

**MINUTES**  
**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**June 27, 2016 – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, June 27, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman, Jason Chappell, Chairman Mike Hawkins, Page Lemel and Kelvin Phillips. Also present were County Attorney Tony Dalton, Health Director Elaine Russell and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Manager Jaime Laughter was not in attendance due to the recent birth of her son. Ms. Russell facilitated the meeting in her stead.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derrick McKissock

There were approximately 30 people in the audience.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**WELCOME**

Chairman Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the audience for participating in their County government. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance. Chairman Hawkins announced that in the absence of the County Manager due to the recent birth of her son, Health Director Elaine would be facilitating the meeting. At the request of Chairman Hawkins, Ms. Russell gave a short bio of herself prior to presenting the business of the agenda.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public.

**AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

There were no agenda modifications from staff. Chairman Hawkins requested to remove Item V.D Transylvania Economic Alliance Semi-Annual Report under Presentations/Recognitions and Item XI.A Closed Session. Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse is scheduled to present these items, but he is out of town. These items will be added to the agenda for the next regular meeting on July 11, 2016.

**Chairman Hawkins moved to approve the modified agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.**

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, June 13, 2016. At this meeting, Commissioners also held a public hearing on the proposed FY 2017 Budget. The minutes were approved as submitted.

DISCOVERY, RELEASE AND MONTHLY SETTLEMENT REPORT

Each month the Tax Administrator has a listing of proposed releases for that month. The Board of Commissioners has the responsibility of approving the releases. For May 2016, total tax dollars released was \$65.00. Refunds totaled \$949.44. For the period June 1-27, 2016, total tax dollars released was \$90.00. Refunds totaled \$523.70. Commissioners approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Reports for May 2016 and June 1-27, 2016.

APPOINTMENT OF REVIEW OFFICER FOR CITY OF BREVARD

The City of Brevard requests that Paul Ray be appointed as a Review Officer for the purposes of reviewing development applications within the City of Brevard's jurisdiction, including their city limits and extra-territorial jurisdiction. NCGS 47-30.2 requires the Board of Commissioners to designate one or more persons experienced in mapping or land records management to be appointed as a Review Officer to certify maps or plats presented to the Register of Deeds as complying with all statutory requirements for recording. The City of Brevard provides a similar technical process in order to verify compliance with the City's development regulations. Commissioners approved Resolution 22-2016 Appointment of Review Officer for City of Brevard thereby appointing Paul Ray with the City of Brevard Planning Department as a Review Officer.

(Resolution 22-2016 Appointment of Review Officer for City of Brevard is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

**PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF SHELTON WAYNE CHEEK

Wayne Cheek will retire from Transylvania County effective July 1, 2016. He has been an employee of the Building, Permitting and Enforcement Department since 2004. Chairman Hawkins read aloud Resolution 19-2016 In Recognition of Shelton Wayne Cheek.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to approve Resolution 19-2016 In Recognition of Shelton Wayne Cheek. The motion was seconded by Commissioners Chapman and Phillips simultaneously.** Mr. Cheek expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work for the County. The Board of Commissioners and Building Permitting Director Mike Owen thanked him publicly for his service to the County and for the knowledge and professionalism he exhibited in his work. **The motion was approved unanimously.** Commissioners presented Mr. Cheek with the resolution.

(Resolution 19-2016 In Recognition of Shelton Wayne Cheek is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF DANIEL D. POWELL

Danny Powell will retire from Transylvania County effective July 1, 2016. He has been an employee of the Solid Waste Department since June 2006. Chairman Hawkins read aloud Resolution 20-2016 In Recognition of Daniel D. Powell.

**Commissioner Phillips moved to approve Resolution 20-2016 In Recognition of Daniel D. Powell. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lemel.** The Board of Commissioners and Director Jeff Brookshire thanked him publicly for his service to the County and for being such a dependable and

joyous employee. Mr. Powell expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to work for the County. **The motion was approved unanimously.** Commissioners presented Mr. Powell with the resolution.

(Resolution 20-2016 In Recognition of Daniel D. Powell is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

#### DESIGNATION OF JULY 2016 AS PARK AND RECREATION MONTH

Parks and Recreation Director Carleen Dixon presented this item. This July the National Parks and Recreation Association is celebrating 31 years of Park and Recreation Month and the enduring importance of parks and recreation for the world. The Transylvania County Parks and Recreation Department is challenging everyone to explore and take advantage of our many parks in July. The department is inviting everyone to post pictures on their Facebook pages of their families, friends, pets, etc. getting active in our parks. At the end of July, Parks and Recreation staff will pick their favorite picture and award the winner with a \$100 credit toward any of their programs within the next year. Chairman Hawkins read aloud the proclamation for the benefit of the public.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to approve Proclamation 21-2016 Designation of July 2016 as Park and Recreation Month and to approve the July challenge as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman and approved unanimously.**

Commissioner Chapman asked for a status on the opening of Champion Pool. Ms. Dixon said the Town of Rosman hopes to open the pool by July 1. She reported that the summer camp has been well attended.

(Proclamation 1-2016 Designation of July 2016 as Park and Recreation Month is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

### **APPOINTMENTS**

#### PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

The terms of Jeff Andersen, Sammy Kicklighter and Scott Saulsbury expire at the end of June. Sammy Kicklighter is eligible for reappointment and is willing to serve another term. Although Jeff Andersen and Scott Saulsbury are eligible to serve another term, both have requested to come off the commission at the end of their term. There are three additional applications on file other than Sammy Kicklighter's application.

Staff recommended reappointing Sammy Kicklighter and filling the other two slots from the three applications on file.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint Sammy Kicklighter to another term, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.**

**Commissioner Lemel nominated and moved to appoint Wayne Rundell to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell.** Commissioner Lemel has been in contact with Mr. Rundell. She believes he will be an engaged member of the Parks and Recreation Commission. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Commissioner Lemel nominated and moved to appoint Coty Ferguson to the Parks and Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman.** Commissioner Lemel believes he will be an engaged member of the Parks and Recreation Commission. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

CHILD FATALITY PREVENTION TEAM

The following terms expire at the end of June and each person represents various organizations in the community:

1. Amanda Lambert           Health Department
2. Kimberly Nichols        Parent
3. Kim Bailey                EMS
4. Sharon Cameron         CFPT Coordinator/Health Department

The hospital representative position is vacant at this time as the hospital is experiencing a transition in its administration. All are eligible and willing to serve another term.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint Amanda Lambert, Kimberly Nichols, Kim Bailey and Sharon Cameron to the Child Fatality Prevention Team, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.**

At the request of Commissioner Chapman, Ms. Russell explained the purpose of the Child Fatality Prevention Team (CFPT). Health Departments across the State facilitate these statutorily required committees. The CFPT is a cross-disciplinary team that performs a systems review when a child fatality occurs in order to determine if there are any changes, recommendations, education initiatives or advocacy points that can be brought forward in the community to prevent another child from potentially losing their life.

COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION TEAM

The following terms expire at the end of June and each person represents various organizations in the community:

1. Amanda Lambert           Health Department
2. Sharon Cameron         CFPT Coordinator/Health Department

The hospital representative position is vacant at this time as the hospital is experiencing a transition in its administration. All are eligible and willing to serve another term.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint Amanda Lambert and Sharon Cameron to the Community Child Protection Team, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.**

SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD

The terms of Judith West and James Felty expire at the end of June. Both are eligible and willing to serve another term. James Felty is appointed by the State and staff will be notified soon of his reappointment. There are several applications on file.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint Judith West to a second term on the Social Services Board, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.**

**NEW BUSINESS**FY 2017 TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BUDGET ORDINANCE

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on May 9 and received the Manager's recommended budget and held a budget workshop on May 12 to discuss potential modifications to the budget proposal. At the conclusion of those meetings, it was the consensus of the Board to propose a General Fund Budget

in the amount of \$48,387,036. The General Fund Budget, plus Other Funds, and less Inter-Fund Transfers gives the County a total Budget of \$53,964,824 for FY 2017.

The proposed budget includes a property tax rate increase to the revenue neutral rate of 0.4910 cents per \$100/valuation, plus an additional 0.02 cents for future capital planning purposes, for a final proposed tax rate at 0.5110. Included in the proposed budget is also a drawdown of Unassigned Fund Balance in the amount of \$105,216.

The Board of Commissioners held a public hearing during a regular meeting on June 13. Finance Director Gay Poor presented a detailed summary of the proposed FY 2017 Budget. Home and Community Care Block Grant Funding recommendations were also presented. Fire Service District tax rates and budgets were presented with no new personnel requests included and reflected changes made during the budget workshop.

There were minor fee schedule changes for both New Adventure Learning Center and EMS to cover additional costs, maintain service quality and reflect market rates.

It is the recommendation of staff to approve the FY 2017 Transylvania County Budget Ordinance and Fee Schedules.

**Commissioner Chapman moved to approve the FY 2017 Transylvania County Budget Ordinance and Fee Schedules as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lemel.**

Commissioner Chapman thanked the Manager and staff for the informative budget process. He noted that the recommended budget is approximately \$4 million less than staff requested which indicates that all of our needs are not being met. He believes the County should be proud of the citizens for supporting their local government operations, much of which is mandated by the State and federal governments. Commissioner Chapman expressed satisfaction with the budget. It reflects an overall increase of 1%, while providing a more significant increase to the School System. However, their needs are not being met either. The Board of Education has identified capital needs totaling approximately \$110 million over the next five years. With that said, he stated that no members of the public expressed any major issues with the budget proposal. He expects the hemlock study request brought up by the Transylvania Natural Resources Council to be brought up later in the year. Commissioner Chapman said he intends to support the tax increase because it is needed in order to continue providing the services that citizens demand.

Commissioner Lemel stated that one challenge that sometimes occurs when approaching a budget is that it is treated as a basic math problem, but a budget should be seen as a policy statement. She is excited that this budget reflects a willingness to invest in ourselves. There are substantial infrastructure needs that lie ahead that will enable our community to continue to succeed. Commissioner Lemel believes the budget reflects support for the School System, although it does not provide them with everything they wanted. The budget for the School System includes an increase in operational spending by 4.8% and capital outlay by 12.5%; while at the same time offering up a local government budget that is leaner than FY 16. Commissioner Lemel stated that by voting to approve this budget, Commissioners are supporting a policy statement of investing in ourselves and moving forward to a very positive and bright future for Transylvania County.

Commissioner Chappell thanked Commissioners and staff for all the work and detail that goes into preparing a proposed budget. He said he agreed with most of the elements in the proposed budget, but he still has concerns. At this time, he supports a budget with a revenue neutral tax rate. He said he would be more supportive of the additional 2 cents tax increase if the dollars were tied to specific capital projects. He would also be willing to have future discussion about increasing sales taxes for specific capital or

economic development projects. Commissioner Chappell noted that we continually close out budget years with surpluses that are added back to the General Fund Balance, although the budgets were passed anticipating a draw down from Fund Balance. One of his concerns about the budget is funding for nonprofits and the role of local government in this process. Commissioner Chappell thanked Commissioners for the dialogue that has occurred throughout this process and for their dedication to developing an appropriate budget for Transylvania County.

Commissioner Phillips also thanked Commissioners for their diligence in developing this budget, but noted the approval of the budget comes down to a philosophical difference in priorities. He agreed with planning for the future; however, he said some of the items included in the budget should not be considered priorities when there are such large capital needs on the horizon. While the budget is not perfect, he agreed with many elements of it. However, he said he does not intend to support the budget because he does back the 2 cents tax increase.

Commissioner Chappell noted that Commissioners intend to move forward with a different structure in terms of how legal services are provided to the County. He challenged Commissioners to study this item closely and gather input from all the necessary sources.

Commissioner Phillips asked for confirmation that no funding for a hemlock study was included in the budget proposal and that it will be brought up for discussion and possible approval at a future date. Commissioners confirmed.

Chairman Hawkins pointed out that budgets are not merely math problems, but rather a process of balancing needs based on resources. A governmental budget is also a policy statement whereby citizens can learn what is important to elected officials. Chairman Hawkins stated that if it passes, the budget will show three key areas of importance to this Board. The first is operational efficiency. The budget is 1% above last year's budget, and is entirely due to the increase that was provided to the School System. Without the additional funding for the School System, the budget is actually leaner than it was last year. The second policy statement is the importance of public schools in Transylvania County. That is not to say they are getting what they need; however, the shortfalls they are suffering are resulting from reductions made at the State and federal levels. The third policy statement is that Commissioners are showing a willingness to invest in the County and a willingness to raise taxes to do so. Chairman Hawkins pointed out that he and Commissioner Chapman made these points as guest speakers at the Transylvania County Republican Club recently and there were no negative comments made by the attendees; on the contrary, they were supportive. Chairman Hawkins is fully comfortable with the budget as proposed and intends to support it.

**The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 2, with Commissioners Chappell and Phillips voting against.**

#### BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Based on Section 28 of the FY 16 Budget Ordinance, certain budget amendments must be submitted to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Finance Director Gay Poor presented the budget amendments that have been requested that require Board approval either because they increase the total General Fund budget by more than \$5,000 and are derived from funding sources that (1) have not been previously approved by the Board and (2) are not simply pass-through funds or because they decrease the total General Fund budget and reflect reductions in projected funding sources.

#104: \$118,285 from General Fund balance assigned for Accrued Vacation for vacation paid out in lieu of time taken (\$72,717) and vacation paid out upon resignation or retirement (\$45,568) between 07/01/16 and 06/06/16

#130: \$55,489 from additional Extradition and Other Fees (\$789), Court Jail Fees (\$200), and fees for housing inmates from other counties (\$54,500) to cover corresponding increases in jail expenditures

#136: \$29,900 from General Fund balance assigned for Maintenance Projects to replace windows at the Social Services Building

#137: \$50,087 from unassigned General Fund balance for a reallocation of time spent by Communications personnel on activities eligible for reimbursement through 911 funds

#138: \$15,265 from General Fund balance assigned for Accrued Vacation for vacation paid out in lieu of time taken (\$6,058) and vacation paid out upon resignation or retirement (\$9,207) between 06/07/16 and 06/24/16

If approved, these amendments will increase the General Fund budget by \$269,026, bringing it to a total of \$49,162,730.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the requested budget amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips.** Commissioner Chapman expressed concern about the vacation accrual amount. He said employees should be encouraged to take vacation. Ms. Poor noted that a reserve is set up to cover vacation payout. The reserve amount is calculated as of June 30 of each year based on the actual vacation that has been earned but not taken and the amount of vacation that has been paid out. She pointed out that on June 30 the accrual is normally higher than it would be at the end of the year because employees have not yet had a full year to take vacation. Chairman Hawkins noted that local governments have gone bankrupt because they have not set up the proper reserves to take care of the various expenses related to retirement payouts. Transylvania County has been fiscally responsible with regards to this. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

#### FY 2016 SUMMARY OF BUDGET AMENDMENTS

The Finance Director provides semi-annual recaps of the budget amendments that have been approved and entered year-to-date and their impact on the fiscal year General Fund budget. Finance Director Gay Poor provided the following summation:

During the second half of the year, amendments were made that increased the budget by \$667,176, with \$445,875 attributable to appropriations from fund balance. Approximately two-thirds of this total was for personnel-related expenditures, and most of the remainder was for economic development incentives. The budget was also amended to recognize a net addition of \$36,484 in State and federal funding, with increases in funding primarily for Public Health and Social Services programs, the Soil and Water Conservation District, and the library exceeding a reduction in child care subsidies. Other amendments totaling \$184,817 were made to reflect \$54,943 in proceeds from insurance settlement; \$90,609 in Sheriff Office revenues; \$30,295 in increases in local grants and fees collected for other County services; and \$8,970 in donations.

As of June 27, 2016, amendments to the FY 16 General Fund budget have totaled \$1,262,803. Through carry forwards from FY 15 and appropriations made in FY 16, \$988,705 has been withdrawn from total fund balance - \$108,814 from restricted fund balance; \$278,664 from assigned fund balance; and \$601,227 from unassigned fund balance. Revenues from jail fees, other fees, insurance proceeds, and miscellaneous items caused \$208,157 of the growth in the budget, and new or increased grants and State and federal funding are responsible for another \$51,212. The remainder of \$14,729 was the result of donations to the County. With these amendments, the FY 16 General Fund budget as of June 27, 2016, is \$49,162,730.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to accept the report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.**

#### TRANSITIONAL TAX SETTLEMENT REPORT

Upon retirement, the Tax Collector must make a full settlement for all tax records in his or her hands per NCGS 105-373 (c) and (d). In addition to this report, the County Manager recommends engaging the County auditors to perform an ending department audit. Though not required by statute, an independent financial audit is prudent as a matter of fiduciary operating procedure.

Deputy Tax Collector presented a summary of the Transitional Tax Settlement Report as follows:

- Total Levy – All Jurisdictions - \$33,839,435.64
  - County portion – \$26,312,940.19
- Uncollected 2015 Taxes (as of June 20, 2016)
  - Total – \$78,746.13
  - County portion - \$62,899.78
- 2015 County Collection Rate (as of June 20, 2016) – 99.76% (the rate is 99.85% as of yesterday, with three days remaining in the fiscal year)
  - Collected \$26,250,040.41
- Amount of Delinquent Taxes Collected for 2014 and Prior (as of June 20, 2016)
  - County - \$33,868.54

Commissioner Chapman thanked employees of the Tax Administration department for their work on achieving an excellent tax collection rate and for remaining first in the State.

**Commissioner Chappell moved to approve the Transitional Tax Settlement Report as presented and authorized the County Manager to conduct the departmental audit. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips.** Chairman Hawkins emphasized that the department audit is not required, but it is prudent and responsible. The audit cost is being determined, but will fall within the threshold of the County Manager’s discretionary authority. The Manager will report the cost to Commissioners prior to conducting the audit. Commissioner Chappell felt the audit was important especially as Commissioners are about to appoint an Interim Tax Administrator and recruit for a new Tax Administrator. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

(The Transitional Tax Settlement Report is on file in the Clerk to the Board’s Office and the Finance Office.)

#### APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM TAX ADMINISTRATOR

It is the duty of the Board of Commissioners to appoint a Tax Administrator upon retirement or resignation of the previous Tax Administrator. Human Resources has begun the recruitment process to fill the position. Human Resources Director Sheila Cozart reported that the posting date for the new Tax Administrator will begin on June 28 and will be posted for a period of four weeks. The posting will be advertised and/or posted through various entities both statewide and locally.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Shasta Moretz as Interim Tax Administrator. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips.** Commissioner Chappell thanked Ms. Moretz for her willingness to step into this role. She is qualified and the County is in good hands through this interim period. Commissioner Phillips noted that the Tax Administration department has been a “well-oiled machine” for some time and he expects no different during the transition period. They have achieved their successes as a team. Chairman Hawkins inquired about the total time the process should take to

recruit a new Tax Administrator. Ms. Cozart believes it should take 70-90 days to fill the position. This mirrors the time frame it required to hire the County Manager, Social Services Director and Health Director. Chairman Hawkins stated there is a certain amount of urgency here to ensure the department is not short-staffed for longer than necessary. He thanked Ms. Moretz for her willingness to take on this role. He assured staff that Commissioners will do all they can to help them during this interim period. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Russell reported the following:

1. The first annual Upper French Broad River Festival was held in Rosman on Saturday, June 18.
2. The Sheriff's Office started SHIELD Camp on June 20. The camp will run for a period of two weeks.
3. Registration for the Library's Summer Reading Program is at 639 and counting (as of June 21). This includes 57 babies who are registered for our new Early Literacy Summer Reading Program.
4. Parks and Recreation 2016 Summer Camps
  - a. Rosman Free Drop In Summer Camp: Averaged 13 daily attendees during the first 8 days
  - b. Tiny Tots Preschool Camp: June 20-24; full with 24 attendees
  - c. Traditional Summer Camp: June 27-July 1; with 24 registered and 6 on the waiting list
  - d. Traditional Summer Camp: July 11-15; 21 of 24 spots full
  - e. Summer Dodgeball Camp: July 25-29; 24 registered with 4 on the waiting list
  - f. Tiny Tots Preschool: August 8-12; 14 of 24 spots full
5. The Planning Department wants to get a high quality resolution picture of the Board of Commissioners to include in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan report. Please stay around for a few minutes after the meeting so we can get a picture of the full Board.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bill Mayes: Mr. Mayes reported that he appealed his tax appraisal to the Tax Administration office and then to the Board of Equalization and Review. He was displeased with the amount of time he was allowed to make his appeal to the Board. He believes he is entitled to another hearing. He also believes there should be a better education campaign to help citizens understand how their property is appraised. Mr. Mayes provided some background documents to Commissioners for their review and respectfully requested a new hearing.

Don Surette: Mr. Surette thanked Commissioners for their investment in economic development. He believes it was a good decision for the future of the County and it will provide funds to complete projects.

#### **COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Lemel reported on her Commissioner activities since the last meeting. She spent some time with the REACH group and they are proceeding with their goal of establishing host homes for homeless youth with the assistance of the faith community. She met with our Health Director and a representative from Smoky Mountain Mental Health to plan for a mental health forum that will be held on Monday, September 19. At this forum, various groups intend to talk about access for mental health services in Transylvania County. Commissioner Lemel attended the Mission Hospital quarterly meeting, along with Operations Manager David McNeill, and talked about helicopter services and how we respond to emergencies, and also the struggles experienced by emergency rooms with an overwhelming number of mental health patients. The Early Child Initiative continues to meet. She announced that Western Carolina Community Action will be expanding into Brevard Elementary School with two Pre-K classrooms for the fall. This will help also them to develop a new Early Head Start program at their

Hillview center. Commissioner Lemel expressed gratitude to the Parks and Recreation and Library for their programs catered toward our youngest citizens.

Commissioner Chapman responded to Mr. Mayes and assured him the Board of Commissioners will look into his complaint. He agreed that the public needs to be more educated about the tax appraisal process. Commissioner Chapman reported that we are experiencing an uptick in litter around the County, as well as damage to trails and waterways. This is due to an influx of tourists during the summer season. This is beginning to be a serious issue and we need to encourage all folks to be responsible. Commissioner Chapman again thanked the Board for their work on the budget. He believes that the investment will help to improve the economy and bring jobs. There are serious needs on the horizon for both the local government and School System that need to be addressed. He encouraged citizens to get involved with their local government and budget process. It is important that we invest ourselves moving forward. Commissioner Chapman emphasized we should be proud of this County as a whole and for what we have been able to accomplish.

Commissioner Chappell wished everyone a Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July. He invited everyone to attend the festival on Monday and noted that elected officials will participate in a reading of the Declaration of Independence at 3:00 p.m. in front of the Courthouse. He said he forwarded Commissioners an email from the Rural Planning Organization that highlighted various transportation projects. He asked Commissioners to contact him with any questions.

Chairman Hawkins reported there is an investigation taking place involving our former Tax Administrator. County Commissioners are aware of the scope of the investigation, but Commissioners cannot comment on anything related to the investigation while it is ongoing because it would hinder the investigation. The County is cooperating fully with the SBI and will support them as they work to discover the facts of the case. Chairman Hawkins emphasized that nothing in the investigation indicates any kind of official misconduct in relation to the Tax Administrator's duties. With that said, it is prudent for the County to perform an audit of the department. The Board of Commissioners and employees of Transylvania County government value public trust above all else. The Board will take any action that is necessary to ensure that illegal action does not take place in local government.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Lemel moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously carried.**

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Mike Hawkins, Chair  
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board