

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JANUARY 8, 2024 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in a regular meeting on Monday, January 8, 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 Julie Hooten, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: Jon Rich – *The Transylvania Times*

There were approximately 25 in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

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

WELCOME

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

Commissioner Dalton moved to approve the agenda as submitted, seconded by Commissioners Casciato and McCall simultaneously, and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on December 11, 2023. The 2nd meeting in December was canceled. The Board approved the minutes as submitted.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR WNC CONSTRUCTION CAREER DAY

The Mountain Area Workforce Board requested a letter of support for the WNC Construction Career Day scheduled for April 29 and May 1 at the Smoky Mountain Event Center. The goal of the event is to raise

awareness of numerous careers and show the benefits and career mobility that exist within the construction industry. It is also intended to connect with local talent on recruitment and retention and promote the current job openings in the industry. Construction Career Day is being presented by Vannoy Construction and hosted by the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board. Private sector employers will provide up to \$40,000 in sponsorships but the event is projected to cost \$60,000. The Workforce Development Board is seeking \$20,000 from Duke Energy's Foundation to support the event expenses and thus is requesting a letter of support from its member counties to acquire this funding. The Board approved a letter of support for the WNC Construction Career Day.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY AND NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY

North Carolina State University amended the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Transylvania County for the operation of the Cooperative Extension Service. There are minimal changes to the previous document. The changes are mainly terminology updates. The County Attorney reviewed the document and suggested additional changes which are also minor. There are no changes to the financial responsibility of each entity. The Board approved the updated MOA between the County and NC State.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

RECOGNITION OF CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

In July 2015, the Board of Commissioners implemented a recognition program to express their appreciation to citizens who volunteer their time and expertise on the County's citizen advisory councils. The Board recognizes citizens on a semi-annual basis. This period covered July 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023. Each person in attendance was presented with a certificate of appreciation and an insulated mug with the County logo. The Clerk extended the invitation to either the December 11, January 8, or January 22 meetings. The Clerk will mail certificates to those citizen volunteers who are unable to attend.

- Kate Hayes – Transylvania Natural Resources Council (in attendance)
- Joel Malefyt – Transylvania Natural Resources Council
- Fred Morse – Transylvania County Planning Board (attended 12/11/2023 meeting)
- Ali Holroyd Lien – Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority
- Layton Parker – Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (attended 12/11/2023 meeting)
- Jeremy Gibbs – Library Board of Trustees

Chairman Chappell encouraged citizens to consider applying to serve on a citizen advisory council. Citizens can access an application via the County's website or by contacting the Clerk to the Board.

PRESENTATION BY TRANSYLVANIA HERITAGE MUSEUM

Rebecca Suddeth is the Program Director for the Transylvania Heritage Museum. She requested to make a presentation to the Board on the activities and programs hosted by the Museum, as well as to update the Board on the Museum's goals and objectives. There is no action required by the Board. Below is a summary of her presentation:

Mission

The mission of the Transylvania Heritage Museum is to protect and preserve the heritage of Transylvania County. Their interactive exhibits, multi-age educational programs, cultural events, and special collections foster an understanding of local culture to ensure it is appreciated by the people of today and preserved for those of tomorrow.

Mountain Legacies: Exploring Appalachian Culture

Ms. Suddeth offered the following statistics for the period March 18 – October 21:

- 1,350 visitors to the Museum
- 8 supporting programs
- 530 program attendees
- Partnered with 4 community centers to provide programming in the communities
- 1,500 estimated attendees at the Appalachian Folk Festival

Silvermont House Museum

The Transylvania Heritage Museum also operates the second-floor house Museum at Silvermont. The Museum is open for tours on Thursday mornings and Friday afternoons, from April through September. In addition to open hours, the Museum accommodated the following groups:

- 11 groups by special arrangements
- 5 school visits totaling 260 students
- 4 day trip tours from outside of Transylvania County

Educational Endeavors

- 18 class tours at 3 locations, served 725 Transylvania County students in 2023
- 550 students enrolled in Transylvania County Schools; 175 private or homeschooled students
- Teaching trunks were checked out 3 times

Destination for History Lovers

- The Museum had 13 scheduled walking tours, including the popular East Main/Silvermont tour held the first Monday of each month in 2023
- Groups that contacted history organizations in Transylvania County to schedule day trips: Asheville History Club, Antique Car Club, Gastonia Senior Center, and the Greenville Newcomers Club

Programs and Collaborations

- Provides educational programming for the Transylvania County Historical Society
- Provides historical content for the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority and the Adventurer when needed
- Provides 8 hours of programming for Vision Transylvania during History Day each year
- Provides historical tours for the County when needed
- Consulted with College Walk to provide an exhibit for their 35th Anniversary
- Consulted with Transylvania Vocational Services on their anniversary planning
- Advised the Chamber of Commerce in planning their 100th Anniversary and provided a historical table setting for the Chamber of Commerce Gala

Aluminum Tree and Ornament Museum

- Attracts 1000's of visitors to the County during the slow season
- Garners media attention from outlets across the southeast
- Attracts both day trip and overnight visitors to the area
- Provides much-needed operating funds to the Museum
- Makes people smile

Public Support

- 2,300 followers on Facebook
- 625 subscribers to Notes & Notables
- 235 members

- \$5,000 in membership fees (estimate only)
- 30 volunteers
- \$3,850 corporate sponsorships (cash)
- \$5,000 corporate sponsorships (services)
- \$13,000 donations (estimate only)
- \$16,000 received in grant funds in 2023; Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority has assisted with funds to allow the Museum to host its larger events
- Receives donation of artifacts related to the history and heritage of Transylvania County and its families

Goals & Objectives

- Create quality exhibits and programs that engage and educate those who interact with them.
- Expand education programs and add a sensory/education garden to their location on West Main Street.
- Increase the visibility of the Museum and its programs.
- Update technology to improve organizational operations and improve visitor experiences.
- Continue to work towards financial stability and ensure future sustainability.

This concluded the formal presentation. Chairman Chappell called for questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Chapman asked which community centers the Museum partnered with. Ms. Suddeth responded that the Museum partnered with the Eastatoe, Cathey's Creek, Dunn's Rock, and Lake Toxaway Community Centers.

Commissioner McCall asked how people can learn about donating to the Museum. Ms. Suddeth stated that the Museum has not participated in a marketing campaign in several years, so they are currently seeking quotes to do a marketing campaign. She stated that most of their donations come from word of mouth. They also call for donations in their newsletter. They have placed donation boxes in strategic places. The Museum's website is outdated, but they continue to seek ways to increase their visibility and make it convenient for people to support them.

Commissioner Chapman encouraged Ms. Suddeth to continue seeking grant funds through the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority and to ensure their work and events are highlighted in the TCTDA's communications.

Commissioner Dalton asked if the Museum had considered hosting a golf tournament fundraiser. Ms. Suddeth said Burlingame has not been able to accommodate the Museum for a tournament since the pandemic. Once she determines another location, the Museum will be on board to host a tournament.

Chairman Chappell asked Ms. Suddeth to forward him an email outlining how individuals can contribute to the Museum, and he will share the information.

Commissioner Chapman reminded the public that the nation's 250th anniversary will be coming up in 2026. He encouraged everyone to begin thinking about how the County could participate in that event.

Commissioner Casciato said he has experience running a museum and therefore he was appreciative of Ms. Suddeth's passion for Transylvania County's history.

APPOINTMENTS

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

At the previous meeting, the Board reviewed individual County Commissioner appointments to several boards and committees on which they serve. Commissioner Casciato expressed that he would like to serve on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council as the County Commissioner representative, replacing Commissioner Jake Dalton. Commissioner Dalton supported this change.

Commissioner Dalton moved to appoint Commissioner Emmett Casciato as the County Commissioner representative to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

EDUCATION CAPITAL STUDY WORK GROUP UPDATE

The Manager updated the Board of Commissioners on the status of the Education Capital Study Workgroup and the expected timeline for the completion of their work. This is a summary of her presentation:

Background

- 2022- The original scope of work for Rosman High School, Rosman Middle School, and Brevard High School exceeded funding availability. The first pass at reducing the scope of work would have required the removal of some of the renovations, including the roofs. Pictures were circulating in the news media regarding the condition of the roofs.
- 2023- Collaborative effort began. Both Boards agreed there is critical work to be done to fix the school facilities.
 - The Board of Education and Board of Commissioners agreed to form a working study group to comprise the Manager, Superintendent, a retired manager, and a retired superintendent. The first step was to contract for a maintenance reserve study to inform the process. The firm Axias scheduled the assessment work to be completed during the summer months to avoid impacts on instructional time.
 - Summer 2023- The Board of Education appointed new Superintendent Dr. Lisa Fletcher.
 - Summer 2023- Conducted systemwide site visits to complete the work for the Maintenance Reserve Study.
- September 2023- The workgroup met with Axias to begin reviewing the results from the Maintenance Reserve Study. A Maintenance Reserve Study is a building assessment that helps identify critical projects that need to be done on existing facilities along with the estimated cost to do the work and a timeline for completion.
- October 2023- The workgroup met to continue reviewing the results and discussed the need to update the safety assessment for the system to inform capital project funds specifically to address safety within the school facilities.
- October 2023- In a Board of Commissioners' meeting, Brevard High School students raised concerns about mold. The Board of Commissioners authorized testing at the schools to evaluate any mold issues to inform the work of the study group.
- November 2023- Established contracts with Safe Haven to perform the safety assessment and conduct mold testing,
- December 2023- Conducted systemwide mold testing onsite and prepared recommendations.
- December 2023- Engaged the bond consultants for financial planning confirmation of the study group's work.

- December 2023- Safe Haven conducted the onsite assessment. On his blog, the Safe Haven assessor praised the collaboration of the Board of Commissioners, Board of Education, and Sheriff's Office on the School Resource Officer program that has been in place since 1998, with the following statement:
 - *"I've visited and assessed hundreds of schools, across this country. This little town in western North Carolina should be the model for school districts across the country. The police, especially trained SROs, are not the enemy. They should not be de-funded. They should be fully funded and supported. Lieutenant Greg Stroup, God bless you and your SROs!"*
- December 2023- A parent forwarded concerns to the County's Building Inspections Department regarding the structural beams at Brevard High School. County staff reengaged a structural engineer to assess the repair work from the last assessment and to provide the current status. The engineer conducted a site visit in late December.

Current Status

- The need to be responsive to concerns raised during this process has slowed down work from the original timeline but has been necessary to make sure that the workgroup has complete information to develop actionable options for the Board's consideration.
- Results from the safety assessment are still pending. An update with Safe Haven is scheduled for next week.
- Structural results are pending but they are expected to be available this week.
- Mold test information has been completed and sent to Axias to ensure the information is considered on the identified projects list.
- Transylvania County Schools staff has provided some additional information based on currently funded project work on building needs and those have been sent to Axias.
- The workgroup is unified that the buildings are worthy of investment and have usable life. The most critical need appears to be roof replacements. The group continues to sort through all of the data from this work to provide a comprehensive path forward.
- Expecting to have solid project options for the Boards to consider and with the expectation of moving forward in 2024 collectively.

This concluded the Manager's presentation. She asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the work the study group has conducted so far.

Discussion

Chairman Chappell said the Board looks forward to receiving the full report as soon as possible so that both Boards can work together to accomplish these projects. The Commissioners have been unanimous in their desire to see progress and for these projects to have a major impact on the community.

Commissioner Chapman asked how the reports would be presented to the Boards. He recommended the Board of Commissioners consider a joint meeting with the Board of Education to receive the report. The Manager stated that both Boards will receive the same information. Whether the Boards choose to receive the information in a joint session or separate sessions will be the desire of the two Boards. The workgroup has been very thoughtful in its work and its goal is to ensure the path forward is a practical approach, not aspirational. She expected both Boards to be pleased with the work that has been done.

Commissioner McCall requested a hard copy of the Manager's update. She then referred to the statement in the Manager's presentation about the workgroup being unified. She stressed how important this is and noted that the workgroup is made up of staff from the County and the School System. She commended the relationship and work between the County Manager and Superintendent. She was appreciative of their collaborative efforts and responsiveness to issues. The Manager shared that the collaboration with Dr.

Fletcher has been incredible. Additionally, having the two retired professionals has helped them to see issues from a different perspective. Dr. Fletcher was in attendance, and she expressed her appreciation for how concerns are being addressed immediately. She was also thankful that the Board of Commissioners was funding the work for these studies. She felt that the County and the School System were moving forward expeditiously.

Commissioner Dalton asked if the roof replacements for Rosman Middle School and Rosman High School have been completed. The Manager replied yes. The roof replacements for these two schools were funded last year. She felt that moving those projects forward was smart to protect the facilities from further issues.

Commissioner Dalton inquired about the piping project at Pisgah Forest Elementary School. The Manager shared that this project is also moving forward. The County has been receiving some of those invoices. As a compliment to School System staff, the County has seen a lot of school projects moving forward as the reimbursement requests are coming through the Finance Department. Commissioner Dalton commented that the staff overseeing the completion of the capital projects for the School System are doing a wonderful job.

Commissioner Casciato inquired about how number of maintenance staff the School System has for maintaining the school facilities. He was concerned there may not be enough staff to maintain the number of facilities they have. The Manager did not have the number, but she said she would find out and inform the Commissioners.

Chairman Chappell thanked staff for the work being done to move forward much-needed projects.

NEW BUSINESS

ROSMAN FIRE DEPARTMENT RESERVE FUND & APPARATUS FUNDING REQUEST

Fire Marshal Scott Justice presented this item to the Board. The purpose of this item is to request the Commissioners' support for a withdrawal from the Rosman Fire Department reserves and the completion of the necessary documents for the department's low-interest loan for apparatus acquisition.

Mr. Justus reported that in 2021, Rosman Fire Department began saving for a down payment on the replacement of its 24-year-old tanker (1999 Freightliner 4WD 2,000-gallon tank and 750/gpm pump) that will be replaced with 2025 Toyne - Freightliner Tanker that is also 4WD and carries 2,000 gallons of water but comes with a larger capacity 1,500/gpm pump. Since that time, the cost of this apparatus has continued to increase prompting the department to review funding options with HomeTrust Bank. The delivery times have also been extended. The total cost of the apparatus is \$607,198.58.

The department has negotiated debt service funding options with HomeTrust Bank to borrow \$514,689 for a 10-year term at a rate of 4.97%. This debt service funding option requires a quarterly payment of \$16,408.93. Going this route saves the Rosman Fire Department over \$165,633.20 in interest over the life of the loan. The department has paid Toyne Fire Apparatus a down payment of \$92,509.58 (20%) from their apparatus savings fund and has paid \$6,433.62 for a performance bond.

Rosman Fire Department is requesting to draw down \$49,226.79 from its district reserve funds to cover three quarterly payments for this apparatus. The department will pay \$32,817.86 from its savings account to cover two quarterly payments which will cover the loan payments for one year and three months until the two current loans the department has reach maturity date and are paid off, totaling \$14,466.66 quarterly. At that time, the Rosman Fire Department will roll the quarterly payments into the new apparatus loan. This will result in a quarterly deficit of \$1,942.27 (\$7,769.88 annually) in apparatus payments beginning in July 2025 (FY 26 Budget). Rosman Fire Department is not requesting a debt service increase for this apparatus in the

upcoming budget year (FY 25). The department plans to ask for a debt service increase in FY 26 to cover the deficit.

Staff recommended the Board of Commissioners support Rosman Fire Department's request to draw down funds from its fire district reserve and to sign the low-interest loan documentation for the acquisition of the apparatus.

In response to questions from Commissioner Chapman, Rosman Fire Department's Treasurer Terry Crowe shared that the department has locked in the interest rate for the life of the loan, but the department could refinance should the interest rate drop. The department has not decided on the use of the current truck at this time other than replacing it. They are 30 months out from receiving the new truck, so the department is not currently at a decision point on the current truck.

Commissioner McCall was appreciative of the department looking within its budget to accommodate this need and trying to make the best financial decision for the department. Chairman Chappell echoed Commissioner McCall's comments about the department's planning and preparation to minimize the impact on the budget.

Commissioner Casciato moved to approve a withdrawal of \$49,226.79 from Rosman Fire Department's district reserve fund to use as quarterly payments for a new apparatus and to authorize the Chairman to sign the County Funding and Acknowledgement Letter with Hometryst Bank to receive the low-interest rate financing for this apparatus, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and approved unanimously.

SUBMISSION OF CAPITAL ITEMS TO STATE FOR POTENTIAL FUNDING

Due to the advocacy of the County Commissioners and staff, Transylvania County and the municipalities received \$40 million in funding for capital improvements over the last year. The Board and staff are thankful to our representatives - Senator Corbin and Representative Clappitt - for advocating on our behalf as well. The short session will be starting soon. The Commissioners want to continue advocating for funding for critical projects. Below is the list that staff submitted to our State Representatives last year, along with a few updates. Staff asked the Board to review and discuss the list for approval:

Capital Project	Projected Costs
County Courthouse	\$50 million
High School Improvements	\$100 million
Blue Ridge Community College Campus	\$35 million - \$80 million (tearing down and rebuilding onsite versus an entirely new campus)
Middle and Elementary School Improvements	\$20 million
Land for Industrial Park	\$4 million
Water Intake/Water Treatment Plan	\$45 million
City of Brevard Wastewater Needs	\$65 million
Town of Rosman/Lake Toxaway Area Water/Sewer Expansion Needs	\$35 million
Pisgah Labs/Pisgah Forest Area Water/Sewer Extension	\$5 million

Azalea Community Extension for Failing Septic	\$3 million
Wilson Road Community Water/Sewer Extension	\$10 million
Radio Replacement Needs in Emergency Services/Sheriff's Office	\$1.2 million (increased to \$2 million at the request of the Board of Commissioners)
Communications Tower	\$1 million
Relocated Facilities for Industrial Park	\$8 million
Sylvan Valley Industrial Park Addition	\$4 million (the project is larger, but County staff is currently managing a \$1.5 million GoldenLeaf grant)

Commissioner Chapman noted that a significant portion of the list is comprised of water and sewer infrastructure funding requests. He asked if the City of Brevard and the Town of Rosman intend to make similar requests from the State or whether the funds would pass through the County before being appropriated to the municipalities. He also asked whether it was time for the County to consider a countywide infrastructure system.

The Manager stated that larger systems can operate and keep costs affordable due to having an economy of scale. For this reason, she would never advise the Board not to consider a larger system; however, with both the City of Brevard and the Town of Rosman providing these services, it is in the County's best interest for there to be infrastructure available to meet the needs for residential, commercial and industrial development. The County is well guided to continue advocating for water and sewer funds whether they come to the County or either municipality. In the last go-round, the State appropriated funds for the County, City, and Town, so she encouraged the Commissioners to continue advocacy.

Commissioner McCall asked if the Legislature could earmark dollars for water and sewer for specific entities and designate the entity that would manage the system. The Manager said the State has broad discretion to make those determinations on which entities receive funding and for what the funding is used. In the last set of earmarks, the State did not specify the projects and instead left the decisions up to the funding recipients. The Manager noted that State and federal funding always comes with spending requirements, so it is important for the jurisdictions to understand the rules and have the staff to manage the funds responsibly.

Commissioner McCall stated that the Commissioners should not completely set aside the possibility of a county water authority in the future because it would serve all citizens in Transylvania County.

Commissioner Dalton inquired further about the Wilson Road community water and sewer extension request. He asked for clarification on whether the County was ready to provide funding to assist the community but was unable to get the cooperation of the City. The Manager explained that staff explored applying some of the County's ARPA funding toward this project but in the end, it was not a project in which the City was ready to move forward.

Commissioner Casciato asked how many people will be displaced and how many businesses will be impacted by the Wilson Road widening project. The Manager was unsure how many people would be displaced. She pointed out that the NC Department of Transportation will provide funding to help them relocate, but the challenge is that there is no place for them to relocate. A daycare center will likely be impacted, as well as the Le Parc development.

Commissioner McCall asked whether any State funding would cover the needs of the fire departments or County departments only. The Manager stated that any State funding received would only impact the County's departments; however, with Kenwood going out of the communications business, there will be impacts on all first responder agencies.

Commissioner McCall suggested increasing the amount being requested for the radio replacements based on systemwide needs. She saw this as a major safety and communications issue. The Manager acknowledged that the Board could increase the ask which would allow the County, if awarded, to make a larger purchase of radios to donate to the fire departments.

The Manager commended the Board for submitting a diverse list of requests to the State. It will be helpful to them as they begin exploring available funding within the State budget. Chairman Chappell agreed. He did not anticipate the County receiving funding for each project or funding for any project in its entirety but stressed that the County would not receive any funding unless it asked. He also pointed out that the items in the list show how the County engages in partnerships with other entities and makes requests on their behalf when they have specific needs.

Chairman Chappell agreed with Commissioner McCall's suggestion to up the funding request for the radios.

Commissioner Dalton mentioned that three of the five Commissioners will be in Raleigh next week for the NCACC meetings, and with the short session beginning soon, it would be prudent to hand deliver the letter to our representatives. Staff will have the letter ready for the Chairman to sign for the Commissioners to hand-deliver next week.

Commissioner Chapman pointed out the list includes requests for \$120 million in school improvements. He asked if the recent completion of several capital projects would impact those figures. The Manager stated that it made sense to keep the previous numbers because there are so many needs. The work the study group is doing will help to prioritize the most critical needs.

Commissioner Chapman asked if it was necessary to provide backup materials or justification to our legislators for the County's funding requests. The Manager stated that the Commissioners and staff are in regular communication with both representatives, so they are familiar with the County's needs. If they have questions, they will reach out to staff for further information. Fortunately, the Board has made approval of a list of funding requests an annual practice, so they are seeing the County's needs frequently. Commissioner Dalton shared that when he delivered the letter last year, he sat down with the representatives and reviewed the list line by line and answered any questions they had at that time as well.

Commissioner McCall inquired further about the communications tower and whether the funding request was adequate. The Manager stated that one tower was funded in this year's County budget. In the funding request, she included the cost of two additional towers.

Commissioner Chapman asked staff to ensure that the City of Brevard and the Town of Rosman are aware of the County's funding requests.

With no further discussion, Chairman Chappell reiterated that staff would prepare the letter this week for him to sign and the Commissioners to pick up for delivery to Raleigh.

Commissioner McCall moved to approve the revised list, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Severe weather is on its way with 4-6 inches of rain projected in our area along with a wind advisory through tomorrow night. Updates will be available on the Transylvania Emergency Services Facebook page. Citizens may sign up for alerts to receive updates on specific events.
- Transylvania County offices will be closed on Monday, January 15 in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.
- NC Association of County Commissioners kicked off a new video series to show the ins and outs of county functions and to illustrate the responsibilities, processes, and hard-working people that make county governments operate in North Carolina. The first episode was shared in February, and it gave a general overview of county government. The second episode shared in June gave an overview of county finance functions. Episode 3 highlighted Emergency Management in North Carolina. Episode 4 showcased the positive yet challenging work of the Department of Social Services. These videos are important to help the public understand how their tax dollars are at work in county government and the difference between counties and municipalities.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman shared that he met with Congressman Edwards last week to discuss several issues. One issue that arose was that the Veterans Administration is transitioning its departmental funds to serve illegal immigrants. Congressman Edwards is proposing a bill to stop this from occurring. Commissioner Chapman encouraged citizens to contact their federal legislators if they are interested in this topic. Commissioner Chapman reported that Congressman Edwards wanted to know the Board's stance on a request to designate the North Fork of the French Broad River as wild and scenic. Lastly, he encouraged citizens to visit Congressman Edwards' mobile bus and talk with him and his staff about any issues they may have.

Commissioner McCall commented on how fortunate the County is to have Amanda Vanderloef as its Department of Social Services Director. She has strived to hire very dedicated employees in a department that does difficult work. She stated that when people come to DSS, they are normally not at the highest point in their lives, so it is extremely important to have leadership and staff that are compassionate and responsive to the needs of the citizens.

Commissioner Casciato announced that on February 3, a showing of the NC Association of County Commissioners' documentary film "The Veteran's Battlefield" will be in the Rogow Room at the Library at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. The film highlights many of the issues, both mentally and physically, that veterans are going through. Much of it was filmed in Transylvania and Henderson Counties. Commissioner Casciato encouraged everyone to attend this very moving film. He also wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Chairman Chappell stated this will likely be the last short meeting the Board has for the next few months as the County enters the budget season. He asked the Commissioners to keep staff apprised of their schedules moving forward so that they can schedule meetings accordingly. Chairman Chappell mentioned that the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday next week shortens the turnaround time on the next agenda. He encouraged citizens to participate in the many events scheduled next week to honor Dr. King. Lastly, Chairman Chappell thanked everyone for attending the meeting and being part of the local government process and he wished everyone a Happy New Year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Dalton moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Casciato and unanimously approved.**

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board