the overall charge to the Planning Board is in line with state statutes.

Mr. West reported that prior to starting work on the comprehensive plan, the Planning Board studied the corridor areas and looked at several aspects like transportation, infrastructure, environmental impact, etc. It was one of the first times they looked at the County as a whole and determined how much land was available for development. Staff can provide the information from the study, but the Planning Board can certainly review that information again for the purposes of the comprehensive plan. Currently, the Planning Board is reviewing the County's ordinances for any updates to comply with changes in State and federal laws. Lastly, he stated that the Planning Board looks forward to receiving future direction from the Board of Commissioners to assist them in their work.

#### OFFER TO PURCHASE OLD ANIMAL SHELTER PROPERTY ON ROSS ROAD

Transylvania County opened a new animal shelter in 2013 and demolished the old animal shelter on Ross Road leaving the property vacant. The septic tank was pumped at that time, marked and left in place.

The 2016 tax valuation for the property without the building is \$45,000 and GIS reflects the acreage at 1.53 acres.

Adjacent property owners, Charles and Kelli McKinney, have submitted an offer to purchase the property in the amount of \$10,000. Should the Commissioners express a desire to accept this offer, they would then request that staff prepare a resolution for the next agenda that describes the property, the amount and terms of the offer, sets the terms of the deposit requirements (at least 5% from offeror by statute), detail the upset bid procedures and the deadline for accepting or rejecting the final bid. Commissioners also have the options of rejecting the bid or authorizing staff to further negotiate with the property owners and bring back another offer if this offer is unsuitable. By state law, any offer to purchase county property must follow the upset bid process if accepted. The Manager asked Commissioners to consider the offer for acceptance or denial and direct staff on how to proceed.

Commissioner Phillips inquired about any liability issues with the property. The Manager reported she has investigated claims about the property, but those claims are unsubstantiated. The biggest issue with the property is determining if the septic tank is reusable, otherwise there are no environmental issues with the property. Should Commissioner decide to sell, the resolution should disclose everything known about the property with the condition that the County would be absolved of any further liability.

Commissioner Chappell asked if staff knew of any potential use of this property. The Manager was unaware of any proposed uses, but after the agenda was published she received a call asking if the property had been considered for a dog park.

Commissioner Hawkins inquired further about the upset bid offer. If Commissioners decide to engage the offer, there is a period of time in which others may submit a higher bid. The Manager confirmed, noting that the upset bid process would not start until the Board adopts a resolution and has the 5% deposit from the bidder in hand. Commissioner Hawkins wanted confirmation that the bidding process would establish the true value of the property. The Manager confirmed.

Chairman Chapman expressed concern that the County owns a limited amount of property. He wanted to ensure staff has exhausted all uses for the property before selling it.

**Chairman Chapman moved that we further evaluate the potential use of the property and decline the offer.** The Manager stated she will communicate to staff to evaluate whether or not there is another purpose for the property. Tax Office staff reported to her that the current valuation is based on the road frontage, onsite well and septic, and comparable prices in the community. **The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lemel. The motion failed by a vote of 3 to 2, with Commissioners Chappell, Hawkins and Phillips.**

Commissioner Hawkins said he could not think of a logical reason to hold onto the property. The Manager added that she is obligated to bring forth such offers to the Board of Commissioners. Staff has yet to investigate any further use of the property for any purpose, but will do so if the Board desires.

**Commissioner Hawkins moved to communicate with the buyers to ask for a 90-day extension on their offer and to direct staff during that time to explore potential uses for the site. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lemel.** Commissioner Phillips pointed out this is an isolated piece of property and it is only worth what someone is willing to pay for it, which will be determined by the bid process. He felt it would benefit the County by being on the tax rolls. Commissioner Chappell said he only his concern is if there are any environmental issues. The Manager informed the Board that a resolution could state that the property is for sell as is once the Board is ready to dispose of the property. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

### BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE

Staff was asked to propose an alternative regular meeting schedule for the Board of Commissioners to include a daytime meeting. After considering several factors, staff proposed that the Board adopt a regular meeting schedule whereby meetings are held at 9am on the second Tuesday and at 7pm on the fourth Monday of each month. Holding a day meeting may capture another segment of the population that prefers not to attend evening meetings and the practice of holding a morning meeting is common in jurisdictions that hold two meetings per month.

The calendar below is the proposed new meeting schedule. The Tuesday daytime meeting was selected to ensure the turnaround time between agenda preparation and meetings was not unreasonable.

#### 2017 Regular Meeting Schedule

March	9am - Tuesday, March 14 7pm - Monday, March 27
April	9am - Tuesday, April 11 7pm - Monday, April 24
May	9am - Tuesday, May 9 7pm - Monday, May 22
June	9am - Tuesday, June 13 7pm - Monday, June 26
July	9am - Tuesday, July 11 7pm - Monday, July 24
August	9am - Tuesday, August 8 7pm - Monday, August 28
September	9am - Tuesday, September 12 7pm - Monday, September 25
October	9am - Tuesday, October 10 10am - Monday, October 23
November	9am - Tuesday, November 14 7pm - Monday, November 27
December	9am - Tuesday, December 12 7pm - Thursday, December 28 (12/25-27 Christmas holiday)

The Manager recommended the Board consider their meeting schedule and direct staff to act accordingly should they prefer to change their meeting schedule.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the new meeting schedule as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins.** Commissioner Phillips said the County's large manufacturing plants have closed down meaning there is no longer a high volume of shift work. He was concerned that participation at the meetings may dwindle. He does not see a need to have a daytime meeting and he does not support the proposed new meeting schedule. Commissioner Chappell had similar concerns that this change could have a negative effect on participation and might even limit individuals from running for office because the daytime meeting interferes with their work schedule. His own circumstances will require him to use vacation time to fulfill his duties as Commissioner. Commissioner Lemel pointed out that most of the meeting attendees now are retirees. She said she has trouble driving at night on our dark mountainous roads so she can imagine others do as well. She is supportive of the change because other counties have seen success with a daytime meeting and additionally County staff would be able to perform their duties providing information to the Board during regular working hours. Commissioner Lemel asked Commissioners to consider the schedule pointing out that if it does not work, the Board can change it back. Commissioner Phillips was concerned about balancing agenda items in order to

accommodate other agencies coming before the Board. He preferred there to be public input on this item before taking action because we may find the public does not support this change. Chairman Chapman pointed out that many of our meetings are lasting into the late hours of the night and he agreed that most of the citizenry that attend meetings are retirees. He asked Commissioners to give the new schedule a try and if it proves unsuccessful, the Board can vote to change it back. He also brought up holding meetings around the community. Commissioner Phillips advocated for holding meetings at the various community centers rather than changing the meeting schedule at this time. **The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 2 with Commissioners Chappell and Phillips voting against.**

#### MANAGER'S REPORT

- At the next meeting department heads will present their mid-year report on the annual work plans in preparation for the budget kick off
- Congratulations to Clerk to the Board Clerk Trisha Hogan
  - Obtained NC Certified County Clerk designation and will receive credentials in April
  - Asked to serve another term NC Association of County Clerks Board of Directors and she will be reappointed in April
- Next Friday the Manager is hosting a lunch for the School of Government; SOG has invited women from the area that serve in local government leadership roles; participants will talk about developing careers as young women in local government; SOG hopes to offer training and other resources to encourage women to pursue local government careers, including management

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Kathleen Barnes: Ms. Barnes reported that she regularly attends Planning Board meetings and she can attest to how hard the Planning Board has worked on the comprehensive plan. The Planning Board, with the help of staff, also worked hard to resolve their deep divisions and strong opinions in order to accomplish the task. Ms. Barnes believes Commissioners are doing a disservice to the Planning Board by not filling the vacancies in a timely manner and she urged the Board to fill those vacancies as soon as possible.

#### **COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Lemel represented the County last week at the Emerging Issues Institute where she participated on a panel to talk about how small rural counties are addressing early childhood needs. It was a great opportunity to network with others and get the word out about we are accomplishing in Transylvania County. Commissioner Lemel announced that on Friday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. in the DSS lobby will be the unveiling the first mental health screening kiosk in the 31-county region of VAYA Health. This is a big step in opening access to mental health screening and referrals for service. She invited the public to attend and help celebrate this accomplishment.

Chairman Chapman reported that he will be in Raleigh on Wednesday attending the Board of Directors meeting for the NC Association of County Commissioners. He reminded everyone that the new legislative goals have been posted to the NCACC website. He encouraged the public to pressure the State legislature to meet its statutory requirement for disbursement of lotter funds. Chairman Chapman again asked Commissioners to review the Planning Board applications thoroughly and asked the Clerk to ensure Commissioners had copies of all the applications.

Commissioner Hawkins pointed out that the Manager was interviewed by the *Asheville-Citizens Times* as part of a feature story and he asked to talk about that. The Manager reported that the article is about the rise of women managers in WNC and it should be in Friday's edition. In 1980, 14% of managers across the nation were women and that statistic has not changed; whereas, department heads and assistants

comprise a 50-50 split in gender. North Carolina is ahead of the curve at 20% of female leaders in management at the local government level. Six counties in WNC have female managers; WNC leads other regions of the State.

Chairman Chapman congratulated the Manager for being recognized across the State for her contributions to local government.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Lemel moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Hawkins and unanimously carried.**

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Larry L. Chapman, Chairman  
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board