

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
July 27, 2015 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, July 27, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building.

Commissioners present were Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman, Chairman Mike Hawkins, Page Lemel and Kelvin Phillips. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Tony Dalton and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Jeremiah Reed

There were approximately 50 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. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Don Surrette: Mr. Surrette reported on the recent event at the Allison-Deaver House to celebrate its 200th birthday. On behalf of the Transylvania County Historical Society he thanked the Board of Commissioners for supporting the event. Mr. Surrette reported attendance of well over 700 and said he has heard nothing but good comments. There was good food and music and several demonstrations. The day was capped off with birthday cake and ice cream. He mentioned the possibility of a future horseshoe tournament for local elected officials.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, July 13, 2015 and following the regular meeting met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed. Commissioners approved the minutes 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 the period June 23-30, 2015, total tax dollars released was \$75 and refunds totaled \$1,126.86. Commissioners approved the report as submitted.

CANCELLATION OF AUGUST 10, 2015 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

There is no pressing business for Commissioners to consider on August 10. Staff is working on several projects and those items will be brought to Commissioners beginning with the second meeting in August. Typically after the budget process is complete, Commissioners cancel a summer meeting. Commissioners agreed to cancel the August 10, 2015 meeting and instructed the Clerk to advertise accordingly.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF CHARLES W. BYRD

Charles W. "Chuck" Byrd will retire from Transylvania County effective August 1, 2015. He has been an employee of the Animal Services Department since 1986 and over his 28 years served as an Animal Control Officer and Lead Officer. Commissioners recognized Mr. Byrd with a resolution.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve Resolution 26-2015 In Recognition of Charles W. Byrd. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Chairman Hawkins read aloud the resolution. Commissioners thanked Mr. Byrd for his years of service to the County and wished him well in his retirement. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

(Resolution 26-2015 In Recognition of Charles W. Byrd is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

VETERANS SERVICES REPORT

County Veterans Service Officer Frank Pearsall presents an annual report to Commissioners and reports on the expenditures in Transylvania County for veterans' services. In FY 2014, Veterans Affairs expended a total of \$19,381,000 in Transylvania County which is approximately \$2.8 million more than the previous year. Part of the expenditures includes compensation, pensions and medical expenses. Retirement figures can vary depending on rank upon retirement and this could explain the variation in expenditures among peer counties. The veteran population increased slightly over the previous year by 83, the first increase in several years, and is more than likely attributed to retired veterans moving into the County. Although the veteran population has decreased by nearly 500 since 2005, the amount of funds being expended has increased exponentially. Additionally, the number of veterans receiving services at the VA Hospital in Asheville has steadily increased, up by almost 30 from the prior year. Mr. Pearsall urged everyone to refer to his office anyone they know who served in Vietnam and was exposed to Agent Orange because they are deserving of compensation for the effects this chemical had on their bodies and health. Mr. Pearsall is in the office on Tuesdays and Thursdays and on other days by appointment. Commissioners thanked Mr. Pearsall for the outstanding service he provides to veterans in Transylvania County.

BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE UPDATE

Blue Ridge Community College President Dr. Molly Parkhill updates the Board of Commissioners on the status of the Community College, particularly the Transylvania County campus. She recognized the Board of Trustees members in attendance that represent Transylvania County. She also thanked the County for its financial support of the Transylvania County campus facilities and plant operations. Prior

to this meeting, Dr. Parkhill provided Commissioners with the College's annual report. She highlighted portions of report as follows:

Blue Ridge Community College began a new brewing, distillation and fermentation program to support the brewing industry. There are 24 students enrolled in the program and it continues to expand. There are some new programs beginning as well that require several hundred hours of class time, such as phlebotomy and medical assisting, and will help meet a need in the medical workforce. Blue Ridge Community College takes pride in its small business center which ranked 5th in the State for outstanding performance and 2nd based on the number of training courses. There are two businesses currently using the small business incubator and there are two openings. The College is exploring a business to use the incubator on the Transylvania County Campus.

Enrollment for the fall semester starts in mid-August. Last year, Transylvania County's enrollment for the fall semester was 424 which represents a steady increase. There was a 28% enrollment increase in Transylvania County and a 15% increase overall. Dr. Parkhill reported that many high school students are participating in the Career and College Promise program which helps them get a jumpstart on their college education. It is free for high school students and is a great opportunity for those students who might not have been able to afford college or might not have had the opportunity to attend college. Some of the courses offered in this program are college transfer, criminal justice and mechatronics. She recognized Jeremy Gibbs who is not only a Board of Trustees member, but also works with Transylvania County Schools and helps students advance their education and training opportunities. Both the College and School System continue to look for new opportunities to work together as well.

Another initiative is the NC Works program, formerly the Job Link Center that opened in 2013. It has served over 4,400 clients, providing job search assistance, resume writing, education and training. The College has created a new opportunity based on feedback from the business community called the Professional Development Institute and it will offer assistance to business owners in specific areas to help them have excellent and successful businesses. Blue Ridge Community College also worked with two local companies, Excelsior and PharmAgra, to provide customized training to their employees.

Dr. Parkhill announced an organizational change in order to stress the importance of the Transylvania County Campus and its growth. Glenda McCarson is now the Associate Vice-President of the Transylvania County Campus and reports directly to Dr. Parkhill. This is a positive change for Transylvania County.

Chairman Hawkins noted that Commissioner Chappell, who is employed by Blue Ridge Community College, has been working on an initiative to become a "certified work-ready community". Commissioner Chappell elaborated. He reported that the State put forth this effort to certify counties to be work ready for potential companies. The effort requires the formation of a steering committee, comprised of a wide range of individuals, to make application. The certification shows potential employers that a county has been certified as having a ready and skilled workforce. He said the County can make application next month and then has three years to receive certification. Fortunately, Transylvania County has completed 90% of the work required for certification. Commissioner Chappell is excited about the opportunity and feels this will help to market Transylvania County well.

Lastly, Dr. Parkill showed a video commercial that positively reflects the College and its mission for success and specifically highlights Brevard and Transylvania County. She welcomed questions and comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Chapman asked Dr. Parkhill if Transylvania County high school students are prepared for higher education. Dr. Parkhill responded that Transylvania County should be proud because this County

does a good job preparing students for higher education. It is a problem nationwide, but Transylvania County is doing a good job.

Commissioner Chapman noted that the State is still debating its budget and wondered if there are budget decisions that may adversely affect the College. Dr. Parkhill said the College is fortunate that both Henderson and Transylvania Counties have good legislative representation that fights for community colleges. There are no issues at this time that would impact the College negatively. At this point, both the Senate and House budgets support faculty salary increases, equipment dollars and summer funding.

Commissioners thanked Dr. Parkhill for making a presentation and congratulated Ms. McCarson on her new role at the Transylvania County Campus.

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT BY TRANSYLVANIA PARTNERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Board of Commissioners entered into a funding agreement with the Transylvania Partnership for Economic Development (TPED) on November 1, 2014. The agreement states that TPED “shall submit to the County a semi-annual and annual status report of all program activities at mutually agreed upon dates, including a summary of the accomplishment of stated goals and objectives”. TPED Executive Director Josh Hallingse presented the first semi-annual report to Commissioners. First, he recognized the TPED Board of Directors in attendance.

Background & Review

Mr. Hallingse reported the Board of Directors took action immediately after establishing a public/private partnership with Transylvania County. The Board of Directors met weekly to identify a funding and staffing strategy to fulfill their economic development goals as an organization. Part of that was looking at the feasibility of an office location for the organization, developing a job description and qualifications for the Executive Director and moving forward with roundtable discussions that were necessary to understand the type of person they wanted as their Executive Director. Following that, there was an interim period where they contracted with Creative EDC who specializes in strategic plans and helps economic development organizations begin the process of formalizing their efforts. Also during this period, they worked on an infill development map which identifies specific properties that could be used for infill development or are currently underutilized from an economic development standpoint. The next phase included the development of the strategic plan which began when Mr. Hallingse came on board as Executive Director. In April, they facilitated a number of meetings engaging with community stakeholders and looking at opportunities that really make a difference in the economic development landscape locally.

Recent Activities

Complete	In Progress	Future
Identified, selected and relocated to new office location	Marketing and Communications Director	Transportation corridor study
Strategic plan	Professional economic development website	
Brand and logo project	Economic development specific photography	
Professional target industry analysis		

Roundtables, Business Survey & Interviews

The roundtable and strategic planning process involved a number of different assets: roundtable discussions, business surveys and one-on-one interviews with existing businesses. It was important to hear from businesses and others their thoughts on doing business in this County. This is the feedback from those discussions:

- Average business climate
- Does not exceed expectations
- Most often cited hurdles to expansion was regulatory
- Chamber, BRCC Small Business Center and Senior Resource Network are most utilized local support agencies
- Businesses want help with: regulatory issues, incentives, financing, business mentoring and workforce training

Target Market Analysis

A Target Market Analysis was done as part of the strategic plan and was completed by an independent third party economic development firm, not internally. The firm reviewed the County's existing businesses, specifically looking at Transylvania County as a business location and how it plays into the global market. The economic firm noted Transylvania County's advantages and used those to identify six target markets and industries the County can "play well in". Below is the outcome of the Target Market Analysis and their rankings as far as which specific advantage in Transylvania County ties directly into those target markets:

Transylvania Advantages	Industry Targets					
	Sports and Outdoor Products	Beverages	Food and Organic Products	Creative Services	Advanced and Niche Manufacturing	Tourism
Health and Wellness Focus	✓		✓			✓
Artistic Culture		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research & Development	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Transportation Network	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Hospitality	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Target Industry	Target Group 1 Universe	Target Group 1 Universe with Growth/Events	Target Group 2 Universe	Target Group 2 Universe with Growth/Events
Sports and Outdoor Products	228	57	187	56
Beverages	251	50	255	63
Food and Organic Products	700	140	1,062	265
Creative Services*	1,416	212	1,255	185
Advanced and Niche Manufacturing	2,754	550	2,764	691
Tourism**	2,599	250	2,291	183
TOTAL	7,948	1,259	7,814	1,443

In addition to target markets, Mr. Hallingse stated it is important to understand the population of businesses that exist outside of Transylvania County and the likelihood of recruiting them to the area. Identifying the County's role in actively recruiting those companies, tracking the number of companies within the target sector and knowing how many businesses of that population set are growing, will provide TPED with the data they need to justify spending resources chasing those types of companies.

Branding System

A Branding System can help the organization plug into the target markets both internally and externally. It is simply an image or message that the County conveys to companies to highlight what is important to the organization and the community from an economic development standpoint. The organization worked with a firm to develop a new brand, tag line and logo. This is their new brand which includes the new tag line:

For centuries, people have been drawn to Transylvania County because they love this place of opportunity, this land of waterfalls.

We are a place of untold natural advantages: access to nature, close community relationships, a supportive business climate. We enjoy easy access to major transportation corridors and major southeast U.S. markets. We are home to a highly educated population; benefit from innovative workforce training relationships with Blue Ridge Community College; a historic liberal arts institution with a business school in Brevard College; and a quality public school system that is both safe and highly ranked.

We are a close-knit community of businesses that support one another and applaud our successes. We are a place where employees love to come to work, a place where a lunch break can be taken in a national forest and still just last an hour. We are the home of national brands that are experiencing phenomenal growth, creating investment and jobs in our community. We are also a place of friendly, affordable, walkable neighborhoods; a robust public greenway system; and easy access to trails, waterfalls, music, art, shopping, dining, and all the charm our mountain towns have to offer.

In short, we are Transylvania County and we invite businesses to explore Our Natural Advantage.

As a result of this work, TPED has officially changed its name to the Transylvania Economic Alliance.

Strategic Plan-Action Items

Mr. Hallingse next talked about the strategic plan process. He intends to share a copy of the organization's strategic plan with Commissioners. The strategic plan is very detailed and to the point and includes specific action items the organization can implement. It includes short-term, mid-term and long-term actions and those are the items the organization intends to focus on within each of these programs of work. Below is a summary of the strategic plan items Mr. Hallingse discussed:

	Short-Term Actions	Mid-Term Actions	Long-Term Actions
Existing Business	<p>Implement a proactive BRE visitation program with data tracking</p> <p>Facilitate business expansions through a business liaison service</p>	<p>Establish and facilitate a business networking group</p>	<p>Create a manufacturing awareness campaign</p> <p>Advocate for local and state regulatory changes that support business</p>
Marketing & Attraction	<p>Implement new brand and vision</p> <p>Implement the Target Industry Analysis recommendations</p> <p>Implement a comprehensive marketing plan</p> <p>Take the Alliance on the road to make presentations to partner organizations</p>	<p>Leverage customers and suppliers of existing businesses for the recruitment program</p> <p>Capitalize on Asheville & Greenville markets</p> <p>Implement E-marketing campaign</p>	<p>Through a third party, conduct a cost of services study to show the value of commercial and industrial development compared to the return from residential development</p>
Product Development	<p>Review sites/buildings listings for updates and changes</p> <p>Identify redevelopment and infill opportunities</p> <p>Prioritize a list of needed infrastructure improvements that will support site and park development</p> <p>Perform major transportation corridor study</p>	<p>Identify land for future business park and perform market feasibility study for shell building within identified business park (McGill study identified several options)</p>	<p>To be competitive in business retention and attraction, quality industrial buildings are a must. Over 80% of all inquiries to the NCEDP request available buildings (The lack of available buildings has been the #1 complaint of industries ready to expand).</p>

What Can a Community Do to Be More Competitive?

The popular model used in the competitive site selection screening process is the funnel. The role of a site selection professional is to eliminate sites/communities and decide upon the best option for a company that has the least amount of risk. From a community standpoint, the community must have an inventory of sites and buildings that matches its target sectors. A community must perform its due diligence on those sites, making them marketable and being able to answer basic questions about each site. Such questions may be: Is the property for sale? Is it developable? What would the cost of development be? Is there access to utilities? A community must know its customers and understand they are profit-driven, deadline driven and risk adverse, and be prepared to respond to their questions and other needs.

Existing Building Inventory

From a product development standpoint, the organization has assembled its existing inventory of buildings and sites in Transylvania County. There are some challenges. The organization has been exhaustive in its efforts and there may be a few properties not yet listed. The list indicates there is a definite gap in the market place and the County and organization need to figure out a way forward.

Properties versus Sites

- Dirt won't do (popular saying from economic development consultants)
 - Property does not equal site
- Location decisions demand speed
 - Site selection and facility start-up
- Be prepared
 - Maintain and develop a portfolio of ready and available sites/buildings

This concluded Mr. Hallingse's presentation. He welcomed questions and feedback from Commissioners.

This is a summary of the questions/comments and Mr. Hallingse's responses:

1. Commissioners hope there will be some specific target dates for accomplishing items mentioned in the strategic plan, while fully recognizing the challenges. It is important to determine if this endeavor is successful and that the County is moving in the right direction. At this point, has the County invested enough dollars in this effort?

The groundwork has been laid. The strategic plan includes specific action items the organization must accomplish. The County's investment in economic development at this point is important and is telling about the County's priorities from a job creation and investment standpoint. The organization is moving very quickly to accomplish much of the baseline work in order to be successful.

2. Mr. Hallingse and the Board of Director should be commended for the quantity of work that has been accomplished thus far. The strategic plan is impressive and Commissioners look forward to seeing the results.
3. When will the second staff person be on board?

By the end of August or sooner.

4. Commissioners commended the Board of Directors for the effort they made in getting this organization off the ground which is credited to their love and concern for Transylvania County. There remains a lot of work to be done, but the pieces are falling into place to see success in this County.
5. The Davidson River Village property is a key component of the County's economic development success. It is Commissioners' hope that Mr. Hallingse and the Transylvania Economic Alliance continue to build on the relationship with the property owners.

Continuing to build on the relationship is very important. It is just as important to note that the land owners have made a critical decision in terms of the future of the property and Transylvania County has no control over that. The Transylvania Economic Alliance also wants to have an answer for when that property is developed and no longer available to this community.

6. Commissioners are expecting a return on investment for the people of Transylvania County. Time frames and objectives are important and, in some ways, critical.

A return on investment is the priority of the Transylvania Economic Alliance as well. Economic development is a highly competitive business and takes resources in order to be successful. The next conversation with County Administration will be about the metrics component and methods for reporting back to the County Commissioners.

7. It has been noted that product is the County's number one issue. As Commissioners move into the budget process for next year, it will be important to hear from the Transylvania Economic Alliance about the investment the County needs to make in order to develop product. Any endeavor into investing in or developing product is going to require a large dollar investment on the County's part.

There is even greater concern about existing businesses and their ability to grow. Existing businesses have no product to help them grow and expand here.

8. Mr. Hallingse and the Board of Directors have worked hard to lay the groundwork for this organization, but that is not all they have been doing. They have been very active with existing businesses and thinking about new opportunities. Is that a fair statement?

Yes. Ideally in the economic development world there would not be much time spent in the office, but time spent with existing businesses and those who are interested in locating in this market. As the organization gets through the planning process, the organization will increase its interaction with existing businesses and external communications.

9. With regards to the new organization name, Transylvania Economic Alliance, the word alliance is defined as a merging of efforts or interest. There are a number of economic development stakeholders in the community that can and should be working together for the betterment of economic development in this County.

Economic development does not happen in a vacuum. It is a community-wide effort. It is also an understanding that job creation and investment in today's world does not happen by accident. It is something that entrepreneurs and existing business owners spend countless hours studying. The community must be an asset for businesses and future businesses. The Transylvania Economic Alliance is very optimistic about working with the various organizations in the community.

10. The Board of Commissioners has made a three-year commitment to the Transylvania Economic Alliance, so it is important to first have a strong baseline in order to move forward in a smart, systematic and successful way. The Board of Commissioners challenges Mr. Hallingse and the Board of Directors to future substantive discussions on dealing with product for existing businesses and new businesses and they look forward to the next report on six months.

OLD BUSINESS

PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN

This item was tabled from the previous meeting to allow time for the County Attorney to review and comment on the Professional Services Agreement and Scope of Services being proposed by the firm Barge, Waggoner, Sumner, and Cannon, Inc. The County Attorney reported that he found no issues with the agreement. At the previous meeting, Parks and Recreation Director Carleen Dixon requested that the Board of Commissioners allocate an additional \$31,500 for the strategic plan process on top of the

previous allocation of \$20,000. The City of Brevard has contributed \$25,000 to date and will be asked to contribute an additional amount so that the total amount from both entities equals the cost of completing a full operational strategic plan at \$103,000.

As an update from the previous meeting, Ms. Dixon commented that the most recent Parks and Recreation Commission meeting had its largest attendance. It is clear there is a huge interest in parks and recreation amenities and many feel that a strategic plan will define a path forward to meet the needs of parks and recreation in the County as a whole. A strategic plan is much more than a master plan and will look at the full operation of parks and recreation and determine how to streamline or merge efforts with the City of Brevard which will positively impact economic development and provide other opportunities.

Commissioners asked several questions and voiced their concerns about the request, prior to a motion being made. This is a summary:

1. What is the timeline for the process? If approved, staff should provide updates on a regular basis.

If approved by the County and the City of Brevard, the process can begin in late August or early September. The full plan completion will take between six and eight months and it will then be presented to both Boards for adoption.

2. How was the firm chosen as the one to complete the strategic plan?

The request for proposals was very detailed and this firm really listened to what the County and City wanted. The firm has significant parks and recreation experience, even in Western North Carolina, which they will use to determine efficiencies and better operations. One of the stronger features the firm brought to the table was their ability to identify and utilize collaborative stakeholders within the communities.

3. When Commissioners reviewed the proposal at the previous meeting, it was noted that the firm had used older census information. Will they be using more updated census information if approved to move forward?

Ms. Dixon confirmed that they will be using the latest census data.

4. There is some concern about the additional budget request so soon after the new budget was passed, as well as the scope change of the project. What would the outcome of the process be if this request was not approved?

Monies were included in the budget during the last budget cycle to secure a starting place for developing a plan. This was done prior to the forming of a task force. During this process, stakeholders provided feedback which helped to determine what they wanted out of this process. If Commissioners decide not to allocate additional funds and move forward with the original scope, the County will get a basic master plan.

It was noted that Commissioners have been bombarded with a number of requests over the last several months that involve parks and recreation activities and amenities. Having a strategic plan in place gives Commissioners a plan to begin addressing parks and recreation issues and needs in a systematic way.

5. The proposal includes a cost breakdown of the services the firm intends to provide. There are other costs listed as well. What are those?

There are additional services the task force does not wish to engage at this time.

Commissioner Lemel moved to allocate an additional \$31,500 to fund the full strategic planning process. Commissioner Chapman seconded the motion. Commissioner Phillips was not supportive of spending the additional funds. He felt that once a master plan was in place, the remaining work could be done in house and should include an evaluation of the School System's parks and recreation facilities as well. Ms. Dixon confirmed that all parks and recreational facilities, including the School System's, would be included in the study to determine accessibility. The cost is higher because the study will encompass parks and recreation in both the County and City of Brevard. Commissioner Chapman supported the proposal because he believed in creating government efficiencies to save taxpayer dollars. It is his hope that the outcome will streamline operations between the County and the City that create exceptional recreation opportunities and ultimately have a positive impact on economic development. Commissioner Chappell shared his concern about the County having studies done and then not acting upon them. Commissioner Phillips agreed and stated that much of the work being proposed could be done internally if many of the items in the previous study had been completed. Chairman Hawkins said it is important to develop and maintain outstanding parks and recreational facilities as a development strategy with the Transylvania Economic Alliance. He believes the proposal gives the County a road map to implement a plan to accomplish this. He understood Commissioners' concerns about the previous study, but noted it was the Commissioners' decision at that time not to implement the recommendations. Therefore, to him, a vote in favor of this proposal is a statement that Commissioners are also willing to implement the recommendations. **Chairman Hawkins called for the previous question and there was no objection. The motion passed by a vote of 3 to 2, with Commissioners Chappell and Phillips voting against.**

STRATEGIC VISION PROCESS UPDATE

The purpose of this agenda item was to update the Board of Commissioners on the strategic plan process and discuss next steps. The Manager first gave some background on the process thus far. The Board of Commissioners met in December 2014 to develop six goal statements for the strategic plan. The six goal statements developed by Commissioners are:

<p>GOAL #1: Economic Development Diversify the local economic tax base, increase jobs for citizens that pay a living wage and create a stable local economy that capitalizes on the unique quality of life and environment found in our community.</p>
<p>GOALS #2: Quality of Life Enhance the attractiveness of the community's quality of life by developing resources that promote health, transportation connectivity, a sense of place and cultural heritage.</p>
<p>GOAL #3: Visitation Create vibrant nodes of economic and civic activity that create a draw for tourism as well as a platform for community engagement.</p>
<p>GOAL #4: Value of County Government Achieve a service driven, transparent and performance-based County government that engages all citizens.</p>
<p>GOAL #5: Environmental Preserve and enhance the wealth of natural resources in Transylvania County in support of the local economy and quality of life.</p>
<p>GOAL #6: Education Insure that the educational environment provides the right setting and infrastructure to prepare students for a successful future.</p>

The next step was to engage community stakeholders. Stephen Straus and Joe Durham of Developmental Associates conducted focus group discussions comprised of community leaders who held a common interest in components of each goal. The focus groups met over the course of a few days in March 2015 and worked on developing objectives. The Manager noted that Goal #6 (Education) was excluded from the focus groups at the time pending more work with the County's education providers.

Included in the Commissioners' agenda packets was a summary of the focus group discussions and the work that has been completed. Staff has taken the output and sorted objectives by strategy areas and presented the information in the form of a spreadsheet. This work has helped to begin fleshing out the higher level and longer term vision for the strategic plan.

During the budget process, departments were asked to submit objectives for the budget year with their requests including measures that can reflect whether those objectives were met. Where applicable, they were asked to tie back to the draft goal statements Commissioners developed for the strategic plan. Staff is currently in the process of incorporating that information into the work completed by the focus groups.

The Manager discussed the next steps in the process and requested buy in from Commissioners. She said the end product should be a document with goals and objectives that are achievable in a 5-10 year time frame. Each year this would provide the framework for developing annual goals and measuring progress. The next steps are:

- Utilize County department leadership and the work completed with the budget to flesh out objectives
- Have County department leadership comment and make suggestions on objectives suggested by the focus groups
- Reconvene focus groups for review and comment
- Workshop with Commissioners to refine
 - Streamline achievable objectives for the next 5-10 years
 - Identify measures of success for annual review of goals and objectives

The Manager emphasized that Commissioners must be committed to this plan in terms of funding and programmatic choices in order for it to be useful. The County needs to have a clear message of what it is trying to accomplish that would cross over politics and other changes. She welcomed feedback from Commissioners on how they would like to proceed with the strategic plan and whether or not they like the direction so far.

This is a summary of the questions and comments by Commissioners and the Manager's response to each:

1. What is the project time frame for bringing Commissioners back together for a workshop?

Ideally this would occur sometime this coming fall or winter. In January, staff will be reviewing the measures created for the current year's budget and providing Commissioners with an interim report on their accomplishments thus far. It would be ideal for staff to be able to make the connections back to a strategic plan that Commissioners have bought into.

2. The direction the County is moving in with this process is very positive and will help Commissioners provide correct feedback to staff for the next budget cycle.
3. This is not just an action plan; it is an accountability plan. The challenge is for department heads and staff to be able to understand and value the process and how they can leverage the process to

do a better job for their departments and citizens. With that said, this is going to take time. If the County Commissioners have a solid vision and is willing to be consistent, then over time this plan will be successful.

4. Does the Manager have the resources to complete this work because this is not easy work? If there is something that would enhance or distract from the work that needs to be done, Commissioners need to know.

The Manager agreed this is not an easy task, but she believes this will be a very honest and transparent process. She hopes the County gets to a point where there is no question about where the weaknesses are in the organization. The County cannot accomplish everything stated in the six goals with the current resources; however, local government does not have to shoulder all of the responsibility. It is her goal to start to identify current resources and how best to utilize those.

5. The six goals identified by Commissioners are lofty goals. One of the worst things an organization can do is establish goals and never meet them. It is important to be realistic about what the County can accomplish.

The Manager noted that some of the focus groups created a long list of items that are not achievable. The Board will need to take each goal and identify what is achievable over the next 5-10 year time frame. Commissioners need to be fully invested in order to affect positive change in the community.

NEW BUSINESS

BAD DEBT AND NC DEBT SETOFF AMOUNTS

The Health Department's bad debt policy states that bad debt accounts should be reviewed every 180 days. Health Director Elaine Russell submitted bad debt amounts from the period January 1, 2015 through June 30, 2015. The Board of Health requests approval to write off debt totaling \$395.60, with \$307 being sent to the NC Debt Setoff Program.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve the write off of debt totaling \$395.60, with \$307 being sent to the NC Debt Setoff Program, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

Commissioner Chappell asked that the Board of Commissioners consider in the future adding this item to the Consent Agenda because they involve such small amounts of money. Commissioners agreed. Ms. Russell noted that the citizens of this County are wonderful at honoring their debt and the amount coming to Commissioners for write off is miniscule compared to other counties.

DISPOSITION OF SCHOOL PROPERTY

The NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has made an offer to the School System to purchase 0.347 acres of land on Sugar Loaf Road for the purposes of replacing and constructing a 2-lane bridge across Nicholson Creek to make travel safer for both school buses and other vehicles. The current bridge is a 1-lane bridge and has aged. The area is also prone to flooding so a new structure will be able to hold up better under these conditions. On July 20, the Board of Education approved a resolution declaring the property as surplus per Chapter 160A, Article 12 of North Carolina General Statutes. However, NCGS 115C-518 indicates that the board of commissioners for the county in which the property is located shall be afforded the first opportunity to obtain the property. If the board of commissioners chooses not to obtain the property, then the board of education may move forward with disposing of the property.

Commissioner Lemel moved to deny the offer to purchase the property and submit in writing a letter to the Board of Education indicating such so they may move forward with the disposition of the property. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

INSTALLMENT FINANCING AGREEMENT

During the July 13, 2015 Board of Commissioners' meeting, Commissioners approved moving forward with renovations to the old detention center for use by the Board of Elections and Employee Wellness Clinic and funding the project through an installment financing agreement for a term of 15 years. On July 14, the County Manager and Finance Director consulted with Dianne Kelly at the Local Government Commission (LGC) about the procedure for applying for LGC approval and the timeline. Below is a list of the steps in the process, the responsible party, the schedule and status:

1. Hold a preliminary conference with LGC staff	Staff	Jul 14	Complete
2. Send a letter to the Joint Legislative Committee on Local Government notifying them of the County's intent to enter into debt	Staff	Jul 17	Complete
3. Issue Requests for Proposal for Installment Financing Agreement to financial institutions (sent to 6, 1 has declined)	Staff	Jul 21	Complete
4. Pass a resolution authorizing the filing of an application for approval of a financing agreement	Board	Jul 27	
5. Approve Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse	Board	Jul 27	
6. Receive proposals from financial institutions	Staff	Aug 4	
7. Submit application to the LGC	Staff	Aug 5	
8. Publish notice of public hearing on proposed financing	Staff	Aug 7	
9. Hold the public hearing	Board	Aug 24	
10. Accept the best proposal for financing	Board	Aug 24	
11. Receive response from the LGC	Staff	Sep 1	
12. Close on financing installment agreement	Staff	Prior to Sep 30	

Approval of Resolution 25-2015 will authorize staff to proceed with the application process and the installment financing agreement, while approval of the Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse will allow the County to reimburse itself with proceeds of the borrowing if any project expenditures are incurred prior to the closing of the installment financing agreement. The Finance Director will submit the application to the Local Government Commission as soon as she receives the proposals from the financial institutions. A public hearing must be held prior to the submittal of the application and that has been scheduled for August 24. Staff will ask Commissioners to approve the proposal at the same meeting. The Local Government Commission meets on September 1 and should respond to the County on the same day on whether or not the financing agreement has been approved. This process is moving forward. After approval, it should take two to three weeks to close on the loan.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve Resolution 25-2015 and the Declaration of Official Intent to Reimburse and to direct staff to schedule and publish notice of a public hearing for the August 24 Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

(Resolution 25-2015 Authorizing the Filing of an Application for Approval of a Financing Agreement Authorized by North Carolina General Statute 160A-20 is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

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. Below is a summary of 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 have not been previously approved by the Board and are not simply pass-through funds or because they decrease the total General Fund budget and reflect reductions in projected funding sources.

#1: \$36,059 from funds appropriated in FY 15 for Maintenance projects approved but not completed prior to June 30th (from assigned fund balance)

#2: \$80,736 from funds appropriated or received in FY 15 for the Sheriff's Office but not spent until FY 16 (from restricted and assigned fund balance)

#3: \$191,175 from funds appropriated, committed, or donated in FY 15 for Parks and Recreation projects but not spent prior to June 30th (from restricted and assigned fund balance)

If approved, these amendments will increase the General Fund budget by \$307,970, bringing it to a total of \$48,207,897. In addition, as shown on Amendment #3, there will be an increase of \$231,537 to the Silvermont Fund budget for funds remaining from the FY 15 appropriation and donations for the Silvermont Mansion restoration project.

Commissioner Chappell moved to approve the budget amendments as presented, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.

Commissioner Chapman asked the Finance Director how a citizen can donate to the County. Ms. Poor said a citizen would submit a check to the County with a designation of what it is for. The County does not have a separate account. The money goes into the General Fund, but it is earmarked for the specific purpose. Donations to the County receive the same favorable tax treatment as donations to a nonprofit.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Courthouse repair work is complete; thanks to staff in several departments for ensuring the process went smoothly
- Working on Medicaid reform at that State level; the budget proposals could have significant impacts on the Health Department and local health providers; could face impacts to community transportation, EMS transports, and nursing infrastructure within the Health Department; trying to make sure there is a clear understanding so there are no unintended consequences on local public health
- Parks and Recreation Director Carleen Dixon alluded to many parks and recreation interests that have come forward lately; emphasized that staff really wants public involvement in this process
- Solid Waste site improvements plans for the coming year are:
 - Pisgah Forest: Replace the small shed at the scales, repair the gutter and porch on the spotters shed, paint the parking spaces and entrance and exit pavement markings, upgrade the signage, repairs to the sort bins
 - Calvert: Upgrade the signage, repairs to the sort bins, general maintenance on the building (flooring, door, windows)
 - Connestee: Repairs to the building roof and overhangs, repairs to the parking lot where the pavement has sunk, repaint the parking lot and entrance ways, upgrade the signage, repairs to the sort bins; trying to relocate a bear in the area

- Landfill: Upgrade signage and repaint parking areas
- From last meeting there was public comment about the availability of transportation services from Rosman to Sapphire; the County Transportation Department responded quickly and on August 11 will begin a route on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays in that area; the department will be using a backup van and temporary driver to provide the service; will be done on a six-month cycle and then will be reviewed to determine if the route should be continued
- Thanked Don Surrette for his generosity in building shelves for the Board of Commissioners' Minute Books, which date back to 1861 when Transylvania County became a county, in honor of his great-grandfather David A. Surrette who was hired by Transylvania County from 1861-1867 to build public stocks for use in the court system; Commissioners proposed putting a plaque on the shelves to signify that Mr. Surrette constructed the bookshelves and who he built them in honor of.

PUBLIC COMMENT

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Lemel reported she led the Little League pledge at the Little League State Championships on Friday evening at the sports complex. It was a nice event to see the County hosting folks from other communities. She and Chairman Hawkins attended the Allison-Deaver House 200th birthday celebration on Saturday. The Historical Society has done a great job with the house and the event was very well attended. Commissioner Lemel is still following her interest in early childhood education and trying to figure out how to best serve the young children in the community. She had a nice lunch with folks from United Way who share the same interest. She reported there is less than two weeks left in camp season.

Chairman Hawkins recognized the Clerk to the Board for providing such detailed minutes of the previous meeting. He reminded everyone that the next meeting is cancelled; however, there remains lots of work to do this fall. Some of those things are dealing with Courthouse space needs, working with the Board of Education on a budget formula, being more engaged with economic development projects and activities, continuing work on the strategic plan and comprehensive plan, and showing some tangible evidence of the work being done at the staff level on coordinating water and sewer discussions with the local government entities. The next few months are going to be busy.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board