

Unsealed by the Board of Commissioners on 02/12/2024.

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 25, 2021 – CLOSED SESSION

Per N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11 (a) (4) To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, the closed session was entered at 7:45 p.m. Present were Chairman Chappell, Commissioners Chapman, Dalton, Guice, and McCall, County Attorney Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Bill Bulfer, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Closed Session #1 – Pisgah Labs Expansion

The Manager reported that she had a positive meeting last week with Pisgah Labs' parent company, IPCA Laboratories about their commitment to expanding production in Transylvania County. They are interested in a pilot facility, with larger expansion plans in the future, and intend to begin exploring that by the end of the year. The pilot facility would add 100,000 sq. ft. across from their existing facility. They will need to conduct a floodplain study, determine wastewater capacity, and perform other due diligence work. They intend to hire an engineer to begin this work soon. Pisgah Labs has yet to provide the details on the number of new jobs and investments, but the Manager expected the expansion to be substantial.

The company identified several challenges they will face with this expansion, including workforce development, running utilities to the site, and potential economic incentives. The company is concerned about the rails to trail project because it would bring pedestrian and bicycle access right into the middle of their campus. The Manager informed them that the trail project is not currently funded but the property has been railbanked. The Transylvania Economic Alliance has secured the services of a company to conduct an analysis and evaluate the potential for rerouting the trail behind their buildings to ensure compliance with federal regulators, but so far has not gotten clearance from Pisgah Labs to move forward.

The Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) is collecting information on the project to determine an incentive package from the State. The Manager emphasized the confidential nature of this project at this time. The State wants to ensure they are competing for this project so they can attract the talent needed to fill the types of jobs this company will create. They are interested in developing curriculum training in this area in conjunction with our educational facilities. This will benefit the County and region far into the future and ready us for the next biotech company to locate there. At this point, the company must decide if they want to move forward on the pilot project or submit for the full project. From the County's perspective, it would be more beneficial for them to move forward with the whole project because that will guarantee the maximum incentives.

There are other funding opportunities as well and staff will be speaking with the Dogwood Trust Foundation this week about their economic development program. In addition, Golden Leaf remains an opportunity, as well as other incentive grants at the State level. This project will be competitive for several funding streams. The Manager encouraged our local contact to keep her informed of any barriers that may arise so they can facilitate preventing anything from keeping this project on track.

The Manager expects them to score well on the County's economic development incentives scorecard. If the County offers a competitive package, it will encourage the State to offer a competitive package as well. She felt there was an additional incentive for the State to act because the biotech and pharmaceuticals industry is growing.

The Manager reemphasized that the meeting was very positive and encouraging. There are many synergies around the biotech industry that are impacting Transylvania County which already has three headquarters located here. The company is committed to expanding its facilities here which will provide great opportunities for our citizens. The Manager and staff will continue working with them on any issues they encounter.

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board