

**MINUTES**  
**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**NOVEMBER 13, 2023 – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in a regular meeting on Monday, November 13, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Emmett Casciato, Larry Chapman, Chairman Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman Jake Dalton, and Teresa McCall. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Bill Bulfer, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Jon Rich

There were approximately 30 people in the audience.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jason Chappell presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**WELCOME**

Chairman Chappell welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Commissioners and staff in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

*These comments represent the opinion or point of view of the speaker.*

Maureen Keate: Ms. Keate directed her comments at the adults and parents who used the high school students to pull a stunt at the last Board of Commissioners' meeting. She was appalled and dismayed at the students' behavior. Not only were they disrespectful to the Board, but they were misinformed. Ms. Keate said for them to accuse the Board of not wanting to spend money on school building repairs is false. She pointed out the Board has approved several million dollars in needs as requested by the Board of Education. These requests have been made in a public setting. In addition, the Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education are jointly working on a comprehensive and fiscally responsible plan to address the longer-term needs and are awaiting a report that will identify those needs and estimate the costs. Ms. Keate stated that these students missed the point and were used by adults with an axe to grind against the Board of Commissioners.

**AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

Staff requested to change the closed session statute to N.C.G.S. § 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.

**Commissioner Dalton moved to approve the revised agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, and unanimously approved.**

## CONSENT AGENDA

**Commissioner McCall moved to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Casciato, and unanimously approved.**

The following items were approved:

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on October 10, 2022, and following met in a closed session in which the minutes were sealed, and in a regular meeting on Monday, October 23, 2023. The Board of Commissioners approved the minutes as submitted.

### UNSEALING OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners seals closed session minutes until such time that opening the minutes does not frustrate the purpose of the closed session. After review, staff proposed the Board of Commissioners unseal several sets of closed session minutes, thus making them available for public inspection. The Board of Commissioners approved unsealing the following closed session minutes:

1. December 14, 2015, potential property acquisition
2. January 11, 2016, potential property acquisition
3. July 11, 2016, potential economic development project
4. March 28, 2016, potential economic development projects
5. January 9, 2018, potential economic development projects
6. April 23, 2018, potential economic development project
7. September 11, 2018, potential economic development project
8. July 22, 2019, potential property acquisition
9. September 9, 2019, potential property acquisition
10. October 14, 2019, potential property acquisition
11. November 25, 2019, potential property acquisition
12. January 13, 2020, potential property acquisition
13. January 13, 2020, property negotiation
14. March 9, 2020, potential property acquisition
15. April 15, 2020, property negotiation
16. April 27, 2020, potential property acquisition
17. September 14, 2020, potential property acquisition
18. September 14, 2020, potential property acquisition
19. September 14, 2020, property negotiation
20. November 9, 2020, potential economic development project
21. November 9, 2020, potential property acquisition
22. November 23, 2020, potential property acquisition
23. February 8, 2021, potential property acquisition
24. February 22, 2021, potential property acquisition
25. May 24, 2021, property negotiation
26. June 14, 2021, potential economic development project
27. June 14, 2021, potential economic development project
28. September 13, 2021, property negotiation
29. November 8, 2021, property negotiation
30. December 13, 2021, potential economic development project
31. February 28, 2022, potential economic development project
32. July 25, 2022, potential property acquisition
33. October 10, 2022, potential economic development project

#### 34. October 9, 2023, potential economic development project

##### DISCOVERY, RELEASE, AND MONTHLY SETTLEMENT - OCTOBER 2023

Per N.C.G.S. § 105-312 (b), the Tax Administrator must 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 N.C.G.S. § 105-381 (b), the Tax Administrator must provide a monthly report to the Board of Commissioners of the actions taken by the Tax Administrator on requests for release or refund, which shall be recorded in the minutes. For October 2023, tax dollars totaled \$233.59, and refunds amounted to 9,201.77. The Board of Commissioners approved the October 2023 Discovery, Release, and Monthly Settlement as submitted.

##### REQUEST TO CHANGE THE JOB TITLES OF TWO POSITIONS WITHIN THE DETENTION CENTER

Sheriff Chuck Owenby requested to change the classification title of two positions in the jail to allow flexibility in assigned duties under his authority. The two current position titles and proposed title changes are PREA Sergeant to Jail Sargeant GR 117 and Corporal to Deputy Sheriff GR 113. PREA responsibilities will still be assigned to staff with a designated PREA coordinator, but not reflected in the job classification title. PREA stands for Prison Rape Elimination Act and will be a job function assigned by the Sheriff. There is no budgetary impact to this request. The Board of Commissioners approved the modification of job titles as requested by Sheriff Chuck Owenby.

##### TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY CONTRACT WITH MADDEN MEDIA FOR WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

Per a memo from Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority Executive Director Clark Lovelace, the TCTDA is long overdue for an updated website. Destination websites typically last for three to five years. The current TCTDA website is six years old. TCTDA created a plan for securing a website vendor that provided the best return on investment in producing a vibrant, modern, user-friendly website that included all their specific needs.

The TCTDA staff worked with the County Finance and Information Technology departments to seek requests for proposals. They received six proposals. The TCTDA's Marketing Committee provided input and guidance toward the development of a new website, reviewed proposals, and selected the preferred vendor. The committee narrowed down the proposals to two and then chose the less expensive option, Madden Media, which also had the most experience with destination websites.

The cost of the contract was included in the TCTDA marketing plan. The development cost of the website is \$83,450. TCTDA staff have negotiated it down to \$75,135. It should be noted that destination websites are particularly costly because they include hundreds of pages of content, as well as tools that allow for entering calendar events, accommodations specials, and more. Additionally, the cost of website development has increased dramatically over the last five years because the capabilities of websites have increased and due to other factors like inflation and demand. The cost of the website, which is one of the primary ways to connect with visitors and potential visitors, is a very reasonable investment.

The County Attorney has reviewed the contract and made any necessary adjustments. The contract was included in the Board's agenda packet for review. County Commissioner review of TCTDA contracts of \$50,000 or more is required per Resolution #35-2021. The Board of Commissioners acknowledged their review and approval as required.

##### RURAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FUNDING

The Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) is a state-funded public transportation program administered by the North Carolina Department of Transportation Integrated Mobility Division (IMD). ROAP consolidates the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (EDTAP), the

Employment Transportation Program (EMPL), and the Rural General Public (RGP) Transportation Program into a single application package. County governments or regional public transportation authorities created pursuant to Article 25 or Article 26 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes (upon written agreement with municipalities or counties served) are the only eligible applicants for ROAP funds. The programs included in the Rural Operating Assistance Program application are:

- The Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance (EDTAP) Program provides funds for the transportation of the state's elderly and disabled citizens.
- The Employment Transportation Assistance Program (EMPL) funds can be used for trips for individuals who have transitioned off the Work First Program within the last 12 months; for participants in Workforce Development Programs; and/or for transportation for the disadvantaged public.
- The Rural General Public (RGP) Program funds are intended to provide transportation services for individuals from the county who do not have a human service agency or organization that will pay for the transportation service.

The Board of Commissioners granted permission for Transylvania County Transportation to apply for FY 2024 Rural Operating Assistance Program funding and provide the necessary assurances and the required local match.

## APPOINTMENTS

### TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The terms of Layton Parker (Accommodations Owner/Operator) and Ali Lien expire at the end of the year. The Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority reviewed the applications and recommended the appointment of Dionne Hodgson to the Accommodations Owner/Operator board position and Nory LeBrun to the Member-at-Large board position effective January 1, 2024.

**Commissioner Chapman moved to appoint Dionne Hodgson (Accommodations Owner/Operator) and Nory LeBrun (Member-at-Large) effective January 1, 2024, seconded by Commissioner Dalton, and unanimously approved.**

### JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

The positions on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council are statutorily defined. The position for a student/person under the age of 18 has been vacant for some time. The School System has historically nominated a student to serve in that role. Transylvania County Schools Superintendent Dr. Lisa Fletcher recommended the appointment of Lexi Powell from Rosman High School to fill this position.

**Commissioner McCall moved to appoint Lexi Powell to fill the student/person under the age of 18 to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, seconded by Commissioner Casciato and unanimously approved.**

## NEW BUSINESS

### FY 2024 1ST QUARTER BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Budget and Management Analyst Jennifer Wright presented this item to the Board. Based on policies approved by the Board of Commissioners through the annual budget ordinance and the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, the Board of Commissioners must approve certain amendments to the budget ordinance. Primarily, these are the types of budget amendments that by their nature require review/approval by the governing board:

1. Recognition of new revenues and appropriations for related expenditures.

2. Appropriations of fund balance (whether assigned, committed, or restricted).
3. Transfers from one fund to another fund, if permitted statute by statute.
4. Establishment of new special revenue funds, capital project funds, or fiduciary funds.

A summary of the amendments for approval is below:

- Budget Amendment 1: Reduce the Emergency Telephone System Contract Services by \$10,653. The PSAP FY 2024 funding is lower than expected based on the final funding distribution; therefore, the fund for Contract Services was reduced based on the prior year's actuals.
- Budget Amendment 2: Transfer \$2,782 from the New Adventure Learning Center (NALC) Salaries and Wages line item to the NALC Food line item. The contract for food services at the NALC is slightly higher than anticipated. The County will receive a reimbursement for half the increased food expense, while the remaining funds will be transferred from NALC positions not expected to be filled during this budget cycle.
- Budget Amendment 3: Record \$20,000 received for the WNC Health Network grant for the COVID-19 and influenza vaccine uptake initiative.
- Budget Amendment 4: Record \$121,101 received for AA-546 CD Pandemic Recovery from federal ARPA funds.
- **\*\*Budget Amendment 5: Allocate from the assigned fund balance \$61,000 to Community Center Grants and \$14,000 to Non-Capitalized Equipment in the Information Technology Department. The Planning Department requested the community center grant funds be allocated to complete a larger call for applications. The Information Technology Department requested that funds from the end of FY23 be allocated to complete a portion of the first phase of a network upgrade.**
- Budget Amendment 6: Allocate the remainder of the Public Health (PH) grant funding (received in a lump sum during FY22). \$20,699 will be allocated to PH Contract Services and \$5,833 to PH Travel and Training. The amendment reflects the transfer of grant funds from the Charitable Fund into the Fund Balance and then into the relevant PH line items.
- Budget Amendment 7: Update the Public Transportation Vehicles Budget by \$81,230 to reflect a supplement for the increase in vehicle costs. Two expansion vehicles for the Transportation in Motion fleet came in just at the budget cycle turnover; so, the County received the supplement for the rolling stock costs in this fiscal year.
- Budget Amendment 8: Appropriate \$15,988 of the Federal Inmate Reserve Funds for the Sheriff's Office to purchase stab-proof vests and vest attachments.
- Budget Amendment 9: Appropriate \$1,124,962 of the Fund Balance to adjust the FY 2024 General Budget to include expenditures authorized in FY23 that were not incurred or completed until after July 1, 2023.
- Budget Amendment 10: Adjust the FY 2024 Solid Waste Budget by \$657,716 from the Carryforward Budget to include expenditures authorized in FY 2023 that were not incurred or completed until after July 1, 2023.
- Budget Amendment 11: Transfer \$933,276 from the Education Capital Fund to the Education General Fund to be allocated for approved education capital projects.
- **Budget Amendment 12: Reallocate \$71,988 from the Central Services Pay Increase line to fund the Board-approved salary study pay increases for Transylvania County School Resource Officers (SROs). The approved salary study increases for SROs include a \$57,020.96 overall salary line item increase and related benefits (7.65% FICA increase, 14.1% Retirement increase, and 5% 401K increase. These changes are related to the SRO contract, and other department salary changes will be implemented later in the fiscal year after further budget analysis.**
- Budget Amendment 13: Reduce the Transylvania County Schools Vehicles budget by \$90,000 and appropriate \$933,276 in Education Capital Funds for school capital projects under \$50,000. The amendment also reflects a transfer to the General Fund to offset the costs of additional

approved capital projects over \$50,000 (see Amendment 14). More of these funds will be dedicated to capital projects while reducing the funds allocated to the bond projects.

- Budget Amendment 14: Appropriate \$1,950,800 from Capital Education Projects funds to fund approved capital improvement projects over \$50,000 for Rosman Middle School, Rosman High School, and Brevard High School. Projects are funded individually for all projects over \$50,000 and managed in the Education Capital Funds.

Staff recommended approval of the budget changes report through September 30, 2023, and approval of the budget amendments as presented. If approved, the financial impacts would be as follows:

- General Fund total appropriations increase of \$2,269,770.
- Education Capital Fund appropriation increase of \$1,950,800.
- Multi-Year Grant Funds increase of \$121,101.

\*\*Chairman Chappell asked for clarification on the total amount for Budget Amendment 5. The information presented by staff, as well as the details provided in the Board's agenda packet, indicated the total as \$75,000, but the PowerPoint slide showed the total as \$85,000. Ms. Wright stated she would review the amount for accuracy and communicate the correction to the Commissioners post-meeting. The Manager stated she believes the \$85,000 amount noted in the slide is an error, but staff will verify and make the necessary corrections.

Commissioner Chapman noted that the County is expected to receive an allocation from the State for Solid Waste purposes. He asked when staff expected the State to provide those funds. The Manager said staff have not been made aware at this point. The State appropriated lots of funds to counties in the budget. Staff have been assured the funding is available; it is just a matter of administering the paperwork at the State level.

Commissioner McCall commented on Budget Amendment 8 regarding the Federal Inmate Reserve Funds. She informed the public that these are federal funds that the Sheriff's Office can utilize to purchase much-needed safety equipment. She also asked for clarification on Budget Amendment 14 for \$1.9 million and asked if these were for projects that have been completed or requested. The Manager stated this amount is for projects that have been requested and is related to action taken by the Board of Commissioners in August when the Commissioners approved the request by the Board of Education and increased the level of funding. These funds have been allocated to the Education Capital Fund and will be appropriated by project.

**Commissioner McCall moved to receive the report and approve the budget amendments as revised, seconded by Commissioner Dalton, and unanimously approved.**

#### FY2024 1ST QUARTER FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Finance Director Meagan O'Neal presented this item to the Board. She presented the unaudited financial statements for the first quarter of FY 2024. The report provided in the Board's packet is a year-to-date budget report directly generated by the County's MUNIS software. The report is sorted by fund and by category. Ms. O'Neal stated her goal for the next quarter is to utilize the features in MUNIS to generate some custom reports for the Board.

Ms. O'Neal shared that the revenues coming in from the State are typically delayed by one to two months. The majority of the expenditure is at the expected 25% unless they are paid out on a different schedule. For the General Fund, revenues are at \$2.2 million for the first quarter and expenditures are at \$17.6 million. The expenditures, as comparable to previous years, are on target. The revenues were much lower than in past

years, but as staff posted journals since creating the report, the revenues were brought up to \$4.9 million. As the tax reports come in, the revenues will continue to increase. The General Fund's accounts covering personnel and operating expenses are at or below 24%. The accounts covering insurance, capital outlay, and debt service are higher because of the timing of new fiscal year purchases and annual payments that are due at the beginning of the fiscal year.

In Solid Waste, the report indicated revenues at \$362,000 and expenses at \$1.6 million. She explained that since the report was generated for the Board's agenda packet, a review showed a depreciation report of the capital assets that was run on July 1 that should have been run for the prior year, so the expenses are very much exaggerated. Staff will fix this issue. With the correct quarterly information, the revenue is almost \$687,000 for the first quarter, and expenses, without depreciation, are \$920,000. She indicated that 70% of the revenue is from the Woodruff Landfill. Sticker sales are at 22% of the budgeted amount. This is lower than expected, but it follows the trend from previous years.

Ms. O'Neal called for questions and comments from the Commissioners. She offered to conduct any research or obtain any information the Commissioners requested, or to provide customized reports per request.

Commissioners were appreciative of the amount of detail provided in the report.

They welcomed Ms. O'Neal and Ms. Wright onboard and for the amazing job they are doing as well.

**Commissioner Dalton moved to receive the report, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, and unanimously approved.**

#### EMERGENCY REPORTING SOFTWARE TRANSITION TO ESO FOR COUNTY-WIDE FIRE RESCUE GROUP DISCOUNT

Fire Marshal Scott Justus presented this item to the Board. He reported that all the fire and rescue departments in the City and County currently utilize software through Emergency Reporting. This past year, the firm ESO, one of the largest emergency service records and reporting vendors in the United States and utilized by the County's EMS, bought out Emergency Reporting. Emergency Reporting is planning to stay onboard, but they do not intend to perform any updates to their system.

The Fire Chiefs Association formed a committee to explore vendors and pricing. They found that many of the vendors did not offer what Transylvania County Emergency Services and the fire departments needed and transferring to another vendor would likely cause the agencies to lose the data they had input into the current system. The consensus of the committee was for the departments to remain with ESO, but the agencies and departments had received various price quotes from different vendor representatives. For this reason, Mr. Justus contacted ESO about the possibility of a group contract rate. The committee was in consensus for Mr. Justus to move forward with a countywide contract at a discounted rate.

Mr. Justus shared that most departments paid \$2,500 to \$3,000 for the basic functions package in FY 2023. For the new countywide contract, staff negotiated a price that included access to all the functions for all departments. The software will cost each fire department approximately \$4,188.80 annually, an increase of \$1,500 per department. When each department tried to negotiate an individual price, they were quoted \$3,000 to \$5,000 more per department.

Mr. Justus felt strongly that all departments should have the same software functions, with a couple of exceptions. The North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services requires any agency that provides transport services, like the Transylvania County Rescue Squad, to have the HER and NEMSIS package. In addition, the Fire Marshal's Office performs fire code compliance inspections and reports and is the

reporting umbrella for agencies to share call data reports for fire and other incidents. These additional costs are included in the package resulting in slightly higher annual costs for these two departments.

The total cost of transitioning to ESO as an individual agency or department would have been \$109,440. The countywide group discount lowered the total cost to \$65,860.80. The first year's cost will be \$50,029.20 which includes a one-time training session of \$5,950 for each department, as well as ongoing technical support. The net annual recurring cost will be \$44,079.20. The contract rate is expected to remain stable.

Mr. Justus requested the Commissioners allow staff to enter into an annual contract with ESO to allow the transition from the current Emergency Reporting Software to the ESO software so that all the fire and rescue departments are utilizing the same reporting and records system with the same functions/ESO Suites. In addition, he asked the Commissioners to allow the Fire Marshal's Office to take on the billing function whereby the Fire Marshal's Office would pay the group rate and invoice each department for their portion to pay back the County. These costs will be included in the fire departments' budgets next year. Mr. Justus stated that all the fire departments support the recommendation.

**Commissioner Casciato moved to approve the recommendation to allow staff to enter into an annual contract with ESO to allow the transition from the current Emergency Reporting Software to the ESO software so that all fire and rescue departments are utilizing the same reporting and records system with the same functions/ESO Suites, and the funding option, seconded by Commissioner Dalton.** Commissioner McCall asked if any of the fire departments were opposed to the recommendations. Mr. Justus stated the support was unanimous, but there was some worry about whether the County would fund it. He informed them that the Board of Commissioners supported the fire departments and that this option saved taxpayers dollars. They were supportive as long as they had the backing of the County. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### ELEVATION OF HOME/MITIGATION PROJECT

Emergency Management Director Kevin Shook presented this item to the Board. He reported that as a result of adverse impacts from Tropical Storm Fred, FEMA opened up mitigation opportunities through various grants. The Pressley family at 378 Main Street in Rosman applied for one of the grants that would involve an elevation of their current home. They applied to the North Carolina Department of Public Safety in December 2021. The County received notice that the grant was approved by the Hazard Mitigation Section on October 23, 2023. The Hazard Mitigation Section has briefed the County's Emergency Management staff on the process and offered to manage all processes associated with the grant since it only involves one house. Originally, the County was going to be responsible for the mitigation project, including the bidding process and project oversight, and be the go-between the homeowner/contractor and the State. Proceeding with the elevation project for this home should reduce future impacts from damage caused by flooding on this property.

Mr. Shook recommended that the Board approve the execution of both the State Centric Form Opting-In, as well as the Resolution Designation of Applicant's Agent Form allowing the NC Department of Public Safety to manage the approved FEMA Project 4588-0006 elevation of the home at 378 Main St, Rosman NC 28772 and to approve the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between Transylvania County and North Carolina for FEMA Project 4588-0006 elevation of home once received from the NC Department of Public Safety. He noted that the County Attorney's office is reviewing the Memorandum of Agreement which should be completed by the end of the week.

Commissioner McCall asked if the County would have a point of contact who would have some oversight to ensure the citizens are being represented. Mr. Shook stated that when the family initially applied for the grant, he was named as the designated agent. He did not include himself on the updated documents without the



approval of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioners agreed that there should be a local point of contact and were okay with Mr. Shook serving that role.

Commissioner Chapman asked if other homes qualified for mitigation grant funds. Mr. Shook stated he was aware of one other home, but the owner decided against it due to the grant program restrictions.

Chairman Chappell asked if the homeowners were aware of the program restrictions. Mr. Shook replied yes and reported that they signed documents acknowledging so. He will reemphasize those restrictions to the homeowner before they sign any final grant documents.

**Commissioner Chapman moved to approve the execution of both the State Centric Form Opting-In as well as the Resolution Designation of Applicant's Agent Form allowing the NC Department of Public Safety to manage the approved FEMA Project 4588-0006 elevation of the home at 378 Main St, Rosman NC 28772, and to approve the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between Transylvania County and North Carolina for FEMA Project 4588-0006 elevation of home once received from the NC Department of Public Safety, seconded by Commissioner Dalton.**

Commissioner McCall asked if this is a reimbursable contract or whether it is paid for on behalf of the homeowner. Mr. Shook stated the State is in the process of bidding the project. The State will hire the contractor and pay them directly. The Manager noted that none of these funds will pass through the County. Commissioner Dalton reemphasized that it is prudent that the homeowners fully understand the program restrictions. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### HRSA RURAL HEALTH NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROGRAM

Public Health Director Elaine Russell presented this item to the Board. She reported that in 2021, Transylvania County Public Health became the fiscal agent for the \$1 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) COVID-19 PH Regional Workforce Agreement Addendum from the NC Department of Public Health. Ms. Russell shared that the program is going well and is serving as a model for other regions in the State. The award provides funding to the NC Region 1 Health Departments to establish, expand, train, and sustain the public health workforce while also filling critical gaps in the Public Health Infrastructure Foundational Capability structure. Through the approval of a no-cost extension, the service period of this funding will extend through May 31, 2024.

On behalf of the NC Region 1 Health Departments, Transylvania County Public Health would like to apply for HRSA's Rural Health Network Development grant and will use this planning grant to begin to explore the feasibility of a shared staffing model with the potential of a multi-county system of care where the need is indicated. This approach could potentially help with recruitment efforts for tough to fill positions, help to improve efficiencies, expand access to care, and improve the capacity of individual agencies to conduct essential tasks.

This program supports one year of planning and will bring together each Health Department in Region 1 to strengthen rural community health interventions and enhance care coordination. The Network Planning Program uses the concept of developing networks as a strategy toward linking rural healthcare network members together to address local challenges and help rural stakeholders achieve greater collective capacity to overcome challenges related to limited economies of scale for rural healthcare stakeholders. The HRSA grant awards up to \$100,000 for one year, with a grant due date of January 26, 2024. The grant funding period is July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. The grant opportunity does not require a financial match or any in-kind match. No County or other sourced funds would be requested or needed for this grant opportunity.

Ms. Russell recommended the Board of Commissioners approve Transylvania Public Health's application to HRSA's Rural Health Network Development Planning Program.

Chairman Chappell noted, as with all grants, that there is no guarantee of local funding if the grant funding ceases.

Chairman Chappell thanked Ms. Russell for her work. She is recognized across the State for the work she does for Transylvania County and how she helps other counties as well. Ms. Russell was appreciative and commented that she is surrounded by the best team in Transylvania County.

**Commissioner McCall moved to approve Transylvania Public Health's application to HRSA's Rural Health Network Development Planning Program, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.**

ACCEPTANCE OF TCTDA FUNDS FOR CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATIONS AND TEMPORARY ICE SKATING RINK

The Manager reported that the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA) has approved two grants to support the County's efforts to enhance the holiday atmosphere for visitors and residents alike.

On December 1, 2023, Transylvania County Administration and Parks and Recreation are partnering with the Heart of Brevard and others for Light Up the Night in downtown from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The event will include the annual tree lighting after sunset in front of the courthouse in addition to family-friendly activities from the downtown area to Silvermont Park. Parks and Recreation is providing a host of activities for the event. One feature will be an ice skating rink as part of the event which is being made possible by a grant from TCTDA for \$4,000 to the County to support the ice skating set up for Light Up the Night.

Transylvania County Maintenance staff decorate the tree in front of the courthouse each year utilizing a crane rental ahead of the annual lighting ceremony and remove them at the end of the holiday season. The TCTDA also approved a grant for \$4,900 to replace the decorations on the Christmas tree. The tree must have shatterproof, UV-treated ornaments to withstand the weather conditions at the courthouse location. These types of ornaments are costly for a tree of that size. The existing set of ornaments was showing severe signs of wear at the end of the season last year and had been in use for approximately five years. The grant will allow for replacement ornaments to be purchased for use this year and for several years to come.

Transylvania County appreciates the opportunity to partner with the Heart of Brevard and the support of TCTDA to make the holiday season festive in our community.

**Commissioner McCall moved to approve the receipt of funds and expenditure as presented and according to the application parameters and grant terms per the TCTDA, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.**

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Transylvania County Fire Marshal has issued a burn ban prohibiting all open burning, including within 100' of an occupied dwelling in the interest of public safety per NC Fire Code Section 307 to help prevent the potential for increased wildfires due to extremely dry weather and drought conditions. The ban includes burning leaves, branches, and additional materials used in recreational fires, bonfires, and outdoor fireplaces. In all cases, it is illegal to burn trash, lumber, tires, plastics, and non-vegetative materials. The ban does not apply to cooking fires, such as grills, BBQs, and outdoor cookers. The local ban will remain in effect until further notice.
- Thanks to all the local fire and rescue and emergency management offices for always working to ensure public safety. Several departments have responded to local and regional fires, and we are grateful to them for their service and for putting themselves in harm's way for the safety of others.

- The November 27 Board of Commissioners Meeting has been cancelled. The Board of Commissioners will meet again on Monday, December 11 at 4:00 p.m., which will include an organizational meeting of the Board. This will be the last meeting of the year for 2023.
- Kudos to the Transylvania Tax Office License Plate Agency staff for achieving 100% scores on the state audits for September and October.
- The Department of Social Services will close on December 8 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. to allow staff to participate in a departmental lunch to celebrate the holidays together.
- Kudos to Erika Brock for her poster presentation at the NC Library Association Conference in October showcasing the children's area redesign.
- Education Capital Work Group Update
  - The contract to assess capital safety needs is secured and work kicks off this week
  - Following concerns raised in public comment regarding mold, county staff are working with school staff to conduct new assessments in any schools without a recent report. School staff did note that the pictures shared in public comment are old photos taken several years ago and that issues shown there had been addressed except for one of the classrooms that is closed to staff and student use pending roof replacement. The timeline for completion is not yet known for the mold study reports.
  - Results will be made available to the education capital work group to inform them about their work to ensure any issues are addressed.
- Light Up the Night! in Downtown Brevard on Friday, December 1 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the community tree-lighting ceremony and several family-friendly activities
- The 52<sup>nd</sup> Downtown Brevard Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, December 2 beginning at 11:00 a.m. This year's theme is "Past, Present, and Future" reflecting the Chamber of Commerce turning 100 years old.
- Commissioners Casciato and Chapman attended the inaugural Veterans Resource Connection event in Cleveland County last Wednesday. The NCACC's production of *Veterans Battlefield* was shown throughout the day. They were invited specifically because Transylvania County was so well-represented in the film. They spoke in between showings of the film and took the opportunity to promote the Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas. They have been invited to attend again next year. The NCACC has created a toolkit to plan for a showing of the film in counties that are interested.
- Transylvania County is one of several counties across the state that participated in Operation Greenlight for Veterans the week of November 6-12, to salute and honor the service and sacrifices of our men and women in uniform transitioning from active service. The Veteran's History Museum of the Carolinas hosted a Veteran's Day celebration on Saturday, November 11 at 11:00 am to honor our Veterans with the community. The Courthouse and Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas were lit up in green to honor all those who made immeasurable sacrifices to preserve our freedom.
- All are invited to attend a community session on Thursday, November 16 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Rogow Room at the Library to learn about NC's opioid settlement money and proposed recommendations for Transylvania County. The CARE Coalition intends to make a formal presentation to the Board of Commissioners on December 11.
- The Land of Sky Regional Council is conducting a survey to better understand transportation needs in our community. The flyer has been posted to the County website to access the survey. For a paper copy, please contact Darby Terrell in the Planning and Community Development department.
- The NC Association of County Commissioners has announced its appointments for membership of the 2023-2024 Steering Committees. Congratulations to Commissioner McCall for being appointed to serve on the Public Education and Tax and Finance Steering Committees and to Commissioner Dalton for being appointed to the Tax and Finance Steering Committee. These County Commissioner steering committees help guide the board of directors in developing the Association's policy priorities and advocacy principles.

- CONGRATULATIONS!!!! To the Brevard High School Lady Devils Volleyball Team and the Men's Cross Country Team for both winning their State Championships! We are very proud of their hard work, dedication, and team spirit.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

### COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman thanked Transylvania County, on behalf of the veterans, for the recognition of the veterans during Operation Green Light. He also commended Commissioner Casciato for planning the Veterans Day Ceremony. It was one of the best programs yet. Commissioner Chapman shared that the Marine Corps JROTC cadets will present at the next Board of Education meeting about their recent trip to Parris Island, SC. These cadets were able to experience what Marine Corps boot camp is like. Commissioner Chapman congratulated all those who were reelected and elected to public office during the recent municipal election. He looked forward to working with the City of Brevard and the Town of Rosman on issues that benefit all citizens. Commissioner Chapman shared that he was selected to serve on the NCACC's Justice and Public Safety Committee. He reported that he met with business owners in Cedar Mountain regarding safety issues at the intersection of Dupont Road and US 276 S. The NC Department of Transportation and Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization are working together to make some improvements and are waiting on additional funding for signage.

Commissioner Casciato thanked Operations Director Chad Owenby and his staff for being attentive to the needs of the Veterans History Museum during its planning of the Veterans Day Ceremony. He thanked Mark White for providing the food for the event which served 150 veterans and their families. He was appreciative of Anchor Baptist Church for providing the tables and chairs. He thanked all those who attended. Commissioner Casciato thanked the firefighters who are battling the wildfire in Edneyville.

Commissioner McCall said as we are entering into the Thanksgiving and holiday season, please remember those for which we are thankful. She was grateful to the Board and our citizens. She was humbled to sit in the presence of those men and women who served our nation this past Saturday at the Veterans Day Ceremony. She felt strongly that today's society needs to be reminded daily that freedom is not free and there are men and women continuously fighting for our freedom. She hopes everyone will remember them during the upcoming holiday season.

Commissioner Dalton expressed his regrets for missing the Veterans Day Ceremony. He was celebrating his 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

Chairman Chappell thanked the staff. He pointed out there was a wide range of issues on the agenda. Staff must be knowledgeable about these issues at all times. He encouraged everyone to be proud of the dedicated public servants of Transylvania County. Chairman Chappell was thankful for how the County staff served the public. He also expressed how grateful he was to serve alongside his fellow Commissioners.

**Chairman Chappell moved to enter into a closed session per N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11 (a) (4) To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, following a 10-minute recess, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously carried.**

### CLOSED SESSION

Per N.C.G.S. § 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, a closed session was entered into at 5:35 p.m. Present were Chairman Chappell, Commissioners Casciato, Chapman, Dalton, and McCall, County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Bill Bulfer, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

The Board instructed the Manager, as the Board's negotiating agent, on their position regarding the potential acquisition of property.

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

#### OPEN SESSION

**Chairman Chappell moved to seal the minutes of the closed session 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 5:45 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.**

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Jason R. Chappell, Chairman  
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board