

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
February 8, 2021 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Larry Chapman, Chairman Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman Jake Dalton, David Guice, and Teresa McCall. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Attorney John Kubis participated remotely via Zoom meeting software.

Media:

- *The Transylvania Times* – Derek McKissock participated remotely.
- *WLOS News*
- *Brevard News Beat* – Dan DeWitt

There were 20 people in the audience, including staff presenters.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jason Chappell presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairman Chappell welcomed everyone to the meeting participating both in person and remotely. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

Commissioners requested to remove the 2020 Delinquent Taxpayer List from the Consent Agenda for discussion under New Business. There were no agenda modifications from staff.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve the agenda as modified, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Guice moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner McCall and unanimously approved.

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on November 23, 2020 and following met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed. The Board of Commissioners also met in regular session on December 14, 2020. The minutes were approved as submitted.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING DONATION OF SURPLUS WHEELED COACH AMBULANCE TO TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY RESCUE SQUAD

A 2008 Wheeled Coach Type 1 Ambulance is no longer in use by EMS and has been declared surplus by the County Manager. The Transylvania County Rescue Squad requested the County donate the ambulance to them for use. They provide EMS call volume back-up, and their current vehicle is in poor shape. North Carolina General Statute § 160A-280 allows the County to donate any surplus property to a nonprofit organization incorporated in the United States. Prior to donation the County must post a public notice of its intent to donate the property and then adopt a resolution donating the property at another meeting. The County has met the posting requirement. Staff requested approval of the donation to the Transylvania County Rescue Squad. The Board approved Resolution #06-2021 Approving the Donation of a Surplus Ambulance to the Transylvania County Rescue Squad.

RESOLUTION # 06-2021**Approving Donation of Wheeled Coach Ambulance to Transylvania County Rescue Squad**

WHEREAS, Transylvania County has declared a 2008 Wheeled Coach Ambulance as surplus and it has been removed from service; and

WHEREAS, the County Manager has declared the item as surplus and requested the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners convey the surplus ambulance to the Transylvania County Rescue Squad at no cost; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute §160A-280 allows the County to donate surplus property to a nonprofit incorporated in the United States upon posting public notice at least five days prior to the adoption of a resolution approving the donation; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County has met the posting requirements outlined in North Carolina General Statute § 160A-280;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County does hereby approve the donation of the 2008 Wheeled Coach Ambulance to the Transylvania County Rescue Squad at no cost.

This the 8th day of February, 2021.

S://Jason Chappell, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONSSEMI-ANNUAL DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS – FY 2022 BUDGET KICKOFF

Department Heads reported on their departmental accomplishments over the first six months of the fiscal year. They also reported on trends that may be reflected in upcoming budget years. (Presentations divided over two regular meetings.)

Prior to the individual presentations, the Manager provided some key dates for the upcoming budget cycle and reviewed the instructions given to departments regarding the format for their presentations:

Regular Meeting Date	Budget Item
Monday, January 25	2 nd quarter financial results 2 nd quarter budget amendments
Monday, February 8	Workplan updates for Board-night one
Monday, February 22	Workplan updates for Board-night two
Last Day of February	Budget requests due from departments and offices Nonprofit applications due
March Board Meetings	Presentations from funded partner organizations
March 1 to March 31	Meet with departments for internal review, committee reviews nonprofit applications
Last of March/Early April	Commissioners meet with management for deep dive on budget requests and to provide feedback
First week of April	Budget team meeting to finalize decisions and draft budget book Any last second revenue estimates/finalized
Monday, April 26	Present recommended budget and present requested fire department budgets
Monday, May 10	Workshop 1
Monday, May 17	Workshop 2* (not a regular Board meeting night)
Monday, May 24	Public Hearing
Monday, June 14	Adoption of budget

Each department was given a five-minute timeframe to present, except for some of the larger departments. Each department was also allowed to provide supplemental documentation which was included in the Board's budget notebook. (Due to the strict time limits assigned to each department, some were cut short on their presentations.) The Manager asked the Board to submit their questions to her for a full response later in writing.

Register of Deeds – Cindy Ownbey

Accomplishments

- Continued the “Thank-A-Vet” program which began in 2018
 - Since implementation, issued 264 photo ID discount cards; 24 participating businesses
- Continued with next phase of GT/GT project
 - Encompasses indexes for real estate dating back to County's beginning
- Completed year five of the Preservation Project
- Conformed to and implemented many changes in processes due to COVID-19

Trends

- Continue to see increased demand for electronic resources
- Continue to see improvement in revenues
 - Collected roughly \$140,000 more in revenues budgeted for at the end of FY 20
 - On target to experience same for FY 21

Goals

- Continue phases of GT/GT scanning projects
 - Pre-1988 Map index and import images.
 - Pre-1960 Real Estate Indexes and import images; almost done.
- Begin new Preservation Project with new budget
- Continue adding submitters for e-recording, ongoing
- Continue efforts to grow “Thank-A-Vet” program by encouraging more businesses to participate in giving a veterans’ discount when shown an ID card
- Continue efforts to revamp website for needed updates
- Implement Statewide Electronic Death Registration System when available
- Continue all customer service and training efforts to better serve our citizens
- Add Fraud Alert at the request of citizens; module to add to current system

Soil and Water Conservation District – Jeff Parker

Accomplishments/Trends

- Construction is set to start in April on the “Good Neighbor Pilot Program” on the Cove Creek Restoration Project; a partnership with the US Forest Service, NC Division of Soil and Water Conservation and Transylvania County
- Removed 17 debris sites from French Broad at a cost of \$24,200
- Planned Best Management Practices (BMPs) with three landowners that will keep 268 tons of soil out of streams and rivers; allocation from State more than previous year; affected 45 acres
- Recognized 34 local students with awards for their Soil & Water Conservation themed posters and essays
- Celebrating 65 years of conservation in Transylvania County
- Completed 12 education programs; lower than normal due to COVID-19
- Equipment rental on target for meeting goal; rentals should pick up in the spring

Goals

- Increase awareness of rental equipment availability and revenues generated by the equipment
- Continue to work with French Broad River Stewards to secure funds for continued debris removal projects
- Increase Envirothon team participation in middle schools and high schools
- Continue to administer the NCACSP and other funds made available to the department to reduce sedimentation in streams
- Partner with the US Forest Service to administer the Good Neighbor Program & Conserving Carolina to help preserve farmland in the County

Tax Administration – Jessica McCall

Accomplishments

- One of the top collection rates in State of North Carolina
 - As of June 30, 2020, 99.77% collected for 2019 tax bills
 - Over 10,000 phone calls, 212 payment plans, \$65,835.18 bank attachments, \$6,262.12 wage garnishments
- Payment coupons and e-Statement option implemented with 2020 tax bills
 - 3rd year to implement the payment coupons and e-Statement option
 - Continues to be well received
 - Several partial payments received, resulting in payment in full prior to the delinquent date

- Heard and responded to real and personal property appeals in a timely manner
 - Informal and Board of Equalization and Review appeals heard and completed; one new appeal to the Property Tax Commission for 2020 but was settled prior to hearing in Raleigh
- Portion of the Present Use Value recipients were reviewed per NCGS § 105-296(j)
 - 175 properties reviewed during this audit, \$9,408.60 discovered as a result of review
- GAP Billing for unregistered motor vehicles successful and continues to be processed on a monthly basis
- Tax Administration began collecting and maintaining Occupancy Taxes July 1, 2019
 - Successful and positive first year
 - Transition has been well received by taxpayers
 - As of June 30, 2020, \$970,298.09 collected for FY 20
 - Information provided to Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority monthly
- Implementation of the BiTek ITS Mobile Module has begun
 - Allows Tax Administration office to move to a paperless property review in the field
- Complete implementation of this project has been delayed due to the pandemic
- 2021 Reappraisal
 - Reappraisal brochures available in Tax Administration office and website
 - 2021 Schedule of Values completed and presented to Board of Commissioners with final adoption on November 9, 2020
- Tax Administration completed full day of training on reappraisal in December
- Reappraisal Notices of Value to be mailed mid to late February 2021
- Appraised previously exempt personal property purchased by HCA
 - Value established at informal appeal level
 - Personal property value added approximately \$7,700,000 in tax value for 2020
- Cross training of Tax Administration staff continues to expand
- Several Tax Administration staff members obtained and/or maintained certification with various State organizations
- Tax Administration staff received training on all topics per the County safety matrix

Trends

- Collection rate above State average
- Approximately 85% of citizens pay taxes in a timely manner
- Cross train staff in all areas of the Tax Administration Office

Goals

- Provide friendly, efficient, courteous, and prompt customer service
- Maintain collection rate at 99.5% or better
- Continue to implement the payment coupons and e-statement option with annual tax billing
- Proficiently review, process, and maintain all tax records
- Land records updated, edited, and maintained accurately
- Hear and respond to appeals in a timely manner
- Continue annual review of Present Use Value recipients per NCGS § 105-296(j)
- Finalize implementation of BiTek ITS Mobile module
- Continue to expand knowledge of occupancy taxes and advance with technology in streamlining the occupancy tax payment process
- Continue with the 2021 Reappraisal and efficiently and effectively appraise all real property in Transylvania County at 100% of the market value as of January 1, 2021 with notices of value to be mailed in late February

- Informal appeals may be submitted online, mail, email, phone and in person
- All Tax Administration staff involved with Reappraisal
- Continue to expand cross training and certification of staff
- Continue staff safety training based on the county safety matrix

Fire Marshal – Gerald Grose

Accomplishments

- Maintaining 100% of the mandated fire and life safety inspections of all commercial occupancies
- Actively supporting and participating in multiple County programs, including the County Safety Committee, Vision, Connect, School Site Safety Surveys with the Sheriff's Office, Local Emergency Planning Committee, Transylvania County Public Health Programs, and functions of the County's Emergency Operations Plan
- In FY 2020, working with Building and Permitting, conducted 89 Commercial Plan Reviews that met the levels of Fire Marshal review; turnaround time within one day
- Continued open communications with the Sheriff's Office and the Brevard Police Department on issues that involve their input and support of fire investigations
- Through web-based training, department continued to meet the mandated requirements of continuing education to maintain Level III Fire Code Certifications and Fire Investigation Certification
- Continued to strive to stay on top of new trends in code enforcement, fire prevention education, fire investigations and emergency management functions to better protect businesses, employees, citizens and guests

Trends

- Inspections continue to grow; new commercial growth is continually being added to the inspection data base
 - 1470 occupancies that require periodic inspections
- Performed 545 inspections including site visits for consultation and fire alarm/sprinkler system acceptance test during construction
- Dispatched to 34 requests for fire investigation origin and cause
- Responded to 41 calls with Emergency Management, EMS, Fire/Rescue, Law Enforcement, and mutual aid to adjacent counties for searches, carry-outs or other weather-related incidents
- Working with multiple departments that are part of the County Emergency Response Team to include an aggressive training program for high level/angle rescue
 - Trend of increased calls to National Forest and State Parks for recovery from rock faces and waterfall incidents that require higher level of expertise
- Continue to support all County programs and functions, festivals, special events, fireworks displays and other community programs

Goals

- Continue to maintain 100% of the mandated fire and safety inspections required by the North Carolina Fire Prevention Code
- Maintain an open means of communication with all public, private, and non-profit agencies that the Fire Marshal's Office networks with
- The Office of the State Fire Marshal has scheduled fire department inspections for 2023
 - Fire Marshal to request a revisit of the fire district maps to ensure that the established response areas are still best for the property owner
 - Since the last update in 2008, new developments, roadways and fire department substations have been added to the infrastructure which highlighted areas of the county

that could benefit from better response times and insurance class protection ratings for property owners

- Fire Marshal intends to submit a written document to the Board for consideration that supports the current operations of the Fire Marshal's Office
 - Covering mandated operational permit requirements, possible fees, fines and stop operations considerations, corrective measures enforced by noncompliance of the code, other operational issues involving local jurisdiction approval, and multiple other safety issues that have been identified as safety concerns

Parks and Recreation – Jared Mull

Accomplishments/Trends

- Programs
 - Served over 250 unique K-8 grade kids from mid-March 2020 (start of the pandemic) through January 2021 for camp to assist the public when businesses and organizations were shut down or had limited operations
 - Partnership with Transylvania County Schools
 - Survey results: 100% satisfaction from participants due to their appreciation of the department's offering services and for the excellent service provided by staff
 - Modified existing programs and incorporated six new programs due to guidelines and restrictions to best serve the community
 - Indoor space was needed to accommodate the programming during the pandemic
 - Camps
 - Silvermont
 - Non-staff-directed programs did not occur because no staff available to monitor during modified programming
 - Youth and Adult Athletic trends statewide and locally are struggling
 - Burden shifting to local parks and recreation departments to run these programs
 - Potential need in the future for additional programming staff or limited programs offered
- Parks
 - Local, State, and national parks are used by the public now more than ever
 - New amenities were added that helped meet the needs identified in the 2016 Master Plan
 - Jameson's Joy Fitness Course
 - Silvermont trail and restrooms
 - Trail inaccessible following heavy rainfall
 - Additional park acreage, but inadequate staffing to maintain
 - Goal in 2021 is to bring service level of parks closer to the level of programming
 - Recreation staff – weekly park inspections and clean up starting tomorrow
 - Park surveys – Rosman, Silvermont, Activity Center tomorrow
- Staff – awesome staff (runner up to Health Department!)

Building and Permitting – Mike Owen

Accomplishments

- Implemented fillable documents to website and made changes to software program to improve acceleration and efficiency of internal processes
- Excellent customer service, timely inspections (within 24 hours of request), expedited permitting process

- Two new Administrative Support staff were hired during the first six months of this fiscal year; still maintaining level of expertise and support to the public
- Consolidation of inspections saves taxpayer dollars by eliminating extra trips by department staff to the job site
- Inspectors are making progress to achieve higher level certifications
- Optional digital commercial plan review is being successfully utilized for new commercial structures

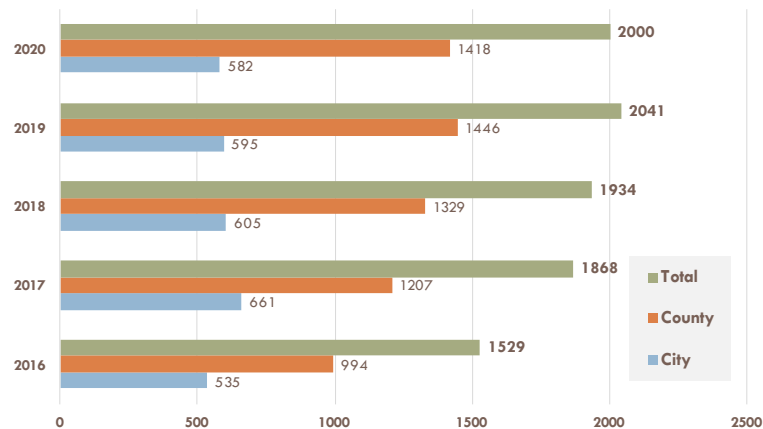
Goals

- Enforce minimum code requirements to safeguard the safety, health, and general welfare of citizens
- Allocate time for training to remain up-to-date on State Building Codes and floodplain management standards, alternative methods and technologies
- Educate contractors and public on codes as well as floodplain development
- Collaboration with other departments to improve workflow to expedite permit submission and approval processes

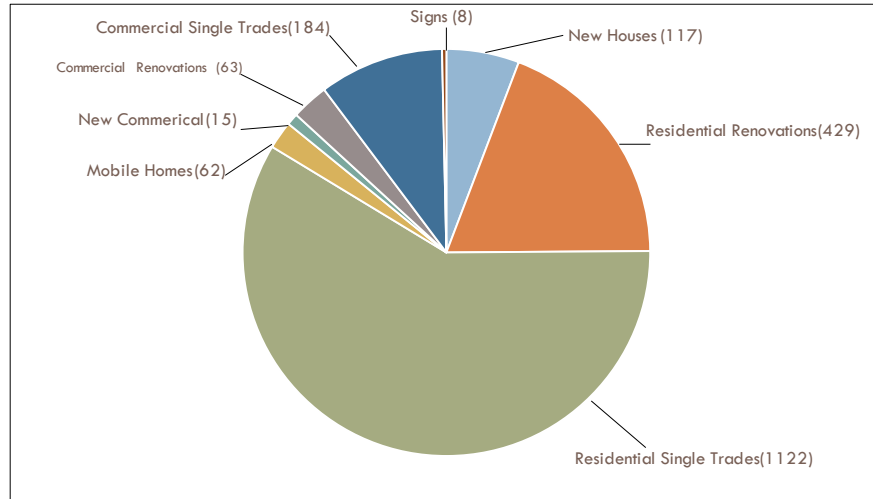
Trends

- Due to uncertain economic conditions with the COVID-19 pandemic, the price of building materials has increased significantly; demand for construction has led to a shortage of materials, supplies, and contractors
- Changes in codes and State requirements have increased phone calls and visits to the office
- Our ordinances and mandated laws create inquiries as to what can be built or done within certain locations in the County and City

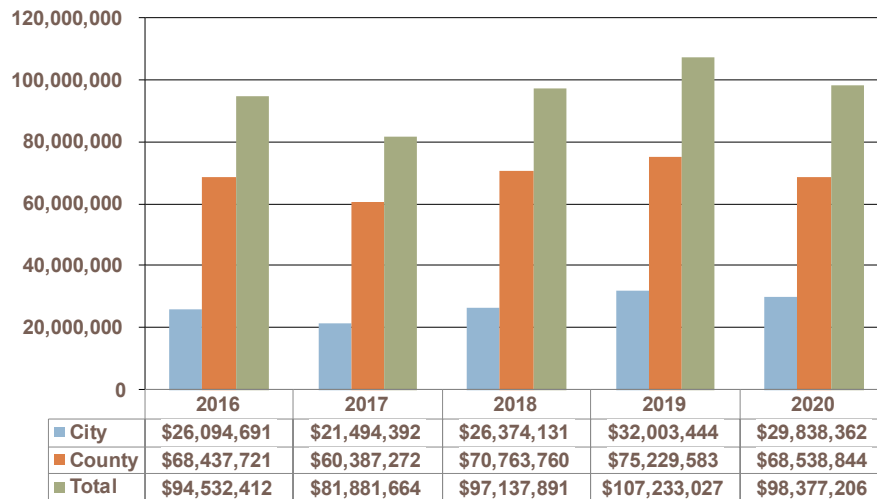
Total Permits Issued 2016 - 2020



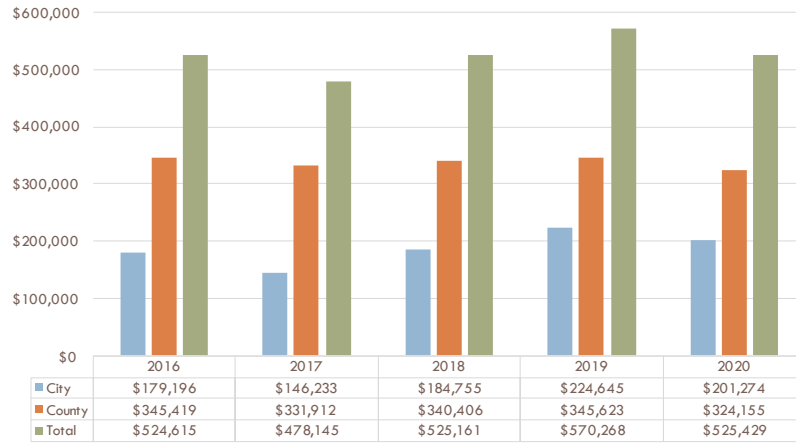
2020 Permits by Type



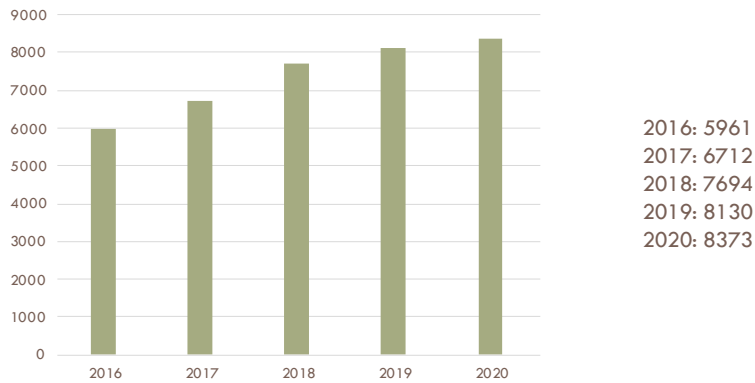
Total Construction Value 2016 - 2020



Total Fees Collected 2016 - 2020



Number of Inspections 2016 - 2020



Solid Waste



Current placement of waste December 2020

Solid Waste

How long do we have in current landfill?

- Landfill Lifespan (4A) is affected by several factors of which compaction and landfill receipts are primary

Date	Estimated Years	Estimated Lifespan
June 2020	7 years	May 2027
July 2019	8.7 years	February 2028
November 2018	8.7 years	August 2027
July 2018	9.3 years	October 2027
June 2017	10.3 years	September 2027

Accomplishments/Trends

- Continue operations in Phase 4 and 5; placed over 27,722 tons in 2020
- Captured a sliver of Phase 1 in “slope recovery project” – very difficult construction
- Compare to 25,770 tons in 2019 (8% increase)

- COVID impact on waste volumes, 2020 receipts are the highest volume since 2008; also in a construction boom
- Erosion control continues to be major concern as several slopes remain bare of vegetation; mulch has now been applied to multiple slopes

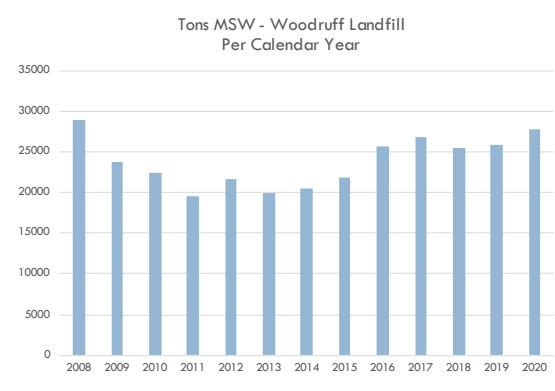
Solid Waste

Trends

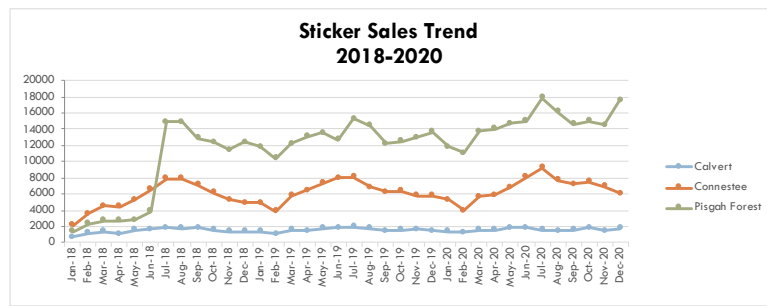
* COVID effects on waste generation as well as robust economy have led to increases in YOY MSW

Most received since 2008

Ongoing trend – TBD?



Solid Waste



Sticker sales also appear to be trending higher

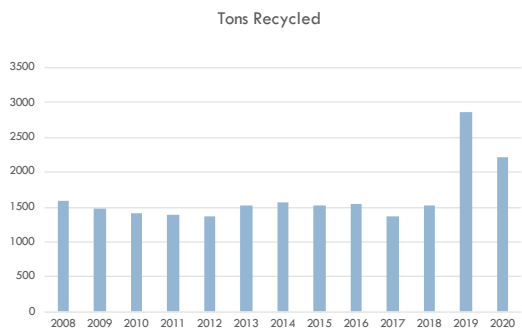
Collection Centers predominantly households

Solid Waste

Trends

* Commodity prices for recyclables have recovered slightly. Regional recycling markets are gaining strength.

* Data now includes tires and glass.



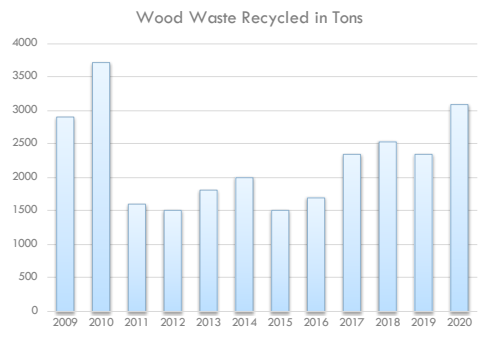
Solid Waste

Trends

* LCID: Land Clearing & Inert Debris

* Strong construction market leads to increase in woody debris

* 32% increase YOY 2019 and largest volume of LCID receipts since 2010



Solid Waste

Trends

* Totals for 2020:

Rainfall 102.67 inches

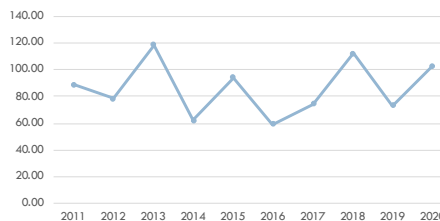
Leachate 3,763,000 gallons

* Compare to 5 Year avg

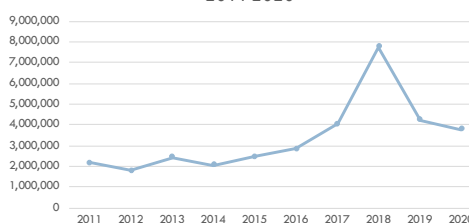
84 inches— 23% higher

4,529,380 gal— 17% lower

Annual Rainfall Summary (inches)
2011-2020



Annual Leachate Summary (gallons shipped)
2011-2020



Goals

- Landfill Expansion: Decision on Eastern or Western expansions Spring 2021
- Survey perimeter followed by detailed wetland mitigation will occur in the first quarter 2021
- Estimate costs of expansion for next five years
- Begin closure on completed sections of current landfill

Housekeeping/Maintenance/Safety – Chad Owenby

Housekeeping-Accomplishments

- Continued to provide a safe and professional environment for employees and patrons during the COVID-19 pandemic; required staff to perform additional services targeted at preventing the spread of the virus
- Housekeeping staff provided deep cleaning and disinfecting in areas where COVID-19 exposures were identified
- Worked in collaboration with Human Resources and TVS for delivery of housekeeping supplies
- Continued schedule to refinish all floors and carpets twice a year
- Revised the cleaning schedule in County buildings including cleaning all public restrooms four times a day per guidance from CDC to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Housekeeping staff evaluated and implemented the use of cleaning equipment to maximize use and improve efficiency
- Housekeeping staff maintained a positive and professional attitude while accepting additional workload to meet the COVID-19 needs and spread prevention recommendations

Housekeeping-Trends

- Use of contract services for specific housekeeping services that requires specialized equipment (i.e., floor strip and seal/carpet cleaning/external window cleaning/and bathroom tile and grout cleaning)
- Continue working with TVS clients in a community partnership for delivery of supplies; continue to explore other opportunities to partner with community organizations to meet needs
- Continue evaluation of equipment and cleaning materials to identify possible efficiencies and provide the safest, most effective housekeeping services
- Continue to provide appropriate training in safety, sanitization, wellness, chemicals, appropriate equipment, and safety supplies

Housekeeping-Goals

- Continue streamlining of supplies and reduce supply storage
- Improve efficiency through implementation of revised housekeeping schedule
- Professionally maintain cleanliness of Transylvania County facilities making them inviting and safe to public
- Monitor and update staff training using the new NEOGOV program that the NCACC uses
- Prepare Housekeeping staff to use the new MUNIS EAM asset management system so they can track specific work order requests and track those back to a specific asset

Safety-Accomplishments

- Continued working to make the transition from the NCACC safety platform to the NEOGOV platform; COVID-19 pandemic delayed this process but the transition continues
- Workers Comp claims were down by 35% this year; rate of incidence and DART rate (Days Away/Restricted or Transferred) were also down; contributes to insurance and liability costs
- Continued Safety Committee efforts including zoom meetings when appropriate during the COVID-19 to evaluate all incident reports, provide feedback and strategies, and educate departments on safety related issues
- Collaborated with Public Health and County COVID-19 Team to ensure a safe work environment
- The Safety Director successfully re-certified as a National Certified Playground Safety Inspector)

Safety-Trends

- Increase in the individual departmental safety meetings
- Workers Comp claims are less in number and severity
- Safety training and risk management is moving to the electronic based form of learning and education
- Safety has been roughly 90% COVID-19 related

Safety-Goals

- Continue the use of Velocity EHS Safety Data Sheet system to track and record any chemical/material that could pose a potential hazard to an employee or patron
- Provide all employees and departments access to the NEOGOV training site through the NCACC
- Ensure that every department completes monthly safety meeting and assist or provide information and resources as needed

Maintenance-Accomplishments

- Completed building maintenance in all County buildings with total square footage of 281,351
- New wayfinding signage installed for downtown Government Complex
- Completed Tax Administration landscape project

- Continued coordinated work with Sheriff's Inmate Work Program
- Completed Community Services Building old step removal and old rock wall repair
- Completed drainage project at Recreation Department for the Fitness Course
- Community Services Building improvements: new carpet in various departments and new blinds for windows in conjunction with HVAC replacements

Trends

- Aging facilities and equipment cause increased maintenance issues and cost
- Continue with Community Service HVAC replacement along with window shades

Cooperative Extension – Bart Renner

Ongoing Goals

- Continue to provide a high level of service to all clients
- Keep volunteer force educated, motivated and engaged
- Assist farmers with compliance to changing State regulations
- Provide high level of support to County advisory boards
- Summer Internship
- Support SHIIP program
- Continue AmeriCorps program

Trends

- Adaptation and support
 - Community feeding efforts
 - CFAP funds distributed to over 30 producers totaling almost \$300,000 in direct payments to local farmers
 - Mountain cattle alliance increased profits by \$65 per head, totaling \$22,750
 - On farm visits/awareness became more important
 - Phone calls increased
- Greater diversity of questions
- Greater diversity of problems and pressures
- Increasing public scrutiny of farm operations
- Small revenue farms
- Continued partnership with AmeriCorps Project Conserve which has increased their ability to design and deliver educational programs and conservation efforts around natural resources in this County; funded by outside organizations
- Continued partnership with SHIIP which saved citizens approximately \$150,000
- Family Consumer Sciences Program and SHIIP funded by outside dollars
- 4-H Youth Development Agent retired leaving position vacant
 - 4-H has been active in Transylvania County for more than 100 years
 - Funds matching by State dollars
 - Requesting the Board fill the position
 - Beneficial program for youth and adds value to programs, such as the T.I.M.E. program in Transylvania County Schools

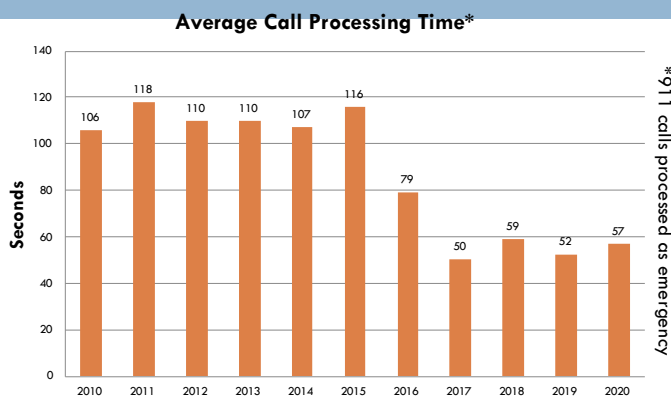
Communications – Cameron Sexton

Accomplishments

- Continued training, certification, and recertification for all telecommunicators through PowerPhone and the North Carolina Office of EMS
- Completed the update to the 911 phone system to include the new installation of a fiber ring from AT&T to provide connection to the NC 911 hosted system that is connected at both the Primary PSAP (Public Safety) as well as the Backup PSAP (South Broad St)
- Completed a multi-phased/multi-month Cyber-Security Assessment for Public Safety that resulted in a 7,000+ page report with recommendations
- Nearing turn-up of new 5-site, 4-channel VHF simulcast radio system that will allow for seamless countywide communications for Fire, Sheriff, EMS, and Police.
- Attended multiple state board meetings and forums virtually
- Assisted with the design, procurement, upfit, and maintenance of numerous emergency services vehicles and their equipment for the Sheriff's Office and EMS
- Consolidated the Brevard Police Department dispatch into the 911 Center forming a single dispatch agency for all Emergency Services in Transylvania County

Trends

Communications



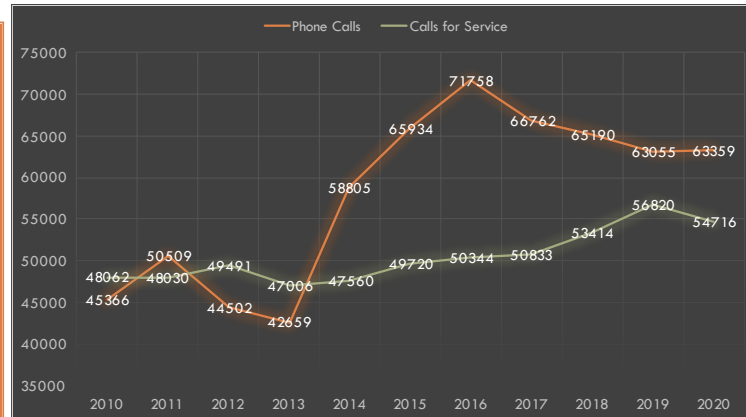
Trends

Call processing time has decreased since the implementation of PowerPhone in 2016. It continues to hold true under our goal of 60 seconds.

Communications

Trends

Steady increase of calls for service over the last six years. The Pandemic did appear to have a small impact on response calls.



Goals

- Continue training, certification, and recertification for all telecommunicators through PowerPhone and the North Carolina Office of EMS
- Complete the implementation of the VHF simulcast radio system
- Attend required trainings, board meetings, and forums
- Upgrade tower and building sites to meet current and future demands of communications
- Continue work on broadband initiatives for public access
- Continue implementation of GIS web-based platform to increase public transparency and responder capability
- Implement recommendation from the Cyber-Security Assessment

(Commissioner Guice wanted more information regarding calls that come into the 911 Center from Latinos or Hispanics in the community and how those calls are managed.)

(Commissioner Guice was also concerned about the search function on the County website not working properly. This question will be referred to Information Technology.)

Animal Control/Emergency Management – Kevin Shook

Emergency Management-Accomplishments

- Staff participated in numerous training virtually despite the pandemic
- Continued coordination with Emergency Services Stakeholders (i.e., Red Cross, Volunteer Departments, Public Health)
- Continued working with Transylvania County Rescue Squad to increase rescue capabilities
- Worked with all local agencies assisting with PPE location for pandemic response
- Worked with County staff on the response to the pandemic
- Sponsored multiple classes for County staff and emergency services
- The Prime Movers awarded through the Homeland Security Grant arrived (large truck for response/deployment for emergencies in South East)

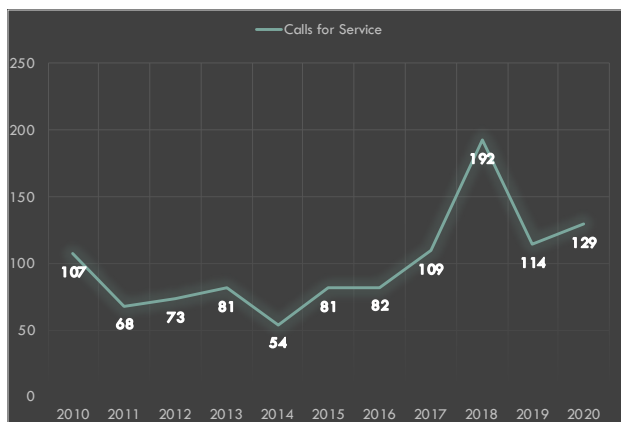
- Completed the Multi-Hazard Regional Plan; regional effort involving five counties which was more cost efficient

Emergency Management-Trends

Emergency Management

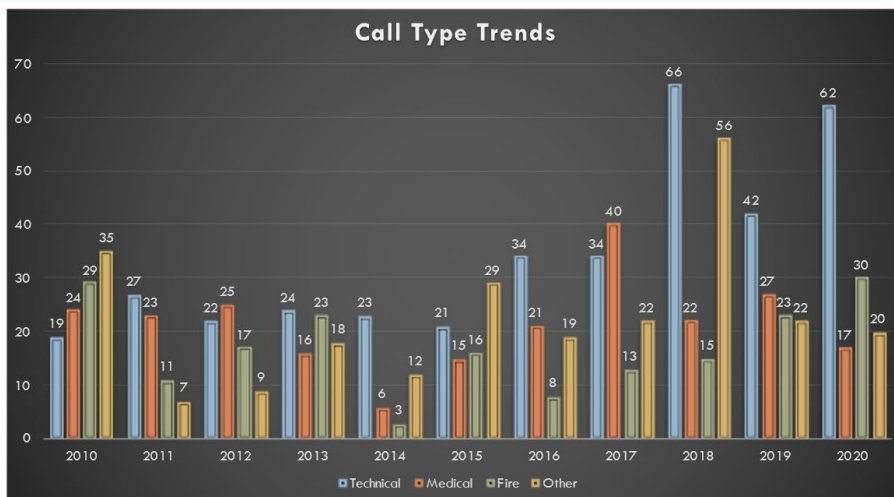
Trends

Continued utilization of technical emergency services capabilities both locally and regionally



- Continued coordination of response disciplines
- Continued integration of non-traditional agencies into emergency services response
- Continued need for technical response needs (high angle rescue, water rescue, wilderness rescue, hazmat)
- Continue requests from local and regional agencies for support from staff for specialized services
- GIS capabilities and specialty software such as SarTopo integration into responses are increasing

Emergency Management



Emergency Management-Goals

- Continued coordination with local agencies (i.e., volunteer fire/rescue, Red Cross, non-traditional emergency services agencies)
- Continue Strategic Operational Planning of Emergency Services
- Update of current Emergency Operations Plan which is required annually
- Revise County Ordinances to reflect State and federal updates
- Continue with implementation of the Emergency Response Team to assist with technical calls
- Coordinate and perform the updating of fire district maps in preparation for the next inspection by the NC State Fire Marshal's Office
- Coordinate the development of a centralized GIS program for County government to improve efficiencies of operations both internally and externally thus benefiting the public and staff
- Work with State, regional, and local agencies on the effort to increase broadband access in the County

Animal Services-Accomplishments

- Maintained shelter Live Release Rate of over 90% for third consecutive year
- Worked with civic groups to facilitate the delivery of food and supplies for animals to citizens in need due to the ongoing pandemic
- Coordinated with rescues resulting in 311 animals pulled from the shelter by approved rescue organizations
- Continued to work with Brother Wolf Animal Rescue (BWAR) and Transylvania Animal Alliance Group (TAAG) to offer citizens several options for local low cost spay/neuter programs locally helping to eliminate the need for transporting privately owned pets out of the county for the service

Information Technology – Dean Landreth

Accomplishments

- Visited all Elections polling places to ensure service and network connectivity; provided staff support on Election Day
- Met with representative from the Department of Homeland Security to allow them to begin testing the County's network for vulnerability and security issues
 - County scored well
- Updated cloud-based backup to provide more storage and longer retention times for data
- Virtualized domain controllers to authenticate users and enforce security policies
- Mailing lists-the ability to send out correspondence to citizens via email; created sign up form which was included in tax notices; continue to build list
- A/V upgrades in Commissioners Chambers-new screen, laser projector, new amplifier, and new streaming server installed
- Upgraded analytics to provide more information about website visitors
 - 10,000 visitors to website in the past 30 days
- Configured and trained users on COVID call center

Trends

- Zoom meetings, streaming, video
 - Since April 2020, 539 Zoom sessions with over 4,000 participants
- VPN/remote access continues to grow across all counties and institutions; accommodating requests with both hardware and security measures
- Security threats ongoing

- In 2020, major cyberattack by a group backed by a foreign government penetrated thousands of organizations globally, including multiple parts of the US federal government and worldwide organizations
- Some of the North Carolina cyber-security incidents include: Haywood County Schools, Mission Health, Buncombe County, Burke County, etc.
- 5,811 Facebook and Live Stream users in 2019; increased to 21,000+ in 2020
- Service tickets continue to increase; over 1,600 for the year

Goals

- Consolidated password management
- Two-factor authentication for external connections
- Continue security training for employees

This concluded the first round of departmental presentations. Presentations will continue at the next meeting. Commissioners were reminded to send any questions to the Manager so she can compile the answers in full for the Board in writing.

NEW BUSINESS

2020 DELINQUENT TAXPAYER LIST

Tax Administrator Jessica Call reported that advertisement of delinquent taxes is required per NC General Statute § 105-369 (a). Commissioners must approve the list before it is advertised. Any delinquent taxes paid prior to the date of advertisement will not be advertised. In addition, taxpayers who have established payment plans with Tax Administration will not be advertised as being delinquent. Tax Administration will begin contacting taxpayers tomorrow who are on the current list in an effort to collect those taxes and whittle down the list prior to advertising.

Commissioners asked for this item to be moved from Consent Agenda to New Business for discussion.

Commissioner Guice asked Ms. McCall about how payments from bank escrow accounts are processed. He also asked if there had been any issues with that process due to the problems and delays with US mail being delivered timely. Ms. McCall explained there are several ways in which payments are made to the Tax Office, to include in-person, by drop-box, online payments, payment by phone, etc. There is also a lockbox service located in Charlotte, NC. That address is included on the payment coupon with the tax bills and those payments are returned to Transylvania County Tax Administration electronically. Mortgage companies, via escrow accounts, also submit electronic payments to Tax Administration. One of the issues the Tax Office has been struggling with this year is the delay in the mail system. There is an unusual delay with receiving payments by mail this year which has impacted the lockbox service receiving payments in a timely manner as well. She noted the Tax Office received a payment today that was postmarked in December. The Tax Office honors the postmark so that a payment is not considered delinquent.

Commissioner Guice was concerned about those citizens making tax payments via escrow and when the bank indicates they have mailed several payments to the Tax Office which have yet to be accounted for due to the delay in the mail system. He was worried about the public's overall well-being due to the pandemic and the fact that this delay in payments adds to their stress. He was curious if most lending institutions use the lockbox service. Ms. McCall stated that lending institutions do not typically use the lockbox service because they collect payments via third party. There are a handful of lending institutions that make tax payments on behalf of their lenders through US mail. The Tax Office honors the postmark to determine whether a payment is delinquent.

Commissioner Guice pointed out the statute covers wrongful advertisement of a delinquent tax and a penalty that could be incurred by the County if such occurred. He wondered how this is managed and remedied. Ms. McCall stated some individuals decide to make the payment and resolved the issue later with their lending institution on reimbursement. If the escrow payment comes in later, it would be refunded. It is not possible to enter a duplicate payment on tax bills. Regardless, the Tax Office must advertise the list per statute if no payment has been received by the taxpayer.

Commissioner Guice asked about the possibility of payments being posted to the wrong account. Ms. McCall responded that if documentation of payment can be provided, Tax staff will research the issue to ensure the payment was properly posted.

Commissioner McCall inquired about what percentage is generally collected prior to the list being advertised. Ms. McCall recalled that the Tax Office normally advertises a list of approximately 400 delinquent taxpayers. The current list has 2,700, so she expects it to be reduced considerably. She noted that some citizens wait to pay when they receive their tax refund or when an estate is settled.

Commissioner McCall moved to approve the 2020 Delinquent Taxpayer List and ordered Tax Administrator Jessica McCall to advertise the list per statute, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Staff intends to update the Board on the process for the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccines and the procedures the County has put into place for administering the vaccine. Because information and guidance from the state and federal governments and their agencies are changing daily, information will be presented to the Board in real time. Staff will continue to report on this topic at each Board meeting going forward.

Below is a summary of the presentation by Public Health Director Elaine Russell, followed by discussion. She thanked the Board for their support and advocacy as the County continues to work through the pandemic for the community.

- The agency continues to support the appointment model for the following reasons:
 - Wait lists have become long in the region and people are joining multiple wait lists (Blue Ridge Health not using a wait list); stand behind decision not to use wait list based on hearing the pros and cons of different methods from counties employing various strategies
 - The vaccine program is federally funded. For this reason, Transylvania County cannot restrict to just residents in our county and must accept requests from other counties and states. This includes a waitlist. The waitlist would have to be first-come, first-serve and there are people actively online identifying when opportunities for waitlists open that then secure spots ahead of residents in a community.
 - It has been suggested the County should have a wait list for only those over a certain age because they are less likely to have technology access and/or skills. NCDHHS requires the County to follow Stage 2 and vaccinate anyone who qualifies equally. A waitlist would be open to all over 65 on a first-come, first-serve basis. Operating outside of the NCDHHS guidance risks allotment of vaccine.
 - Managing a waitlist takes more resources. It slows down the appointment scheduling, which in a higher volume supply (such as the 1,000 doses scheduled two weeks ago) would delay getting vaccine out and hurt future allocations. Another way that resources are impacted is that a list must be managed for integrity. There must be procedures in

place to limit the ability for people to modify the waitlist, document when people are added and assure that equal opportunity is given on the first-come, first-serve basis.

- Other counties who have opened waiting lists have seen a high volume sign-up very quickly. Those with access to technology both locally and regionally are watching for opportunities. Those who do not have access to technology will be delayed hearing about the waitlist and be further behind due to the volume from other communities.
- TEAMS Alerts is a way to try to alert the local community population of opportunities for appointments without announcing to a broader audience. Even so, staff is still seeing people from other places such as upstate South Carolina and other counties sign on and secure appointments. This will be a bigger problem with a waitlist.
- First doses administered by Health Department as to today are 1,714; second doses administered by Health Department 64 as of today; all data entered to CVMS (COVID Vaccine Management System for North Carolina)
- Online guide for making appointments has been completed and added to website and staff is working on a short video to post; Cooperative Extension to assist in making these resources available to people
- Note: Acuity software does not reserve the time slot when you select it, only when someone submits their information
- Multi-disciplinary team approach has been critical to successful vaccine events
- The challenge remains vaccine supply, but the County advocating with Raleigh for additional allocations
- Currently Health Department receiving 200 doses weekly in state allocation
- County team is confident we can vaccinate at a much higher rate if we receive allocation; feedback from citizens from vaccination sites is positive.
- Pharmacies are expected to get vaccines nationwide directly from federal and not through State allocation, but information on whether locations in Transylvania County will receive any is not available yet
- Health Department, Administration, Board of Commissioners, NCACC, Senator Edwards and Representative Johnson have been advocating for more allocation due to the high ratio of citizens over 65. NCDHHS is currently measuring equal distribution based on total population vs total allocation
- Advocacy is working! Call with NCDHHS went well today and we expect to see some modifications in weeks to come that will help support our Stage 2 vaccine program more robustly. State is also carrying this message to federal level
 - If allocations do not increase, our area will be very hard hit if the State moves into Stage 3. Current estimate for completion of Stage 2 in Transylvania is approximately 34 weeks but State average for counties based on Stage 2 population is 17 weeks (This does not consider some in Stage 1 still receiving vaccine)

The Manager emphasized the last bullet point. She felt that the conversation with NCDHHS today was very positive. They took the time to listen to information about Transylvania County's demographics being an older population and how that impacts the County's ability to transition into the priority phase 3. Staff is hoping these issues will be considered and result in higher allocations of vaccine. Federal allocation is also population based, so staff hopes those advocacy efforts will be successful. The Manager thanked Chairman Chappell for participating on the call today because it is helpful for them to hear from County leadership and gain a perspective on what our needs are.

The Manager also wished Ms. Russell Happy Birthday!

Commissioner McCall commented that the last bullet point is very important, and it is critical that we emphasize that if the current allocation continues, it will take longer to get our citizens vaccinated, which is much longer than other counties that are receiving a higher allocation.

Commissioner McCall was disheartened that the Board passed a resolution advocating on our citizens' behalf and that most citizens are unaware of the Board's action because it is not readily available through the media. Citizens need to know that the Board of Commissioners and State representatives are working diligently on their behalf. She felt it would be appropriate for this information to be shared with citizens through the news media.

The Manager pointed out that, while it is not an increase to our base allocation, the County should receive another 100 vaccines which is a direct result of firm advocacy and sharing our message statewide.

Commissioner Chapman asked staff to share Ms. Russell's presentation in electronic format for the benefit of our citizens. Ms. Russell informed that this information is shared on the website. Information will also be shared in a video. She will share the presentation directly to the Commissioners so that they may share with the public.

Commissioner Chapman noted that he started receiving emails and calls from citizens today when the vaccine appointments are full. Most questions were related to the appointment system and how appointments are taken prior to inputting their demographic information. He inquired about whether a citizen could fill in the information ahead of time because it has been the biggest source of frustration by citizens contacting him. Ms. Russell pointed out it is the nature of the Acuity software. When someone accesses the software to book an appointment at a certain time, someone else may also be trying to book the same appointment. Whomever gets their demographics entered and submitted first will get that specific appointment slot. She understood that it is a very frustrating aspect of the software. Staff has researched with the software company about changing this method, but the software does not have that capacity. For those that have cookies and cache on their device, their information will automatically populate on some forms and thus some people might be able to move through the appointment process quicker if so.

Commissioner Dalton encouraged citizens to contact the Governor's Office and the NC Department of Health and Human Services because they are controlling the allocation to counties. He emphasized if the County could obtain a larger amount of vaccine, the Health Department could serve more citizens. He noted that the resolution passed by the Board at the previous meeting stresses this fact because our County's senior citizen population exceeds 97 other counties in North Carolina. Ms. Russell noted that more than 30% of our population (10,500) are 65 and older and qualify for the vaccine, yet the County is receiving only 200 doses a week. This is a daunting imbalance.

Responding to Commissioner McCall, Ms. Russell shared the Health Department has just begun giving the second doses which totals 64 as of today. On Friday, the Health Department will be running vaccine clinics for both first-time and second doses. The department has the capacity and the team work to ensure they are administered timely. The following week will begin another round of second doses.

Commissioner Chapman asked if the Health Department has learned about negative reactions to the vaccine. Ms. Russell stated no. Some shared they had mild symptoms with the first dose. Those receiving the second doses have reported feeling achier over a 24-period. In terms of people having a deep adverse reaction, the department has heard no reports of such.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Staff receive frequent complaints about litter along our roadways.
 - NCDOT Litter Strategy includes:
 - Plans to continue litter pick up every other month (April, June, August, October, and December); however, changes may be made to this plan depending on budget
 - Planned four mowing cycles with the first beginning May 3, 2021. The remaining cycles are scheduled for June, August, and September unless again the budget dictates adjustments. NCDOT has coordinated litter to be picked up prior to the mowing cycles.
 - NCDOT asked Transylvania Maintenance Office to review their roads and pick up any routes where litter is obviously excessive and to pick up big items anywhere they see them. NCDOT has seen an increase in litter over the Christmas season.
 - Community efforts: kudos to Rosman Alumni Effort last month coordinated by Jessica Whitmire from Headwater's Outfitters
 - Chamber of Commerce is launching The Leave It Better Clean Up Program explorebrevard.com for more information
- County Commissioners are responsible for naming the Ecusta Road Connector before the project is finished. Citizens interested in submitting a name suggestion can email Jaime.laughter@transylvaniacounty.org with subject line *Ecusta Road Connector Name* by Noon on February 17.
 - All suggestions will be included for Commissioners to consider at the second meeting in February.
- Administration and Emergency Management regrouped with NCDOT on flooding on Cascade Lake and Hart Roads that have left a high number of residents stranded, especially with failure of Cascade Lake Road's gravel section.
 - NCDOT should have hydrology information in two weeks to assist in creating cost estimates to improve Hart Road
 - NCDOT has also replaced a failing culvert on Cascade Lake Road at Merrill Lane that should help some
 - Emergency Management is sharing data on safety and response times to support need
 - Several strategies for state funding exist but will be dependent on the cost of the project to determine eligibility.
- GetSet is hosting Family Challenges
 - Social distance way of interacting with others
 - February-to show someone love through acts of kindness and post to social media

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman noted that his wife has done a great deal of research on the history of the community and intends to submit name suggestions for the Ecusta Road Connector.

Commissioner Guice shared that Commissioners received a request from *The Transylvania Times* to respond to an Ask Us question and he shared with Commissioners and the public his response. The

question asked what each member of the Board of Commissioners thinks about the incident that occurred on January 6 at the US Capitol building. He shared his response that he was shocked by the invasion and that everyone involved should be prosecuted, along with those who aided the incident. He shared that the result of losing an election should not be anarchy.

Chairman Chappell stated that in light of the pandemic our community, nation and world is facing, he shared how fortunate we are in Transylvania County to have the leadership of our County Manager Jaime Laughter and Public Health Director Elaine Russell leading the charge in the County's response. He was extremely confident in their ability to serve the citizens of this community. He understands citizens are scared but he promised them the County has the most dedicated public servants leading this effort and their work is making a difference.

Chairman Chappell also encouraged everyone (Commissioners, staff, citizens, etc.) when they are sharing information in the community to ensure they are giving correct and factual information. Rumors are unfounded and are contrary to the County's efforts.

Commissioner McCall attested that there is no one receiving preferential or special treatment in terms of obtaining vaccine appointment. She is assisting her family members who qualify for the vaccine and is competing with everyone else trying to get an appointment as well. These times are frustrating for everyone and she encouraged citizens to be patient.

Chairman Chappell moved to enter into closed session per NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (4) To discuss matters related to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, and NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, following a five-minute recess, seconded by Commissioner McCall and unanimously carried.

CLOSED SESSION

Per NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (4) To discuss matters related to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, and NC General Statute, closed session was entered into at 6:08 p.m. Present were Chairman Chappell, Commissioners Chapman, Dalton, Guice and McCall, County Manager Jaime Laughter, Assistant County Manager David McNeill, Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Attorney John Kubis participated remotely via Zoom meeting software.

Commissioners were updated on a potential economic development project.

Per NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, the second closed session was entered. Present were Chairman Chappell, Commissioners Chapman, Dalton, Guice and McCall, County Manager Jaime Laughter, Assistant County Manager David McNeill, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Attorney John Kubis participated remotely via Zoom meeting software.

Commissioners received an update from staff on the negotiation efforts for the potential purchase of property and instructed staff on how to proceed.

Chairman Chappell moved to leave closed session, seconded by Commissioner Dalton, and unanimously carried.

OPEN SESSION

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Chairman Chappell moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.**

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board