

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
August 26, 2019 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, August 26, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman David Guice, Chairman Mike Hawkins and Page Lemel. Commissioner Will Cathey was absent. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Misti Bass and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derek McKissock

There were approximately 50 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

WELCOME

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

The comments made by the public represent the individual speaker's opinion or point of view. No attempt was made to vet their statements for accuracy or modify them based on facts.

Maurice Jones: Mr. Jones had signed up to speak prior to the start of the meeting via telephone call with the Clerk to the Board but was not in attendance at this time. At his request, the Clerk to the Board provided a copy of a Power Point Presentation with information about the City of Brevard's Community Relations Board. This is an agenda item for consideration under New Business.

Terry Crowe: Mr. Crowe asked the Board to consider input from the Fire Chief's Association and the local fire departments on the fire funding methods. He invited the Board to attend the next Fire Chief's Association meeting on Tuesday, September 10 at 6:30 p.m. at Brevard Fire Department.

Alice Wellborn: Ms. Wellborn is a member of the Board of Education. She informed the Board that the Board of Education passed a resolution in support of the City of Brevard's Community Relations Board in July 2017. She read the resolution aloud for the benefit of the Board and public. The Board of Education intends to appoint two high school students to serve on the Community Relations Board. Ms. Wellborn encouraged the County to participate.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in special session on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 to receive the six-month departmental updates in preparation for the FY 2020 budget, held a regular meeting on Monday, February 25, 2019 and following met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed, and following the regular business on July 22, 2019, the Board met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed. Commissioners approved the minutes as submitted.

DISCOVERY, RELEASE AND MONTHLY SETTLEMENT REPORT

Per NC General Statute § 105-312 (b), it is the duty of the Tax Administrator to see that all property not properly listed during the regular listing period be listed, assessed and taxed. The Tax Administrator shall file such reports of discoveries with the Board of Commissioners. Per NC General Statute § 105-381 (b), it is the duty of the Tax Administrator to provide a monthly report to the Board of Commissioners of the actions taken by the Tax Administrator on requests for release or refund, which shall be recorded in the minutes. For July 2019, tax dollars released totaled \$3,530.89 and refunds amounted to \$255.23. Commissioners approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Report for July 2019.

CAMERA SYSTEM FOR TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

Transylvania County leases the former Board of Elections Building to the Transylvania County Family Resource Center. The Director requested approval to install a camera security system around the exterior of the building and has obtained funding from an outside source. The camera system can be removed in the event the Family Resource Center relocates. Drawings of the camera locations and coverage were included in the Board's agenda packet. Commissioners approved the request to install a camera security system at the Transylvania County Family Resource Center.

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO CONDUCT FIREWORKS DISPLAY

The 2010 Pyrotechnics Act requires the Board of Commissioners to approve all permits to conduct aerial fireworks displays in their respective county. Fire Marshal Gerald Grose received a permit application for an aerial fireworks display on September 1 from Camp High Rocks. All is in order for Camp High Rocks to conduct the aerial fireworks display. Commissioners approved the permit application for Camp High Rocks to conduct an aerial fireworks display on September 1.

VAYA HEALTH FISCAL MONITORING REPORT

Per NC General Statute § 122C-117 (c), the quarterly Fiscal Monitoring Reports (FMR) for the local management entities must be presented to the Board of Commissioners.

For the fourth quarter of FY 2019, Vaya Health reported their current annualized revenues through June 30, 2019 as \$423,326,558 (95.07% of budget) and their current annualized expenditures through June 30, 2019 as \$424,291,896 (95.28% of budget). This equates to a current net loss of \$7,604,329 for the FY 2019.

In addition, Vaya Health reported the following fund balances:

- \$44,602,249 - restricted for risk reserve
- \$16,970,835 - restricted for statute, prepaids and investments in fixed assets
- \$16,156,733 - unrestricted

Commissioners accepted the report as presented.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT BAD DEBT WRITE OFF

The Department of Public Health Bad Debt Policy identifies the process for handling aging accounts with no payment activity greater than 180 days. Pursuant to this policy, Health Director Elaine Russell recommended to the Board of Health write off bad debts totaling \$334.17 for the period July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. The Board of Health approved the request at their August 13, 2019 meeting. Account balances greater than \$50 will be sent through the NC Debt Setoff program for collection. This amount totals \$186.80. Commissioners approved the write off of bad debt totaling \$334.17 as requested.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT VACCINE FEE SCHEDULE UPDATE

The Health Department recently reviewed current vaccine fees and acquisition costs and identified a few for adjustment. The increases will allow the agency to recover acquisition costs associated with the following vaccines:

Vaccine	Current Vaccine Fee	Vaccine Purchase Price	Recommended New Vaccine Fee
GARDASIL-HPV-9	\$200.00	\$208.46	\$210.00
MMR	\$72.00	\$74.97	\$76.00
PNEUMONIA (13)	\$170.00	\$177.30	\$180.00
POLIO	\$30.00	\$31.14	\$32.00

On August 13, 2019, Board of Health approved the adjusted vaccine fees. Commissioners approved the vaccine fee adjustments as presented.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

TRANSYLVANIA VOCATIONAL SERVICES – PRESENTATION BY CEO JAMIE BRANDENBURG

Transylvania Vocational Services CEO Jamie Brandenburg requested to present to the Board for the purpose of thanking Transylvania County for its long-term support and to share economic data regarding the contribution TVS is making in the community. This is a summary of his presentation:

Overview of TVS

- Empower and employ adults with disabilities in a meaningful, life-fulfilling way
- Over 50 years in Brevard (started in 1967)
- Inclusive workforce of over 170 employees
- Living Wage Certified
- Social Enterprise with two key areas of focus:
 - People Services
 - Manufacturing Services

Onsite Programs & Services

- Life Skills

- Individuals with very significant disabilities who cannot care for themselves
- TVS provides services so those individuals have a place to go during the day; otherwise, their families could not be gainfully employed in the community
- Provide respite services to others
- INTERACT
 - Group of individuals with significant disabilities to which TVS provides life enrichment skills, such as employment if they choose
- Group Homes
 - Two group homes in the community
 - Some of these individuals have no living loved one or guardian; some that do simply want independence
- Vocational Rehabilitation
 - TVS works closely with local office to bring in folks who have been out of the workforce for an extended period
 - Job coaches assess these individuals and help build their skill levels to a point where they can be employed in the community or at TVS
- Pre-ETS (pre-employment transition services)
 - Work with School System with kids who have a disability or another barrier
 - Counselors work with them to keep them on track to graduate and gain skills toward future employment

“People Services” Impact in Transylvania County

- Those receiving services by TVS are often seen engaging and enriching our community
 - Free Rein Therapeutic Riding
 - Asheville Tourists baseball games
 - Brevard College sports programs
- Giving Back
 - TVS helps facilitate many volunteer opportunities in the community
 - Many volunteers with local charities and other areas helping to serve the community
- Local job placement
 - Many local employers support TVS program

“Manufacturing Services” Impact in Transylvania County

- Blending and packaging of dry foods and beverages
- Diverse jobs
- Many jobs requiring different skill sets
- Match individuals with the right jobs according to their skills and abilities
- Many career opportunities
- Customers:
 - USAID
 - USDA
 - US Military
 - Commercial customers
- Manufactured 200 million pounds of instant non-fat dry milk
- Produced enough bakery mix for 113 million biscuits in one year
- One of only two US manufacturers of SuperCereal Plus

Local Impact

- Study conducted by Western Carolina University
 - Direct spending quantifies economic impact on the local community

- Multiplying effect of local businesses that TVS works with and employees spending their money in the community
- In FY 2019, TVS helped to invest or create in the community an \$8.5 million impact
- “Keep it local”
 - New Excelsior – buy film
 - Warehousing – lease 40,000 sq. ft. in addition to main facility; preparing to lease another 60,000 sq. ft. of space
 - Supplies/parts
- Investing in our employees
 - Living Wage Certification
 - Training/Continuing Education
 - Benefits
- Investing in our community
 - Sponsorships
 - Partnerships

What Does the Future Hold?

- Opportunity
 - More jobs; growing business
 - Capital investment
- Community service because needs of employees and community are always evolving

Current Challenges

- Labor
- Transportation – would provide more opportunity for 2nd and 3rd shift work if there were transportation opportunities

This concluded Mr. Bradenburg’s presentation. He thanked Commissioners for their support of the organization and the population they serve.

Chairman Hawkins called for comments and questions from the Board.

Commissioner Lemel toured the facility two years ago and she was particularly fascinated with the Life Skills support program. She referred to the transportation challenges the organization faces and asked Mr. Bradenburg to help her visualize how that need could be met. Mr. Bradenburg stated that TVS has difficulty recruiting employees to work shifts. The most difficult challenge is they live scattered across the County. He has thoughts and ideas on how best to address this challenge that he would be happy to discuss later. Commissioner Lemel encouraged him to contact the County’s Planning and Community Development department which recently transitioned County Transportation into their operations.

Commissioner Guice thanked Mr. Bradenburg for a great presentation. Historically, the Board of Commissioners has been very supportive of TVS, and he was pleased with the work they are doing in the community.

Mr. Bradenburg recognized his predecessor Nancy Stricker in the audience. He credited her for TVS’s excellence performance over the last several years. He also recognized the TVS Board members in attendance.

Chairman Hawkins thanked Mr. Bradenburg and TVS for all they do. Transylvania County will continue to be a good partner and supporter of TVS. He wished them many years of continued success.

FRENCH BROAD RIVER ACCESS STUDY

The Manager reported that many communities struggle with the underutilization of their natural resources. These resources can be significant economic drivers for communities. The NCGrowth Project aims to give communities guidelines and best practices to ensure that their valuable resources are bringing economic impact to their communities.

Transylvania County partnered with NCGrowth to conduct the French Broad River Access Study to look at the potential economic impact of having a blueway asset in the community, including assessing existing infrastructure and making recommendations on how to best improve upon the existing network.

NCGrowth Analyst Rachel Taylor presented her draft report and findings. This is a summary of her presentation:

French Broad River Access Study

- Overview
- Analysis
- Recommendations

Transylvania County

- Home to many natural resources which promote outdoor recreation and the outdoor economy within the County
- French Broad River has been an underutilized asset

The Outdoor Economy in North Carolina

- Generates \$28 billion in consumer spending annually
 - More than financial services and insurance sector combined
- Contributes 260,000 in direct jobs, \$8.3 billion in wages and salaries, and \$1.3 billion in State and local tax revenue
- Outdoor economy helps to diversify local economies and attract entrepreneurs and employers from other sectors

Overview

- Case Studies:
 - Chattanooga, TN; Roanoke River Trail, NC; Upper Delaware River, NY; Suwannee River Wilderness Trail, FL; Three Rivers & Juniata River Trails, PA
 - Highlight a mix of rural and urban settings and opportunities for each
- Opportunities
 - Build link between communities and tourism
 - Lead other local governments in debris removal efforts
 - Potential to shape a larger regional project
- Challenges
 - Need for clear strategic plan for the French Broad River and buy-in from stakeholders
 - Need for public education regarding water quality and stewardship
 - Need for improved infrastructure

Paddle Sports: Trends and User Profile

- Paddle Sports: canoeing, kayaking, standup paddle boarding, rafting, and tubing
 - One of fastest growing segments of outdoor recreation
 - 21.7 million participants nationwide
 - Participants go on multiple trips per year

- Participate in cross-over activities: hiking, running, road biking, fishing, and camping
- User Profile
 - Primary users: white males, 25-44 age range, earn \$75,000-\$100,000 annually
 - Women and minority paddlers make up an increasing percentage of outdoor recreation participants
 - Most spend less than a full day on the river

User Spending

- Primary spending categories:
 - Lodging, food, transportation
- Groups may spend between \$250-\$500 per trip within local area and over \$500 when traveling from farther away
- Non-locals will spend about \$45 per person per day
- Novice and recreational paddlers prefer:
 - Guided services
 - Social and recreational trips
 - Camping as lodging choice
- Novice and recreational paddlers are inclined to support additional funding mechanisms including user fees and equipment rentals
- “Blueways” share similar characteristics to greenways and provide similar health and community benefits

Access Point Analysis

- Access distance
 - Distance between access points is relatively well-spaced to allow for trips ranging from a few hours to full-day and overnight
 - Headwaters Outfitters owns a private campground near mile eight of the river; MountainTrue reserves camping on a private campground at the mouth of the Little River near mile 30
- Access point managing entities
 - Access points are managed by various entities, including Transylvania County, NCDOT, the Town of Rosman, the City of Brevard, and the NC Wildlife Resources Commission
- River hazards and additional challenges
 - Strainers and log jams due to heavy rains
 - Lack of comprehensive information for trip planning
 - Incised banks make erosion and building access points difficult

Access Point Infrastructure Assessment

- Semi-primitive:
 - Offer some parking and only minimally improved facilities to allow safe access to the river; few signs exist
- Developed I:
 - Offer parking for more than four vehicles and improved river access; signs indicate trail and location
- Developed II:
 - Offer parking for more than 10 vehicles, restroom facilities, and improved river access; signs indicate trail, location, and area information
- Map below shows existing access points and existing campsites along the French Broad River
 - Distance from Lyons Mountain Road to Island Ford and from Island Ford to Hap Simpson represent the greatest distance between access points

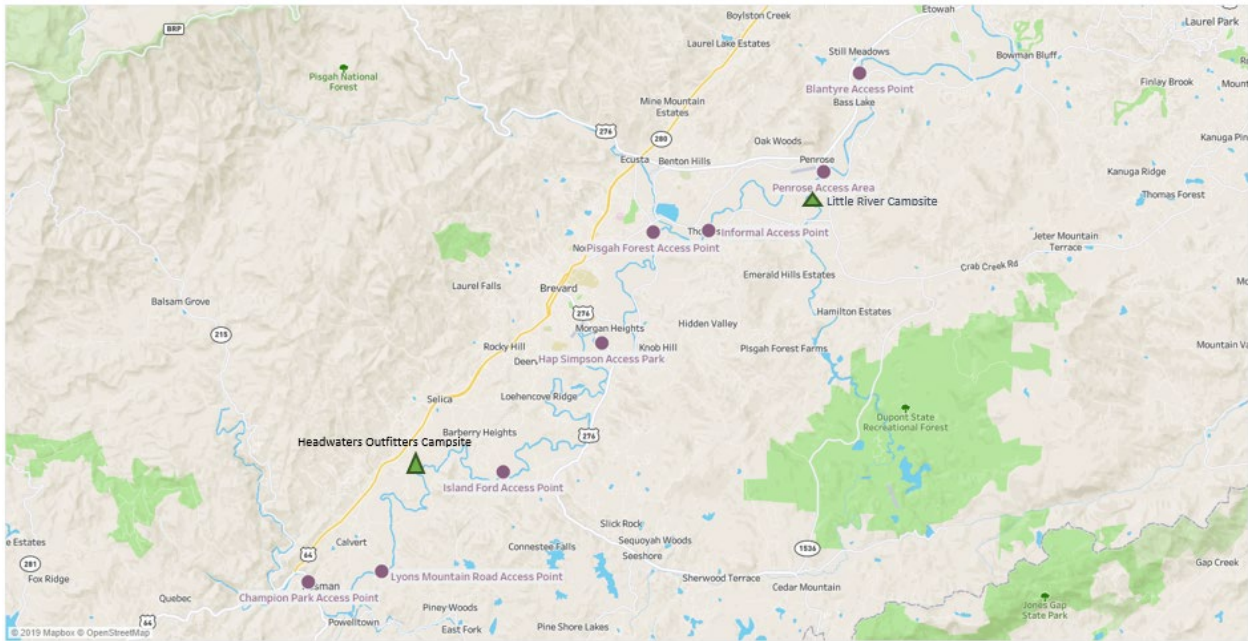


Figure 2 Existing Access Points in Transylvania County

This table represents the existing assessment of the French Broad River access site:

Access Site	Access Condition	River Access	Access Parking	Public Information	Managing Entity	River Location
Champion Park	Developed II	Gradient Ramp	Paved	Kiosk	Town of Rosman	.75
Lyon's Mountain	Semi-Primitive	Steps	Pull-off	None	NC DOT	1.75
Island Ford	Developed I	Steep Steps	Gravel	Kiosk	Transylvania County	10.5
Hap Simpson Park	Developed II	Gradient Ramp	Paved	Kiosk	City of Brevard	20.25
Pisgah Forest	Developed I	Gradient Ramp	Gravel	Kiosk	Transylvania County	25.25
Everett (unofficial)	Primitive	Steep Bank		None	None	26.75
Penrose	Developed I	Floating Dock/ Ramp	Gravel	Kiosk	NC Wildlife Commission	30.75
Blantyre	Developed I	Boat Slide	Gravel	Kiosk	NC Wildlife Commission	34

Project Recommendations

Signage

- Improvements in signage will help increase the number of users and help promote desired behavior amongst river users
- Inform users of water conditions and provide other environmental and cultural knowledge
- Signs should be visible from the road and the river to improve user experience and safety consideration

Facilities

- The County should consider acquiring land for more primitive camping options and along the river
- Infrastructure improvements should consider:
 - Durability and lifespan of materials used in improving the sites
 - Investment in access points around “hub towns” of Rosman and Brevard
 - Improvements on developed parking and river access, picnic options (tables and grills), restroom facilities
 - Kiosks should be consistent throughout the County and updated regularly to aid visitors in quickly identifying important information
 - Note: report included a table outlining the proposed improvement for each access point (as seen below)

Proposed Improvements					
Access Point	Launch Point	Environment	Facilities	Parking	Public Information
Champion Park		Enhance Plant Materials			Streamline paddle trail information and standardize paddle trail signs
Lyon's Mountain	Add wide, hardened stairs and boat ramp	Enhance Plant Materials	Improve visibility from road and river.	Create and increase parking area	Add covered kiosk. Streamline paddle trail information and standardize paddle trail signs
Island Ford	Consider widening stairs to facilitate access. Add boat ramp.	Enhance Plant Materials	Add restroom facilities and picnic facilities.	Increase parking area	Streamline paddle trail information and standardize paddle trail signs. Update kiosk.
Hap Simpson Park		Enhance Plant Materials	Add restroom facilities and improve picnic facilities.	Paved	Streamline paddle trail information and standardize paddle trail signs.
Pisgah Forest	Improve and update boat ramp	Enhance Plant Materials	Add restroom facilities	Increase parking area	Streamline paddle trail information and standardize paddle trail signs. Update kiosk.
Everett (unofficial)	Add wide stairs to facilitate access.	Enhance Plant Materials		Increase parking area	Managing entity should acquire this access point or coordinate with RiverLink/MountainTrue to remove point from paddletrail site.
Penrose		Enhance Plant Materials	Add restroom facilities		Streamline paddle trail information and standardize paddle trail signs.
Blantyre		Enhance Plant Materials			Streamline paddle trail information and standardize paddle trail signs.

The map below represents proposed access points which primarily fall between Lyons Mountain Road and Island Ford access points and between Island Ford and Hap Simpson access points. The potential campsite falls around river mile 20.

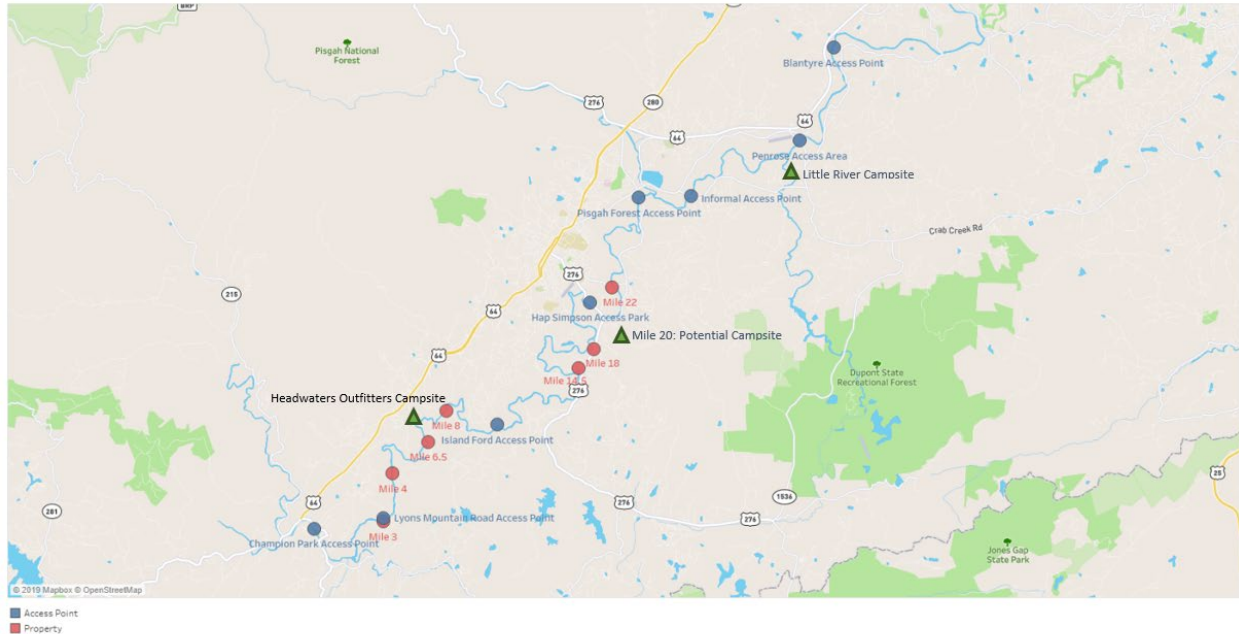


Figure 5: Suggestions for Additional Access Points

Hub Towns

- Special role of connecting river users with communities
- Increase visibility and connectivity between the river and the town
- Provide opportunity to leverage access points onto community spaces and destinations for locals and tourists
- Champion Park in Rosman, along with the Upper French Broad River Festival, is a great example
- Hap Simpson could be improved with more wayfinding and additional facilities

Management

- Create a River Information Sharing Network and Task Force
 - Local government + Nonprofits and Volunteer Organizations + Private Entities
- Continue to assist and collaborate with volunteer organizations and nonprofits
- Create a strategic plan and vision for the river
- Engage in regional collaboration with other communities along the French Broad River

Marketing and Branding

- Streamline and standardize wayfinding
- Cross-promote river activities with other outdoor recreation options
- Easily accessible online and digital information
- Internal marketing
- Create a strategic communications plan in conjunction with strategic plan

Planning and Funding Resources

- Infrastructure development and information assessment; resources detailed in the report

This concluded Ms. Taylor's report.

Chairman Hawkins asked Ms. Taylor to provide some background on why this study took place. Ms. Taylor is a student at Western Carolina University, and she serves as an intern with NCGrowth, an organization affiliated with the UNC Chapel Hill School of Government. County Planner Joy Fields had initially contacted NCGrowth and since Ms. Taylor is the first WCU oriented student analyst, she was chosen to complete the project. The purpose of the project was to address the concerns of the underutilization of the French Broad River in comparison with other outdoor related activities.

Chairman Hawkins called for comments and questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Chappell commented as he reviewed the report he was reminded of a planning workshop the Board held a few years ago where one of the topics for discussion was the underutilization of the French Broad River and how the County should capitalize on the opportunity. He thought the study was very important because it revealed the importance of the river to the County's economy and local businesses. Furthermore, the study revealed the County should be mindful of how future investment in infrastructure impacts access points. Commissioner Chappell found the study to be very important and useful to the County's future.

Commissioner Lemel referenced the available access points and the proposal to develop additional access points around the hub towns (Brevard and Rosman). She noted the County has been in conversation about the possible purchase of a substantially large tract of land between Country Club Road and US 276. The tract contains a lot of river footage along the property. She did not see the property referenced in the report and she asked if that location would be worth considering for river access in Brevard. Ms. Taylor stated NCGrowth believes that any site between Brevard and Rosman would be a great investment for the community, especially a site with the ability to develop a more focal community park that offers access to the river. The report also referenced primitive camping as an option that has relatively minimal infrastructure requirements and it is a preferred lodging method for river users. If the site could address some of those issues, she felt it would be a great investment for the County.

The Manager reported that in collaboration with staff there was a discussion about the park site as a possibility for camping opportunities. The study shows the actual river access sites for the hub town of Brevard as being sufficient. Access points are more needed in Rosman, but infrastructure, like camp sites, could be better developed in Brevard. The County should become more aware of opportunities when they arise. Ms. Taylor noted the proposed sites are suggestions, but if properties become available in the future, the County would have an opportunity to develop an access point in the proposed or general area.

Commissioner Guice felt that the study provided the County a tremendous opportunity to implement some of the recommendations as quickly as possible and to create an overall plan that would move the recommendations further along within a given timeframe.

Chairman Hawkins was impressed with the report. He agreed that partnerships are important to accomplish the proposals. The TDA has shown interest in the study recommendations as a potential project for their organization. If the Town of Rosman is interested in becoming a hub town, it could open additional partnership opportunities. He felt it was important to start prioritizing the recommendations and completing them.

Commissioner Lemel noted that Transylvania County is already actively taking care of the river with funding for debris removal which gives us a huge advantage over other communities. She felt the time was right to seize this opportunity and move forward.

Commissioner Guice acknowledged the partnership with the private sector noting that several business and community leaders have stepped forward to perform tremendous work to keep the river safe and provide opportunities for people to enjoy. He was excited about the study and commended Ms. Taylor on her report.

The Manager reported that next steps will include a review of the report by Ms. Taylor's advisor. It is currently in draft stage; however, County staff is satisfied with the report. When NCGrowth clears the report, a final report will be posted to the website. Staff will then place it on the Board's Consent Agenda for approval at an upcoming meeting. Ms. Taylor added that NCGrowth has created a survey tool, which is also in the approval process, for future assessment and polling of river users.

The Manager thanked Ms. Taylor for her work and stated it was a joy working with her on this project.

APPOINTMENTS

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW

There are two vacancies on the Board of Equalization and Review. Through advertisements and recruitment efforts, the Clerk has received one application. Tax Administrator Jessica McCall recommended the appointment of Thomas Sweeny to fill one of the vacancies on the Board of Equalization and Review.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Thomas Sweeny to fill one of the vacancies on the Board of Equalization and Review, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

There is a vacancy on the Parks and Recreation Commission due to a recent resignation. The Clerk advertised and received one application. Parks and Recreation Director Jared Mull recommended the appointment of Wyn Birkenthal to fill the vacancy on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Wyn Birkenthal to fill the vacancy on the Parks and Recreation Commission, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

RECONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED APPOINTMENT TO JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

On June 11, 2019, the Board of Commissioners considered appointments to fill upcoming openings on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC). Commissioner appointee Toni Casiato's term was set to expire at the end of June and Mrs. Casiato was not seeking reappointment. Commissioners appointed Ms. Dawn McCall to replace Mrs. Casiato at the expiration of her term. On June 12, 2019, Ms. McCall was criminally charged with misdemeanor assault on an individual with disabilities and with misdemeanor going armed to the terror of the public. The letter from the Clerk to the Board notifying Ms. McCall of her appointment had not been mailed and notice to Ms. McCall was withheld pending a determination by the Board as to what, if any, action should be taken in regard to this proposed appointment as a result of these charges. The charges are pending in court.

NC General Statute § 143B-847 provides that the members of the JCPC shall serve a term of two years. When an appointment to a board is for a set term, that board member may only be removed for cause and that member must be given notice and an opportunity to be heard prior to removal. *Stephens v. Dowell*, 208 N.C. 555 (1935). In cases involving the JCPC, NC General Statute § 143B-848 requires that the

Board of Commissioners find either malfeasance or nonfeasance in order to remove an appointed member.

However, the courts have also held that in order for the appointment to be effective it must be communicated to and accepted by the appointee. See Birchfield v. Department of Conservation and Development of North Carolina, 204 N.C. 217. Since in this matter, the recommendation for appointment has not been communicated to Ms. McCall or accepted by Ms. McCall, the appointment of Ms. McCall is not yet complete and, if it desires, the Board may reconsider the appointment without the restrictions set forth for an appointed member.

Staff recommended the Board consider the information presented and determine whether to proceed with the notification and appointment of Ms. McCall to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, appoint a different representative, or determine whether there is additional information or actions needed for the Board to make this decision.

Commissioner Lemel moved to rescind the appointment of Ms. McCall to the JCPC, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

CONSIDERATION OF FIRE PROTECTION FUNDING METHODS

Assistant County Manager David McNeill presented this item. For the FY 2020 Budget, the Board of Commissioners set all fire service tax rates to 5.5 cents/\$100 valuation and funded the remaining fire protection budgets utilizing fund balance. During budget deliberations, Commissioners discussed options for funding fire protection in the future. Commissioners directed staff to develop a process for funding fire protection services in the future as authorized in NC General Statute § 153A that would establish a countywide service district, excluding the City of Brevard, and abolish existing fire service districts, as well as inclusion of rescue services.

Staff included in the Board's agenda packet a proposed timeline for establishing a countywide service district per the statutory requirements. Staff suggested hosting public workshops throughout the County in the various community centers that would include staff presentations followed by Q&A sessions. Mr. McNeill reported the statutes have very specific requirements for establishing and abolishing service districts. The timeline follows the statutory requirements: report from staff to Board of Commissioners, Board of Commissioners review and accept report, report placed in Clerk's office for public inspection, and notification process.

The process involves an extensive public notification process via public hearing and mailings. Staff estimated the cost of advertising to be between \$300-\$500 and the cost of mailing notifications per NC General Statute § 153A-302(c) to range between \$12,000-\$14,000.

The Manager noted the timeline requires a public hearing prior to Board's approval. Staff proposed the public workshops begin in the fall. Based on the timeline, the Board's decision would be expected in January 2020 with an effective date of July 1, 2020.

Commissioner Lemel remembered the previous conversations as being consideration of a single tax district and maintaining existing service districts. However, it seems the information presented is to move in the direction of one service district. Mr. McNeill responded that it is important to note that they are the essentially the same with respect to the tax district. A countywide service district is the same as a tax district. The municipal territory would be excluded unless they wanted to be included. The existing

service districts would remain as the response districts. Commissioner Lemel requested clarification because the verbiage was different than previous discussions.

Chairman Hawkins asked for further information on the public information sessions. Mr. McNeill stated the public meetings would provide a good opportunity for staff to be visible in the various communities and share information about the process and allow for public input. This would also be an opportunity for the fire chiefs and fire departments' members to be involved in the process.

Commissioner Chappell asked if the public sessions would be informational only. He wanted to ensure the meetings were not one-sided and there would be time allowed for public comments and questions. Mr. McNeill stated the intent is for staff to provide a brief overview of what a countywide service district would look like and then allow for participants to ask questions and receive responses from staff.

Mr. McNeill stated the purpose of this agenda item is to receive direction from the Board of Commissioners on whether they approve of the path forward as outlined by staff.

Commissioner Guice commented that the public meetings will be very important because the Board is already receiving letters from the public that clearly indicate misinformation is being shared in the community about the Board's intentions. The public meetings will serve to educate citizens about the significant changes the Board is considering, and they need to be formatted to allow for citizen input.

Mr. McNeill agreed, and he added that verbiage is very important. Staff will develop a format for the meetings, so these issues are covered clearly.

Commissioner Lemel asked how the potential inclusion of rescue services is configured into the timeline. Mr. McNeill stated that NC General Statute § 153A-301 includes the services for which a service district can be established. Ambulance and rescue services are included. To be operationally legal, even with the current districts set as they are, the Board should identify the districts as being established for fire protection and rescue services. This can be done in one of two ways. The Board can adopt a resolution for a countywide service district that specifically states the service district is for the purpose of providing fire protection services and ambulance/rescue services. Once a fire protection district is established, the Commissioners can, by resolution, authorize those service districts to fund fire, rescue, and ambulance services. Mr. McNeill stated the purpose of including rescue and ambulance service is because most of the fire departments already provide rescue service. The countywide service district should be established in a manner that legally allows for tax funds to pay for those services.

Commissioner Lemel moved to direct staff to implement the necessary steps to create a single service district for fire, ambulance, and rescue, seconded by Commissioner Guice. To clarify for Commissioner Guice, Mr. McNeill stated that by instructing staff to follow the timeline, all the statutory requirements for adopting a service district would be followed. Those specific items within the timeline do not require separate action by the Board because they are included and will be implemented. Commissioner Chappell stated he was not in favor of changing the way fire protection services are funded; however, he was in favor of providing an opportunity for citizen input. He stressed he wanted there to be maximum opportunity for citizen input. He encouraged all citizens and fire department members to take advantage of this opportunity to voice their concerns or support. Chairman Hawkins agreed that it is important that these meetings are engaging. This will also be an opportunity for the Board to learn just as much as the public does. Like Commissioner Chappell, he wanted to ensure the structure allowed for dialogue both ways. **The motion passed 4 to 1, with Commissioner Chappell voting against.**

FIRE SERVICE DISTRICT RESERVE POLICY

Assistant County Manager David McNeill presented this item. During FY 2020 budget deliberations, the Board of Commissioners instructed staff to prepare a draft policy for the use of fire service district reserve funds. Fire district tax revenues collected in excess of the approved fire departments' budgets are by law placed in a reserve account specifically for the provision of fire protection services in that particular service district.

Staff requested input from fire departments and prepared a draft policy for consideration. Most of the fire departments' budget needs are addressed during the budget process; however, there are times when an issue arises mid-year due to an emergency or unforeseen financial need. The draft policy put forth by staff outlines the process for requesting reserve funds and uses that may be considered.

Mr. McNeill reviewed the process for fire departments' making a request and the appropriate uses for which a request can be made:

Process

Fire departments will submit a written request to the Fire Marshal for distribution of revenues from fire service district reserves, to include:

- Amount requested
- Purpose for requested funds
- Description of use of funds
- Explanation why request was not included in the annual budget request
- Impact to the department if not approved or delayed until the next budget cycle

Appropriate Uses of Reserve Funds

- Emergency repairs to equipment and/or property
- Purchase of equipment necessary to provide contracted services (unforeseen during budget process and requires replacement prior to next budget process)
- Grants (for equipment or services necessary for provision of contracted services and requires match prior to next budget process)
- Cash flow emergencies (to meet departmental cash flow requirements resulting from emergencies that occurred after the budget process; Commissioners may elect to distribute quarterly installment in advance in-lieu of funds in reserve)
- Unforeseen needs that impact departments' ability to provide contracted services

The Board of Commissioners may opt to utilize reserve funds to meet budget requests or capital needs in the district where the revenues were collected or to improve or enhance services in the fire service district.

Commissioner Lemel commended staff for incorporating input from the fire departments.

Mr. McNeill explained that this policy provides an outline of the Board's expectations for uses of those funds and clearly delineates each party's (Board of Commissioners, staff, and fire departments) responsibilities.

Commissioner Guice stated the policy, if approved, would be interim in that if the Board transitions to a single tax district, the reserve funds would no longer exist. Mr. McNeill explained that is not the case necessarily, because the reserve funds would continue to exist with a countywide service/tax district. If taxes collected through the service district tax are in excess of the total fire departments' budgets, those funds would go into a reserve account. So, fire departments could request additional funds from the reserve account, per the policy. He noted it would be the Commissioners' decision whether to use this

policy if they select to implement a flat tax. He pointed out that even if the Board elected to implement a flat tax in the future, the funds in the current reserve accounts must remain and be used for the purpose for which they were collected in the district in which they were collected. Those funds cannot be redistributed. They would be tracked for that purpose and monitored until the funds were expended.

Commissioner Chappell noted the backup data provided to Commissioners explained the timeframe for when the requests for funds would be forwarded to Commissioners. He asked if staff considered a procedure for how often those requests would be placed before the Board for consideration. Mr. McNeill stated it would depend on the agenda deadline set by the Board. If the information can be included in the packet for the next available meeting, that would be staffs' goal.

Chairman Hawkins suggested an internal policy consideration that each request should be placed on an agenda when received so there is no delay, especially if the request is for emergency needs. He felt the policy reflects reality and puts in writing what is already being done.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the County policy for fire district reserve funds, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

CONTRACT AWARD – SOLID WASTE SERVICES

Solid Waste Director Kenn Webb presented this item. In November 2018, the Solid Waste Department awarded a bid for a wood-grinding project at the landfill. The landfill collects wood waste, such as stumps, logs, and brush for proper disposal. Unfortunately, the contractor awarded the project failed to perform due to equipment malfunction. For the FY 20 Budget, staff had included \$50,000 which would have completed the project along with the funds set aside in FY 19. Mr. Webb requested to use the monies from the reserve fund left over from FY 19 to combine with the \$50,000 in FY 20 to award another contract and dispose of the large pile of wood waste at the landfill. Staff solicited for new bids in July and the low bid came in from Tucker Creek Construction in the amount of \$87,000.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the Solid Waste contract with Tucker Creek Construction and to appropriate \$37,000 from the Solid Waste fund balance to fulfill the contract, seconded by Commissioner Guice. For clarification, Mr. Webb stated the current wood waste pile is a result of four to five years of accumulation. Commissioners should not expect to see a request of this amount of money for a wood-grinding project on a routine basis. Commissioner Chappell stated in the past when there was a backlog of wood waste, Solid Waste allowed for sale of the wood waste to interested individuals. He asked if the department might do the same in the future. Mr. Webb confirmed it would be a plan in the future to sell the wood waste. Currently, the pile is large, and space is limited, so it is not feasible to do so. When there is space, staff intends to separate the hard woods from other types of woods for various uses. Commissioner Guice asked if the wood waste could be burned. Mr. Webb responded that the State of North Carolina does not allow wood accumulation such as this to be burned. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

REVIEW OF OPTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL COURT SPACE

The Manager informed that she has been working alongside Assistant County Manager David McNeill to review court space needs. Transylvania County court officials continue to express concerns about inadequate court space. This has been an ongoing discussion for the past 15 years. While there have been some improvements to help to alleviate issues, in March 2019, the County received a letter from Chief District Court Judge Mack Brittain expressing his increasing concerns about the safety and functionality of the Courthouse. His letter reflected the Courthouse is a “ticking time bomb” and that he would no longer assign district court judges to hold court sessions in the small courtroom, to the extent possible, effective July 1, 2019. His reasoning is due to insufficient space for practical use, overcrowding, noise and interruptions, mold/mildew concerns in warmer months, lack of reliable heat

systems in cold months, and concern for the safety of all who use the Courthouse. This will likely impact the number of Social Services and civil hearing dates that will be available because anything that is not mandatory to be heard in a certain time frame would be pushed to a later date in the scheduling procedure.

The Manager and Mr. McNeill met with court officials to explore options to meet space needs. During that meeting, they asked for court officials to consider a review of the court scheduling options, as well as information to allow staff to have a baseline for their space needs and parameters for a secondary court space. Court officials shared some baseline space needs and parameters that were utilized by staff when exploring space options. These included:

- Courtroom seating space of approximately 100
- Jury room with restroom facility
- Staff restroom
- Inmate holding area with restroom
- Small space for attorneys to meet with each other and clients
- Two separate entrances for court officials and public
- Proximity to current Courthouse

County staff worked with Architect Rich Worley to identify minimum space needs and explore options to meet immediate court space needs. Utilizing the baseline needs expressed by court officials, Mr. Worley estimated the need for approximately 5,000 sq. ft. based on selected building layout and structural constraints. County staff researched available building space in the downtown area that may be available for lease, rent or sale that would meet the minimum space needs. This included looking at multiple buildings and inquiring about the potential availability. In some cases, the building owners were not interested in lease, rent or sale. Building spaces that were available were evaluated based on space needs, estimated construction cost, and acquisition cost. Options that have been suggested in the past including the former K-mart, Masonic Lodge and American Legion Building were eliminated as potential candidates.

County staff identified two potential buildings that meet the minimum requirements of 5,000 sq. ft. Mr. Worley provided an estimated probable cost for upfit to courtroom space: space #1 between \$900,000 and \$1,050,000 (upfit only) and space #2 (use of existing building and significant addition) between \$1,450,000 and \$1,700,000 (properties not named at this time per the owners' request due to marketing concerns). The estimates do not include building acquisition or lease cost. The options are located in the downtown or downtown adjacent area. No negotiation has taken place at this stage beyond confirming comfort level with use with the property owners and that the properties would be available for lease, sale or rent.

County staff also reevaluated a court space expansion option utilizing the old administration building that is adjacent to the Courthouse. In 2007-2008, Mr. Worley worked with County staff to evaluate the old administration building for potential court space. He updated those drawings to include a 70-seat courtroom space and an 88-seat courtroom space. Mr. Worley also provided an updated opinion of probable cost for upfit of the old administration building as of April 12, 2019 to range between \$1,100,000 and \$1,250,000 which includes renovation and some new construction.

The Manager showed the Board drawings that reflect the basic layout of 5,000 sq. ft. to provide a sense of why the space need exists. Staff requested the Board consider the options before them and add as a future agenda item to direct staff on how to proceed.

The Manager added that in looking at the three options, it is very difficult to give the Board a recommendation. The costs are significant for each option. While the least expensive option is to remodel the old administration building on the existing site, the site is also up for consideration for future Courthouse expansion to provide a long-term solution for court space needs.

Chairman Hawkins stressed Commissioners were not being asked to act on this item at this meeting. The purpose of the item is for staff to bring forth information on options to replace court space that is no longer being used. This is a decision that impacts other decisions.

Commissioner Chappell inquired about the timeframe for how long the upfits would take, regardless of option. The Manager estimated the timeframe to be about a year for design and implementation. It could take longer depending on the site chosen. The County would be required to seek bids for the project. The Manager noted that construction costs are rapidly rising.

Commissioner Guice stated there are many questions surrounding this issue and the Board is not in a position to make a decision any time soon. He felt more information was needed as to how other counties have addressed this same type of issue. Commissioners understand the need for a new facility, but there is also a management component to building a new facility on the same site. All operations will be impacted if a new facility is built on the same site. At this point, it is unknown whether the site is big enough to accommodate a new facility without hurting the historical nature of the current building and thus could require property acquisition. Commissioner Guice encouraged Commissioners to visit the Haywood County Courthouse because their officials did a great job with managing their historical building while placing a new facility on site. He also felt it was important to consider potential changes to future court operations. Some counties have begun to manage their dockets differently and there may be ways to modify operations here to alleviate issues during the transition period. He would not be comfortable investing in the old administration building if the long-term goal would be to place a new facility in the downtown on that site. Commissioner Guice stated that no option is off the table for him. He felt that Commissioners need to have all the facts and information to make a quality decision. For that reason, Commissioner Guice felt there is quite a bit more work to do concerning this issue. If it is necessary to find additional space in the short term, he felt the Board needed to look at the two off-site locations but stressed there is still the long-term component of building a new courthouse. The Board has taken steps in that direction by creating a funding stream.

Chairman Hawkins stated there are two approaches to this issue. He suggested the Board ask staff to help Commissioners understand court operations and determine if there are short-term alternatives to help alleviate some of the pressure that exists with the closure of the small courtroom. At the same time, the Board needs to examine the three alternatives with the understanding that any one of them will require a significant amount of dollars. This fact is a powerful incentive to work on long-term solutions. Chairman Hawkins reminded the Board it has been a year since they stopped further work on exploring a new facility. He suggested the formation of a small committee to reexamine the long-term alternatives for court space. The committee should bring back a solution for the Board to consider. He did not feel the Board could decide on a short-term fix without having a sense of the long-term decision.

Commissioner Lemel felt that the Board should challenge themselves to develop a timeline and hold themselves accountable to it. The courthouse conversation has been ongoing for over 15+ years. She stated court services deserve action and a timeline for action.

Commissioner Guice pointed out the conversation has been going on longer than 15 years. The facility has several issues of concern and does not meet the standards of a court system in today's world. He was amenable to setting a timeline for action. He felt that the short-term issues could be alleviated if the Board renewed its commitment to the Morris Road site. With that said, there are citizens who are

interested in the courthouse being in downtown and the Board agreed to allow them to do their study and make a recommendation on a location. However, that decision has impacted current operations.

Commissioner Chappell recognized the court officials in attendance. He felt it was imperative the Commissioners work with them to seek both the short-term and long-term solutions. The County needs sound and experienced advice so they can make the best decision.

Commissioner Guice stated he understands Judge Brittain's and staffs' concerns about all the issues and he is committed to continue working diligently to find a resolution.

Commissioner Lemel asked if the Board would commit to forming a committee of stakeholders within the next six weeks and make the appointments at the first meeting in October.

Commissioner Guice stated the stakeholders are extremely important and will be involved in providing the Board with information to better understand court operations. He suggested the Board identify five people in the community that have a background in making these types of decisions and without any biases about a location.

Chairman Hawkins committed to speaking with Commissioners to determine the committee structure.

Commissioner Guice recently reviewed the history of this project. He said those that have commented that the Board did not have the right people involved in the process over the last several years are incorrect. The work has been done and many people participated in various study groups. What needs to be done today is to determine if operations have changed. With that said, a new courthouse is badly needed, and the Board needs to determine a location and the cost to build it.

Commissioner Lemel asked staff to reemphasize the history of this project on the County website so that it is easily accessible and prominent.

Chairman Hawkins pointed out interest rates remain the same as one year ago. The question is whether the USDA loan would be available again. He will continue working with the staff over the couple of weeks to clarify the short-term options. He will also consult with Commissioners on their thoughts about the makeup of a committee. He agreed that it is time to move forward on this project.

FY 2019-2020 CONTRACT TO AUDIT ACCOUNTS

Finance Director Jonathan Griffin presented this item. Per NC General Statute § 159-34, "each unit of local government and public authority shall have its accounts audited as soon as possible after the close of each fiscal year by a certified public accountant or by an accountant certified by the Commission as qualified to audit local government accounts". The decision of an auditing firm is the exclusive decision of a governing board per that same statute, which reads, "the auditor shall be selected by and shall report directly to the governing board". The statute also stipulates a requirement for an annual contract.

Martin Starnes & Associates has provided auditing services for Transylvania County since FY 2009-2010. Transylvania County has experienced several price increases for these services. For example, the total contract price in FY 2015 was \$33,000 versus FY 2018's contract price at \$65,000. The significant increase is comparable to many other audit contracts experienced by other counties.

In FY 2015-2016, the Finance Director conducted a full request for proposals for auditing services and received three bids. After a price increase in FY 2017, the Finance Director sought informal quotes. Statute does not require that a full formal request for bids be conducted on audit services, but at this point it is the standard practice across the State.

In an email to the Board of Commissioners on July 12, 2019, the Finance Director provided an overview about what the County might expect in the future regarding audit costs and services. He also provided information from 90+ counties about the price of their audits, the supplemental services provided, and the name and geographic location of the firm providing those services, as well as an assessment of what the Commissioners' options are for audit firms.

Mr. Griffin reported that issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for auditing services and evaluating responses will take approximately six to eight weeks. In addition, it would require however much time would be necessary for the Board to evaluate its choices and make a selection. With this in mind, the Finance Department requested that the Board make a decision on how to move forward so that the department can adequately balance their ongoing projects through the rest of FY 2019-2020. Currently, the Finance Department is engaged in several major projects, including the implementation of a new enterprise-wide software system, preparing to apply to the Local Government Commission to issue \$68,000,000 in general obligation school bonds, and working with the County's financial advisor to prepare statistics for capital planning workshops in the fall.

Commissioner Lemel asked Mr. Griffin to elaborate on his concerns about potential RFP responses. Mr. Griffin reviewed other counties that issued RFPs and they received only a few responses. There are approximately 15 firms that perform local government audits in North Carolina and only a handful operate west of Hickory. There is a risk with going out to bid and not receiving a lot of responses.

Commissioner Chappell stated he generally prefers changing auditors every few years to have a fresh look at the County's finances; however, he was concerned with changing auditors this late in the year, especially with all the projects the Finance Department is involved in. While he was dismayed at the ever-increasing costs of audits, the County has no choice in the matter. He was also concerned about the risk of getting only a few responses to an RFP.

Commissioner Guice asked if there had been any issues working with this auditor over the last nine years. Mr. Griffin reported none that he was aware of.

Commissioner Lemel moved to proceed with Martin Starnes as the County's auditor for FY 2020, seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioner Guice asked staff to continue gathering information on other counties' experiences. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

CONSIDERATION OF PARTICIPATION ON THE CITY OF BREVARD'S COMMUNITY RELATIONS BOARD

The Manager reported that in 1972, a joint venture by Transylvania County and the City of Brevard resulted in the creation of a Human Relations Board. The board was reorganized in 2002 which reduced the membership from 15 to nine. In 2014, the City of Brevard voted to cease involvement in the Human Relations Board and it was essentially disbanded. At the same time, the City expressed interest in the creation of a Community Relations Board. They formed a task force that was comprised of several community representatives and stakeholders which resulted in a statement of organization and purpose.

Brevard City Council and Community Relations Board requested the support of the County Commissioners and invited the County to participate by appointing a member to the committee. The City expects the committee to have a positive impact on the community as a whole, improve overall human relations, aid in the reduction of poverty and crime, and mainly assist with conflicts between people who have issues stemming from their differences with each other. The committee composition consists of 11 members from Transylvania County, City of Brevard, and Town of Rosman and appointed by specific organizations in the community.

The recommendation is for the Board to consider participation on the Community Relations Board. If so, Commissioners should appoint one person to fill the County position either through advertisement and recruitment or appointment of an interested person. Commissioner Guice has expressed an interest in serving if the Board chooses to participate.

Brevard City Councilman Maurice Jones addressed the Board on this topic. Prior to this meeting, Councilman Jones shared a lengthy document with the Board on the details of the Community Relations Board. He pointed out this board has been five years in the making. He asked the Board to support the Community Relations Board. He pointed out the Community Relations Board is not intended to be a City board, but rather a community board. Councilman Jones informed the Board they can appoint a member to serve without a formal endorsement.

Commissioner Lemel appreciated the task force's effort in specifically identifying different entities to have representation on the board. Specifying the essential components of what brings this community together and provides the most substantial leadership is a good step in this regard.

Commissioner Lemel moved that the County recognize the Community Relations Board and become a participating member, seconded by Commissioner Guice. Commissioner Guice thanked Councilman Jones for his leadership. He has learned over the years in his career that it is important to be a good listener and to be at the table. He looked forward to working with this group and having discussions on ways to improve the community. Councilman Jones was appreciative of the Board revisiting this item. Commissioner Chappell thanked Councilman Jones for his work. He looked forward to Commissioner Guice's service on this board. He felt that the right appointment by each entity was of utmost importance if the board is going to be successful and for the betterment of the community. Commissioner Lemel stated there is no better time than now for the Community Relations Board to come together and show strength and cohesion in sharing common issues so that the community can succeed. Chairman Hawkins shared that one of the workshops at the NCACC annual conference involved how local officials operate in the national environment that exists right now and the local government's role in bringing people together and unifying our communities. While we cannot change what is going on at the national or state level, we can make a difference in our local community. He thanked Councilman Jones for his efforts. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Commissioner Guice to the Community Relations Board, seconded by Chairman Hawkins and approved unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Chairman Hawkins, Commissioner Lemel and County Manager attended NCACC Conference in Guilford County last week
 - Commissioner Lemel and County Manager presented during general session on Friday, along with Dr. Jeanette Betancourt, Sr. Vice-President, Sesame Street Workshop
 - Presentation on how Sesame Street in Communities provides resources to help young children through traumatic experience and to build resilient children
 - Presentation on collective model and County partnerships
 - Cookie Monster was a big hit!
 - Manager impressed with sense of camaraderie expressed by all Commissioners and their willingness to seek ways to improve their communities
- GetSet has announced the first toolkits for families will roll out September 20
 - Interested parents and caregivers can sign up to receive eight different toolkits
 - Each toolkit will cover a different topic and provide list of community resources

- GetSet announced participation in HalloweenFest on October 26 and an appearance by Cookie Monster
- Kudos from NCACC County Management Fellow Kate Hayes to the Building Permitting Department for their help with the transition in the Planning and Community Development Department; assisted staff with understanding processes, specifically related to permits that cross over both departments
- Kudos to Planning and Community Development and Parks and Recreation on their collaboration to complete the French Broad River study that was presented earlier in the meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT

The comments made by the public represent the individual speaker's opinion or point of view. No attempt was made to vet their statements for accuracy or modify them based on facts.

Judith West: Ms. West is the Chair of Social Services Board. She expressed concern about the slowdown in court processes for families involved with DSS because these are our most vulnerable population. She encouraged Commissioners to keep these families in mind as they seek to make the best decision regarding court space needs.

Danny Hein: Mr. Hein stated that the cost of inaction on the Courthouse has risen significantly. He understood the Board has a tough decision to make. The constraint on services, safety issues and future tax implications make the decision even more important. Mr. Hein was concerned about the timeframe and he did not think the County could afford to delay a decision any longer. He thanked the Board for the dedication, time, and energy they expend on behalf of all citizens. He implored the Board to address the court issues now.

Kristi Brown: Mrs. Brown is the Clerk of Superior Court. She reminded the Board that just over a year ago she remembered being at a County Commission meeting and saying to herself that she hoped the County would not be in the same situation with the Courthouse a year later. She understood the Board has a difficult decision, but she and other court officials want to be included in the conversation. They work in the Courthouse and can share more about the building and its operations than most people can and what is needed for future operations. She pleaded for more communication from the Board because there has been very little since their decision a year ago to halt further work on the Courthouse.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Lemel thanked everyone for the opportunity to attend the NCACC annual conference. She felt the conference is very beneficial for Commissioners to spend time with leaders in other communities and share resources with each other. She was also excited to hear Doris Kearns Goodwin speak during the conference on Saturday about leadership. During the conference, Commissioner Lemel assisted with presenting Transylvania County's program on GetSet which is the envy of the rest of the State. She shared that the North Carolina quilt was on display at the conference. It was made with a quilt square from each of the 100 counties and was an appropriate tribute to our State.

Commissioner Chappell recently traveled to Washington, DC as part of a delegation of regional County Commissioners. The reason for his participation was due to the issues the County is facing with the local Job Corps. Schenck Job Corps is a valued partner in our community. He shared important information with Secretary of Agriculture Perdue and met with Congressman Meadows' Chief of Staff to discuss a wide range of issues – broadband, education grant opportunities, special education rules, federal reimbursements, support of BUILD grant for City of Brevard, support for Workforce Innovation

Opportunity Act, etc. His visit has already resulted in some follow-up dialogue about these issues. He was appreciative of the opportunity to advocate on behalf of Transylvania County.

Chairman Hawkins thanked Commissioner Chappell for his work in Washington, DC advocating for Transylvania County. He also commended Commissioner Lemel and the Manager for their GetSet presentation at the NCACC conference. They were the featured program during the general session. They did a sensational job and represented Transylvania County well.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Lemel moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 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