

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
February 22, 2021 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, February 22, 2021 at 6:00 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, and David Guice. Commissioner Teresa McCall was absent. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Attorney Natalia Isenberg participated remotely via Zoom meeting software.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derek McKissock participated remotely.

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 6:05 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

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.

Chairman Chappell read comments that were submitted prior to the meeting. They have been summarized below by the Clerk to the Board:

Donna Thompson: (via voice mail) Ms. Thompson is a Buncombe County resident. She thanked the Board of Commissioners for prioritizing vaccinations for senior citizens. She commended Transylvania County for their vaccine rollout system, which she claimed was not going well in Buncombe County.

Elda Brown: Ms. Brown is a 65-year-old resident of Transylvania County. She expressed she would give up her place in line for a COVID-19 vaccine for a teacher or school employee. While she can stay safe at home, teachers and school employees must work in a hazardous workplace. She urged the County to follow the State's guidelines and make schools a priority by taking steps to keep teachers and employees safe and healthy. Ms. Brown suggested setting aside a limited number of vaccine doses from the weekly allotment for teachers and school personnel. She felt that an "all or nothing" approach neglects the health of our community.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

Commissioners requested to table the Personnel Board appointments until the first meeting in March. The Manager requested to add a closed session per NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (3) to consult with an attorney to protect the attorney-client privilege.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on January 11, 2021 and following met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed. The minutes were approved 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. Tax dollars released totaled \$624.39. Refunds issued amounted to \$1,788.43. The Board approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Report for January 2021 as submitted.

VAYA HEALTH FISCAL MONITORING REPORT

Per NC General Statute § 122C-117 (c), the quarterly Fiscal Monitoring Reports (FMR) for the local management entities (LMEs) must be presented to the Board of Commissioners. Vaya Health submitted its report for the first quarter of FY 2021.

Vaya Health reported their current actual revenues as \$238,317,553 (103.9% of budget) and their current actual expenditures as \$229,036,983 (99.85% of budget) through December 31, 2020. This equates to a current net income of \$6,326,001.

Vaya Health reported the following fund balances:

- \$52,494,908 restricted for risk reserve
- \$16,923,807 restricted for statute, prepaids and investments in fixed assets
- \$20,090,967 unrestricted

They also reported total operating cash of \$87,178,151 net of risk reserves. The total spendable cash estimate is \$11,813,345 on December 31, 2020.

The Board received the report as presented.

AUDIT CONTRACT EXTENSION

Pursuant to the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act (NC General Statute § 159-34), the County is required to undergo an annual audit. For counties, the audit process is particularly significant because it also encompasses a comprehensive review of the functions a county undertakes on behalf of the State (like most programs of the Department of Social Services and the Department of Public Health). The Board of Commissioners, by statute, has the exclusive right to choose an audit firm. Over the past two years, the Board has proceeded with Martin Starnes and Associates based on a three-year fee proposal last solicited in FY 2018.

Pursuant to LGC Memorandum 2020-07, the Local Government Commission unilaterally extended the standard due dates for all municipal and county audits to January 31, 2021. In reviewing the draft audit reports in late January, Martin Starnes's staff and the Finance Officer agreed that it was unlikely the final report would be submitted to the Local Government Commission by the January 31, 2021 deadline. Between the significant changes in the County's financial position caused by the influx of CARES Act revenues and expenditures and the nature of the pandemic restricting the ability of Martin Starnes's staff to conduct on-site visits during the spring of 2020, it was difficult for the audit to be completed by the deadline.

Contracts between governing boards and public accounting firms have two major components – an agreement on the fee schedule and an agreement on the due date by which the accounting firm must submit a final product for LGC approval. The proposed amended contract does not amend the fee schedule, only the due date. The Finance Officer has requested from Martin Starnes that the report be submitted by the end of February, but the due date is set to the end of March to ensure that a second amendment is not necessary. The Board approved an extension of the County's audit contract with Martin Starnes & Associates, CPAs as requested.

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF NCACC PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCY

NCACC President and Martin County Commissioner Ronnie Smith is leading an initiative to address food system resiliency in North Carolina. The goal of the initiative is to identify ways counties can help ensure all North Carolinians have access to high-quality, affordable food and that local producers are able to help meet this need.

Access to food is a basic human need and a critical component of a healthy society. Food insecurity has wide impacts on a community and can be particularly harmful for children. The pandemic has and will continue to exacerbate the food insecurity crisis in North Carolina. Counties in North Carolina will need to take decisive and immediate action to curb this crisis.

Counties are extensively involved in addressing food insecurity, particularly through their departments of social services which administer the food and nutrition service programs for families in need of assistance, public school systems that distribute meals to students, and cooperative extensions which provide research-based knowledge and educational programs that enable people to make practical decisions to improve their quality of life.

President Smith has convened a task force to identify ways counties can provide more food resources and security to the residents. He has asked all counties to support the initiative through the passage of a resolution. The task force will release their findings and solutions after each convening so that counties can begin to work on this issue immediately. The task force will compile the action steps into a final report to serve as a roadmap for counties to utilize in developing their plans to address this critical issue.

The Manager read aloud the proposed resolution for the benefit of the public. Commissioners approved Resolution 07-2021 In Support of NCACC Presidential Initiative to Promote Food System Resiliency.

RESOLUTION #07-2021

In Support of NCACC Presidential Initiative to Promote Food System Resiliency

WHEREAS, access to food is a basic human need and is vital to the well-being of a community; and

WHEREAS, all 100 North Carolina counties are committed to ensuring the needs of their citizens are met; and

WHEREAS, food security, defined as reliable access to quality, affordable food, is vital to a thriving community, and food insecurity threatens the fabric of a healthy society; and

WHEREAS, according to Feeding America's annual Map the Meal Gap study, conducted to improve our understanding of food insecurity and food costs at the local level, the average food insecurity rate across North Carolina's counties is 14%, and Feeding America projects the rate will rise to 19.3% during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County has a food insecurity rate of 13%; and

WHEREAS, the current pandemic is only further exacerbating the issue of food insecurity, and families are facing difficult decisions about how to make ends meet, including whether they can afford the food they need; and

WHEREAS, it is projected that the food insecurity rate in North Carolina will rise to 19.3% due to the pandemic and the child food insecurity rate is projected to rise from 19.3% to 28.6%; and

WHEREAS, according to state officials, agriculture and agribusinesses account for 17% of all jobs in the state, have an annual economic impact of \$91.8 billion, and are a vital aspect of the economy of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, county commissioners have a responsibility to ensure the basic needs of our citizens are met; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), under the direction of President Ronnie Smith will be leading a task force to address food system resiliency to help counties take actions to ensure the resources they have are getting to the people in need; and

WHEREAS, the NCACC Task Force will be meeting to examine the various issues that go into creating and sustaining a resilient food system for our residents; and

WHEREAS, by supporting our farmers, supply chains, agribusiness, food industry, and hungry families, we can build resilient communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, THAT THE Transylvania County Board of Commissioners does hereby resolve to support the work of the NCACC Task Force and will commit to examining the food system in Transylvania County and take steps to help strengthen the system in the service of sustaining a thriving community.

ADOPTED this the 22nd day of February, 2021.

S://Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

PRESENTATION BY NC ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (NCACC) – DAVID NICHOLSON, OUTREACH ASSOCIATE

David Nicholson, Outreach Associate with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), presented to the Board on how the NCACC serves as a resource and partnership for counties. The following is a summary of his presentation:

The NCACC represents all 100 counties and empowers them to work together for the betterment of one State. Their mission is to support and promote the well-being of all North Carolina counties through advocacy, education, research, and member services.

The NCACC is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of County Commissioners from across the State who are elected by their peers. Rebecca McCall, Henderson County Commissioner, represents Transylvania County as its District Director.

Much of the work of the NCACC is done through its various steering committees. They work on issues related to agriculture, the environment, general government, health and human services, justice and public safety, public education, and tax and finance. Commissioners are invited to serve on a steering committee of their interest.

Executive Director Kevin Leonard has given the NCACC the moniker ‘Team County’. The Executive Administration staff includes Mr. Leonard Laurel Edwards who serves as the Manager of Strategic Initiatives, including the presidential initiative on food resiliency.

The Operations department works behind the scenes but provides important services to counties and Executive team and Board of Directors. This group generates weekly updates to the Board and various County staff, and they send out blast emails when action is needed by the Board of Commissioners at the legislative level. Operations also publishes the County Quarterly Magazine, and they are currently revamping the NCACC’s website which should be launched next month. Operations staff is responsible for planning conferences and education programs. The NCACC hopes to host an in-person annual conference in August in New Hanover County.

The Policy Team focuses on lobbying with the NC General Assembly on counties’ interests, with the advocacy of County Commissioners from across the State. The Policy Team also includes Outreach Associates like Mr. Nicholson, and they bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from their years serving in various levels of local government. NCACC Outreach Associates serve as the eyes and ears of the Association and share information from counties to the Association and vice versa. They can help counties with a variety of studies, retreat facilitation, management of staff recruitment, and affiliate group assistance.

Other departments include Finance and Risk Management. Transylvania County Manager Jaime Laughter serves on the NCACC Risk Management Board of Trustees.

Mr. Nicholson disseminated copies of the NCACC County Map Book with information compiled by their research team that compares counties on metrics, such as tax levy, unemployment rates, education, etc. This concluded his presentation, and he offered his assistance to the Board and staff. He called for questions and comments from the Board.

Commissioner Guice commented on the current economic tier system and how it impacts State funding to counties. Transylvania County was negatively impacted by a recent update in the tier levels. Some of the metrics, like average income, are not reflective of the County’s current economic condition. Tier levels would be more accurate if based on average weekly wages, for example. Mr. Nicholson stated that the tier system was created for the right reason – to help smaller counties – but the State has not figured out the formula that works best and one that gives an accurate look at communities. He pointed out each year the NCACC’s goal has been to offer assistance on reworking the tier system metrics to make it a fairer system across the State, but it is a tough process to endure, especially knowing that not all counties will be pleased with the potential outcome.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Nicholson for his presentation and leadership for many years. The County depends a great deal on the NCACC for their services and information, and Commissioners were very appreciative of their support, guidance, and advocacy.

SEMI-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 were divided over two regular meetings, this being the second night of presentations.

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.

Sheriff's Office – Chief Deputy Eddie Gunter, on behalf of Sheriff David Mahoney

The Sheriff's Office is on track to meet their current budget. There have been no major incidents or break downs that would require extensive manpower for any length of time, like the manhunt in the most recent past. Some of items in the FY 2022 budget worth mentioning included:

- An increase in the request for patrol cars
- No longer housing out-of-county inmates and State Misdemeanant Confinement Program inmates in the Detention Center due to COVID, which caused a hit to their revenues
 - Hope to resume both programs in the future
- In 2018, Sheriff's Office was awarded NC Governor's Crime Commission Grant for \$24,500 but those funds were never disbursed due to legal litigation at the State level involving sanctuary cities
 - Learned last year that the Sheriff's Office would be awarded the funds which will come to the Board for approval in the very near future
- Sheriff's Office applied for second NC Governor's Crime Commission Grant that will be available to them, if approved, in October 2021 for \$24,900
 - Monies must be budgeted to show the anticipated income on the books, but there is no grant match requirement once the grant is awarded
 - For much needed equipment
- Investigative Division will be requesting a crime scene trailer to provide a secure, controlled area to process evidence and transport evidence appropriately; and a utility vehicle to access hard to access locations
- Three retirees in late 2020
 - Full time positions have been filled, but they continue to struggle to recruit and maintain staff despite implementation of compensation study
 - Not anticipated to request additional staff for the coming year

Prior to moving forward with departmental presentations with unelected leaders, the Manager reviewed the budget kickoff calendar, as follows:

<i>Regular Meeting Date</i>	<i>Budget Item</i>
<i>Monday, January 25, 2021</i>	<i>2nd quarter financial results 2nd quarter budget amendments</i>
<i>Monday, February 8, 2021</i>	<i>Workplan updates for Board night one</i>

Monday, February 22, 2021	<i>Workplan updates for Board night two</i>
Last Day of February	<i>Budget Requests Due from Departments and Offices, Nonprofit Applications Due</i>
March Commissioner Meetings	<i>Presentations from funded partner organizations</i>
March 1 to March 31st	<i>Meet with departments for internal review, committee reviews nonprofit applications</i>
Last of March/Early April	<i>Commissioners meet with Management for Deep Dive on Budget Requests and to provide feedback</i>
First week of April	<i>Budget team meeting finalize decisions and draft book Any last second revenue estimates/finalized</i>
Monday, April 26, 2021	<i>Present recommended budget and present Requested Fire Dept Budgets</i>
Monday, May 10, 2021	<i>Workshop 1</i>
Monday, May 13, 2021	<i>Workshop 2* Not a regular BOC meeting night</i>
Monday, May 24, 2021	<i>Public Hearing</i>
Monday, June 14, 2021	<i>Adoption</i>

EMS – Kim Bailey

Accomplishments

- Continued to work with Mission Health (HCA) on strategies and protocols to reduce out-of-county transports
- Worked with County Public Health and other local and state agencies to develop protocols, policies, and procedures to ensure that quality services were maintained and that appropriate safety measures were taken for staff, families, and citizens amid COVID-19
- Replaced six Stryker stretchers and six LP15 cardiac monitors; Power-LOAD system was installed in all ambulances
- Continued to safely offer Continuing Education courses that comply with National Standards adopted by NCOEMS amid COVID-19 restrictions
- Progressed in the development of a Transylvania County Peer Support Team
- Continued to work with County Administration on a policy to finalize the purchase of ballistic equipment
- Continued to assist Communications with updates, reviews, and training needs of the Emergency Dispatch (EMD) program

Trends

- Difficult to maintain average response time under nine minutes
- Out-of-county transports decreased due to assistance from Mission; collaboration is vital with ongoing I-26 construction
- Continues to see increased need for Stress Management/ PTSD and Suicide Prevention education and awareness and for mental health resources
- Continuing education and mandatory training needs continue to increase, resulting in more overtime
- Healthcare reform continues to impact EMS agencies; includes special reporting to Medicare in FY 22

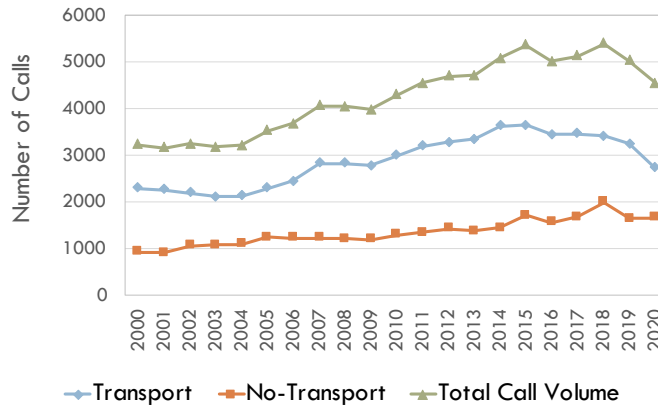
- EMS agencies across the country continue to see an increase in violent events and have been purchasing ballistic protection (helmets and vests) for staff; some of this increase can be attributed to the national opioid crisis and reduced access to mental health services

EMS

Trends

Overall call volume decreased 9.6% from 2019 (482 calls)

EMS Call Volume Over Time, 2000-2020

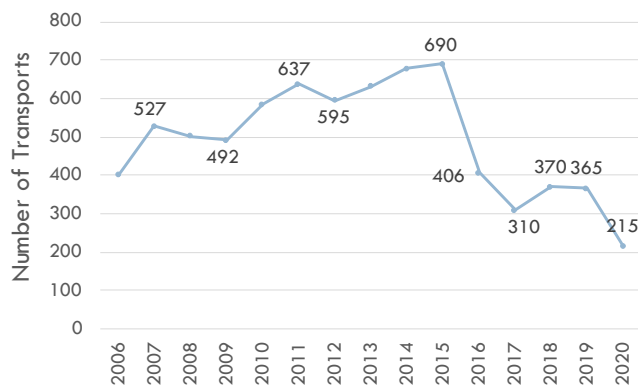


EMS

Trends

Out-of-county transports can tie up an ambulance for at least 3 hours.
In 2020, 27% of these transports occurred between the hours of 2100-0900 when TCEMS is limited to 2 full crew on-duty ambulances.

Total Out-of-County Transports, 2006 -2020



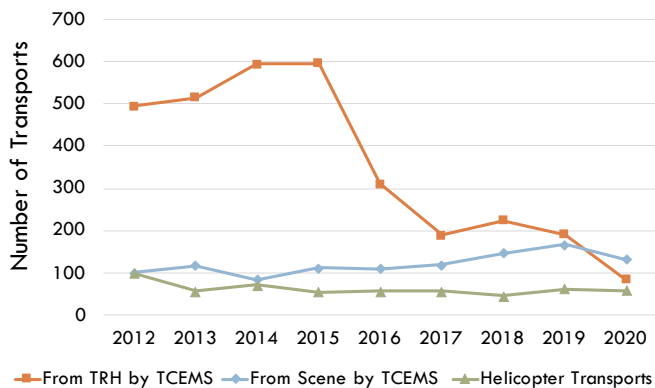
* Note: new protocol for requesting non-emergency transports started in September 2016

EMS

Trends

If a helicopter is unable to transport critical patients, ground transport is used.

Out-of-County Transports by Type, 2012-2020



* Note: new protocol for requesting non-emergency transports started in September 2016

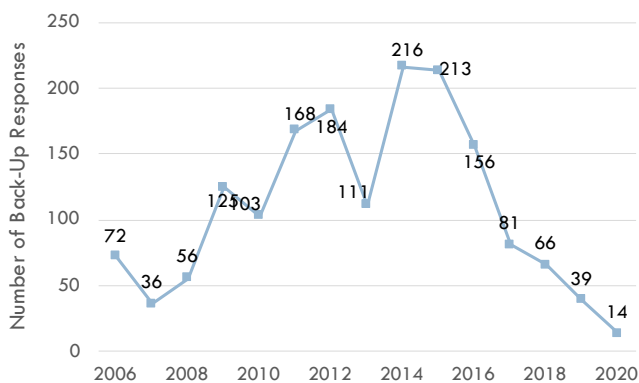
EMS

Trends

As primary back up ambulance, Transylvania County Rescue Squad responded an ambulance 14 times in 2020 with 2 transports.

The decrease in responses is due to the added response by the TCEMS Shift Supervisor.

Back-Up Responses by TCRS, 2006-2020



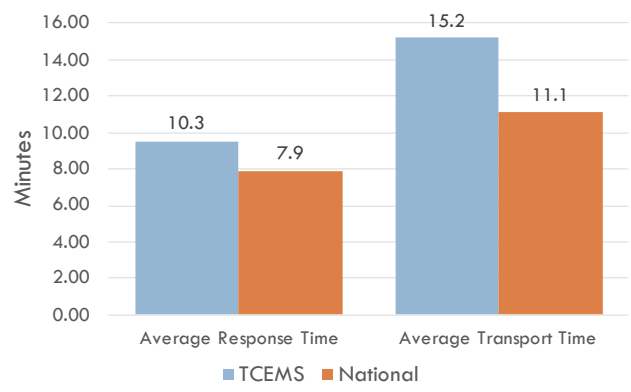
EMS

Trends

TCEMS response time is 2.4 minutes greater than national averages.

TCEMS transport time is 4.1 minutes greater.

Response and Transport Times, National Average vs. TCEMS, 2020

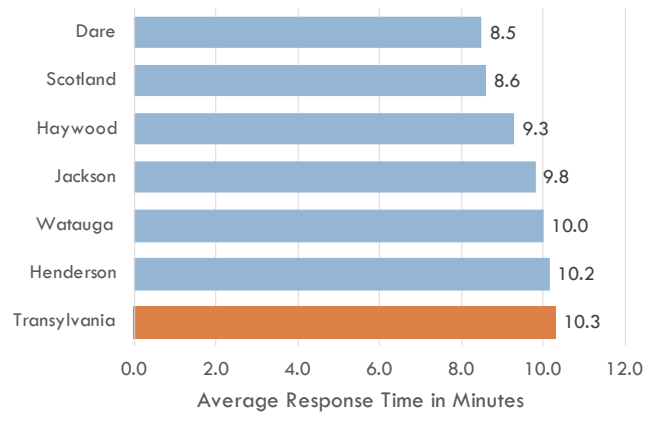


EMS

Trends

TCEMS ranks 7th out of 7 reporting peer counties in regard to response times.

Peer County EMS Response Times, 2020

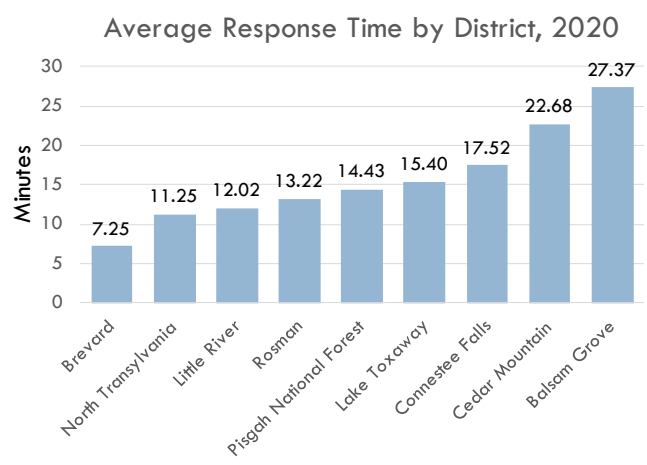


EMS

Trends

Average EMS response time was 10.3 minutes in 2020.

There is significant room for improvement in response times to outlying areas dependent upon the distribution of resources.

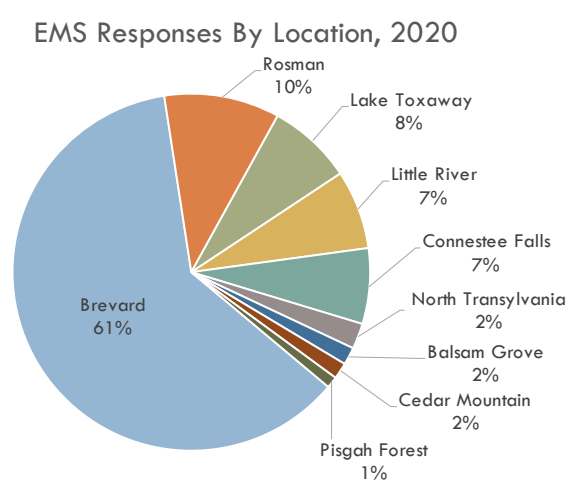


* EMS Resources located in Brevard and Quebec

EMS

Trends

We need to focus on improving response times to outlying areas, where call volume is increasing and current response times are much longer.



Goals

- Consider future base replacement/relocation to better distribute resources throughout the County to reduce response times in outlying areas
- Replace an ambulance
- Replace vital equipment

- Continue to work with Mission Health (HCA) to reduce out-of-county transports and identify appropriate strategies to maintain this trend
- Continue mass violence training
- Work with Finance to ensure Medicare reporting requirements during FY22 are met successfully
- Reduce average response time with guidance from County Commissioners, with focus on outlying areas
- Continue to assist Communications with updates, reviews, and the training needs of the Emergency Medical Dispatch program
- Continue to improve Continuing Education program and educational offerings
- Continue to address mental health resource needs of local responders

**Commissioner Guice was interested in the work being done on suicide prevention, stress management, PTSD, mental health resources, etc.

Library – Rishara Finsel

Accomplishments and Trends

- Continuous Library Service
 - March 18 – June 14: Building closed
 - Curbside checkouts
 - 25,968 items checked out curbside
 - Phone & email reference and technology assistance
 - Received 1,000 phone calls per week
 - Provided 167 hours of reference service
 - Virtual programs and digital resources
 - 14,211 uses of NC Digital Library, Hoopla and RB Digital; an increase of 25%-217% per service

Transylvania County Library

FY19/20	Legal Service Population	Visits Per Capita	Program Attendance Per 1000 Capita	Total Collection Use Per Capita	Children's Checkouts Per Capita	E-Circ Per Capita
Transylvania	35,034	4.1	403	9.95	3.2	1.4
Appalachian Regional (incl. Ashe)	155,104	1.8	220	3.3	1.2	0.3
Bladen	34,298	0.6	104	0.7	0.2	0.1
Buncombe	262,483	2.7	190	6.1	1.8	1.6
East Albemarle (incl. Dare)	114,758	2	202	3.2	1.1	0.3
Haywood	62,959	2.6	169	4.5	0.9	1.1
Henderson	117,312	3.3	214	7.3	1.6	1.3
Scotland	35,802	1.2	28	1.1	0.3	0.1
Fontana Region (incl. Jackson & Macon)	95,251	2.7	358	3.8	1	1
Sandhill Regional (incl. Montgomery)	238,427	1.1	218	1.2	0.4	0.1
Statewide Average	128,834	2.1	262	4.2	1.3	0.7
TCL Rank <i>(among County & Regional Public Libraries in NC)</i>		1	7	4	2	6

Transylvania County Library

July – Dec. 2020: Library OPEN

Library Visits	47,290
New Patrons	683
Virtual & To-Go Program Participants	2,091
Public Computer Use	3,109
Wireless Internet Sessions	8,386
Checkouts in the library	145,224
Online Collection Use	42,587
Total Collection Use	187,811



Transylvania County Library

Creative Virtual Services



Goals 2a,b



Transylvania County Library (2a,b)

NC Cardinal Consortium

- Launched May 21, 2020; began sharing materials July 14, 2020.
- Transylvania County Library cards work at any member library
- Can request that items from any member library be sent to TCL for checkout.
- 7.2 million items available among 42 library systems in NC
- 18,113 items exchanged with partner libraries so far_(1/31/21)



Goals 2a,b

Goals

- Resume in-person library programs and events as soon as safely possible
 - Expand hands on and interactive programming for all ages to support a wide variety of learning styles
 - Continue work with County and Community partners to develop and enrich outreach programs for all ages
 - Expand Hullabaloo early literacy program: offer every week
 - Programming paid for by Friends of the Library
- Explore and pursue policies and practices that eliminate barriers to library services
- Work with community partners to continue to promote and expand GetSet Transylvania, as well as other early literacy efforts
- Raise county-wide awareness about library events, resources, and services
- Provide opportunities and platforms for nonprofit organizations to share news and information about resources and services

DSS/Child Development – Kevin Marino

Accomplishments – DSS

- Medicaid was successful in meeting the monthly report card each month, with an average of 97% for the year
- Continued success in using NCFAST for CPS intake and assessments
- Stable workforce, with minimal turnover in all areas
- Aging & Adult Services Team has significant subject matter expertise, strong community relationships, resulting in meeting their required outcomes
- Child Welfare continues to have multiple interns from multiple universities, which contributes positively to overall social work outcomes and allows for hiring social workers trained in Transylvania County
- TCDSS/NCDHHS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Agreement: meeting goals in Child Support, Child Welfare, Adult Services, and Medicaid
- Increased to 11 licensed foster homes; implemented virtual Deciding Together options and plans to conduct virtual MAPP training.

- Finalized two adoptions this past fiscal year and could potentially finalize 14 adoptions in the upcoming fiscal year
- All Child Subsidy records were scanned, resulting in paperless system
- New attorney hired
- Transferred some of the most complex guardianship cases to contractor

Trends – DSS

- Slight increases in Economic Services caseload sizes: Medicaid cases increased by 224 cases and Food & Nutrition Services increased by 213 cases in 2020
- Adult guardianship cases continue to grow, with younger persons with behavioral health issues; currently TCDSS has 11 guardianship cases in which placement remains an issue
- Between March 2020 and December 4, 2020, 29 children have been ordered into TCDSS legal custody
 - Complicating factors due to families struggling with severe mental illness, addiction, and domestic violence
- Work First participation rates have declined, some due to pandemic, but also due to stronger economy pre-pandemic

Goals – DSS

- Explore the ability to transfer additional Adult Guardianship Cases to current contractor
- Enhance recruitment, with timelines and goals, of Foster Care Providers & Respite Foster Care Providers for both Foster Homes and Kinship providers
- Implement recommendations from Organizational Evaluation and Culture and Climate Assessment
- Continue to invest in professional growth of the leadership team, guided by agency mission, values, and public stewardships
- Ensure adequate supervisory oversight based on supervisor to worker ratios
- Enhance trauma-informed and evidence-based services for children and families to enhance safety, permanence, and well-being
- Hire fully-qualified director, who has strength in developing partner relationships, leading cross-program teams, building a resilient culture and climate, and working across County departments
- Improve communication through engagement of stakeholders, the workforce, and feedback loops related to achieving outcomes

Accomplishments – Child Development/New Adventure Learning Center

- Increased education of staff; many staff are advancing their education levels even when not required for licensing
- Continue to maintain five-star licensure
- New Director hired with the necessary credentials to maintain the five-star license
- Minimal inconvenience to parents during COVID incidences by only closing essential rooms and not the entire center
- Maintain full capacity

Trends – Child Development/New Adventure Learning Center

- Continue to maintain a five-star license
- Daycare is at full capacity and has an extensive waiting list
- The Center is open more often than other daycare centers
- Strong relationships with community partners, parents, and caregivers

Goals – Child Development/New Adventure Learning Center

- Enhance the communication system with parents/families across all classrooms regarding center events, closures, happenings, and child progress
- To research and possibly place cameras in all classrooms as a risk mitigation strategy
- Increase awareness of substitute and volunteer opportunities to recruit a larger pool to utilize during times of need
- Increase parent/family and community involvement
- Combine floater position currently shared with two part-time individuals into a full-time position for consistency
- Gather child assessments data to inform center-based goals and designs

Budgetary Needs & Strategies

Needs

Supervisory to Worker Ratio - Child Protective Services

- Child Protective Services (state mandate 1:5, TCDS currently at 1:8)
- Given the critical and high-risk nature of child welfare, ensuring Supervisory to Worker Ratios help to decrease risk of harm and child fatality

Supervisory to Worker Ratio- Medicaid

- Medicaid Transformation implementation
- Due to increased state mandates in REDA audits, the greater risk is associated with an error. The state does not currently have recommended ratio.

Training

- Implement and maintain current professional development plan that will result in higher quality staff performance and will decrease risk of errors in all mandated work

Strategies

- Existing funds/grant funds to support Family Centered Treatment, Circles of Security, and Safety Organization Practice
- Shifting work internally, to reallocate positions & funding to address needs
- Evaluating services for contract (guardianship, payee, childcare subsidy)
- By reinvesting currently budgeted funds, will add SWS and utilize other funds to address other needs
- Funding Needs:
 - Child Protective Services Supervisor \$12,500
 - Medicaid Supervisor \$4,500
 - Training \$5,000

**Commissioner Chapman wanted to know how many children were currently being served by the New Adventure Learning Center. He also wanted to know the status of the 14 potential adoptions and whether there was potential for others currently in foster care.

**Commissioner Guice was interested in learning more about the State mandates on Child Protective Services 1:5 ratio of social workers to children, noting the department's current ratio is 1:8. He wanted to know more about the intricacies of this complicated work. He was concerned about the County's potential liability and the impacts of the pandemic.

Elections – Jeff Storey

Accomplishments

- Successfully conducted four elections in 12 months
- 2020 General Election
 - First General election with paper ballots countywide in more than 20 years
 - Over 20,000 residents voted with no COVID-19 related clusters contributed to elections
 - Met State deadlines for absentee ballot mailings with over a 400% increase in volume
 - Safely conducted early voting in the old Kmart and Rosman Town Hall for over 13,000 voters
- Training for 150 election officials
 - Due to COVID concerns, the department lost over 50% of its normal workforce for the 2020 election period

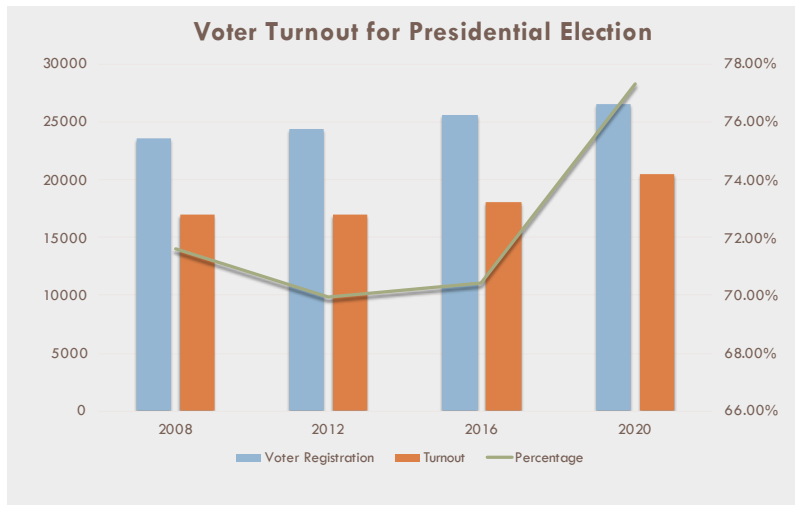
- Thanks to community for helping to provide adequate workers for the election process
- Online training for experienced poll workers
- Smaller in-person training classes for inexperienced poll workers
- Maintenance, IT and Housekeeping aided in setting up early voting sites

Trends

Transylvania County Election Center

Trends

Year	Registration	Voted	Turnout %
2008	23,619	16,909	71.59%
2012	24,302	16,994	69.93%
2016	25,540	17,988	70.43%
2020	26,513	20,498	77.31%

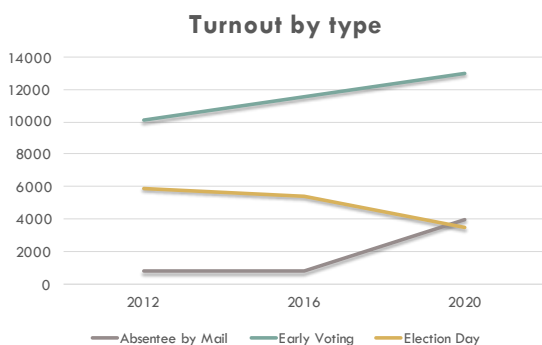


77.31%

Highest turnout in recent history

Transylvania County Election Center

Trends



Absentee by mail

2016: 754 2020: 3,965

↑ 426%

Early Voting

2016: 11,588 2020: 13,017

↑ 12%

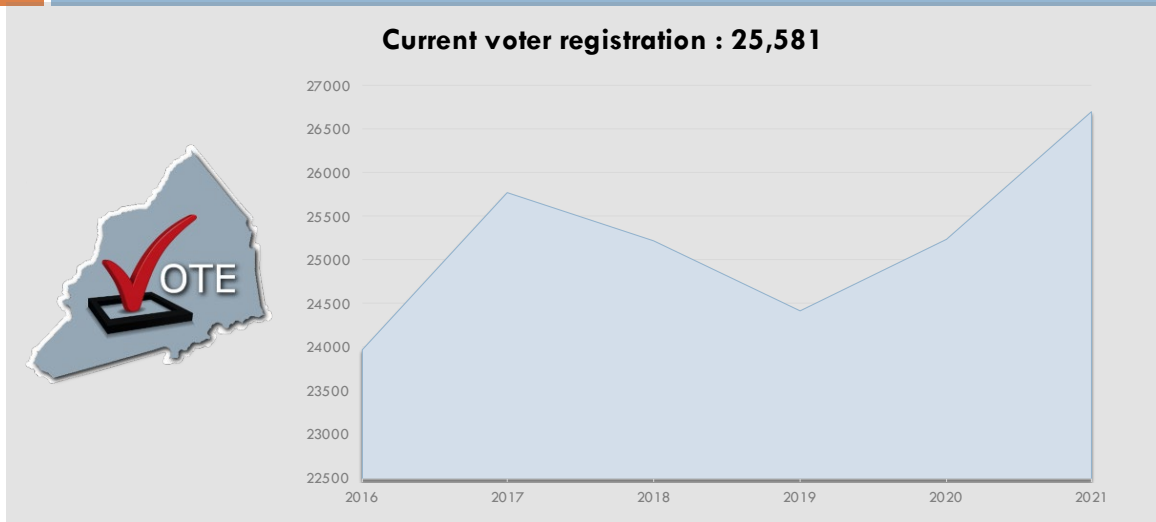
Election Day

2016: 5,417 2020: 3,516

↓ 35%

Transylvania County Election Center

Trends



Goals

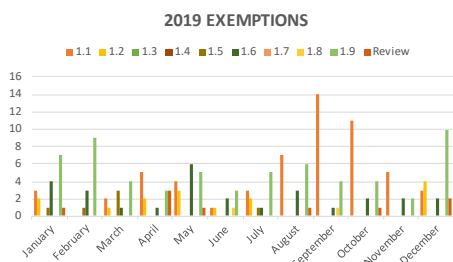
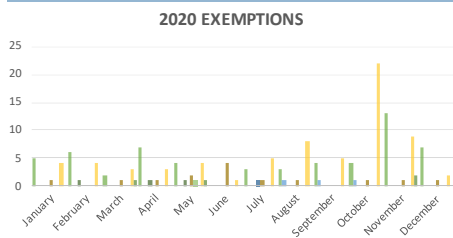
- Continued transparency and education
 - Public trust in the voting process
- Prepare for 2021 and 2022 elections
 - Absentee by mail
 - COVID-19 protocols
- Precinct location review
 - Polling sites, accessibility, driving distance

Planning/Transportation – Allen McNeill & April Alm

Accomplishments - Planning

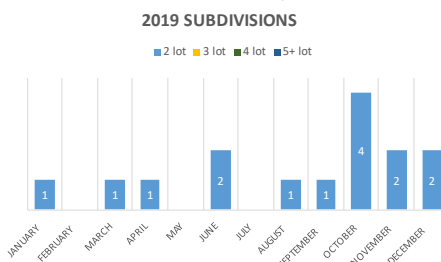
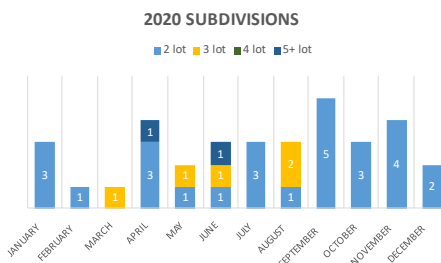
- Provided regular support and guidance to multiple citizen advisory councils and the public as they navigate the permitting process
- Provided assistance to the US Census Bureau and collaborated with other departments and organizations to promote participation in the 2020 US Census
- Researched, pursued, administered, and successfully closed out grants
 - Applied for and received the Dogwood Health Trust Census 2020 Outreach Grant and closed out the 2016 Golden Leaf Grant
- Completed Community Development and Transportation department merger to improve efficiency and consistency of planning operations
- Participated in and hosted a variety of training and professional development opportunities for staff, advisory board members, and the public

Planning & Community Development



Totals

- Subdivision Review
2019: 15
2020: 34
- Exemption Reviews
2019: 180
2020: 154

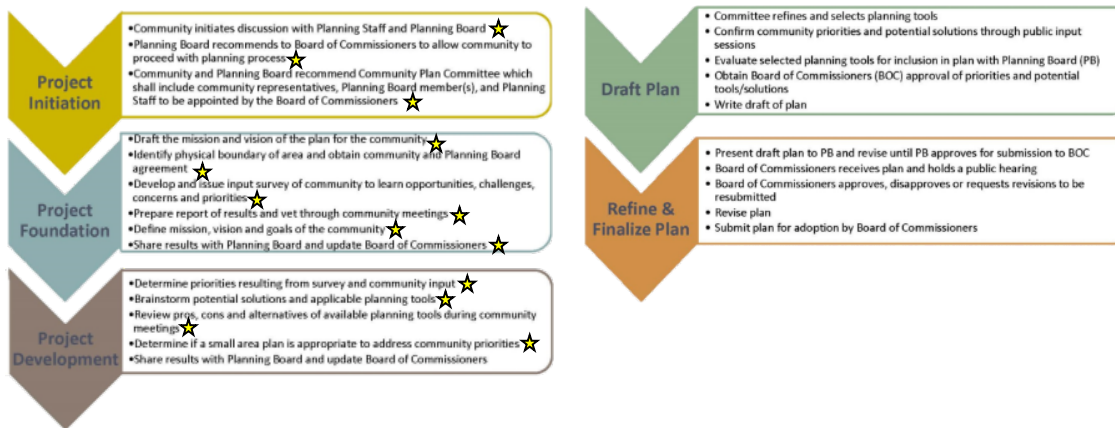


- Completed updates to planning-related ordinances for compliance with NCGS § 160D (6b), and included updates for procedural efficiency and existing errors
- Working to progress the Cedar Mountain Small Area Plan (areas marked below with a star represent items that have been completed by the CMSAP Committee; plan is nearing completion and staff will provide the Board with a draft plan in the coming months)

Planning & Community Development

Accomplishments Cont.

□ Cedar Mountain Small Area Planning Progress



Goals - Planning

- Continue to provide excellent and efficient service to citizen advisory councils and citizens
- Manage, enforce, and update ordinances
 - Investigate a Unified Development Ordinance

- Research new grant fund opportunities and projects the County could pursue
- Track 2025 Comprehensive Plan implementation
- Develop personnel through training and professional memberships
- Digitize office records and refine permit recording process
- Coordinate with Emergency Services and Tax Administration to refine GIS processes
- Complete the CMSAP and assess the Small Area Plan process for future

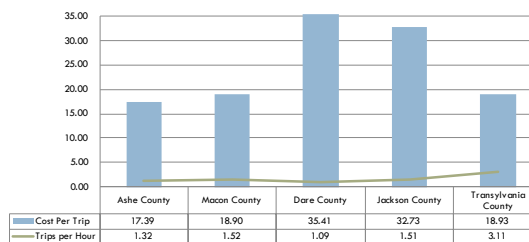
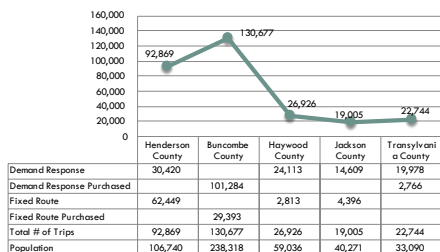
Accomplishments – Transportation

- FY 2022 5311 Administrative and Combined Capital Grants applications submitted and pending approval for two bike racks, a replacement camera system for all seven vans and propane conversion costs for two vans
- FY 2022 5310 Operating Grant application submitted and pending approval for subsidized privately operated transit for individuals who are 65+ or have a disability
- CARES Act Grant Funding (alternative funding opportunities):
 - Transit providers have seen a drastic decrease in ridership and revenue because of social distancing, while incurring unplanned costs for health and safety due to COVID-19
 - After applying for three distributions of CARES funding and filing claims for FY 20, \$335,490 remains for FY 21 for Administrative and Operating Expense
 - 100% federal funding in addition to 5311, 5310 and HCCBG grant funds for FY 21
- COVID-19 response
 - Experienced a significant decrease in trip requests due to COVID-19
 - Reduced full-time vans’ operation from five to one; have not reduced services or halted operations
 - Pandemic protocols were created regarding PPE, van sanitization and practicing social distancing when possible
 - Social Services and Transportation began delivering meals to Senior Nutrition clients and continues to do so as Senior Nutrition sites have not reopened
- Started running a new fixed route beginning January 4, 2021 with stops from Rosman to Brevard to Pisgah Forest, Monday-Friday, 6:30am-5pm
 - Ribbon cutting on Friday, February 26 on Morgan Street
- Collaborated with Red Razor Marketing to create new name and logo called TIM – Transylvania in Motion
 - New marketing campaign will begin in February/March to help introduce the new name and fixed route

Planning & Community Development Transportation

Trends

FY 2020



Regionally – Transylvania County Transportation’s Number Of Demand Response Trips For FY 2020 Is Comparable To Counties With Higher Populations. All agencies number of trips were affected by COVID19.

In comparison to Ashe, Macon, Dare and Jackson –Transylvania County Transportation has a comparable Demand Response cost per trip as well as exceeding in the number of trips per hour.

Goals

- Improve communication and technology to enhance transport; modernize department with new scheduling software which includes route optimization with automated scheduling, electronic passes, smart device data entry and real time vehicle tracking

Health – Elaine Russell

Goals

- Collaborated with multiple systems and partners for COVID-19 education, testing, case investigation, contact tracing, and vaccination
- Collaborated with community members to support Blue Zones Project
- Received new 18-month federal RCORP planning grant for C.A.R.E. Coalition work on opiate response
- Developed food/lodging/institutions modules in HealthSpace software

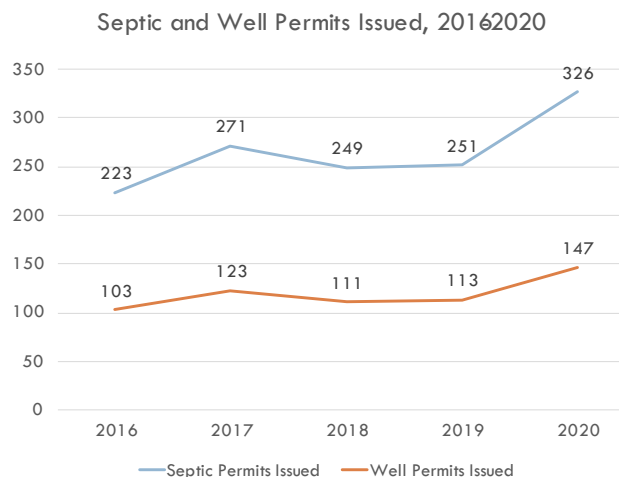
Trends

- Significant shift of trainings, meetings, some services to online model
- WIC transitioned to predominantly online services, now serving 116% of assigned caseload
- Continued increase in communicable diseases
- Environmental health met projected revenue mid-year for well/septic

Transylvania Public Health

The number of on-site wastewater (septic) permits and well permits issued by TPH in 2020 both increased by around 30% compared to 2019.

Similar trends are being seen in most counties statewide.



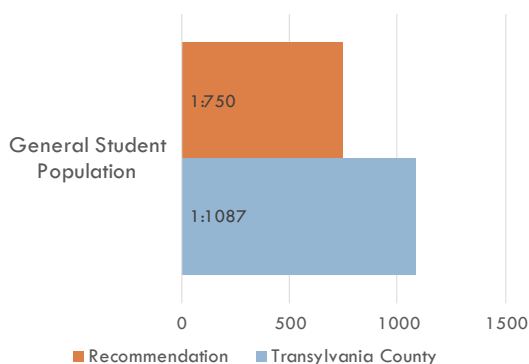
Transylvania Public Health

Transylvania County school nurses are serving **3262** students in the 2020-2021 school year.

Duties were redistributed among the 3 school nurses to include services to preschoolers and exceptional children within assigned schools.

The nurse to student ratio has improved from 1:1480 to 1:1087 but still remains higher than the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) recommendations.

School Nursing Ratios, Transylvania vs. Recommendation

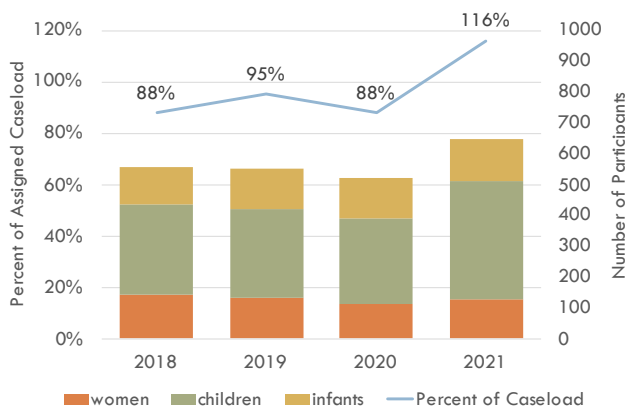


Transylvania Public Health

Transylvania County's WIC caseload percentage has been trending upward in 2020 and currently exceeds the assigned caseload.

WIC contributed \$345,789 to the local economy in 2020, compared to \$335,032 in 2019.

Transylvania County WIC Caseload January of each year, 2018-2020



Goals

- Promote public health collaborations with Blue Zone Project, GetSet, other regional resources
- Continue to focus on efficiencies and improvements for current programs and projects
- Continue development of COVID-19 response framework for this ever-evolving situation
- Promote child health through expansion of school nursing staff through advocacy at local and State level

**Commissioner Guice was very concerned about the nurse to student ratio, despite improvements made in this area. He wanted further discussion on this issue.

Finance

Finance Activity Trends

	FY17	FY18	FY 19	FY 20	▲ %
General Ledger Entries	1,422	1,219	1,328	1,674	6.91%
AP Checks Written	7,658	7,426	7,129	6,326	-6.10%
Annual Payment Total	36,934,638	39,467,024	42,932,284	40,539,337	3.35%
Payroll Direct Deposits	11,208	11,057	11,568	11,014	-0.50%
Purchase Orders Issued	1,833	1,000	1,208	1,446	-1.65%
EMS Department Revenues*	1,181,003	1,157,083	1,365,881	1,124,302	-0.56%
Total Grants (All Funds)	6,688,745	6,827,377	7,115,070	7,564,725	4.20%
Largest Grant Share of Total		70%	65%	61%	-6.65%
Investment Returns	130,775	406,690	525,775	522,412	79.88%
FTE	6	6	6	6	

Trends

- General ledger entries
 - Necessary correction or manual transaction
 - All tax bills, for instance
- Accounts Payable
 - Gradually trended upward
- Payroll Direct Deposits
 - Stable
- Purchase Orders
 - Must comply with purchasing policies
 - Ensuring fair deal for the County
- EMS revenues
 - Stable
 - Outsourced to generate additional revenue
- Total grants
 - Restricted revenue from outside sources
 - Trended upward at about 4% annually
 - Larger grants are declining; County receiving more smaller grants
 - Grant compliance requires more work by Finance and adds to items that must be audited, which drives up auditing costs
 - In the future, the County should be more strategic in how it accepts funds from other agencies

Accomplishments

- FY 21 is wrapping up a three-year project to completely transition County's management system:
 - Financials live January 2020
 - Human Resources and Payroll live January 2021
 - Working with Maintenance to deploy an Asset Management system
 - Received 2019 CAFR award, on track to receive 2020 CAFR award from GFOA

Goals

- Moving for July 2021 issuance of General obligation bonds
 - \$68,000,000 bond issuance and accounting (\$2,302,050 expended to date)
 - Arbitrage tracking, MSRB disclosures

- New GASB standards
 - Leases, disclose assets the County is leasing from and to other entities
 - Fiduciary Standards
 - Pension Plans
- FY 2022 Government Finance Officer's Budget Award Program
- FY 2021 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report developed in-house to achieve a significant cost savings; currently, County pays auditors for this service

Human Resources – Sheila Cozart

Accomplishments

- COVID navigation was a huge investment of time in 2020
 - Commissioners approved special COVID Sick Leave provision; through the end of the year 111 employees had used some portion and 17 have used all available COVID sick leave
- Compensation Study
 - Implemented in September 2019, the Compensation Study has aided in the successful recruitment of fully qualified, experienced applicants in difficult to fill positions in Law Enforcement, Social Services, Public Health and Solid Waste.
 - The study has put Transylvania County in a more competitive position amongst our competitors
- Applicant Tracking Software
 - Transitioned to NeoGov on-line application and applicant tracking software, which helps attract and manage applicants; and assists with compliance and electronic recordkeeping
 - Career portal for posting of all internal and external position vacancies on the county website
 - Eliminated paper applications to maintain or shuffle
 - NCWorks has partnered to assist candidates who do not have access to technology or skills to provide access to a computer, email, etc.
 - Able to provide electronic communications with candidates through NeoGov for information such as current application status, follow-up questions, obtaining electronic references, setting up interview times, electronic offer letters, etc.
 - Generates reports for EEO purposes and maintains all data within the system
 - Potential candidates can create a profile and interest card in NeoGov and they are notified of the vacancies when they occur
 - Notable increase in the total number and the number of qualified applicants for positions
 - 719 total applicants for 69 positions in 17 divisions.
- Recruitment assistance and new employee processing
- Connect Transylvania
 - Pilot program in 2019/20
 - Employee Program designed to Lead.Empower.Grow
 - Similar to Vision/ Employees Academy
 - Many presentations by Zoom this year due to Covid challenges
- Coordination and promotion of employee activities
 - Wellness Committee has continued to provide wellness information through Facebook and monthly flyers, targeting depression, stress and hydration and wearing masks and using hand sanitizers with EWE logo (through use of grant funds)
 - COVID-friendly activities each day for the 10 days leading up to Christmas Week - Holly Jolly Days of Christmas
- Worked diligently with the Finance, Human Resources and Tyler Technology staff to develop the Munis payroll infrastructure; successful in generating the first payroll in the new system on January 8

- Hired 69 workers for elections purposes; total of 618 individuals working for Transylvania County in some capacity in 2020

Administration – Jaime Laughter

Accomplishments/Trends

- Collaboration
 - MyFutureNC
 - Opioid Response Team and Opioid Litigation
 - WestNGN Broadband with Land of Sky
 - GetSet Early Childhood Initiative
 - Workforce/affordable housing
 - Pandemic response
 - Essential nature of the work of counties
- Innovation
 - Technology implementation to improve efficiency and effectiveness
 - Munis upgrade
 - Timekeeping/payroll this year
 - County is behind in implementing technology
 - Technology helps to eliminate human error and aids in being more efficient with the ability to share information with citizens
 - Understanding County services and what our legal and fiscal boundaries are
 - Evaluating how to reach citizens
 - Using data to better inform decisions for Board of Commissioners
 - Critical for COVID-19 response
- Adaption
 - Benchmarking against other counties (NCACC Map Book, State resources, census)
 - Keeping up to speed on best practices and understanding impacts of State policy changes, i.e., Tier System
 - Pandemic required nimble decision-making
 - Repurpose skill sets within the organization for non-essential functions and make them essential for response purposes
 - Process information to gauge impacts and mitigate/change strategy in real time and communicate information to the community

Goals

- GetSet
 - Toolkits, Comfy Cozy Spaces, possible regional expansion
- Capital planning continuing
- NCACC Fellowship Continuance
 - Financial process mapping and standard operating procedures
 - HR process mapping and SOPs
- Employee performance system
- Continue to implement technology
- Sewer line built for Gaia/Rosman
- Water/sewer discussions across County
- Bond issuance for school construction

The Manager wrapped up the budget kickoff presentations by saying that by working together we are going to successfully serve Transylvania County and secure our future for decades to come. She and staff look forward to sharing the upcoming budget requests and moving toward a recommended budget for FY 2022 for presentation in April.

Chairman Chappell thanked all staff for their presentations. He asked that Commissioners submit to the Manager any additional questions they may have.

NEW BUSINESS

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Public Health Director Elaine Russell updated the Board of Commissioners and public on the status of the COVID-19 vaccine program. This is a summary of her presentation:

COVID-19 Vaccine Update (as of this date)

- 11.2% (3,857) of County's population, 1st dose vaccinated (all NC enrolled provider data)
- 1st dose percent of population vaccinated
 - 18-24, 0.82% (medical providers in the 1A priority category)
 - 25-49, 4.81%
 - 50-64, 4.58%
 - 65-74, 28.13%
 - 75+, 29.19%
- 5.4% (1,852) of County's population, 2nd dose vaccinated (all NC enrolled provider data)
- 2nd dose percent of population vaccinated
 - 18-24, 0.43%
 - 25-49, 3.67%
 - 50-64, 3.14%
 - 65-74, 10.19%
 - 75+, 14.18%
- WNC predominately receiving Moderna vaccine
 - 28-day lag between 1st and 2nd dose
- Vaccine advocacy has resulted in action, thanks to the Board of Commissioners
- Baseline increased to 300
- Allocation received for 65+ population now a new category on State allocation chart; received 200 doses
- Allocation of 200 received for event that will be directed toward 65+ population
- As of this week, Transylvania Public Health has received 3,200 first doses (includes a 500 Mission transfer) and 1,500 second doses (includes a 500 Mission transfer)
- Nationwide weather impact on vaccine delivery
 - Advised by NCDHHS Friday of statewide delayed delivery for this week, adjusted plans locally
- Fortunate to receive last week's allocation of 500 doses and this week's allocation of 700 doses in a single shipment today
- Agency will move forward with administering all vaccine received on Thursday, February 25 and Friday, February 26
 - Appointments will be released at 11am Tuesday, February 23

Chairman Chappell asked Ms. Russell to explain when a citizen goes elsewhere to get their initial dose what happens with the 2nd dose. Ms. Russell informed that when a person gets a vaccine with an enrolled provider, all their information is entered into a system called CVMS which automatically queues up their 2nd dose to that agency in that county in which the 1st dose was given. Therefore, it is critical that people return to the same site in which they received their 1st dose for the 2nd dose. The Health Department has been advised that at some point there may be transfer capacity within the system, but that does not exist at this time.

Chairman Chappell commended staff for being so adaptable in these ever-changing times. Ms. Russell credited the leadership and support the Health Department receives from the Board, Manager and County departments.

NAMING OF ECUSTA ROAD CONNECTOR

The Board of Commissioners has the option of naming the Ecusta Road Connector project before it is open to the public. The NC Department of Transportation will need the name to order signage. At the February 8, 2021 Board of Commissioners' meeting, County Manager Laughter announced that the public could submit name suggestions. Her announcement was followed up with a social media posting and a message to the Clerk to the Board's Sunshine List to solicit ideas with a deadline for submittal of February 17.

The following suggestions were submitted by the deadline for consideration. The decision resides with the Board of Commissioners. They may select a name from the list or decide on something entirely different. They could also narrow down a list for a community survey. The Manager asked the Board to consider the name suggestions for the Ecusta Road Connector and determine next steps.

Baldwin Parkway	Em-Dash	Olin Road
Ben's Bypass	Fay Walker Way	Paper Path
Black Bear Road	Flax Road	Papermaker Drive
Brevard Boulevard	Glatfelter Road	Pisgah Pass
Brevard Byway	Harry Straus Blvd	Pisgah Path
Brook Trout Byway	Harry Straus Road	Rhododendron Row
Constitution Way	Harstraus Road	River Cut
Davidson Bridge Road	Industry Trail	River Rotary
Davidson Direct	Looking Glass Lane	Roundabout Way
Davidson Drive	Memorial Boulevard	Straus Parkway
Davidson River Village Road	Mill Bypass	Straus Way
Dogwood Lane	Mill Circle	Transylvania Turnpike
Echo Road	Mill Pass	Uncle Harry's Loop
Ecusta Connector	Mill Path	Veteran's Link
Ecusta Corner Road	Old Ecusta Mill Road	Waterfall Way
Ecusta Pike	Olin Bypass	
Ecusta Road Connector	Olin Parkway	

Commissioners discussed briefly and offered the following suggestions:

- Select list of favorites to vote on at an upcoming meeting through a nomination process similar to the process the Board uses for making appointments
- Cautioned consideration of naming after a person because no background checks being conducted on individuals and did not want there to be an issue to arise in the future
- Do not use the Ecusta in the name so it is not confused with the currently named Ecusta Road
- Determine a name the community will support as a vision for the future rather than focusing on history
- Commissioners to consider through nomination process at 2nd meeting in March

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Board of Education to give a bond update to Commissioners on March 8 to include information from the architect
- Staff is working on scheduling a capital workshop including the scenario modeling provided by Tryon and Advisors. Once audit figures are finalized, they can be uploaded into the modeling software for the workshop purposes.
- NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) has issued a rule effective January 1 of this year that prohibits commercial or industrial businesses from utilizing solid waste collection centers for disposal of their solid waste. Any business-generated waste material, including that from nonprofits, must be transported to a permitted solid waste facility and deposited directly in the cell. Convenience centers will only be allowed to accept residential trash. Transylvania County operates a permitted Sub-Title D Landfill at 500 Howell Road that can manage this material, but the convenience sites, including the one at the landfill, will not be able to allow business waste. Businesses can still take sorted recycling to convenience sites. Letters will be mailed to businesses and signage will be posted at the various sites. The new law will necessitate changing traffic flow at the main landfill site.
- Emergency Management met with NCDOT regarding the flooding concerns on Hart Road and Cascade Lake Road at Merrill Lane that impacts the ability to provide emergency services in the area. The gravel section of Cascade Lake Road is now repaired, but NCDOT is looking at a possible project to address the access issues for emergencies that are presented during floods. NCDOT also repaired a culvert under Cascade Lake Road at Merrill Lane that should help the situation. Project costs should be determined this spring.
- Thank you to GetSet Transylvania Partner, Smart Start of Transylvania County for the new Comfy Cozy Space in the Community Services Building lobby with a grant funded by St. Phillips Episcopal Church Foundation. It will welcome our smallest and youngest citizens into the building. The lobby is limited currently due to COVID, but as we begin to open up more, it will be a welcoming space for children and offer resources for both children and parents. This is part of the GetSet Initiative's partnership with Sesame Street.
- In response to Commissioner Guice's concerns about school nurses – Two years ago, the State found that Transylvania County was being shorted SNFI funds which are State funds that provide partial funding for school nurses. Adding one school nurse would better the nurse to student ratio and bring it in line with the national average. She encouraged the Board to advocate on behalf of the County in their contacts with State representatives and request that the State honor the funds the County is eligible to receive.

Commissioner Guice felt it would be appropriate for the Chairman to draft a letter to our State representatives regarding the school nurse position and to remind them that Transylvania County is owed these funds for this purpose.

Commissioner Guice also commented on the NCDOT project to mitigate flooding issues around Cascade Lake Road. He was concerned about how to respond to those residents who are concerned about emergency situations occurring during flooding. The Manager replied that she responds to those citizens (she is also a resident of this part of the County and experiences flooding issues) that there is the ability to use Cascade Lake Road when the gravel road is open for emergency services, although it extends response times. The other option is to cut through Eagles Nest. They have always been very generous with opening their gates to allow people through. If either of those options are closed, it presents a very serious situation. For this reason, staff brought this issue forward to the NCDOT and they are working to design a solution with cost estimates. The Manager emphasized that emergency services staff will find a way to reach citizens but that is not to say there are not concerns. For that reason, it is important for the County to continue to address this issue.

Commissioner Guice asked a question about the bond update scheduled for the March 8 meeting. He was concerned about the scope of work that was initially presented by the Board of Education and whether it

has changed since. He was interested in getting clarification on that issue. He noted that he has received calls from staff within the School System who have expressed concerns about the same issue.

Commissioner Guice inquired further about the law changes by NCDEQ on solid waste disposal. He asked if this change resulted from new legislation or rules that were implemented by that State department. The Manager's understanding was the change came about from a slew of regulations at the State level. She expects there to be continued regulations that may make it more challenging to operate convenience sites throughout the County. This is a unique service and one that has been a great benefit to citizens, but as more and more regulations are imposed around waste collection, that may be something that could be reconsidered in the future. Commissioner Guice questioned the timing of these regulations during a pandemic when businesses have been struggling to keep their doors open and adds another layer of undue burden on the business community. In addition, Commissioners and citizens continue to express their disdain with trash along our highways and he expects these and further regulations to exacerbate the issue.

Regarding the update from the Board of Education in March, Chairman Chappell noted that communication during the School Bond Construction Team meetings indicated they intend to present an update on the overall project, timeframe, and scope of work. If Commissioners have specific questions, they should submit those to staff as soon as possible so they can be sent to school staff ahead of the meeting for responses.

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

Rick Billini: Mr. Billini is a resident of Little River and understands the flooding issues the community faces regularly. He shared there are two subdivisions that can provide access and egress during flooding – Pisgah Forest Farms and The Reserve. He commented that Eagles Nest has been very generous by opening their gates to allow access around the flooding. Citizens in the area often make donations to them for road maintenance. Mr. Billini also informed there are firemen that live in the area who sometimes bring a truck home to serve as first response in case of an emergency. He wanted the County and citizens to be aware of these options during emergencies.

Kimsey Jackson: Mr. Jackson is a member of the Board of Education. He commented on the naming of the Ecusta Road Connector Project. He recalled that Harry Straus came to Transylvania County in the 1930's and decided to build the Ecusta plant which changed this County forever. To his knowledge, there has never been a formal recognition of Mr. Straus and thus he urged the Board to do so with the naming of this road and to erect a sign in his honor.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman stated he received a letter from the editor of *The Transylvania Times* in which he informed that the newspaper would not accept any opinion letters from Commissioner Chapman. He was very frustrated by this and he noted that he has received many calls and emails regarding the Board's recent action to adopt a resolution affirming their intention to uphold the Constitution. Because of the editor's refusal to print his letters, he has not been able to respond to the calls and emails in a public way. For that reason, he decided to respond in an open meeting. He felt that he and the Board appropriately and strongly condemned the January Capital riots and he stood behind his comments about the "hate America left" anarchists – not political parties or members of political parties – and other groups that have been responsible for responsible for damaging businesses and government buildings, destroying the livelihood of thousands of citizens, and putting people's lives in danger. These groups hate law enforcement and want them defunded. Commissioner Chapman was concerned there were not enough

people condemning these actions. He reaffirmed his support for law enforcement agencies and officers. He shared that Commissioners received calls and emails attacking them for supporting a resolution in support of the Constitution which reaffirmed the oath of office he took as an elected official, and therefore he will not apologize for supporting the resolution. He was deeply concerned about the future of our freedom and liberties, especially if citizens do not stand up against those anarchists and other groups that aim to destroy everything this nation has fought for. He vowed to always stand for what is right.

Chairman Chappell reported there are several opportunities for citizens to serve on a board or committee and he encouraged citizens to apply for one of their interest. Boards and committees serve to advise the Board on a variety of issues. There is information on the County website about each or citizens may contact the Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Chappell moved to enter into closed session per North Carolina General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease and per North Carolina General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (3) To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged, following a five-minute recess, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

CLOSED SESSION

Per North Carolina General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, closed session was entered into at 8:45 p.m. Present were Chairman Chappell, Commissioners Chapman, Dalton and Guice, County Manager Jaime Laughter, Assistant County Manager David McNeill, County Attorneys Natalia Isenberg and Julie Hooten, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

The Manager updated the Board on property negotiation efforts, and she was directed on how to proceed.

Per North Carolina General Statute § 143-318.11 (a) (3) To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged, the second closed session was entered. Present were Chairman Chappell, Commissioners Chapman, Dalton and Guice, County Manager Jaime Laughter, Human Resources Director Sheila Cozart, County Attorneys Natalia Isenberg and Julie Hooten, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

The Board consulted with the County Attorney on a privileged matter.

Chairman Chappell moved to leave closed session, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

OPEN SESSION

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

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Chairman Chappell moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 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