

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 12, 2024 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in a regular meeting on Monday, February 12, 2024, 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: Jon Rich – *The Transylvania Times*

There were approximately 30 people in the audience, including several staff presenters.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jason Chappell presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

WELCOME

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comments are the opinions or points of view of the speakers. The Clerk to the Board did not attempt to modify the comments based on facts.

Lisa Rodke: Ms. Rodke said she understands that the Board feels it is unfair that people say they do not care about the children and that they have not done anything to fix the schools; however, she said it is fair to say that the Board has not started selling the school bonds. She asked the Board to make selling the bonds their priority. Ms. Rodke suggested the Board authorize the County Manager to work with the Superintendent to develop a plan that is agreed upon by both Boards and is as close as possible to the wording of the school bond referendum. She was against any further studies. Ms. Rodke said this is an opportunity to please everyone across the political spectrum by moving forward with selling the bonds as soon as possible.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The Board approved the following items:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on January 22, 2024, and following met in a closed session (5) in which the minutes were sealed. The Board approved the minutes as submitted.

UNSEALING OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

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

- March 8, 2020 - consult with an attorney
- April 25, 2016 - property negotiations
- August 22, 2016 - economic development
- January 23, 2017 - economic development (2)
- July 10, 2018 - economic development and property negotiations (2)
- June 24, 2019 - economic development (2)
- February 10, 2020 - consult with an attorney
- March 31, 2020 - consult with an attorney
- July 13, 2020 - consult with an attorney
- October 12, 2020 - consult with an attorney
- May 10, 2021 - consult with an attorney
- June 14, 2021 - economic development
- July 26, 2021 - consult with an attorney
- August 23, 2021 - consult with an attorney
- September 13, 2021 - consult with an attorney
- October 25, 2021 - economic development
- October 25, 2021 - consult with an attorney
- March 27, 2023 - consult with an attorney

VAYA HEALTH FISCAL MONITORING – FY 2024 Q2

Per N.C.G.S. § 122C-117 (c), the local management entities/managed care organizations must present their fiscal quarterly reports to the Board of Commissioners. This report covers the financial statistics through the second quarter (December 31, 2023).

Vaya Health reported its current actual revenues as \$441,379,270 (81.22% of the annualized budget) and its current actual expenditures as \$452,405,154 (83.25% of the annualized budget). This equates to a current net loss from operations of \$13,685,182.

Vaya reported the following fund balances:

- \$103,110,924 restricted for risk reserve
- \$68,862,032 restricted for statute, prepaids, and investments in fixed assets
- (\$16,516,004) unrestricted

They also reported total operating cash of \$117,664,066 net of risk reserves and estimated total spendable cash as \$48,821,947. The Board acknowledged receipt of the report.

2023 DELINQUENT TAXPAYER LIST

N.C.G.S. 105-369(a) requires that counties advertise the list of delinquent taxes owed. The Board of Commissioners must approve the list prior to advertisement. Tax Administration staff will continue their collection efforts. Any taxes paid prior to the date of the advertisement will not be advertised. The Board approved the 2023 Delinquent Taxpayer List as submitted.

SOLE SOURCE APPROVAL FOR VENDORS ON THE SYLVAN VALLEY INDUSTRIAL BUILDING PHASE 2

The architect for the Sylvan Valley Industrial Building Phase 2 recommended the Board approve utilizing a single vendor as allowed per statute and local policy for the following areas for proper connection to Phase 1; maintenance purposes; consistency, compatibility, and functionality throughout the building; knowledge and expertise on design-build features; and familiarity with the site and conditions:

- Fire suppression system by Diboco Fire Sprinkler, Inc. in Flat Rock, NC
- Pier foundation support system by GeoStructures, Inc. in Purcellville, VA
- Structural concrete panels by Tindall Building Systems in Spartanburg, SC
- Fire alarm system by FCI/Gamewell/Honeywell Infinity Systems in Leicester, NC

The County's project team has reviewed the information provided by the architect and agrees that the unique nature of this project being an expansion of the building warrants that all four vendors be approved for sole source on these items in the interest of the overall integrity of the building in construction and long-term operation. The Board approved the single-source vendors as requested.

PISGAH HEALTH FOUNDATION GRANT APPROPRIATION

Pisgah Health Foundation has awarded \$30,000 to Transylvania County to be used by Transylvania in Motion (TIM) to provide transportation services to County residents in the FY 24 year. Planning and Community Development staff have been working with the Administration on the best use of the funds within the goal of serving seniors identified by the foundation. Staff evaluated different options for the potential for the greatest impact and long-term sustainability.

The department has secured two expansion vehicles through a separate grant that are ready to be used to expand service beyond the current footprint. On-demand and fixed route services have been limited in the past to areas primarily around Brevard and Rosman.

Staff recommended utilizing the \$30,000 grant to support implementing the expansion. This will provide stability for funding during the expansion and build better data on demand and usage that can support leveraging additional state grants for operations in the next cycle. The expansion will increase access for seniors and the capacity of the transit system to serve senior transportation needs. Staff also requested that the Commissioners request an extension for using the grant funds to FY 25.

The Board approved the appropriation of the Pisgah Health Foundation Grant for transit expansion and authorized staff to request an extension on the use of the funds through FY 25.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

PURPLE HEART HOMES FOR VETERANS

Joel Dalton of Purple Heart Homes for Veterans made a brief presentation to the Board of Commissioners. This is a summary of his presentation:

Purple Heart Homes is a 501(c)(3) based out of Statesville, NC. In 2004, two of Mr. Dalton's friends – John Gallina and the late Dale Beatty – suffered life-changing injuries during a combat mission in Iraq. Returning home to Statesville, NC, the community provided a warm welcome and celebrated their return. In 2008, John and Dale founded Purple Heart Homes to serve other veterans like the City of Statesville did for them.

Since its founding 15 years ago, Purple Heart Homes has completed 1,250 projects nationwide. The organization focuses on veterans aging in place (wheelchair ramps, ADA-accessible bathrooms, etc.) and ensuring that their homes are not hazards. Veterans have done so much for this nation, and this is the organization's way of giving back. Purple Heart Homes is a charitable organization that thrives on donations and welcomes any assistance from the public.

Mr. Dalton announced that Purple Heart Homes is working on a local project in Cedar Mountain that is going to cost \$12,000. His goal is to involve the community through in-kind donations thus cutting the cost in half and raising \$6,000 to complete the project. Purple Heart Homes is seeking to form a chapter in this area to ensure the local veterans' needs are being met.

Mr. Dalton encouraged the public to visit the Purple Heart Homes website for more information. Veterans do not have to be recipients of the Purple Heart to receive assistance, but they must have a connected disability. They also aid widows of disabled veterans. The need is great and so the organization strongly encourages the public to become involved to help the veterans in our communities.

SEMI-ANNUAL DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS - FY 2025 BUDGET KICKOFF

Department Heads reported on their departmental accomplishments over the first six months of the year. They reported on trends that may be reflected in the upcoming budget years. The departmental presentations, along with any supplemental information they shared, were provided to the Board in a separate notebook.

The Manager was excited to kick off the FY 25 budget season by allowing departments to showcase the work the County does to serve its citizens. She shared a tentative budget calendar that staff hopes to finalize soon. Over the next couple of months, staff will be reviewing several areas in which the County provides funding – departments, nonprofits, education, etc. – and that impacts the budget.

Each department was instructed to provide a five-minute presentation, with a few exceptions. The reports are intended to serve as a snapshot as the Board prepares soon to discuss the budget requests.

The Manager cut off the presentations when the speakers reached their time limit, but for informational purposes, the Clerk to the Board included each department's entire presentation. The Manager asked the Commissioners to submit any questions they have after the meeting to keep the presentations moving forward.

Register of Deeds – by Register Beth Landreth

Accomplishments

- Implemented Property Fraud Alert as a security measure for citizens on March 31, 2021; currently have 485 accounts, an increase of 281 accounts since 2022 which is a 58% increase.
- Implemented software development with a vendor to add deed links to the new GIS system going forward.
- Added a day of operations in the Passport Acceptance Facility. Services began on October 5, 2021, with services offered three days per week. As of September 2023, passport services are now open four days a week, Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. This is a very successful program.

- One additional deputy achieved NCARD certification which now certifies four of the five eligible staff.
- Continued the “Thank A Vet” program which began in 2018. Since implementation, the department has issued 340 photo ID discount cards and has 25 participating businesses. This is a slight increase of about 4.3% over the previous year.
- Continued to update Vital Records (index information only) daily online to assist constituents in research for Real Estate, Genealogy, etc. This online service began on December 7, 2021.
- Completed in-person training in November 2023, hosted by NC Vital Records for the new birth registration system.
- Continued partnership with the Health Department and other registration partners and are now able to process all new death records using NCDAVE.
- Continued to offer a more streamlined service for the marriage license process. The application and the ability to submit documents are both available online to help expedite this service.
- Continued with the next phase of the GT/GT project. Encompasses documents for Real Estate dating back to the County’s beginning.
 - Completed several group projects for converting older records into searchable data; through GT/GT, back-indexing; and back-scanning. Ex: pre-1988 maps; older Vital Records, and pre-1960 Real Estate. These projects took years to complete, and it is a huge accomplishment.

Passport Acceptance Facility Information										In 23 Qtr 4, passports opened 4 days per week	
Began: 10-05-21											
	21 Qtr 4	22 Qtr 1	22 Qtr 2	22 Qtr 3	22 Qtr 4	23 Qtr 1	23 Qtr 2	23 Qtr 3	23 Qtr 4		
# of Customers	140	310	230	235	240	486	409	422	281		
# of Walk-ins	0	197	188	174	175	259	276	303	261		
# of Phone Calls	0	245	206	246	222	574	592	572	357		
\$ mailed to State	\$12,756.67	\$29,106.52	\$22,251.87	\$22,079.92	\$23,634.92	\$30,840.17	\$43,502.95	\$40,615.86	\$26,557.01		
\$ to ROD	\$5,405.00	\$12,080.00	\$8,575.00	\$8,990.00	\$8,940.00	\$17,705.00	\$15,658.75	\$15,930.00	\$10,445.00		
Less Postage:	\$401.40	\$582.90	\$522.85	\$499.95	\$528.05	\$765.33	\$742.00	\$772.25	\$685.15		
Net Income:	\$5,003.60	\$11,497.10	\$8,052.15	\$8,490.05	\$8,411.95	\$16,939.67	\$14,916.75	\$15,157.75	\$9,759.85		
Total Net Income:											
Oct 2021 - Dec 2021 = \$5003.60											
Jan 2022 - Dec 2022 = \$36,449.25											
Jan 2023 - Dec 2023 = \$56,779.02											
FY 21/22 = \$24,552.85 (Oct- June only)											
FY 22/23 = \$48,758.42											
Note: Total # of customers are those that made appointments.											
Walk-ins and phone calls are reported separately. Customer count indicates passport services that we collected money from for a service that was provided. We have added the other stats just to show how busy the passport division with customers regardless if money was collected or not for this service.											

Trends

- Continued steady demand for electronic resources (see slide showing e-file %). Profound increase in all electronic resources due to the pandemic.
- Continue to be a self-supported office with the collection of revenues. \$320,000 more received in revenues than expenses in the FY 22-23, (see past trends and graph) and are on target for the same at mid-year FY 23-24.
- Passport services continue to grow in customer demand. As we have now had more time to collect data, we can see a pattern when the “busy” times of the year are for passport services. We continue to have an increase in call volume and requests for appointments.

Electronic Document Filings

E-file stats 2022

2022		Total # RE		# e-files		% e-files
		recorded	# e-files	# rec'd	% e-files	
January	all docs	650	410	63.08%		
February	all docs	650	422	64.92%		
March	all docs	794	511	64.36%		
April	all docs	718	451	62.81%		
May	all docs	732	415	56.69%		
June	all docs	687	448	65.21%		
TOTALS	jan-june	4231	2657	62.80%		
TOTALS	FY 21-22					
	July-June	9060	5776	63.75%		
July	all docs	668	450	67.37%		
August	all docs	643	427	66.41%		
Sept.	all docs	649	419	64.56%		
Oct	all docs	661	410	62.03%		
Nov	all docs	552	365	66.12%		
Dec.	all docs	501	323	64.47%		
TOTALS	Jul-dec	3674	2394	65.16%		
TOTALS	Jan-dec	7905	5051	63.90%		

Total Rec	Total \$	% e-files
\$104,138.00	\$70,561.00	67.76%
\$88,467.50	\$55,846.00	63.13%
\$138,993.50	\$83,090.00	59.78%
\$126,830.75	\$86,903.00	67.74%
\$143,391.25	\$88,362.00	61.62%
\$143,058.50	\$103,748.00	72.52%
\$744,859.50	\$487,511.00	65.45%
\$1,427,888.75	\$1,007,900.00	69.93%
\$138,702.25	\$109,618.00	78.03%
\$137,038.00	\$87,351.00	63.74%
\$148,552.50	\$83,986.00	56.54%
\$145,534.25	\$110,096.00	75.65%
\$125,498.50	\$93,541.00	74.54%
\$84,366.25	\$55,027.00	65.22%
\$779,691.75	\$539,619.00	69.21%
\$1,524,551.25	\$1,027,130.00	67.37%

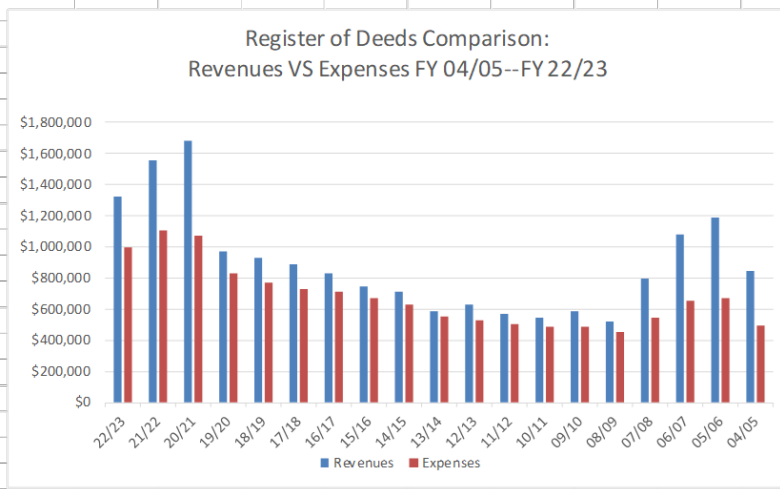
E-file stats 2023

2023		Total # RE		# e-files		% e-files
		recorded	# e-files	# rec'd	% e-files	
January	all docs	478	266	55.65%		
February	all docs	472	296	62.71%		
March	all docs	610	370	60.66%		
April	all docs	512	334	65.23%		
May	all docs	524	324	61.83%		
June	all docs	573	356	62.13%		
TOTALS	Jan-June	3169	1946	61.41%		
TOTALS	FY 23-24					
	July-June			#DIV/0!		
July	all docs	552	369	66.85%		
August	all docs	592	353	59.63%		
Sept.	all docs	489	352	71.98%		
Oct	all docs	563	352	62.52%		
Nov	all docs	513	334	65.11%		
Dec.	all docs	490	308	62.86%		
TOTALS	Jul-dec	3199	2068	64.65%		
TOTALS	Jan-dec	6368	4014	63.03%		

Total Rec	Total \$	% e-files
\$94,975.75	\$61,594.00	65.54%
\$74,284.50	\$48,800.00	65.69%
\$108,583.00	\$61,617.00	56.75%
\$90,089.25	\$53,112.00	58.95%
\$107,394.75	\$55,265.00	51.46%
\$118,657.75	\$69,716.00	58.75%
\$592,985.00	\$350,103.00	59.04%
		#DIV/0!
\$138,233.00	\$102,882.00	74.43%
\$138,487.75	\$104,582.00	75.52%
\$112,969.75	\$86,961.00	76.98%
\$125,072.75	\$87,929.00	70.30%
\$91,888.25	\$63,767.00	69.78%
\$106,008.50	\$77,721.00	73.32%
\$712,160.00	\$523,842.00	73.56%
\$1,905,145.00	\$873,945.00	66.96%

E-File Vendors: Began:
 Simplifile 6/22/2015
 EPW 12/12/2016
 CSC 3/10/2017
 Indcomm 4/21/2020

	Revenues	Expenses
22/23	\$1,318,722	\$998,375
21/22	\$1,559,915	\$1,103,649
20/21	\$1,684,048	\$1,073,892
19/20	\$972,155	\$832,537
18/19	\$932,115	\$773,410
17/18	\$888,316	\$731,103
16/17	\$828,667	\$715,745
15/16	\$742,300	\$673,690
14/15	\$712,395	\$630,274
13/14	\$587,837	\$550,637
12/13	\$627,526	\$528,717
11/12	\$566,379	\$505,013
10/11	\$546,435	\$484,451
09/10	\$583,735	\$489,674
08/09	\$520,773	\$453,591
07/08	\$794,111	\$544,651
06/07	\$1,078,630	\$654,080
05/06	\$1,188,040	\$668,984
04/05	\$843,057	\$496,965



Goals

- Continue phases of GT/GT scanning projects
- Continue adding submitters for e-recording
- Continue efforts to grow the “Thank-A-Vet” program by encouraging more businesses to participate in giving a discount when showing an ID card, as well as registering more veterans for this free program

- Continue efforts to grow Fraud Alert Services by advertising to keep the public informed of the service
- Continue passport services, training, and all requirements set by the Department of State
- Increase hours of operation for the passport office per service demand
- For all five eligible staff members to become NCARD-certified
- Continue to increase online options for various services we provide; access to Vital Records (indexes only) was added on December 7, 2021
- Continue efforts to revamp the website for needed updates
- Continue efforts to train and utilize the Statewide Electronic Death Registration System through NC Vital Records
- NCOVR will implement a new birth registration system within NCDAVE. EBRS, the prior out-of-county birth system, was converted to NCDAVE and went live on January 1, 2024. We will continue to advertise that within NC, both out-of-county births and deaths are obtainable in our office.
- Continue all customer service and training efforts to better serve our citizens

Solid Waste – by Director Kenn Webb



Current placement of waste January 2024

How long do we have in current landfill?

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

Date	Estimated Years	Estimated Lifespan
June 2023	2.9 years	April 2026
June 2022	3.3 years	October 2025
June 2021	5.4 years	October 2026
June 2020	7 years	May 2027
July 2019	8.7 years	February 2028

- Landfill Construction in Phases 4, 5 & 6
- Placed 35,191 tons in 2023
- Compare to 36,081 tons in 2022 (2% decrease)
- Compare to 31,722 tons in 2021 (14% increase)
- Compare to 27,722 tons in 2020 (14% increase)
- Compare to 25,770 tons in 2019 (8% increase)
- Known Impacts due to:
 - Local Contractor – newly permitted private Transfer Facility, C&D

- Landfill Compaction has multiple factors:
 - Type of Material
 - Placement of Waste
 - Number of Passes with Compactor
- Calculations are based on Density in LF Capacity Report

○ 2023	1,237 lbs/cy
○ 2022	1,054 lbs/cy
○ 2021	1,101 lbs/cy
○ 2020	967 lbs/cy
○ 2019	913 lbs/cy



Trends

- MSW Woodruff Landfill
 - Solid Waste receipts may have peaked
 - 10-year review shows pandemic effect
 - Future receipts dependent on growth in the County
- Tons recycled
 - Commodity prices for non-ferrous recyclables have dipped to \$23/ton from \$53/ton in 2022
- LCID Woodruff Landfill
 - LCID: Land Clearing & Inert Debris
 - Several private sector competitors in the County
 - No significant storm impact in 2023
- Rainfall and Leachate summary
 - Rainfall 74.38 inches (Five-year average 85.54 inches)
 - Leachate 4,254,200 gallons (Five-year average 4,201,200 gallons)

Goals

- New landfill permit application delivered to NCDEQ; expecting approval to construct in the spring of 2024
- Cover on slopes has been successful with mulch amendments
- Final closure on older slopes is still a goal in the near term following the construction of phase 7 expansion



Photo from July 2023 facing Northwest

Soil and Water – by Supervisor Jeff Parker

Accomplishments

- Completed the Stream Rehabilitation Assistance Program for debris removal from the French Broad with the Tropical Storm Fred grant for \$90,000
- Wrote two Ag. Cost Share contracts for 16,796 ft. of livestock exclusion fencing, two wells, and 10 livestock watering tanks
- Jeff Parker received his 30-year service award from the NC Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts at their Annual Meeting in Raleigh

Trends

- Presented 23 classroom programs resulting in over 500 students participating in the department's annual poster contest
- For the Cost Share programs, they calculated a soil loss reduction of 121 tons are the two farms they have been working on; funding is up from last year due to the new Upper French Broad Livestock Exclusion Fund of another \$100,000 for a total of \$143,562
- Over their goal by 40 acres affected by conservation best management practices at 83 acres
- Since July, completed six debris removals; but over the past year, completed 23 using the \$90,000 from the State's StRAP Program
- Equipment rentals are low but should pick up in the spring

Goals

- Complete Tropical Storm Fred Federal EWP streambank repairs
- Continue to administer the NCACSP and other funds made available to the SWCD, reducing the sedimentation of streams
- Increase awareness of rental equipment availability and revenues generated by the equipment
- Increase participation in middle schools and high schools Conservation Edu. Programs

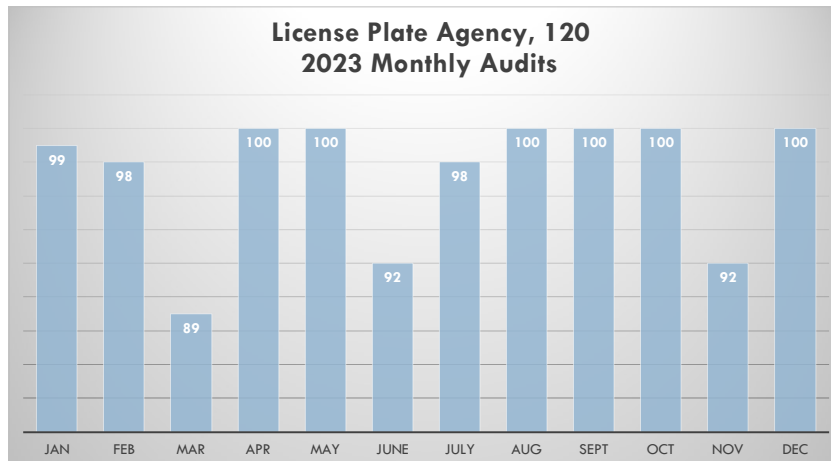
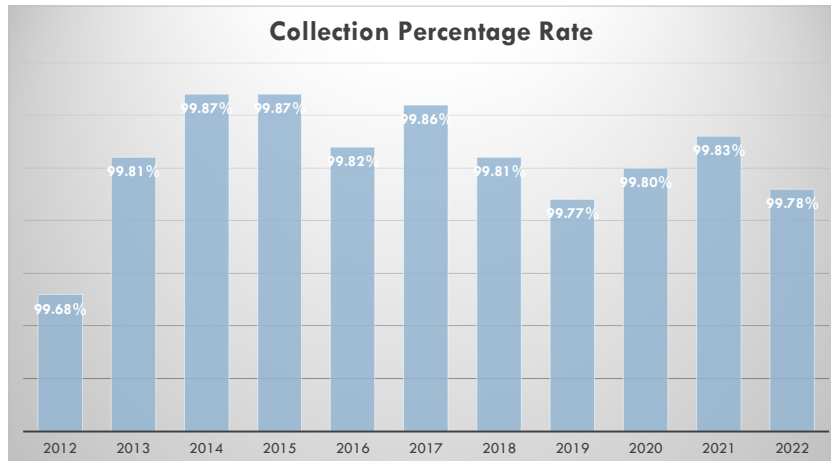
Tax Administration – by Administrator Jessica McCall

Accomplishments

- One of the top collection rates in the State of North Carolina
 - As of June 30, 2023, 99.78% collected for 2022 tax bills
 - Each district collection rate, greater than or equal to 99.14%
 - Approximately 8,600 phone calls, 171 payment plans, \$14,248.12 bank attachments, \$8,765.68 wage garnishments
- Payment coupons and e-Statement option included with 2022 tax bills
 - 6th year to implement the payment coupons and e-statement option
 - Continues to be well-received
 - Several partial payments were received, resulting in payment in full prior to the delinquent date
- A new credit card platform, Invoice Cloud, was implemented on October 31, 2023
 - Well received by taxpayers and staff
 - Many payment options for citizens, including e-checks, credit, debit, PayPal, Venmo, etc.
 - Allows Transylvania County to advance with technology in streamlining the online payment process, paperless billing, scheduling of future payments, and much more
- A portion of the Present Use Value recipients were reviewed per GS 105-296(j)
 - 202 properties reviewed during this audit, \$61,155.67 was discovered as a result of the annual PUV review
- Tax Administration continues to collect and maintain Occupancy Taxes
 - As of 6/30/2023, \$1,995,117.68 collected for fiscal year Occupancy Taxes
- License Plate Agency
- License Plate Agency opened to the public February 2, 2022
 - \$100,368.97 in Net Compensation received from the NC Department of Transportation for January 2023 through December 2023
 - \$10,155 received in Notary fees for January 2023 through December 2023
 - 26,855 walk-in customers recorded from January 2023 through December 2023, over 5,000 more walk-ins than recorded last year
 - Received 89 or higher for each monthly audit
- Cross-training of Tax Administration staff continues to expand
- Several Tax Administration staff members obtained and/or maintained certification with NCDOR, NCAAO, NCTCA, NCPMA, and/or IAAO in Property Tax Assessing, Collecting, and Mapping
- Tax Administration staff received training per the county safety matrix
 - Safety training continues monthly

Trends

- The collection rate is above the State average
- Approximately 88% of citizens pay taxes promptly
 - 2023 collection rate was 88.14% as of January 5, 2024
- The monthly state audit score for License Plate Agency is greater than 85
- Cross-train staff in all areas of the Tax Administration Office
 - Education and training continue virtually and in person



Goals

- Provide friendly, efficient, courteous, and prompt customer service
- Maintain collection rate at 99.5% or better
- Continue to implement payment coupons, e-statement options, payment contracts, and other convenient payment options with annual tax billing
- Proficiently review, process, and maintain all tax records
 - Real property
 - Business Personal Property
 - Personal Property
- Land records are updated, edited, and maintained accurately
- License Plate Agency
 - Provide friendly, efficient, courteous, and prompt customer service
 - Maintain a monthly License Plate Agency audit score of 85 or greater
 - Continue to expand knowledge in License Plate Agency
- Hear and respond to appeals promptly
 - Informal appeals
 - Board of Equalization and Review appeals
 - Property Tax Commission appeals

- Continue annual review of Present Use Value recipients per GS 105-296(j)
- Continue annual review process of Exempt properties per GS 105-296(l)
- 2025 Reappraisal
 - The 2025 Reappraisal Brochure available in the Tax Administration office and on the Tax Administration website
 - Appraisal staff continues to review neighborhoods throughout the county to verify for accurate data
 - Approximately 3,050 field visits for new construction and reappraisal review
- 2025 Schedule of Values
 - Completed by Tax Administration in October 2024
 - Finalized and adopted in November 2024
- 2025 Notices of Value
 - Mailed to all Real Property owners in February 2025
- 2025 Appeal Process
 - Informal Appeals in house January 2025 through mid-April 2025
 - Board of Equalization Appeals mid-April 2025 through early May 2025
 - Property Tax Commission Appeals as needed
- 2025 Tax Bills
 - To be mailed in late July 2025
 - Due September 1, 2025, the last day to pay without interest is January 5, 2026
- Occupancy Tax
 - Continue to expand knowledge in occupancy taxes
 - Advance with technology in streamlining the occupancy tax filing and payment process
- Continue to expand cross-training and certification of staff
 - Promote longevity and commitment to Transylvania County Tax Administration
- Continue staff safety training based on the county safety matrix

Fire Marshal – by Fire Marshal Scott Justus

Mission Statement: Through inspections, investigations, and training, it is the mission of the Fire Marshal's Office to reduce and eliminate deaths, injuries, and property destruction as a result of fire, which is reflected in the department's accomplishments and goals.

Accomplishments

- Maintained 100% of the mandated fire and life safety inspections of all commercial occupancies as required by the NC State Fire Code
 - We inspect all occupancies/businesses except; one and two private family dwellings and strictly for agricultural use. Currently, we have 1580 occupancies that require periodic inspections every one to two, or three years
- Completed 594 inspections, plan reviews, and permits issued. These include periodic routine fire and life safety inspections, ABC inspections and permits, large tent and bounce house inspections and permits, and fire protection system operation and compliance inspections
 - Periodic inspections can range from; every six months, once every year, every two years, and every three years
- Assisted the NCOSFM and fire departments during the DOI rating process. Every fire department either maintained or lowered their insurance classifications
- Participates and serves in multiple County and private programs such as the Safety Committee, Vision, School Site Safety Surveys, the Chiefs Association, and LEPC
- Investigated 22 fires (structure, vehicles, recreational/camper) this year, including joint fire investigations with insurance companies, the Sheriff's Office, Brevard Police Dept., NC SBI, and US

ATF on incendiary/arson fires. Also responded to 48 other emergencies and public service calls including the search for lost or missing persons, water rescue, high angle rescue, vehicle accidents, and smoke detector installations

- Completed 434 hours of training this year, including fire investigation training and special schools provided by the International Association of Arson Investigators, NC SBI, US ATF, NCOSFM, NC Fire Code Inspector continuing education, and various emergency management training
 - Training is vital in maintaining State and national certifications and knowledge
- Employees of the Fire Marshal's Office serve on State training committees and boards such as the NC Chapter of Arson Investigators Training Committee and serve as the Western Representative for the NC Search & Rescue Advisory Council
- Provided fire prevention education training for child day care centers, county departments, and community groups that request specified training

Trends

- Inspections continue to grow; new commercial growth is continually adding to our inspection database and daily workload
 - Last year we were at 1510 occupancies, current is the 1580
- Continue to see issues of noncompliance/fire hazards and lack of properties to maintain fire and life safety requirements. The majority are found during our fire code inspection visits; however, we do receive complaints from concerned citizens about fire hazards, blocked, exits and storage issues
 - The noncompliance fire hazard issues and complaints occur in between the three-year periodic inspection visits that we perform
- Continue to see new commercial plan reviews, requests for site visits, and inquiries on requirements for new and future development ideas prior to it going to the planning or permitting process
 - These include glamping projects, retreats, subdivisions, and commercial properties

Goals

- Perform 100% of the mandated fire and life safety inspections required by the NC State Fire Prevention Code. Maintain a high level of service for fire investigations and other emergency calls that we respond to. Keeping positive and professional communications with the public, private, and non-profit agencies we network with
- Continue to update our Fire Investigation Task Force which includes the Fire Marshal, Sheriff, Police, NC SBI, and US ATF.
 - This includes equipment, training, ideas, best practices, and procedures, and most important is the teamwork and collaboration between all these agencies for the common goal of saving lives and property
- Submit for consideration a Fire Prevention Ordinance that supports the current operations of the Fire Marshal's Office and the non-compliance issues/trends that we see
 - This includes corrective measures of non-compliance/fire hazards and utilizing a "compliance engine" so we can be aware of non-compliance issues between periodic inspection times

Building – by Director Mike Owen

Accomplishments

- 2023 has been another stellar year in the number of permits issued, fees collected, and inspections performed while continuing the training of new staff
- Spencer Groner obtained Level I Standard Plumbing, Mechanical, and Building certifications.
- Hired Amanda Siniard, Administrative Support, and Mabry Robinson, Code Enforcement Officer to replace Ken Hyatt, who is retiring in March 2024
- Provide excellent customer service within 24 hours of request

- Significant improvements were added to the permitting system for identifying agencies and preventing applications from being submitted without proper documentation

Goals

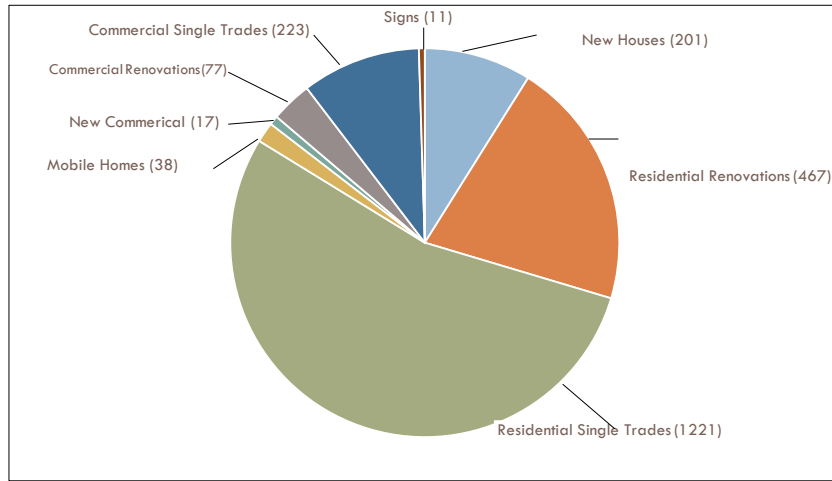
- Enforce minimum code requirements to safeguard the safety, health, and general welfare of our citizens and contractors
- Continue to update our software program to add more capabilities for contractors and citizens.
- Educate and train new staff on general statutes, laws and administration, NC Building codes, and office procedure
- Correctly identify all properties prior to issuing permits
- Our goal is to provide quality inspections, for our citizens of Transylvania County, by employing and retaining qualified inspectors and staff

Trends

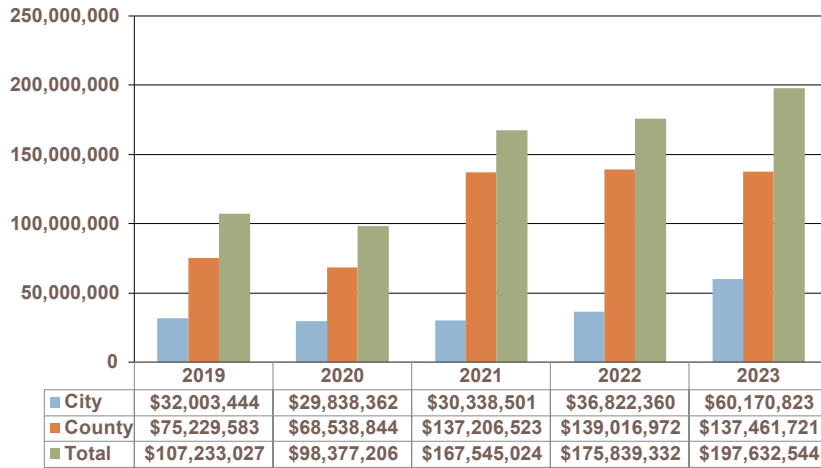
- Land parcels are being purchased for recreational vehicle parks, which are being used as permanent dwellings, because of the lack of affordability of housing (59 RV sites within parks; 28 individual RV sites)
- Illegal construction without obtaining proper permits prior to the engagement of work
- Limited usable parcels of property in flood zones are being purchased not knowing the building requirements in specific areas resulting in lengthy and extensive education to property owners and staff
- Ongoing price increases are continuing to lead homeowners to act as their general contractors creating prolonged inspections and multiple questions being asked of staff
- Website usage continues to provide service to licensed contractors, enabling them to submit online permit applications, request inspections, and ability to view the daily inspection schedule. 2023 website usage:

Item	Avg per Week	Total per Time Frame
Number of Users		1156
Number of Permit Views	907.58	47,194
View Daily Schedule	544.77	28,328
Apply for Single Trade Permit	33.54	1,744
Number of Inspection Requests	78.85	4,100
Total:	1,564.73	81,366

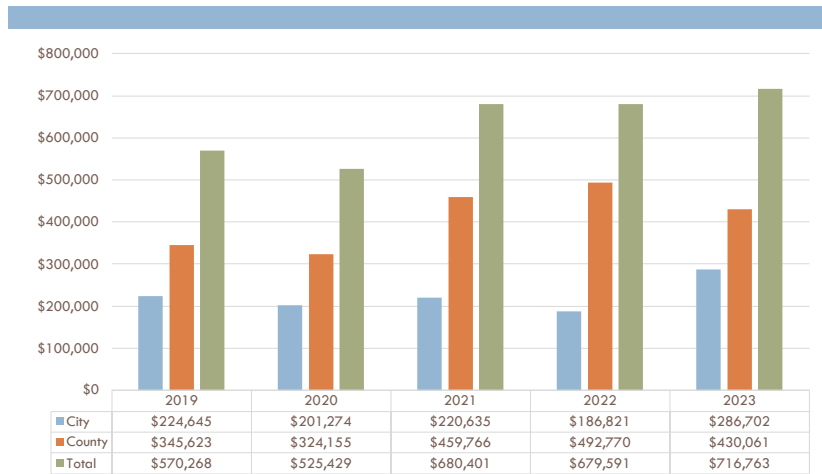
2023 Permits by Type



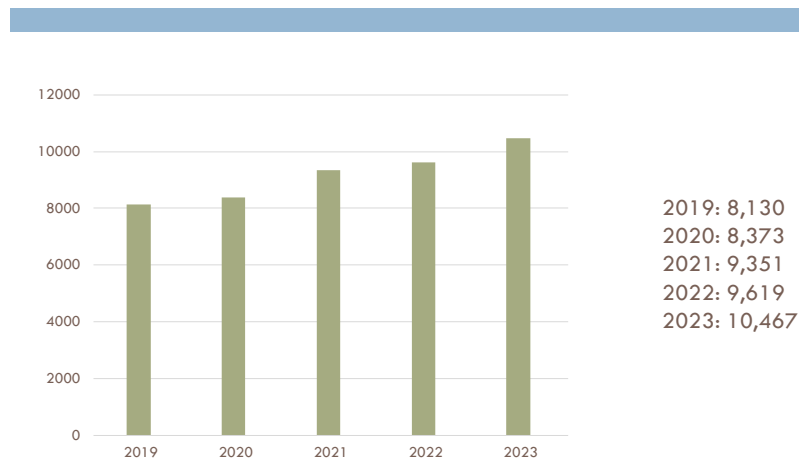
Total Construction Value 2019 - 2023



Total Fees Collected 2019 - 2023



Number of Inspections 2019 – 2023



EMS – by Director Kim Bailey

Accomplishments

- Continued collaboration with community partners to address staffing challenges
 - Continued work with Human Resources and County Administration to identify effective and sustainable recruitment and retention strategies
 - Implementation of the pay study recommendations was significantly positive.
 - Consultation with NCOEMS to identify appropriate, acceptable, and sustainable staffing models
 - As of November 2023, TCEMS is fully staffed

- Progression in the TCEMS main Brevard base replacement/relocation process
 - Continued collaboration with the construction team and contractor
 - Construction completion and occupancy will take place in Spring 2024
- Progressed further in the development of the Transylvania County Peer Support Team. SOG and Procedure, Education, and Resource Committees are active
 - Initial individual and group crisis intervention courses were offered in the county. Additional courses are being scheduled
 - Referral to available resources
 - Continued updates to the compilation of an accurate mental health resource list
 - Team members are actively participating with the WNC Peer Support Team to gain experience
- Procured vital equipment and software
 - Replaced an ambulance
 - Order placed for replacement stair chairs for patient movement
 - Completed the purchase and implementation of NarcBoxes
 - Preparing for the implementation of an electronic inventory and asset management system
 - Finalizing the purchase of a pediatric resuscitation system
- Updated TCEMS protocols and Standard Operating Guidelines; preparing for an additional 2024 update
- Continued to work with Mission Health/HCA on strategies and protocols to reduce out-of-county transports. Have seen a significant decrease since September 2016. This frees up ambulances to cover other calls in the county
- Worked with Finance to ensure mandatory Medicare reporting requirements during FY23 were met successfully

Trends

- Recruitment and retention continue to present significant challenges locally, statewide, and nationwide
- Staffing shortages have impacted TCEMS. It has been difficult to maintain adequate staffing levels for EMS coverage
 - Contributing factors include, but are not limited to:
 - Benefits compatibility with other agencies in the area
 - Paid time worked for up to 12 hours per pay period of initial paramedic classwork
 - Additional compensation for additional certifications
 - Holiday pay extended to part-time staff members
- Emergency Services continues to see an increased need for stress management/PTSD and suicide prevention education and awareness and mental health resources
- Healthcare reform continues to impact EMS agencies. This included special mandatory reporting to Medicare for FY 23
- Turnaround times remain increased. Contributing factors include increased hospital patient volumes, staffing needs, and diversions
- Out-of-county transport remained steady compared to 2022. With the continued I-26 construction, we must work with Mission to keep these at a minimum
- Continuing education and mandatory training needs continue to increase, resulting in additional overtime
- EMS agencies across the country continue to see an increase in violent events
- Overall call volume increased 0.2% from 2022 (11 calls)

- Out-of-county transport can tie up an ambulance for at least three hours; in 2023, 33% of these transports occurred between the hours of 2100-0900 when TCEMS is limited to 2 fully staffed on-duty ambulances
- If a helicopter is unable to transport critical patients, ground transportation is used.
- As the primary backup ambulance, Transylvania County Rescue Squad responded to an ambulance 66 times in 2023 with 49 transports. This is an increase from 39 responses and 22 transports in 2022
- It is difficult to maintain an average response time under 9 minutes; the total average TCEMS response time was 11.6 minutes in 2023
- The total average TCEMS response time is 2.7 minutes greater than the national standard; the total average TCEMS transport time is 4.3 minutes greater
- TCEMS ranks 5th out of 5 reporting peer counties regarding response times
- There is significant room for improvement in response times to outlying areas where call volume is increasing, and current response times are much longer

Goals

- Continued collaboration with community partners to address staffing challenges
 - Continued work with Human Resources and County Administration to identify sustainable recruitment and retention strategies
 - Continued consultation with NCOEMS to identify appropriate, acceptable, and sustainable staffing models
 - Continued collaboration with Blue Ridge Community College in the development and implementation of an EMS Cadet Program and streamlined Paramedic program
- Continue to address the need for stress management/PTSD and suicide prevention education and awareness among Emergency Services personnel
 - Further promotion and recruitment for the County Peer Support Team to allow for rapid deployment of this much-needed resource
 - Ensure the appropriate mental health resources are readily available to our Emergency Services personnel
- Reduce average response time with guidance from the Board of Commissioners, with the focus on outlying areas with moderate call volume
- Replace vital equipment
- Continue mass violence training and response procedures in conjunction with BRCC and TCSO and continue to work toward the purchase of appropriate ballistic vests and helmets for EMS staff and mass violence response kits
- Continue to improve continuing education programs and educational offerings
- Continue to work with Mission to reduce out-of-county transport and identify appropriate strategies to maintain this trend
- Continue to work with TRH to reduce the number of hospital diversions so that adequate and timely EMS coverage is maintained in the County

Planning, Transportation, and Community Development – by Director Jeff Adams

Accomplishments

- FY 23-24 saw the hiring and on-boarding of a new Director, four new full-time drivers, and three part-time and substitute drivers to achieve full-staffing
- Provided regular support and guidance to the following boards and committees:
 - Planning Board
 - Joint Historic Preservation Commission
 - Transportation Advisory Board
 - Transportation Advisory Committee

- Administered and ensured compliance with ordinances including Subdivision, Sign, Telecommunication Tower, Pisgah Forest Community Zoning, and Mountain Ridge Protection
- Researched, pursued, administered, and successfully closed-out grants
 - Administered a Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority grant re-establishing the Transylvania County Community Appearance Initiative
 - Re-established and administered the Annual Community Center Grant Program
 - Administration of the Pisgah Health Foundation grant supporting Senior Transportation funding
 - Researched and pursued other grant opportunities
- Participated in and hosted a variety of training and professional development opportunities for staff, advisory board members, and the public
- Continued the process of digitizing office records
- Added two new expansion vehicles to *Transylvania in Motion's* fleet
- Worked with Transportation Advisory Committee to draft Comprehensive Transportation Plan and annual STIP
- JHPC nominated a new landmark property in the City of Brevard
- Provided regional housing support:
 - Acted as County representative to the Asheville Regional Housing Consortium for the administration of \$2.5 Million in HOME funding for affordable housing and home improvements
 - Worked with the Brevard Transylvania County Housing Coalition to host the Faith & Housing Social Impact Summit to promote affordable housing and home improvements with regional partners
 - Worked with Land of Sky Regional Planning Organization to form the LOSRC Regional Housing Alliance in support of affordable and workforce housing across the region
- Began the Comprehensive Plan Update:
 - The Planning Board developed a timeline and community outreach plan for FY 24-25 update
 - The Planning Board developed a community survey for a spring release
 - Researched and developed community snapshot for community outreach and update

Goals

- Continue to supply administrative support to citizen advisory committees, grants, and development regulations
- Provide support to an update of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan
- Provide planning support on the Rosman corridor utilities expansion
- Work with regional partners on supporting and developing affordable and workforce housing
- Work with the Agricultural Advisory Board and County staff to support Voluntary Agricultural Districts
- Provide support for Emergency Management, Hazard Mitigation, and Community Appearance Initiative
- Provide support and grant administration for the community centers
- Partner with County agencies and departments for planning, GIS, and transportation needs
- Continue to provide safe and efficient transportation
- Evaluate and market transportation services
- Fee schedule review of comparable fare pricing
- Analysis of capital improvement plan for vehicle and transit facilities
- Explore expansion of van service in underserved areas of the County
 - Going further into rural areas where van transportation is currently unavailable
 - Partnering with area agencies and community centers to geographically coordinate service

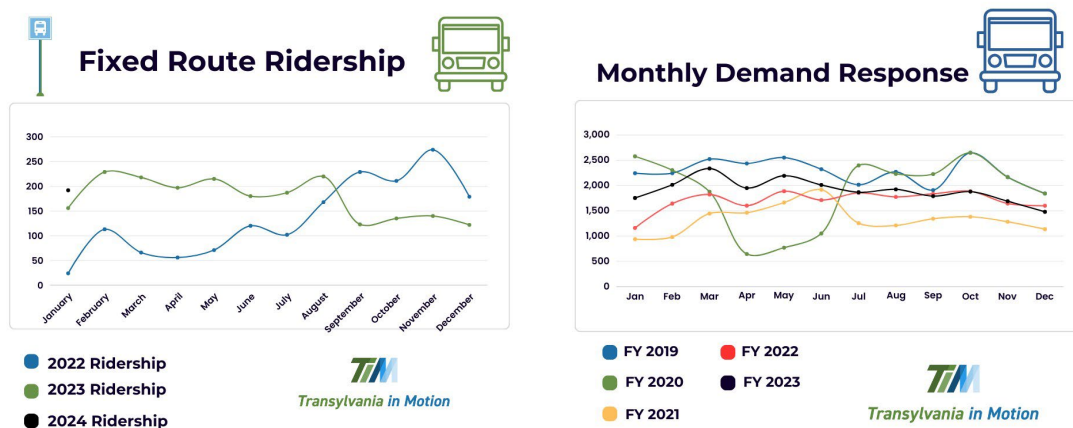
- Analyze ways to connect van service with Henderson County and Buncombe County
- Evaluate the extension of service to evenings and Saturdays
- Continue to standardize data auditing procedures to ensure proper compliance, data accuracy, and reporting
- Finalize Comprehensive Transportation Plan
- Continue to work with the TAC, City of Brevard, NC DOT, and area partners to update STIP projects

Trends

- Subdivision review
 - 2023: 49
 - 2022: 65
- Exemption review
 - 2023: 96
 - 2022: 137
- Transportation Demand Response and Fixed Route Service

Planning, Transportation & Community Development

Transportation: Demand Response & Fixed Route Service



- Transylvania County requested a total of \$270,000 in capital funding for the replacement of two vans with lifts that have bike racks, requiring a county match of \$27,000 (10%) of the total.
- Affordable housing continues to be an issue across the region
- Lack of affordable housing places increasing pressures on substandard housing conditions (i.e., RV & unpermitted structures) and the development of ecologically compromised parcels (i.e., floodplain or steep slopes)
- Subdivisions & Exemptions continue to decline in Transylvania County
- On-going driver shortages hamper expanded transportation services
- Demand response transportation service requests remain strong

Housekeeping – by Operations Director Chad Owenby

Accomplishments

- Provided a safe and professional environment for employees and patrons
- Staff continue to be trained and certified in the COVID disinfecting process and provided supplemental cleaning in response to concerns
- Continued collaboration with outside organizations (TVS, community service work program)
- Continued floor and carpet cleaning schedule
- Continued ordering, tracking, and delivery of housekeeping supplies for all County departments
- Added smaller, job-specific, equipment to improve housekeeping efficiency

Trends

- Utilization of contract services for specialized housekeeping services (strip and wax floors/carpet cleaning/external windows/ mold and mildew/ and bathroom tile and grout)
- Continue working with TVS Clients, probation and parole (community service work program) for delivery of supplies and cleaning services
- Evaluation of equipment and cleaning materials along with contract services to identify efficiencies and provide the safest, most effective cleaning solutions
- Continue to provide appropriate safety training for staff
- Janitorial supplies continue to rise in cost due to inflation as well as the increased use of our facilities by both citizens and staff (more supplies being used)

Goals

- Streamlined housekeeping supplies to reduce overhead supply storage; maintain minimal supplies to reduce cost and prevent waste
- Improved efficiency through revised housekeeping schedule, acquisition and utilization of proper equipment, privatization and contracting of specialized housekeeping services
- Continue to professionally maintain the cleanliness of Transylvania County facilities making them inviting and safe
- Monitor and update staff training/using the NEOGOV platform as well as services from BRAME and Spartan

Safety – by Operations Director Chad Owenby

Accomplishments

- Continued Safety Committee meetings to evaluate and promote improved safety.
- Collaborated with all departments to ensure a safe work environment, continued COVID precautions, and a reduction in recordable incidents from last year; reduced incident rate and DART rate for the 2023 calendar year
- Safety Director completed the recertification for the National Certified Playground Safety Inspector certification
- The County Scored 89 out of 92 points for the NCACC Risk Management Services Safety Credit Program which will provide a 3% credit on our insurance and liability renewal

Trends

- Increase in the individual department safety meetings; most departments continue to hold monthly safety meetings
- Decrease in workers' compensation claims

- Utilization of electronic safety and risk management training in Local Government sector (NEOGOV)
- Many of the incident reports tend to be issues with vehicles. These tend to be preventable with minimal vehicle or property damage and no injuries
- Reduction in the incident and DART rate which means fewer injuries with more total hours worked by employees, and fewer days away from work or on restricted duty

Goals

- Continue to use the Accelerate/Velocity EHS Safety Data Sheet system to track and record any chemical/material
- Provide all departments access to the NEOGOV training site through the NCACC by fall 2024. This training can be standard for all employees as well as specific to individual departments
- Monitor and promote monthly safety meetings
- Continue to monitor current data regarding workers comp cases and provide information to prevent an increase in claims
- Continue to educate all departments on the current OSHA and NCDOL tracking and reporting procedures for workers comp claims and prepare staff for any inspections or audits

Maintenance – by Operations Director Chad Owenby

Accomplishments

- Completed building maintenance in all County buildings with a total square footage of 281,351
- Completed refinishing the floors of the Animal Shelter
- Continued flooring and carpet replacement as needed
- Continued painting and wall repair as needed
- Continued landscaping, pruning, mulching, and repair on more than 250 acres a week with limited landscaping staff
- Continued HVAC replacement for aging R-22 units
- Completed Silvermont restroom renovation.
- Installation of new front doors for Tax Administration
- Successful transition of EMS to a temporary location through the construction of the new EMS facility
- Continued the roofing preventative maintenance program with Piper Roofing on all County buildings, including flat roofs, metal roofs, and shingled roofs which has provided cost savings to the County
- Continued maintenance and preparation of softball and soccer fields for youth soccer, flag football, youth football, Rosman Middle School/High School athletics, recreation summer camps, and adult softball
- Finalizing the erosion control project and walking path at Silvermont
- Continued to work with volunteers and contractors for invasive species removal at Silvermont

Trends

- Aging facilities and equipment have increased maintenance issues and increased costs
- The current economic situation has increased maintenance supply costs and the ability to receive supplies; supply vs demand is a big issue
- Flat and aging roofs with increasing maintenance and repair needs. Currently, Child Development, Silvermont, and the Administration Building need to be addressed
- Continued utilization of outside groups to complete projects; students from BRCC, workers from the Community Service Work Program, and the inmate work crew when they become available

- Aging HVAC systems: need for HVAC-qualified technicians and continue with the R-22 unit replacement; R-22 units are becoming increasingly more expensive to service and repair and the refrigerant is no longer available
- Increased use of contract services to help with repairs for HVAC, refrigeration, elevator, asphalt/concrete, and boiler repairs
- Moisture/humidity control issues in older buildings
- Parking lot deterioration, repair, and replacement: currently replacing Animal Shelter in spring 2024; other County parking lots need to be resurfaced and/or restriped (Community Services Building, Library, and Child Development)
- Paint and building beautification efforts: Interior spaces, handrails, and parking curbs are all areas of concern
- Continued need to replace or repair aging electronic equipment: jail and public safety facility have many electrical parts, hardware, and software that continually need to be updated and upgraded
- Continued need to repair and replace exterior doors: Many exterior doors have been in place for a long time and need to be updated to address security concerns at various locations
- Increase in repairs for aging boiler systems

Goals

- Continue improvements to building and grounds appearance; provide better scheduling, efficiency, and service, especially with adding facilities
- Continue HVAC replacement program, R-22 unit management, and maintain compliance with regulatory guidelines. (Public Safety, Courthouse, EMS Quebec base, and the old airport facility)
- Complete building maintenance and work orders in a timely and scheduled manner; continue using the MUNIS EAM asset management program
- Continue to evaluate contracts, such as pest control, elevator service, boiler and air compressor service, roofing maintenance, etc. every year
- Introduce a yearly grounds contract to assist staff with mowing and other services at designated county facilities

Parks and Recreation – by Operations Director Chad Owenby

Accomplishments

- Youth sports: 545 participants; up 5% from 2022
- Summer Camps: 865 participants; up 18% from 2022
 - Day camps, spring break camps, and summer camps
- Pre-K programs (does not include camps and sports): 554 participants; neutral from 2022 (includes Indoor Fun Play, holiday programs, and the Reading Connection at Silvermont)
- Miscellaneous Programs (includes Homeschool PE, Employee 5K, and Senior Games programming): 384 participants up 129% from 2022 (the large increase is due to the addition of the Homeschool PE program)
- Special events (Light up the Night and Super Soaked Saturday): 3616 participants; up 37% from 2022
 - Successful partnerships with the Library, the Family Place, Transylvania County Maintenance, and the Heart of Brevard
- Silvermont participants – 839 that attend on a weekly/monthly basis; includes the Lunch Plus program, exercise programs, Friends of Silvermont, and other senior programming
- Transylvania Youth Council is a high school program comprised of 95 members focusing on community service projects throughout the County; an increase in membership from the past five years

- Factory Strong is our strength and conditioning program in partnership with the Fitness Factory for Special Olympic athletes and we work with 10 athletes every week
- Staff continue to help with a field day at BES and PFES and May Day at TC Henderson Elementary
- FY 24 projected program revenue: \$102,000; up 13% from FY 23 (trending to exceed projection by 5-7%)
- FY 24 projected rental revenue: \$8,000; up 14% from FY 23

Trends

- Need for summer camps is increasing each year; a steady increase in applications and waiting list numbers over the past five years; record-breaking sign-ups this year; all camps were full in three days
- Summer staffing levels and location availability is a limiting factor; a big thanks to Brevard Elementary School this year for helping as Pisgah Forest will be under construction this summer; thanks to Rosman Elementary for their help each year; Transylvania County Schools are a great partner for Parks and Recreation
- Increased need for childcare and youth programs; seeing an increase for pre-K and elementary programming
- Senior programming at Silvermont is growing at a steady rate; Silvermont programming and attendance are at an all-time high; Congressman Chuck Edwards visited with seniors in January
- Our goal is to continue providing great programming to meet the needs of the community; seeing an increase in activity in all parks and facilities.

This concluded the first half of the departmental presentations. The Manager encouraged the Commissioners to review the presentations and supplemental information and send her any questions they may have. She will in turn compile and send all the responses back to the Board. The second half of the departmental presentations will occur at the February 26 meeting.

Chairman Chappell pointed out that the presentations represent only a snippet of the wonderful work that all the County departments are doing to serve the citizens.

NEW BUSINESS

REQUEST TO RECLASSIFY ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SPECIALIST TO HUMAN RESOURCES BENEFIT AND ADMINISTRATION SPECIALIST

Human Resources Director Sheila Cozart presented this item to the Board. In January, the Administrative Support Specialist III for Administration, Human Resources, and Finance retired. The vacancy created an opportunity for management to evaluate how the position functions compared with the current needs of the County Administration group, as well as how it aligns with the transition to the new Finance Director.

As part of that work, management determined that this position should focus on onboarding, benefits processing, and administration and that some duties historically associated with the position should be shifted to other existing staff based on alignment with their functions. The need to refocus the duties of this position is driven by the increase in the number of employees hired, the growth and complexity of the human resources function, and the processing of all benefit-related information within mandated timelines.

The County has invested in software to support the automation of many processes in Finance and Human Resources, with more tools still to implement within those investments, which will enhance the ability of the Administration to support County departments. This will require skill sets at a higher level than the current position requirements to support those functions. Therefore, the staff requested approval to reclassify the Administrative Support Specialist III position (GR 108) to a Human Resources Benefit and Administration Specialist position (GR 115).

Transylvania County has participated in the NCACC Fellowship Program for the past eight years. This program has been funded in part by NCACC and in part by the County and is offered to a few counties a year through the Association. The program offers a two-year fellowship to a new Master Level Public Administration level graduate to explore local government functions and careers. The program has been most effective in supporting early career development for fellows and in accomplishing project-based outcomes. At the same time, the program does not require that any ongoing processes or support functions go through re-training during the transition of candidates in the two-year cycle and there are limitations on the ability of the position to contribute to long-range initiatives because it is time limited. To maximize the existing budget and meet current needs, staff recommended applying the County funds associated with this program to reclassify and reorganize the administrative functions. The current fellowship cycle will expire before the end of FY 24 and the intent is not to renew for FY 25 allowing another county to utilize the program.

The annual cost of the reclassification is approximately \$8,100 above current the budgeted wages and benefits. Currently, there are sufficient funds within the FY 24 budget already approved to cover salary expenses due to lapsed wages. For FY 25, the budget for the position would be based on the education and experience of the individual filling the role. For example, at the minimum salary, the difference is \$13,338. Standard benefits are already budgeted for the position and would remain with the reclassification.

The savings from not renewing the fellowship program in FY 25 would net approximately \$46,600 in County funds to offset the reclassification in full with no projected increase in the budget due to this request. Staff may make recommendations regarding the remaining savings at a later date to make additional adjustments within the administration function. The need to reclassify the current position to fill the position is time sensitive.

The Manager reiterated that the request is budget neutral for FY 24 and FY 25 and is the best recommendation based on the current needs of County Administration and Finance.

Commissioner McCall was pleased with the staff's ongoing practice of reviewing functions when a position becomes available rather than automatically filling the vacancy as is. She asked, when reviewing the functions of this position, if any duties had been previously performed that would be considered critical and would no longer be performed under the new responsibilities. Ms. Cozart responded that many of the duties of the position seemed to fit better in other areas, most of which are finance functions. Commissioner McCall supported the reclassification to ensure that onboarding of new employees occurs timely and accurately and to make the best use of personnel.

Commissioner Chapman moved to reclassify the Administrative Support Specialist III GR 108 to Human Resources Benefit and Administration Specialist GR 115 with no net impact on the FY 24 or FY 25 budgets due to the reallocation of funds from the Fellowship Program, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

OVERLAP HIRING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SPECIALIST IV IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Assistant County Manager David McNeill presented this item to the Board. He reported that the Administrative Support Specialist IV who provides administrative support to several departments, including Emergency Management, Communications, Maintenance, Housekeeping, Fire Marshal's Office, and Emergency Medical Services is retiring effective April 1, 2024. Some of the duties of this position include processing address requests, maintenance work orders, financials for Emergency Management, Maintenance, and Communications, as well as records management for these departments. Failure to have someone adequately trained to assume these functions could result in delays in address requests and responses to maintenance work order requests. Obtaining an address is the first critical point in obtaining building permits.

Processing maintenance work orders is critical to ensuring that staff are effectively maintaining facilities and responding to immediate repair needs promptly.

Mr. McNeill requested permission from the Board to hire a new Administrative Support Specialist IV effective March 1, 2024, to allow a one-month overlap for training purposes. He did not request additional funds as there are lapsed salaries available to cover the cost.

Chairman Chappell strongly agreed with the request. The position serves a critical role in serving our citizens.

Commissioner McCall agreed. She asked if there was enough time to hire someone on March 1. Mr. McNeill said he would prefer to hire someone sooner, but staff expedite the process as best they can to hire someone by March 1.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve hiring an Administrative Support Specialist IV position effective March 1, 2024, to allow for one month of training by the current person in the position who is retiring on April 1, 2024, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

PSAP PORTABLE RADIO GRANT AGREEMENT

Communications Director Cameron Sexton presented this item to the Board. The NC 911 Board has approved grant funding for each PSAP in the State to acquire a portable radio for each dispatch position in the primary PSAP. These portable radios are intended to be utilized in the event of a system failure to allow the telecommunicator to continue to have contact with field units. The grant covers one portable radio, two batteries, two chargers, and associated programming and maintenance costs for each of the primary dispatch positions. The NC 911 Board has submitted the attached grant agreement for Transylvania County to cover six radios, as approved in our primary seat count.

This grant is set up as a reimbursement. Transylvania County will pay the vendor the agreed-upon contract price for the radios and then submit the payment confirmation to the NC 911 Board for reimbursement. The contract cost per radio is \$8,330.89, for a total of \$49,985.34. Transylvania County must agree to maintain the radios in the PSAP for at least 36 months. Mr. Sexton did not foresee any ongoing maintenance costs, but he noted the department has an in-house radio engineer should there be any issues. The radios are all-band radios so they will be compatible with radios used by other agencies. Mr. Sexton recommended the Board approve accepting the PSAP Portable Radio Grant from the NC 911 Board.

Commissioner Casciato moved to approve accepting the PSAP Portable Radio Grant from the NC 911 Board, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

PSAP CYBERSECURITY REMEDIATION INITIATIVE

Communications Director Cameron Sexton presented this item to the Board. To assist PSAPs across the State in identifying and mitigating potential cyber threats and vulnerabilities that could result in severely negative consequences to the 911 call-taking process, subsequent and ancillary call-processing functions, and the State NG911 ecosystem as a whole, the NC 911 Board has earmarked NG911 funding for PSAP Cybersecurity Remediation Initiatives (CRI). Because each PSAP in the State has its own unique and locality design-specific network and complement of equipment comprising the 911 system, this funding is intended to provide financial assistance to address areas of risk that the individual PSAP may have to improve its cyber security posture. In 2020 and 2021, the Board provided the opportunity for PSAPs to have a cyber security assessment performed and receive a confidential report that identified key vulnerabilities. This funding initiative is the next step in correcting vulnerabilities to eliminate potential consequences.

There is currently approximately \$2.9 million available for PSAP requests. To receive this funding, PSAPs must submit a proposal to the NC 911 Board outlining the project(s), a timeline, demographics, and an

itemized vendor quote. The PSAP Manager, County Manager, and Finance Director must also sign the proposal. The 911 Board will review the proposals for eligibility and present them to the 911 Board Technology Committee for approval. The outcome of that approval will determine if funding will be released to the PSAP. Staff recommended requesting an amount of up to \$152,268.75. If approved, the County will pay the expenses upfront and submit invoices and proof of payment to the NC 911 Board who will process the reimbursement and transmit it back to the County in the same manner as the County's monthly distribution. Mr. Sexton recommended the Board approve staff to submit the PSAP Cybersecurity projects to the NC 911 Board for approval. The deadline for submission is Thursday of this week.

Commissioner Dalton moved to approve staff submitting PSAP Cybersecurity projects to the NC 911 Board for approval up to the amount of \$152,268.75 and if approved, pending review of the agreement by the County Attorney and County Manager, seconded by Commissioner McCall and unanimously approved.

2024 CAPACITY BUILDING COMPETITIVE GRANTS APPLICATION

Emergency Management Director Kevin Shook presented this item to the Board. The purpose of the Capacity Building Competitive Grants is to provide a funding source for counties that meet the requirements of the grant to make application for areas they determine need additional building out to make the county more resilient during disasters. The grant focuses on these key areas:

- Increasing mass care and human services
- Preparedness initiatives
- Incident management/coordination
- EOC capabilities
- Resiliency
- Any other items supported by a local Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

Counties can submit one application that has multiple parts, but it cannot exceed \$200,000 for the total request. Each part is graded in the application to ensure it meets the requirements of the grant.

Over the years, Transylvania County has continued to ensure disaster shelter is available when needed. The Commissioners approved the addition of shower facilities, upgraded the heat and air, and increased the size of the backup power generation to the County's main shelter. Along with human sheltering, FEMA requires counties to offer animal sheltering during disasters should any of the evacuees have animals with them. The County's current plan is to house them at the Animal Shelter. There is both a local and national record capacity at animal rescue sites and animal shelters which could make housing of evacuee animals problematic. One solution available is to acquire a mobile animal shelter trailer. The trailer can be used during disasters for a major rescue operation or during normal operations for adoption events. This reduces the need to set up emergency kennels during disasters. The estimated cost of this solution is \$80,000.

Another solution is to install a backup generator at the Animal Shelter. The building does not currently have backup power, which can be an issue, especially during winter months, in caring for the animals in their custody. The estimated cost of this solution is \$80,000.

Staff recently held a tabletop exercise to work through the steps of setting up a disaster shelter. Takeaways from the exercise included different bedding options based on the person's needs, go-kits for citizens entering the shelter (essential items a person might need that they did not have time to collect before being evacuated), a trailer for housing, and transporting items for disaster shelter establishment. The estimated cost of this solution is \$40,000.

If the State approves the grant for the total request, it will require a one-time increase to the annual Emergency Management distribution from the State to cover the approved items submitted in the grant application. There are no local matching funds required. The deadline for submitting a request for the 2024 CBCG is March 6, 2024. The award announcement will be no later than July 1, 2024. Staff recommended the Board authorize staff to begin the application process for the 2024 Capacity Building Competitive Grant for submission by the deadline.

Commissioner Chapman was concerned about the cost of a trailer at \$80,000. He asked about the possibility of exploring whether SylvanSport, which specializes in trailers/campers, would be interested in assisting the County. Mr. Shook agreed to reach out to SylvanSport. He noted that the trailers must meet requirements set forth by the Department of Agriculture.

Chairman Chappell asked if the trailer could connect to the backup generator. Mr. Shook replied yes. He shared that they intend to repurpose the generator from the old EMS Building.

Commissioner McCall asked how Emergency Management handles evacuees who must use life-saving equipment, such as oxygen tanks. Mr. Shook stated these situations are handled on a case-by-case basis to the extent of the person's medical needs. It may involve them being housed temporarily in a hospital setting or making other arrangements.

Commissioner Casciato asked how many days the generator would last during a major disaster. Mr. Shook stated that emergency generators are typically provisioned for at least seven days. They have never had a generator go down for lack of fuel.

Commissioner McCall moved to authorize staff to begin the application process for the 2024 Capacity Building Competitive Grant for submission by the deadline, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

MOWING CONTRACT FOR GROUNDS

Operations Director Chad Owenby presented this item to the Board. The Grounds department has experienced a turnover of four grounds employees in the past two years. Keeping a consistent staff has been difficult. There is currently a grounds position open. Staff requested that the Board of Commissioners approve a reduction in staffing and utilize funds budgeted for the position to cover the cost of a ground maintenance contract. Maintenance would utilize the remaining staff to maintain all park facilities, including the softball fields, soccer fields, the old airport property, Connestee Falls, and Rosman Community Park.

Staff evaluated the use of a private contractor to provide mowing and other grounds maintenance activities in these areas from April 1-October 31 and for additional weeks if impacted by weather or for weed control and leaf removal and sought quotes for providing these services. Moving to a contract service would achieve a savings of \$5,486.10 (salary and benefits of position is \$70,486.10 minus the proposed contract cost of \$65,000).

If approved, the Operations Director would manage the grounds contract. Staff recommended approval of the Operations Director to proceed with the use of a grounds contract to perform mowing at designated County facilities.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve the Operations Director to proceed with the use of a grounds contract to perform mowing at designated County facilities, seconded by Commissioner Casciato and unanimously approved.

Chairman Chappell called for a recess at 5:56 p.m. The Board reconvened at 6:09 p.m.

SELECTION OF COURTHOUSE ARCHITECT

Background

The County Manager presented this item to the Board. In early 2023, the Board of Commissioners decided to pursue the construction of a new courthouse adjacent to the Public Safety Site on Morris Road.

The request for qualifications (RFQ) process in North Carolina is intended to allow for the assessment of qualifications for professional services, like architecture, customized to the type of work and project being proposed and to promote decision-making based on professional assessment. The Manager intended to present a professional assessment of the RFQ responses.

The Manager noted that in previous meetings, the Commissioners had conversations about what they would be looking for in an architect. As a result, staff developed an RFQ that invited proposals from architecture firms capable of designing a courthouse with a particular interest in demonstrated experience in courthouse projects specifically, phasing of projects for future growth, alternative construction methods, and cost reduction strategies. Additional information was requested to showcase courthouse and/or public projects within North Carolina and knowledge of required processes inherent to the state.

Transylvania County uses a project team approach to project evaluation, development, design, and management. The team holds regular meetings to engage diverse professionals in guiding County projects and to ensure communication across various functions involved in capital improvements including finance, administration, operations, and construction management functions. This team was engaged to evaluate the written proposals as submitted for the courthouse project. The team then developed questions for the interview of each proposal party. The interviews were designed to gain additional information on the professional elements desired for the project. The interview format also included the full County project team to test the ability of the proposed firm's staff to function effectively with each other and engage the County project team. Each firm was invited to bring their staff as they saw fit but asked to include the principal designer who would be responsible for design in their proposal. They were instructed not to bring presentations or other materials for marketing their services so that the interviews could be focused on performance and the interaction between the firm and County teams. The design process will be lengthy and involve a lot of decision-making and communication, making the ability to effectively collaborate a critical element to success.

Following the interviews, the project team was asked to fill out template evaluations assessing the three firms on their RFQ written response and performance in the interviews with a ranking. These evaluations were conducted individually and returned without identifying information to ensure independent review. Responses and rankings were then compiled into a summary which was included in the Board's agenda packet.

Summary Proposal Notes

The County received three proposals from the following firms: Domokur/Silling, Moseley, and Sizemore. All three proposals were valid responses based on the RFQ and were thus accepted into the review process.

All firms were able to demonstrate professionals in their proposal that had at least some North Carolina public building experience and experience in courthouse design. Two firms had a local presence, but only one firm proposed a local principal designer for the project. Sizemore has an office in Asheville that houses the principal designer proposed in their response. The Domokur-Silling partnership proposal involves the Brevard-based Domokur office, but the principal designer would be from Silling and based out of state. The Moseley proposal proposed services out of their Charlotte, NC office with the principal designer based in Charlotte.

The project team's summary evaluations of the proposals based on the RFQ responses and interviews are included in the Board's agenda packet. Each proposal had positive merits and presented a professional team

of qualified and capable individuals making the project team's task of evaluation challenging. The summary of feedback from the seven project team participants including desired factors such as experience in alternative construction methods and cost control strategies is summarized to show the differences in performance among the three proposals and the composite ranking of the three proposals. For purposes of evaluation, a 1 is the perfect score for ranking. The group ranked the response from Sizemore (1.43) as the top proposal over Moseley (1.57) and Domokur-Silling (3.0). The score reflects that Sizemore and Moseley ranked very closely with each other.

Next Steps

Once the Commissioners select an architect representing the most qualified proposal for the project, staff will negotiate a contract in consultation with the County Attorney. The contract would then come back to the Commissioners for approval and appropriation of funds. Should negotiations fail, Commissioners should select the second most qualified proposal. All firms indicated in the interview that there needs to be a program verification phase as the first step. This will involve engaging the courthouse staff stakeholders, the project team, and the Commissioners to verify the project program including square footage, refined and updated budget estimate, and timeline for construction.

The Manager recommended the Board of Commissioners select an architect to design the courthouse and direct staff to negotiate a contract.

Chairman Chappell called for discussion.

Commissioner Chapman inquired about the various functions that were represented on the project team. The Manager responded that the project team consists of representation from the Finance department (bidding, contracting, processing payments for a project), Administration, Project Management (experience with the design and construction of capital projects), and Operations (housekeeping, maintenance). Collectively, the project team has over 100 years of experience in public capital projects.

Chairman Chappell noted the different categories the team evaluated to arrive at a ranking for each firm. They were RFQ documental submittal, professionalism, experience in courthouse design, experience in alternative construction, experience in cost-reduction strategies, interview overall, ability to answer interview questions thoroughly, and the ability to collaborate with the project team.

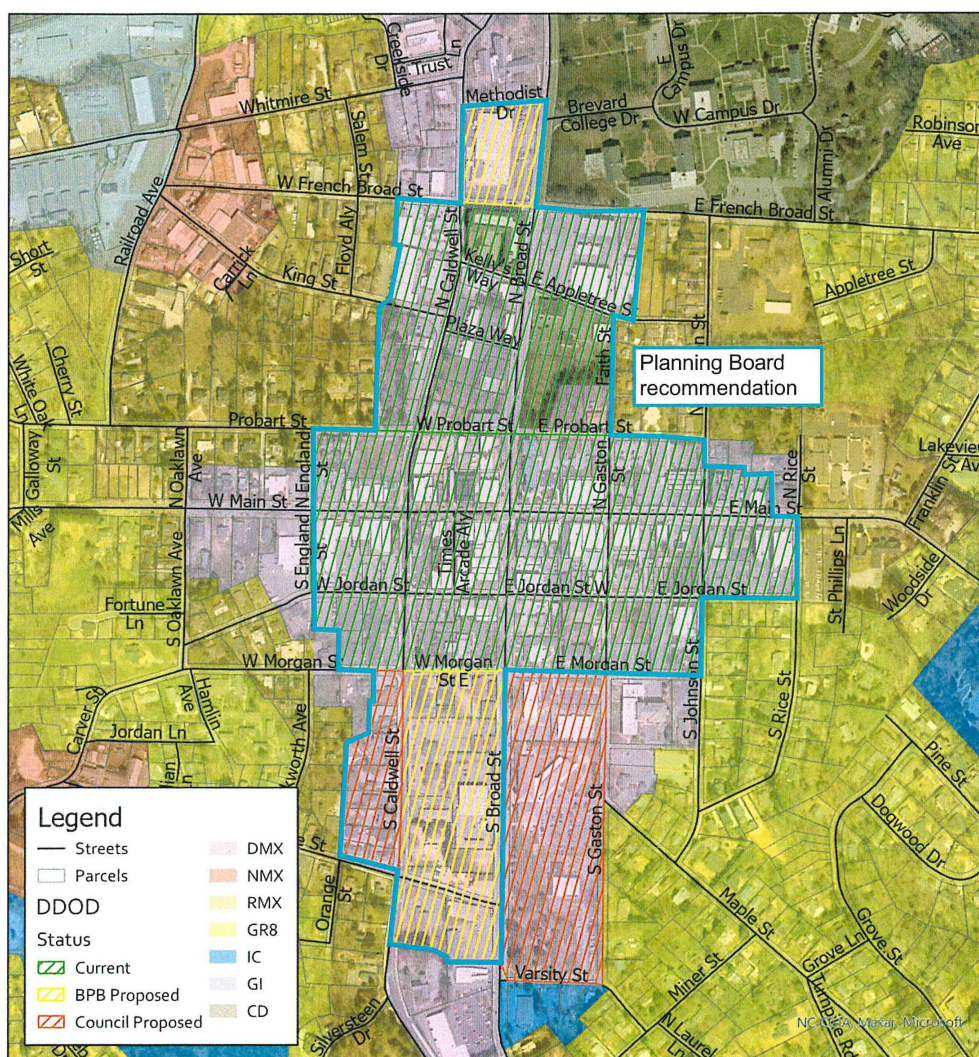
Commissioner Casciato moved to hire Sizemore as the architect to design the new courthouse and direct staff to negotiate a contract, seconded by Commissioner Dalton. Commissioner McCall asked about Sizemore's reference to Axias. The Manager stated that the contract would be with Sizemore. Sizemore would subcontract with Axias and an engineer. Axias is the same group the County and School System have been working with on the education reserve study. Staff are satisfied with Axias' work. Commissioner Chapman preferred the Board choose Moseley Architects to design the courthouse because they have completed projects in Transylvania County before and are familiar with the City's UDO. They have presented to the Board several times on courthouse options, etc. Commissioner Chapman said he had nothing against Sizemore, but he was concerned that their market is in Atlanta, GA which is markedly different than Transylvania County. Also, a new architect would have to start this process from scratch. **To accommodate Commissioner Chapman's request and with the Board's permission, Chairman Chappell called for a nomination process. Commissioner Chapman nominated and moved to appoint Moseley Architects. There was no second so the motion died.** Commissioner McCall stated that the County has conducted several studies and compiled quite a bit of information over the years, so Sizemore would not have to begin this project from scratch. Commissioner Casciato was pleased to see a timeline for completion in Sizemore's proposal. Commissioner McCall pointed out that the projects Moseley highlighted in their proposal contained significant change orders which were concerning to her. She did not see the same with Sizemore's proposal. She understands that change orders are common in projects of this size, but they become concerning when the

change orders are large and frequent. The Manager stated that the project team will review and challenge all change order requests. Projects of this size should have a significant contingency to cover change orders. Commissioner Chapman asked if staff contacted or interviewed other local governments that Sizemore has done projects to get feedback. The Manager stated that the project team received feedback on all the firms. As part of the contracting process, staff will conduct a thorough check of their references. Chairman Chappell agreed with the project team's rankings. The category that stood out the most to him was the ability to collaborate with the project team. This is one of the most important areas for a project of this scope and design. Another component was their intent to subcontract with Axias because the County has been pleased with their work on the education capital reserve study. **The motion passed by a vote of 4 to 1, with Commissioner Chapman voting against it.**

Commissioner Dalton moved to select Moseley Architects as the second choice should contract negotiations with Sizemore fail, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.

BREVARD DOWNTOWN OVERLAY REZONING COUNTY PROPERTY

REZ-23-005 - Downtown Development Overlay District Second Expansion Proposal



The Manager reported that in the fall of 2023, the City of Brevard Planning Board proposed rezoning an area of downtown to be included in the downtown overlay district. The area proposed to be included in the initial proposal for rezoning is shown on the map in yellow hatching and did not include additional County campus properties. The County already has property within the downtown development overlay at the courthouse and administration building shown in green hatching. The City Council considered the proposal in November 2023 and directed staff to include additional properties belonging to the County (Tax and Register of Deeds Office, Board of Elections, Library, Child Development, and South Broad Park). The expanded areas are shown on the map in red hatching. The revised proposal went before the City of Brevard Planning Board for their recommendation in December 2023. The Planning Board then recommended that the rezoning include the additional areas proposed by the Council but excluding the County's properties.

A public hearing was held on the proposal on February 5, 2024, but the Commissioners had not yet had the opportunity to discuss the proposal or submit comments. The City Council may vote on the proposal on February 19, 2024.

The overlay is an additional zoning regulation that applies on top of the base zoning district in the downtown area of the City. Currently, the only additional requirement is a build-to-line or maximum setback of 12 ft. for new construction. Existing buildings are not impacted under the current overlay language.

Should the Commissioners wish to register comments, support, or object to the inclusion of the additional County property in the overlay, they would need to submit comments to the City Council prior to the next meeting on February 19. She sought direction from the Board.

Chairman Chappell asked the Manager to share her concerns about the proposal. The Manager stated her biggest concerns are the unknowns about how the Board of Commissioners wants to utilize the properties in the future. Staff explored South Broad Park as a location for the new courthouse, so this new proposal would have impacted the project. That area already has stormwater drainage and soil issues which further constrain the property. Adding regulations could impact the County's ability to develop the property. Without having a solid plan in place, she said it is difficult to gauge what the actual impacts might be.

Commissioner McCall asked if a remodel or rehab of the New Adventure Learning Center would be impacted by the additional regulations. The Manager stated the regulations would not impact existing buildings. If the County were to rebuild, then they would because the setback requirements would be in place.

Commissioner Chapman inquired about the benefit to the County for supporting the proposal. The Manager stated that overlays help to keep consistency within a downtown area. The County's property would be part of the look and feel of the remainder of downtown.

Commissioner Dalton stated that the Library is raising funds to install a cover over the stage area of the amphitheater. He asked if the proposal would affect this project. The Manager stated it could if the City applied the 12 ft. build-to-line on South Gaston. Commissioner Dalton said he would not support the proposal if it impacted the Library's project for which they have already begun to fundraise.

Commissioner Chapman to reject the proposed overlay as it affects County property, seconded by Commissioner Casciato. Commissioner Mccall asked if the City would accept the Board's rejection or approve the overlay anyway. The Manager stated the decision resides with the City Council. Following this meeting, staff will send the City a rejection letter so that they understand the Commissioners are opposed to it. Chairman Chappell asked staff to make specific objections in the letter, such as the Library project and other potential expansions. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Early voting for the 2024 Primary Election begins February 15 and runs through March 2. Voters will be required to show a photo ID when voting. Contact the Transylvania County Board of Elections office for more information. Due to the Elections Center being tied up with early voting, the second courtroom will move into the Commissioners' Chambers. Parking on the County campus will be very limited over the next couple of weeks.
- Transylvania County will host the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners District 16 meeting on Wednesday, April 24 from 5:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Each District Director and their planning team serves as the host county for their district's meeting, where county commissioners and other county officials meet to share challenges, successes, and issues impacting counties within the region. Transylvania County Commissioner Larry Chapman serves as District Director for District 16. District 16 is comprised of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties.
- Kudos to the Finance Team! They have received the Certificate of Excellence for the FY 22 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report from the Government Finance Officers Association. The designation requires a panel to evaluate the "spirit of full disclosure" intended to motivate users to read and use the report.
- Education Capital Work Group meets this week
 - March 4 special meeting in Commissioners' Chambers at 4:00 p.m. to present findings to both Boards
 - Document to release the same day
 - All schools have received mold testing and safety assessment along with BHS structural testing which were all added per request after concerns were raised
 - RES project information has been forwarded to the workgroup
 - School staff confirmed there is not an immediate life safety issue
 - Working with the Fire Marshal and Building Code Enforcement Director to evaluate given their expertise just to be sure
 - The first monthly meeting with the School System's Project Coordinator, Superintendent, Assistant County Manager, and County Manager was helpful
 - Discussed looking for ways to generate savings, such as combining contracts if there is an opportunity
 - Also was an opportunity to talk through funding processes with project development
- Many have heard that a 12-year-old died in our community last weekend. Please keep him, all who may have loved and cared for him, and everyone involved in the response to this tragedy in your thoughts.

Commissioner McCall asked if the workgroup or consultant intend to make recommendations at the special meeting on March 4. The Manager stated that both Boards will receive the results of the assessment that was completed by Axias and at least a baseline option from the workgroup that will hopefully provide a roadmap on how to move forward, provided both Boards are in agreement. They also intend to at least have a second option for consideration. After the special meeting, the path forward will depend on the cooperation and agreement of the two Boards. The workgroup agrees with the recommendations that will be put forth to both Boards.

Commissioner Chapman asked if the Board of Education has agreed to the March 4 meeting. The Manager responded that Superintendent Fletcher would confirm soon. The Board of Education has a meeting the same evening, so they are trying to determine the logistics. Chairman Chappell added that this is the earliest date that could be calendared to present the findings due to juggling around several schedules. He reminded the public that the meeting would be live streamed if they were unable to attend.

In response to Commissioner Casciato, the Manager said the special meeting will be a presentation only. The two Board will then need to agree on the next steps.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Mockridge: Mr. Mockridge implored the Board to consider modifying the sound system so he can hear and understand what goes on at the meetings. He said he was only able to hear 20% of the words spoken. He asked the Board to exercise microphone etiquette by speaking directly into them. Mr. Mockridge shared that he has severe hearing loss and has trouble hearing even with the hearing loop. He asked the Board to take his concerns into consideration.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman stated that while the Board appreciates input from citizens, it is frustrating when citizens speak during public comment without knowing the facts. In response to the lady who spoke during the first public comment period, he stated that there is a process to sell the bonds which involves having detailed drawings and cost estimates in hand. The Board of Education, not the Board of Commissioners, is responsible for obtaining those. Commissioner Chapman reminded the public that the original bids on the school bond projects were 25% higher than estimated so the Board of Education had to reduce the scope of the projects. The projects were significantly different than the public expected. He wondered if the citizens remained supportive of the school bond. He wished citizens understood the process. Commissioner Chapman supported the method the Boards have taken with the workgroup and consultant to understand the critical needs of all the school facilities. He stressed that the two Boards are committed to moving forward.

Commissioner McCall stressed that the Board and Manager have been very transparent with the process during Commissioners' meetings and by posting information on the County's website. She also stressed that the original school bond projects proposed by the Board of Education were unrealistic and would have cost the taxpayers millions of dollars more. Commissioner McCall was excited about the current path, and she looked forward to receiving the report so that the two Boards have a roadmap for moving forward to address the school facilities' needs. She was appreciative of the efforts of the workgroup

Commissioner Dalton was appreciative of the Sheriff's Office, Social Services, the first responders, and others who responded to the tragic death of the 12-year-old who recently died in our County.

Commissioner Casciato asked for clarification from the Manager that the school bond referendum was to give the Board of Commissioners the ability to sell bonds as a financing method and not for specific projects. The Manager confirmed. Commissioner Casciato stated that the original plans were unrealistic, and he looked forward to receiving the report soon so that the Boards could chart a path forward to make critical repairs in all the school facilities.

Chairman Chappell stated that he looked forward to receiving the report as well. He was appreciative of both Boards agreeing to hold a special meeting in this location. He felt it was important that both Boards receive the same information at the same time. He stressed that the Board of Commissioners intends to live up to their promises to improve the school facilities.

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

CLOSED SESSION

Pursuant to 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, a closed session was entered into at 7:03 p.m. Present were Chairman Chappell, Commissioners Casciato, Chapman, Dalton, and McCall, County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Jake Dalton, Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Burton Hodges, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

The Board of Commissioners received information on potential economic development projects and directed staff on how to proceed.

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

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 7:33 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously carried.**

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board