

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
November 14, 2011 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, November 14, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the large courtroom of the Transylvania County Courthouse.

Commissioners present were Larry Chapman, Jason Chappell, Chairman Mike Hawkins, Daryle Hogsed, and Vice-Chairman Kelvin Phillips. Also present were County Manager Artie Wilson, County Attorney Curtis Potter, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Mark Todd

There were approximately 40 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding 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. Chairman Hawkins introduced the members of the Board of Commissioners and staff.

PUBLIC HEARING

CLOSE OUT 2008 SCATTERED SITE HOUSING PROJECT

In 2008 Transylvania County received a Scattered Site Housing grant through the North Carolina Department of Commerce in the amount of \$400,000. Benchmark CMR, Inc. administered the grant program which is now complete. A public hearing is required in order to close out the grant. Gary Wilson with Benchmark CMR, Inc. provided the report to Commissioners as follows:

Transylvania County was awarded \$400,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Community Investment and Assistance in November 2008 to provide full, comprehensive rehabilitation to seven units within the County and to assist seven units with grants of up to \$5,000 each on behalf of low and moderate income families. Transylvania County was able to assist six families with full, comprehensive rehabilitation with deferred, forgiven loans ranging from \$31,779 to \$58,170. Transylvania County also assisted seven families with emergency repair grants up to \$5,000 each. Mr. Wilson noted that seven houses were originally targeted for full rehabilitations, but due to regulations that could not be met, an amendment was not sent to the State in a prompt manner to help the seventh family. As a result, Transylvania County returned approximately \$8,223 to the State which was funds the County did not have time to spend because of the particular amendment issue.

Mr. Wilson showed pictures of some of the projects, noting that the rehabilitated homes help elderly and disabled persons have energy efficient homes for the remainder of their lives. Homes are also equipped with handicapped improvements and accessibility, if needed.

The following assistance was provided for the full rehabilitation units:

- Interior and exterior repairs, including siding
- Repaired foundations

11/14/2011

- Installed new vents
- Upgraded insulation
- Repaired plumbing systems
- Electrical upgrades
- New windows and doors
- New central heating and air units
- Repaired floors
- Replaced bath amenities
- Added new exhaust fans in bathrooms and kitchens
- New cabinets
- New roofs
- New ceiling vents

Transylvania County spent a total of \$313,182.78 on comprehensive rehabilitation projects at an average cost of \$44,470 per unit. Transylvania County spent \$31,951 in emergency repair costs at an average cost of \$4,564 per unit. The total expended was \$391,776.58.

These programs do not operate alone and there is a lot of work involved at the local level. Mr. Wilson thanked all those who assisted Benchmark CMR, Inc., particularly the Transylvania County Planning Office and Transylvania County Administration.

Commissioner Chapman inquired as to who identifies the structures or units in the County that need rehabilitation. Mr. Wilson responded that advertisements are placed in the local newspaper. The County has had these programs for a number of years so there is a waiting list. Interested persons complete an application and then added to the waiting list. A selection committee makes the recommendation. The selection committee, appointed by the County Commissioners, is a very diverse committee of members representing different groups throughout the community.

The next funding cycle for Transylvania County begins again in 2012. Chairman Hawkins asked if the next cycle will be funded. Mr. Wilson said Transylvania County is on the list of counties to receive funding but the State has not yet announced the cycle. Once the announcement is made the County will have to attend a meeting in order to apply. Then the County will have approximately three months to prepare the application.

Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing open at 7:20 p.m.

Planning and Economic Development Director Mark Burrows thanked Benchmark CMR, Inc. for administering the grant because Transylvania County could not afford to do all the work that they do as part of this service. Mr. Burrows pointed out that monies were returned to the State not because of an error by Benchmark CMR, Inc. or Transylvania County, but rather because of State bureaucracy.

There were no further comments. **Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing closed at 7:22 p.m.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chris Lewis: Mr. Lewis publicly recognized Charlie Waser who has been the moving force behind the Transylvania County Wheels to Work program for a number of years. The Wheels to Work program is where donated and low cost purchased cars are repaired and donated to qualified recipients through the Sharing House. Mr. Lewis reported that Mr. Waser typically does most, if not all, the work on the cars, including finding and buying the non-donated cars. In 2010 there were 13 cars given to qualified clients and additional 9 in 2011. This program allows clients to obtain and/or maintain employment. Mr. Waser

plans to retire in the very near future and Mr. Lewis has agreed to fill his shoes. If the County has a distinguished citizen service award, Mr. Lewis suggested the County research Mr. Waser's efforts and determine whether or not he is a candidate. He suggested the County consider recognizing Mr. Waser for his service to the community.

Mr. Lewis said he recently became involved with giving money and time to the new homeless shelter, The Haven. As he looked at the process for how such an organization operates, he said it became evident that they are doing very much with very little. He noted there has been much publicity about fundraising efforts for the new animal shelter and it struck him as odd at the relative disparity between the projected and funded cost of both shelters. Mr. Lewis inquired as to how other qualifying organizations tap into government resources. He said he would like to see a more balanced approach to settling both shelter issues.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

The Manager reported on the agenda modifications. He requested to add Item VIII-B Reject Bids for Sidewalk at the Public Safety Facility under Old Business, add Item IX-D Budget Amendments under New Business and move the Manager's Report to Item IX-E.

Commissioner Hogsed moved to approve the agenda as modified, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The minutes of the October 24, 2011 regular meeting were approved.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

TRANSYLVANIA SPORTS AND RECREATION FOUNDATION

The Transylvania Sports and Recreation Foundation (TSRF) is a newly formed foundation with the goal of funding recreation and sports facilities in Transylvania County. Skip Hirsch, a member of the Foundation, gave a presentation to the Board.

The TSRF is made up of a group of people who recognize that sports and recreation in some way touches everyone's lives. This group also recognizes the difficult economic times and priorities that local governments must make, so they hope this organization can help find the monies for recreation and sports projects. TSRF's vision is to improve the quality of life of all residents of Transylvania County by providing independent funding for recreation and sports multi-use capital projects.

Through the funding of recreation and sports facilities, the TSRF's purpose is to:

1. Support the development of well rounded physically fit youth
2. Improve the quality of life of the County's population regardless of age or level of physical ability
3. Advocate the sharing of facilities
4. Use sports and recreation as a means of economic development in the County

The membership will consist of any person who is willing to give their time and/or money to support the vision, purpose and projects of the TSRF.

The TSRF expects cooperation, endorsement and support from various organizations in order to be successful. They are:

1. Grants from private foundations
2. Government
3. Transylvania County Schools
4. Brevard College
5. Private Groups
6. Businesses
7. Private donations, tributes, and memorials

Mr. Hirsch emphasized that the TSRF does not intend to replace any organization but only to support those who are trying to find funding for various sports and recreation projects.

The TSRF will operate by receiving grant requests from interested organizations and grants will be evaluated based on priorities set by the board of directors. The TSRF plans to raise money through an annual fundraising campaign and targeted capital project campaigns and then provide funding as needed by the grantee organization and monitor its use.

Mr. Hirsch reported the first major project the TSRF plans to raise monies for is for turf for Brevard High School Memorial Stadium. In order to make that happen, the TSRF will need a grant request from Transylvania County Schools, coupled with endorsements and commitments of support from Transylvania County, the City of Brevard, Transylvania County Schools and Brevard College. The TSRF is committed to using its available resources to raise the funds necessary to complete the project.

Commissioner Chapman inquired as to any timelines the Foundation may have established for its first project. Mr. Hirsch said there are many challenges to overcome but the goal would be to raise the money by 2015-2016.

Commissioner Chappell expressed concern about the TSRF's first fundraising project being turf for Brevard High School Memorial Stadium when no request has been made by either the Transylvania County Board of Education or Brevard College. Mr. Hirsch said the TSRF is doing its best to bring the affected organizations together to make the request to the TSRF. The TSRF is trying to stay out of the business of defining projects but the TSRF deems it worthy of being its flagship project.

Commissioner Chappell asked if passage of the proposed resolution allows the TSRF to use the County's logo and gives them automatic endorsement of the project by the County. He expressed concern about this because the Board of Commissioners has yet to discuss this matter. Mr. Hirsch said he is not asking the County for endorsement at this point, only to pass a resolution supporting the efforts of the TSRF. The TSRF has made a formal request to the Board of Education to use the School System's logo.

Chairman Hawkins said he thinks what the TSRF is doing is extremely positive and part of the reason is that there is a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that has identified a lot of needs that over the next 10 years could cost the County nearly \$8 million. If it is possible to form partnerships with others to help make these projects a reality, then he believes everyone wins and it is very positive for the County.

Commissioner Hogsed moved to approve Resolution 46-11 Supporting the Efforts of the Transylvania Sports and Recreation Foundation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman. Commissioner Chappell inquired about the result of the Foundation's request to use the Board of Education's logo on fundraising materials, etc. Mr. Hirsch said the Board of Education tabled

the decision to another meeting. He hopes the Board of Education will agree to the request because this same practice has proved successful in other areas. Commissioner Phillips suggested the Board of Commissioners delay its decision until the Board of Education is on board with the project. Mr. Hirsch said the Board of Education is very supportive of the project and the Board tabled only the decision to allow the TSRF to use its logo because there are some questions unanswered about the details. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

(Resolution 46-11 Supporting the Efforts of the Transylvania Sports and Recreation Foundation are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

RESULTS OF 2011 LIBRARY SURVEY

The Transylvania County Library conducted its first patron survey in July of this year. Library Director Anna Yount and Library employees gave a presentation on the results of the survey.

Ms. Yount reported that the Library's Long Range Strategic Plan was developed in 2009 with a grant from the State Library of North Carolina. The Plan set some ambitious goals, a good number of which have been accomplished. One of the items remaining was to conduct an annual survey with age group analysis to determine the areas of interest and need in the community. The survey team started working in early 2011 and they have worked hard and long to design the survey and gather the necessary information. Ms. Yount introduced the members of the survey team as follows: Brenda Ivers, Janet Merrell, Saronda Morgan, Cathie Odom, and Karen Weller.

Ms. Morgan reported that the Library has over 20,000 cardholders so in order to have reliable results the survey team set a goal to collect at least 1,000 surveys. During the one month survey term, almost 1,200 patrons responded.

Ms. Weller reported that each area of the survey consisted of a list of items rated by respondents based on how well the item met their needs. Out of the 50 items, half of them were rated as fully or mostly meeting the needs across all age groups. With regard to Adult Materials, patrons expressed an appreciation for the high quality and the current collection and the way the collection meets the diverse needs of all ages and interests. Patrons also expressed the need for more books that are newer and more copies of newer books so there would be a shorter waiting list for books on hold. With regard to Adult Program, the survey team learned that users enjoy the variety and the quality of the programs that are offered. Patrons did express a need for the Library to get creative with the time that some of the programs are offered, particularly to be more convenient to parents who are working. With regard to Children's and Young Adult Materials, patrons appreciate the variety and frequent additions to the Library's collection. They too would like to see more, particularly more movies and more audio books. With regard to Children's and Young Adult Programs, there was high praise as to the quality of those programs, particularly the summer reading program and the early literacy series which both receive high usage. Again, patrons asked for more programs, such as classes and activities and varying times for programs so that more parents and children can take advantage of these programs. With regard to Library Services, email reminders are popular. Technology continues to move into the forefront and patrons are asking for more online electronic services. Patrons also asked the Library to publicize its services more widely. Lastly, with regard to Technology, the quality of the technical support and the availability of the public computers and the wireless network ranked very high with patrons. On the wish list for this area, patrons requested the Library make the online card catalog and Library website more user-friendly.

Ms. Ivers talked about how the patrons find out about the programs, services and materials in the Library. The most frequently used sources are the Library website and Library staff. Younger patrons tend to get their information through social and online sites. Older groups tend to get their information from print media and the Library newsletter. Respondents also reported they were not aware of many of the services

and programs offered until they took the survey. One patron indicated that he/she is vastly underutilizing the services the Library offers.

Ms. Merrell said the surveys indicated that patrons would like for the Library to be a bit quieter. Part of the challenge will be learning how to balance the needs of people who grew up in the traditional quiet libraries and people who have grown up in the cell phone age. In addition to learning what patrons would like to be different, staff also learned about what people really like. People love the facility itself, the windows, the brightness, and they really experience it as a warm welcoming environment. People really also love the Library and the services it provides, how it enriches their lives, and how proud they are to live in a County that built and maintained a resource of this quality that truly improves their lives on a regular basis.

Ms. Odom said now that the surveys are complete and have been analyzed, the next steps will be to show the patrons that the Library staff heard what they had to say. Library staff created some steps they plan to take to improve the services the Library has to offer its patrons and they are eager to implement as many of them as they can. Parts of some of the steps have already been implemented. Ms. Odom reviewed them as follows:

1. Strengthen outreach
2. Initiate additional non-print communication – Staff is exploring the possibility of email and web-based newsletters that will also include a calendar
3. Review website for clarity and ease of use
4. Issue an FAQ to explain policies and procedures
5. Review Library collections in light of recommendations
6. Explore rearranging some areas of the collections
7. Design information sessions, printed guidelines and web-based tools to support Library technology – On a number of days the Library holds a workshop called Tech-Talk where patrons can bring in any electronic device and someone will help patrons learn more about it and how it can be utilized at the Library, such as with e-books. There are also printed materials around the Library showing users how to download books, etc.
8. Recruit patron advisory panels
9. Consider additional ways to meet scheduling needs of working people – Youth Services is looking at the possibility of offering many programs on Saturdays
10. Explore ways to minimize noise

Ms. Yount said nearly 600 people took the time to write extra comments on the survey and an overwhelming majority commented on something that was not asked about in the survey and that was the staff. The survey respondents consider the staff to be the Library's greatest asset. She expressed how proud she is of her staff. She commented that what the Library does all comes back to its Mission Statement and the usage statistics are one measure of the Library's success in fulfilling its mission.

Ms. Yount provided some highlights from the Library's Annual Statistical Report for FY 2010-11 to the State Library of North Carolina:

- Last year the Library circulated 352,980 items, an increase of nearly 4% over the previous year
- Saw greatest increase in the areas of Juvenile and Young Adult material and e-books
- Total Library business last year was 250,055 for a daily average of 874
- 20,186 people attended a program of some sort in the Library

In closing, she left Commissioners with one of the most positive comments from the survey. It read, "The Library is a success story. The County government needs to not only highly appreciate this service by reinvesting money into the Library's staff and resources, but it needs to use this as a model."

Commissioners agreed with the comment that the Library is a success story and is reflective of the hard work by the Library staff. Furthermore, surveys like this allow Commissioners to know how citizens feel about particular services the County provides and what they want to see from their County government. Commissioners thanked Ms. Yount and her staff for the tremendous job they do.

UPDATE ON COUNTY EMPLOYEES' UNITED WAY EFFORTS

Social Services Director Stoney Blevins headed up the Transylvania County Employees' United Way Campaign this year. He gave a brief presentation about the employees' efforts. Over the last few years employee contributions have been shrinking due to several factors. For many years Transylvania County government was the highest corporate giver in the County. Transylvania Regional Hospital has taken over the number one spot.

Mr. Blevins said the campaign goal this year was for employees to "hold the line" and not allow contributions to decrease this year. The fundraising goal year was set at \$18,500 and employees exceeded that goal by raising \$19,250. The second goal was to "build the team". Below 50% of employees contributed to the United Way Campaign and there were several large givers that have retired over the last couple of years. He challenged employees to give any amount to meet this goal. Last year 142 employees donated and this year that number increased to 168 which exceeded the goal of 165 employees.

APPOINTMENTS

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE CONTACT PERSON

Transylvania County recently agreed to participate in the Livable Communities Initiative. A consortium of local governments, businesses and organizations in the region will draw on existing plans and strategies to develop a plan to foster economic prosperity through a regional vision that identifies implementable projects and plans. The Board needs to appoint a member to participate in the initiative and be the contact person for Transylvania County.

Chairman Hawkins moved to appoint Commissioner Chappell to serve as the contact person for Transylvania County on the Livable Communities Initiative, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Transportation Committee has been inactive therefore there are several expired terms, listed as follows:

1. Ralph Cobb – not eligible, does not want to continue to serve
2. Dana Hawkins – not eligible, wants to continue to serve
3. Raymond Norris – eligible, wants to continue to serve
4. Mac Morrow – not eligible, wants to continue to serve
5. Horace Jarrett – eligible, wants to continue to serve
6. Fred Tinsley – not eligible, does not want to continue to serve

Besides the members list above, there is one other application on file. The applicant is interesting in serving on this committee. There would be one vacancy remaining. The Clerk advertised for the vacancies and received no applications. It is also the Board of Commissioners' responsibility to appoint a chairman. The Manager noted that during the October 18 meeting, the Transportation Committee members agreed to meet quarterly.

Chairman Hawkins moved to:

- 1. Waive the term limits and reappoint Dana Hawkins**
- 2. Reappoint Raymond Norris**
- 3. Waive the term limits and reappoint Mac Morrow**
- 4. Reappoint Horace Jarrett as the Town of Rosman representative**
- 5. Appoint Norah Davis to fill one of the vacancies**

Chairman Hawkins further moved to table the appointment of chairman and requested that the Transportation Committee make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners as to who is willing to serve as chairman. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

DELAYING THE 2013 REVALUATION

A couple of months ago Tax Administrator David Reid submitted a request to the Board of Commissioners to delay the next revaluation to January 1, 2016. The next revaluation is scheduled to occur January 1, 2013. The last revaluation was effective January 1, 2009. Commissioners tabled the decision at that time. Mr. Reid provided Commissioners more information via a power point presentation.

Counties perform revaluations in order to provide equalization and equity assessments of real and personal property. Reappraisals also create more equitable distribution of the tax burden. Counties are required to perform revaluations every eight years. Since 1995 Transylvania County has been on a seven year cycle; however in 2003 Commissioners adopted a resolution to move to a four year cycle. Transylvania County has historically tied revaluations to the Sales Assessment Ratio which compares sales prices to assessed values. The sales that have occurred since the last revaluation indicate that property values are just under market value statistically as reflected in the 2011 Sales Assessment Ratio of 98.77%. Mr. Reid will monitor the Sales Assessment Ratio and if it indicates a need to revalue, the cycle can be advanced.

If the Board of Commissioners wishes to continue with a revaluation in 2013 the cost to do an outside revaluation within the twelve month period is estimated at \$780,000 and the cost of doing it in house within twelve months is estimated at \$360,000. An in house revaluation would require the assistance of several temporary employees to complete the process within the twelve month period.

Mr. Reid summarized his presentation saying that the Sales Assessment Ratio does not indicate a need for a revaluation at this time and that it would not be cost effective because of the additional resources that would be required.

Commissioner Chapman inquired about how the County budgets for a revaluation. The Manager said funds used to be set aside in the past for octennial revaluations; however when the County moved to a four year cycle, the funds were drawn down from the general fund when needed.

Commissioner Chapman pointed out that if property values were lowered, the County would have to raise the tax rate in order to maintain the County's budget assuming that the budget was not reduced. Mr. Reid agreed, noting that many people may believe that their tax bill would be reduced if their property value was reduced, and that is not the case most of the time.

Commissioner Chapman commented that the information provided by the Tax Administrator indicates that Transylvania County is not experiencing the negative impact of falling property values like other

places across the nation and furthermore that Transylvania County remains a desirable place to live and the tax rate remains low.

Chairman Hawkins opened the floor for questions from the public. There were no public comments or questions.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve Resolution 34-11 Delaying the Revaluation Cycle From January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2016 For Reappraisal of Real Property In Transylvania County. The motion was seconded by Chairman Hawkins. Commissioner Chapman said there is no justification to spend the money on this process. Commissioner Hogsed believes the Board is making the best decision to delay the revaluation because there is insufficient data and that not doing the revaluation benefits the citizens. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

(Resolution 34-11 Delaying the Revaluation Cycle From January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2016 For Reappraisal of Real Property in Transylvania County is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

REJECT BIDS FOR SIDEWALK

The County went out for bids on the sidewalk at the Public Safety Facility on October 3, 2011. The bids were discussed at the October 24, 2011 meeting and Commissioners expressed concern about the responsiveness of the bids. After further review of the bid instructions the Manager and County Attorney believe there was sufficient ambiguity within the language regarding what information was in fact required to be submitted from each bidder therefore warranting an across the board rejection of all bids in good faith. They both believe this overly cautious approach is justified to minimize possible liability faced by the Board due to the possibility of misinterpretations of the bid instructions.

In addition, in the last two weeks there have been questions raised by Commissioners about the possibility of paying in lieu of the project which would negate the necessity of constructing the sidewalk. In order to clear up all these issues the Manager further recommended rejecting all bids and then if warranted rebid the project at a later date. If the project is to be rebid he recommended negotiating with the City to construct the project in the spring in order to get a better stand of grass and minimize erosion.

In response to a question by Commissioner Chappell, the Manager informed Commissioners that the bid documents are being revised in order to be clearer to all bidders, which is why in fairness the Manager believes the best approach is to reject all bids at this time. Furthermore, with the questions looming about negotiating with the City, the Manager believes it makes better sense to hold off until discussions can be had with the City of Brevard. If the County has to rebid the project, the bid documents will be revised.

Commissioner Chapman inquired about any legal ramifications the County may face since Commissioners voted to accept the bid at the previous meeting. The Manager said based on the concerns expressed the very next day, the bid was not awarded.

The Manager responded to a comment made by Chairman Hawkins and said if the project is delayed until the spring the County is still well within the guidelines of the UDO and the agreement with the City of Brevard.

Commissioner Hogsed moved to send an official letter from the Board of Commissioners to Brevard City Council requesting the ability to pay in lieu of instead of constructing the sidewalk and that the County take the money that otherwise would have been spent on constructing the sidewalk and give the funds to the City so they can pursue a more worthwhile project for all citizens. Chairman Hawkins said moving the project to the spring gives the County time to explore this option. He also said there is a statutory problem with this request and would require the City to change its

policy which would take time. Commissioner Chapman agreed that the County should send a formal letter to the City so citizens will be aware of how their tax dollars are being spent. **Commissioner Phillips seconded the motion.** Commissioner Chappell preferred the motion to be split into two separate actions. He reminded Commissioners that the County went through a very lengthy process with the City about this project and as a Board agreed to build the sidewalk. Therefore the Board has an obligation to fulfill its commitment whether or not it agrees with the project. Commissioner Chapman said the motion does not indicate the County has no plans to fulfill its obligations. He wants the public to be aware that the Board has done everything it can to spend taxpayers' money wisely. Commissioner Hogsed agreed, saying this is one last appeal to the City, and if it fails, the County will move forward with the project. Chairman Hawkins said he did not agree with sending a letter to the City and further commented that it is not the County's role to encourage public opinion. He preferred to work within the parameters over the next few months and see if there is a better resolution. Furthermore, he noted that the County built the Public Safety Facility in City limits knowing there were regulations and requirements that would add to the cost of the building. Lastly, he said it is not the County's role to identify more worthwhile projects within the City's jurisdiction. **The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 2, with Chairman Hawkins and Commissioner Chappell voting against.**

NEW BUSINESS

REQUEST FOR TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AGRICULTURE/COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AGENT

The local Cooperative Extension Office has had a vacancy since January 2008 due to the position being frozen at either the local or State level. The State recently unfroze this position and has offered the position to Transylvania County with the normal cost share (County-45%, State-55%) funding model. Also, just recently the Nutrition Program Assistant Position (EFNEP) became vacant. This position is currently being funded by federal funds and a State grant to the Health Department.

Local Cooperative Extension Director Eric Caldwell gave a presentation to the Board explaining why the position is needed in Transylvania County and the options available to the County. He pointed out that the Extension District viewed the position in Transylvania County as a high priority. If the County chooses not to fill the position, it will be filled by another area in the District that has a vacancy.

The Agriculture/Community Resource Development Agent's scope of work includes the following:

1. Working with local food systems/industries looking at innovative agriculture production practices
2. Working with marketing and marketing development for agriculture commodities
3. Working with food safety (good agricultural practices); from production practices to marketing, how to handle food in the market place safely, restaurants and camps
4. Consumer education: food safety and the value of eating fresh and local produce
5. Entrepreneurship training: for new folks getting into agriculture and for traditional farmers wanting to change their commodity or marketing mix and how they go about doing that
6. Community involvement: getting more folks involved with agriculture in the local community

The agent will perform outreach to new and existing farmers, food distributors, food preparers, camps, schools, and policy makers.

Projected impacts:

1. Increased capacity for all of the Extension programs; add value to what Extension staff are already doing
2. Leverage non-County resources: salary, professional services, grants, etc.
3. Supports Transylvania County Economic Development Strategic Plan
4. Supports Transylvania County Farmland Protection Plan
5. Increased local farm income (\$7,500 increase x 2.8 multiplier = \$21,000)

6. Increased consumer spending on local products (approximately \$210,000)
7. Health and wellness impacts (\$142,500)
8. Other local market impacts (\$56,000)

The projected salary range is \$35,000 to \$38,000. Transylvania County's portion would range from \$21,500 to \$23,200 which is in line with the normal cost share funding model.

Mr. Caldwell offered the following options for the Board's consideration:

Option 1

1. Fund Agent position (\$21,500 up to \$23,200)
2. Keep EFNEP position – funded “as is” (NC State and Health Department “Aid to County” grant)
3. This will leverage \$56,000 - \$60,000 in “non-County” funding

Option 2

1. Fund Agent position: utilizing Health Department “Aid to County” grant (\$10,750)
2. Total cost to County (\$10,750 - \$12,450)
3. EFNEP position abolished
4. “Aid to County” grant must be renewed annually
5. This will leverage \$26,250 - \$28,250

Mr. Caldwell requested and recommended Option 1 to the Board. Mr. Caldwell offered information to justify keeping the EFNEP position in place. The EFNEP's mission is to assist families and youth with limited resources in making simple changes in eating behaviors and daily physical activity so that, over time, healthy choices can become healthy habits. In 2010, over 1,000 participated in the EFNEP program. Programs were held in all three elementary schools, the Boys and Girls Club held summer programs, and there were several related 4-H Club activities. Some of the impacts reported from this program include (from 410 survey responses):

- 72% now eat a variety of foods
- 82% increased knowledge of basic nutrition
- 96% increased ability to select low cost, nutritious foods

Commissioner Chapman said he views this as an economic development issue because agriculture is so important in the County; therefore he supports the Agent position 100%. He said the additional cost is minimal and another County will reap the benefits if the Board turns down this opportunity.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve the request for the Agriculture/Community Resource Development Agent and to fill the EFNEP position. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

SPECIAL BONUS LEAVE FOR TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Staff has been looking at different ways to motivate, encourage and recognize County Employees in light of budget constraints. Human Resources Director Sheila Cozart requested that the Board of Commissioners grant one-time bonus leave in the amount of 20 hours for benefited employees to be used between December 5, 2011 and June 30, 2012. For benefited employees not working full time hours the leave would be prorated accordingly. The leave would be placed in a bonus leave category and could be used by the employee for vacation time, sick leave, or inclement weather purposes. The only places where additional costs might have to be absorbed are in the departments of Emergency Medical Services, Communications and the Sheriff's Office. The maximum out-of-pocket cost is estimated to be less than \$25,000.

In addition, the County Employee Christmas luncheon is scheduled for Friday, December 9, 2011 and staff requested permission to close County Offices that afternoon from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Hogsed moved to approve the 20 hours of bonus leave for full time benefited employees to be used prior to June 30, 2012 or it is forfeited and cannot be cashed out and to allow County Offices to be closed on Friday, December 9, 2011 from 12:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in order for County employees to attend the Christmas luncheon. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION IN OPEN COUNTY MEETINGS

At a previous meeting Commissioner Chapman announced that he recently learned that Greensboro City Council has a procedure in place that allows Council members to participate in official meetings via telephone. The County Attorney has researched this subject and has given his legal opinion on the matter. The School of Government has divided opinions on the legality on this type of participation.

Commissioner Chapman said he understands if his request creates areas of concern by the Board. He said he would not support electronic participation if a quorum already exists. Since he travels frequently he was looking at opportunities to call in and listen to meetings without casting a vote. Commissioner Chappell expressed concern about this practice and said that the decision-making process by the Board is based on member interaction. Because there is so much uncertainty he believes the Board could be setting itself up for problems in the future. As a result, Commissioner Chapman requested no action from the Board on this matter. If needed, the Board can revisit this matter in the future.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS

The Manager submitted two budget amendments for the Board's approval as follows:

- No. 22: to recognize a \$22,977 grant received by Soil and Water for a stream bank restoration project on the French Broad River. No county funds are involved.
- No 23: a Sales and Use Tax Liability as a result of a Sales and Use Tax Audit by the North Carolina Department of Revenue. The audit covered a six year period from July 1, 2005 thru June 30, 2011. The Department of Revenue found two areas where Sales and Use Tax was not being collected that should have been. The two areas identified were out-of-state vendors and the sale of prepaid phone cards in the Detention Center. The total assessment with penalty and interest is \$71,078.31. The County has been informed that the penalty will be waived (\$29,990.66) and when paid, the County will be able to get a significant portion (\$29,554.42) of the sales tax back resulting in a net settlement of \$18,533.23, which includes \$7,224.59 in interest which State will not forgive.

These amendments increase the General Fund budget by \$41,510.

Commissioner Phillips moved to approve the budget amendments, seconded by Commissioner Hogsed and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

1. There is a major log jam in the French Broad River. Representative Guice has been in contact with the Governor's Office about securing funds to pay for the cleanup of the log jam.
2. The NC Department of Transportation has scheduled a public meeting to discuss the replacement of the East Fork Bridge on Tuesday, November 29 at 5:30 p.m. at Rosman High School. They will be presenting alternatives to the public and allowing public participation.

3. On November 18 Transylvania County will host officials from the US Department of Agriculture and Environmental Protection Agency at 1:30 p.m. at the Porter Center at Brevard College. Commissioners are invited to attend a luncheon with officials at noon.
4. Staff continues to work on the False Alarm Ordinance.
5. Items for the next meeting include: 1) audit presentation, 2) public hearing to receive public comment on a proposal to increase the occupancy tax from 4% to 5%

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Chairman Hawkins responded to Chris Lewis who made public comments at the beginning of the meeting. He believes it is a great idea to recognize unsung heroes in the County.

Commissioner Chapman thanked Commissioner Hogsed for planning an excellent Veterans Day Ceremony.

Commissioner Chapman referred to an article in the Carolina Journal in reference to transparency in government. A particular foundation rated counties on their overall transparency. The article focused on Yadkin County which received a D rating. Yadkin County took the necessary steps to increase its rating to an A. Commissioner Chapman noted that Transylvania County received a C rating. He asked the Manager to review this and possibly contact officials in Yadkin County to determine what they did to improve their rating and level of transparency.

Commissioner Hogsed thanked all those who participated in the Veterans Day Ceremony on Saturday. He especially thanked the members of the Honor Guard and suggested that the Board recognize this group for the work they do in the County to honor veterans.

Commissioner Chappell also responded to Chris Lewis about his question regarding funding for nonprofit agencies in the County. Commissioner Chappell informed him of the budget process and said that funding requests can be made through the Finance Department for the upcoming budget year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Chapman moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.**

Mike Hawkins Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board

11/14/2011