

**MINUTES**  
**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**June 13, 2016 – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, June 13, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

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

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derrick McKissock

There were approximately 30 people in the audience.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**WELCOME**

Chairman Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the audience for participating in their County government. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance. Chairman Hawkins announced that the Manager was blessed a few days ago with the birth of a son. She is expected to return full time in late August. Therefore, over the course of the next few meetings, various staff will be assisting with facilitation of the meetings. Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan was responsible for facilitating this meeting. At the request of Chairman Hawkins, she gave a short bio of herself prior to presenting the business of the agenda.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**FY 2017 BUDGET**

Ms. Hogan reported that Manager Laughter presented the recommended FY 2017 Budget to the Board on May 9. Commissioners held one budget workshop on May 12 and made a few adjustments to the proposal, including removing \$50,000 in reserves for community center facility needs, no new full time personnel for the fire departments, and other minor changes to the fire departments' budgets as discussed on May 12. Since then, two other adjustments have been made to the recommended budget: (1) \$12,205 was added to the Sheriff's Office budget to cover the highway use tax on new vehicles and to allow the Sheriff more flexibility on the types of vehicles purchased and (2) \$12,436 was deducted from the Elections budget upon determination by the State that the office would not be required to mail notices of change of address to all registered voters in the County when they relocate to the old detention facility. The net impact of these two revisions is a reduction of \$231.

The FY 2017 General Fund Budget is proposed at \$48,387,036 and includes a property tax rate increase of 4.1 cents per \$100 valuation in order to remain revenue neutral and an additional 2 cents to be set aside for future capital projects, for a final property tax rate of 51.1 cents per \$100/valuation.

The County is required by law to hold a public hearing prior to adopting its budget. Finance Director Gay Poor presented a more detailed summary of the budget, including fire tax rates and Home and Community Care Block Grant funding breakdowns. Commissioners intend to vote on the budget at the June 27 regular meeting.

This is a summary of the presentation by Ms. Poor:

#### Summary

- Balanced budget of \$48.4 million, 1.1% increase over FY 16
- Modify the tax rate to at least revenue neutral rate to operate at existing level of service and meet funding obligations; new rate of \$0.4910 reflects an increase in the tax rate since there was a decrease in the overall property valuation
- Recommended budget includes additional \$0.02/\$100 valuation for capital needs for a recommended tax rate of \$0.51
  - Currently Transylvania County's population is ranked 31<sup>st</sup> in the State when ranked from smallest to largest
  - 12<sup>th</sup> lowest tax rate and 13<sup>th</sup> lowest effective tax rate last fiscal year
  - If recommended budget passes, the new tax rate will be approximately 18<sup>th</sup> lowest tax rate if others do not adjust their rates

#### Changes Made Since Recommended Budget

- Minor adjustments as revised numbers come in for a net reduction of \$231
- During the budget workshop Commissioners removed \$50,000 in community center grant funding pending development of a grant application and approval process, but \$1,000 per community center allocation remains included
  - With these adjustments, FY 17's budget went from a 1.1% increase to a 1% increase over FY 16
  - The appropriation from unassigned fund balance drops to \$105,216, versus the appropriation of \$1.3 million in FY 16's budget
- Fire Department rates set according to consensus reached during the budget workshop

#### Revenue Projections

- Ad Valorem Taxes generate the majority, almost 60%, of the County's revenues
  - These are the only revenues Commissioners have the authority to impose and thereby directly control
- Intergovernmental revenues account for another 16%
  - Provide funding primarily for Public Health and Social Services programs
- At just under 14%, sales taxes are the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest contributor of revenues and are one indicator of the health of the local economy
- These three sources of revenues make up almost 90% of the County's total revenues

#### Revenue Projections – Revaluation

- Revaluation, as of January 1, 2016, resulted in a decrease in assessed value from \$6,124,053,495 to \$5,640,000,000
  - The average annual growth of 0.5% (\$140,000 annually) over the last 7 years does not compensate for the decrease resulting from the revaluation
  - Revenue neutral rate as shown by State formula would be \$.4910/\$100 valuation
- Positive growth indicators in permitting and property transfer fees reflect economic growth
  - Challenge for economic development will be finding or creating space and resources for business expansion so that the tax base can continue to grow and diversify

### Fee Schedule Changes

- Fees remained flat for most County services
- Increases made to cover additional costs, maintain service quality and reflect market rates
- New Adventure Learning Center fee increases as follows:
  - \$100/month – One-year olds
  - \$50/month – Two-year olds
  - \$25/month – Three- to five-year olds
- EMS fee increases as follows:
  - \$25 – Critical Care Support
  - \$15 – Basic Life Support Emergency
  - \$50 – Advanced Life Support Non-Emergency
  - \$25 – Advanced Life Support Emergency/Specialized Care

### Requests vs Projections – Analysis

- Full-funded requested expenditures vs projected total revenue started with a \$4,938,727 deficit at the revenue neutral tax rate
- Justifications were strong; however, covering this deficit through additional revenues would have required a tax increase of almost 9 cents over the revenue neutral rate
- Because such a significant increase was not realistic, reductions were made based on Commissioners' priorities and policies, demonstration of the severity of the need, safety implications and potential to yield higher revenues and sustainable operations in the future
  - Removed \$3,595,017 by deferring costs
  - Included personnel and capital requests that at least had majority support or consensus
- Recommended funding is not an indication that all needs are met

### Expenditure Trends

- Recommendations do not include service expansion
- Deferred capital needs from leaner budget times are still a factor and will continue to be an issue
- Approximately 2/3 of the budget is mandated or required to meet State and federal laws and funding regulations; another 15-20% is needed for functions that support those mandated services
- Economic development support is a key strategy in future sustainability

### Expenditures

- Recommended budget appropriates funds for basic governmental functions
  - Education receives the largest appropriation at 30.6%
    - Current spending, capital outlay for local School System and Blue Ridge Community College
    - Debt service on school bonds
  - Public Safety, which includes Emergency Services and the Sheriff's Office, receives the second largest appropriation at 24.5%
  - Human Services 20.7%
  - Remaining appropriations support General Government, Culture and Recreation, Economic Development, General Debt Service and Transfers to Other Funds
- Includes nonprofit funding under the newly implemented policy
  - All will be required to provide 6-month and year end reports
  - Includes capital funding as presented
- Fleet management program to be developed in the coming year to address vehicle replacement criteria and improve efficiency of the use of County vehicles
  - No new vehicles included
  - List of replacement vehicles pared down

- Includes 3 days of leave for staff to be used in the fiscal year, not subject to cash out or carry over with new cost-of-living policy to be implemented in 2017
- Includes FLSA plan to be implemented as required in December 2016 under federal law
- Includes \$250,000 reserve for implementation of the Emergency Services study
- Includes reserve for Parks and Recreation study in the amount of \$290,000
- Includes revenue from inmate phone and commissary, minus expenses associated, to go into a reserve fund for Sheriff's Office (Commissioners to determine any guides on usage) estimated at \$25,560 annually
- Includes 1% of budgeted revenue on out-of-county inmates to help pay off debt service on the Public Safety Facility
- Expenditures by type:
  - Personnel costs are the largest category at 43% of the total budget
    - Salaries, wages, FICA, retirement contributions, health insurance and other benefits
  - Education expenditures amount to approximately 31% of the budget
  - 12% is used for general operating expenditures, such as supplies, contract services, training, utilities, fuel, maintenance and insurance
  - Proposed capital projects and acquisitions consume only 3%
  - Economic development support and general debt service amount to 1% each of the total General Fund Budget

#### Home and Community Care Block Grant (Pass Through Grant)

- Care Partners Adult Day Services
  - Day Health - \$42,095
  - Day Care - \$26,682
- Care Partners Home Care
  - Level I In Home Aide - \$25,839
  - Level II In Home Aide - \$70,555
- Western Carolina Community Action
  - Congregate Meals - \$86,381
  - Mobile Meals - \$22,571
- Transylvania County Transportation
  - General Transportation - \$13,561
  - MED-Drive - \$3,074
- Land of Sky Regional Council
  - Senior Companion Program - \$18,405
- Pisgah Legal Services
  - Legal Services - \$5,767
- **Total Funding - \$314,930**

#### Fire Department Rates

- As a whole, all but one of the fire districts (Balsam Grove) saw a decrease in the property tax base as a result of the revaluation
- Fire tax rates increased in all but two districts: Brevard/Sylvan Valley 2 and North Transylvania
- No new personnel requests pending Emergency Services Study results
- Modifications per budget workshop
- Proposed Fire Tax Rates per \$100/valuation and based on a 99.5% tax collection rate are as follows:

Fire Service District	Estimated Valuation	Tax/\$100	Fire Taxes
Brevard - Sylvan Valley 2	\$852,500,000	\$0.0393	\$333,594
Rosman	\$451,000,000	\$0.1091	\$489,703
Little River	\$495,500,000	\$0.0877	\$432,495
Connestee Falls	\$915,000,000	\$0.0673	\$612,912
Cedar Mountain	\$146,500,000	\$0.1331	\$194,000
Lake Toxaway	\$1,620,000,000	\$0.0459	\$739,091
Balsam Grove	\$89,000,000	\$0.1089	\$96,477
North Transylvania	\$120,500,000	\$0.1279	<u>\$153,400</u>
			\$3,051,672

#### Summary

- Proposed FY 2017 Budget of \$48,387,036
- Other Funds total \$10,352,002
  - Law Officers' Separation Fund
  - Retiree Health Fund
  - 457 Contribution Fund
  - Self-Insurance
  - Fire Districts
  - Solid Waste
  - Emergency Telephone System
  - Silvermont
- Less Inter-Fund Transfers \$4,774,214
- Total \$53,964,824

Prior to opening the public hearing for the public input portion, Chairman Hawkins called on Commissioners to ask questions or make comments.

Commissioner Chapman thanked Ms. Poor for her presentation and for the detailed budget information provided by staffs. For him, the key issue is there remain needs, many of which are critical needs that are not being funded. He said it is up to Commissioners to prioritize the needs according to availability of funding.

Chairman Hawkins noted that although the total budget reflects a 1% increase over FY 16, the budget includes additional funding for Transylvania County Schools (4.6% increase in current spending and 12.5% increase in capital outlay). The budget also includes setting aside reserve funds for future capital projects which he believes is foresighted on behalf of Commissioners. Noting there was only a 10% difference in the tax base compared to seven years ago, he felt it was imperative that the Board start to make investments in the community to rebuild the tax base and he was very appreciative of the plan presented by staff.

**Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing open at 7:30 p.m.**

Lee McMinn: Mr. McMinn asked the Board to reconsider the request from Transylvania Natural Resources Council to fund a project aimed at preventing the extinction of hemlocks on private lands along the Upper French Broad River. The program would include remediation and treatment of adelgid infected

hemlocks. The request of \$15,000 is estimated to be half of what is needed to start the project and would be used to leverage additional funding. Mr. McMinn offered additional details about the proposed structure of the program. He said the proposal has attracted the interest of adjacent counties and regional organizations. It is a program that would integrate public efforts with private initiatives. He again urged Commissioners to reconsider the request and vowed to work with the Board to bring the program to action stage.

Margot Walston: Ms. Walston is the coordinator of North Carolina's Hemlock Restoration Initiative which was created by Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. She stated that hemlocks are an irreplaceable species that define ecosystems and influence the water quality and quantity in our headwater streams. The threat to the hemlocks by the wooly adelgid is one of the worst ecological disasters to hit the region since the chestnut blight. The continued decline of the hemlocks will not only impact the County economy, but also threaten the safety of all who use our streams and recreate in our forests, which will lead to increased costs for mitigating hazards. Ms. Walston believes the proposal by the Transylvania Natural Resources Council is a unique opportunity to save this natural resource and she hopes the Board of Commissioners will serve as a lead partner in this endeavor.

Susan Sunflower: Ms. Sunflower spoke on behalf of the Native Plant Society and Transylvania Naturally. She asked Commissioners to support the proposal from the Transylvania Natural Resources Council for hemlock regeneration. She believes the proposal offers a creative way to begin hemlock restoration through public-private partnerships. The cost-share funding will provide a return far larger than the \$15,000 contribution being requested from the County. Ms. Sunflower reminded Commissioners that they, the City of Brevard and the Town of Rosman have passed resolutions in support of planting natives first which reflects that we honor our environment.

Peter Mockridge: Mr. Mockridge stated that the proposal by the Transylvania Natural Resources Council is a critical program that needs serious attention by the County. The \$15,000 contribution from the County equates to 50 cents per person per year. Mr. Mockridge stated that the health of the hemlocks has long term implications on the state of the environment and for individuals who live and visit here.

Jimmy Jones: Mr. Jones spoke on behalf of Cedar Mountain Fire Rescue. He is concerned about the budget recommendation. He provided updated statistical information indicating an increased number of calls and noted that the responses are becoming more complicated due to the number of visitors and the nature of our terrain. This is becoming increasingly burdensome on the volunteer organization. Mr. Jones requested the Board reconsider Cedar Mountain Fire Rescue's request for additional funding for paid staff in the amount of \$15,000 which will be used to hire part-time staff on their busiest call days. He also requested that fire departments be included in the reserves being set aside for the implementation of the Emergency Services Study.

Chairman Hawkins reminded the public that the Board intends to take action on the FY 2017 Budget at the next meeting on June 27. He thanked the members of the public for their comments.

**Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing closed at 7:47 p.m.**

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

David Morrow: Mr. Morrow is the Chairman of the Board of Elections. He reminded Commissioners that the Board of Elections requested a change order for the new Elections Office for a flag pole to be located near or adjacent to the new building. At this stage of construction, it is now time to install the electrical conduit for the lighting and the foundation for the pole. Mr. Morrow strongly believes a flag pole is needed for the Elections Office and he asked the Board to approve the change order.

Chairman Hawkins responded that the Manager had communicated with Commissioners about this matter and received feedback. His understanding is there is a path forward and he will follow up with the Manager and respond to Mr. Morrow's inquiry.

### **AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

There were no agenda modifications.

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

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

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

The following items were approved:

#### MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners held a budget workshop on May 12, 2016 and met in regular session on May 23, 2016. The minutes from both meetings were approved as submitted.

#### APPLICATIONS FOR PERMITS TO CONDUCT FIREWORKS DISPLAYS

The 2010 Pyrotechnics Act requires the Board of Commissioners to approve all permits to conduct aerial fireworks displays in their respective county. Fire Marshal Gerald Grose has received the permit applications for aerial fireworks displays on July 4 from the following:

1. Jacqueline Rogow, private property
2. Heart of Brevard
3. Rockbrook Camp for Girls
4. Burlingame Country Club
5. Camp Illahee
6. Camp High Rocks
7. Lake Toxaway Company
8. Camp Carolina

All is in order for each applicant to conduct the fireworks display. Commissioners approved the permit applications as submitted.

#### PROCLAMATION –ARTS AND CULTURE CELEBRATION 2016

For the past few years, the Transylvania Community Arts Council has requested that both the City of Brevard and Transylvania County proclaim the last several days of June leading up to July 4 as Arts and Culture Week. The Transylvania Community Arts Council will host a series of events and activities during this time. Chairman Hawkins read aloud the proclamation for the benefit of the public. Executive Director Tammy Hopkins was in attendance and provided some handouts detailing all the events going on that week and publicly invited the Board of Commissioners and members of the public to take part in the activities leading up to the July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival. She also provided a brief update on filming activities going on in the County and the region. Commissioners approved Proclamation 18-2016 Arts and Culture Week 2016 and presented it to Ms. Hopkins.

(Proclamation 18-2016 Arts and Culture Celebration 2016 is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.)

## **PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**

### MEDICAL COUNTERMEASURES EXERCISE SUMMARY

In October, Public Health staff provided Commissioners with an overview of the timeline and planning process for the required Medical Countermeasures Full Scale Exercise. At that time Commissioners asked for a follow up report on the outcomes of the exercise once completed.

Health Director Elaine Russell reported that as a result of the work that went into this project the State sees it as a model to be used and referenced by other agencies. She thanked all the staff and everyone in the community who participated in the project.

Human Services Planning/Preparedness Coordinator Anita Glance provided the update. This is a summary of her presentation:

#### Medical Countermeasures Full Scale Exercise

- Planning began July/August 2015
- Used HSEEP (Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program) Building Block approach which is a requirement to receive federal funding
  - Multiple training with staff and many other agencies prior to exercise
  - Tabletop Exercise conducted January 13, 2016
  - Full Scale Exercise conducted February 23-24, 2016
- CDC requires 28 different elements to be operationally exercised for the Medical Countermeasures plan every five years
  - This year the State required counties to complete five of the 28; however, the planning committee's goal was ambitious and the group successfully and meaningfully exercised 24 of 28 of those requirements
  - The group has not received proper guidance on three of the remaining four; leaving one part that was not fully exercised
- NCDPH approval of After Action Report received May 4, 2016
- 116 total exercise participants (some dual role)
  - 40 volunteer patrons going through POD (Point of Dispensing) pretending to be citizens to pick up medication; diverse group
  - 68 exercise players who had a responsibility in the exercise
  - 10 exercise staff who kept the exercise moving and included controllers and evaluators who were recording the results for reporting purposes
- 26 different agencies represented among the participants
- POD was "open" for 1 hour to measure throughput; target from CDC to dispense medication to the entire population within 24 hours
- Utilized head of household method which reduces the number of people that must be processed through the POD
- 220 individuals processed through the POD in 1 hour
- 443 bottles of (pretend) medication were dispensed
- Average time from receiving form to completion of dispensing was 4.75 minutes (6.63 minutes when including medical review patrons in the count)
- Most common positive feedback
  - Well organized
  - Good/efficient Flow



- Agency collaboration
- Planning was great
- Key people familiar with their role made a big difference
- Most common feedback on areas of improvement
  - Expand on information provided at briefing both for exercise and operations
  - Need Spanish interpreters on-site; the Health Department no longer has any employees who speak Spanish
  - More players are needed to tax the process
    - Processed 220 individuals in 1 hour; however, the target was 552 per hour
    - Did not have the numbers of people to push through the process
    - Issue is common across the State
  - More runners/escorts
- Performance Measures required by NC Department of Public Health
  - Accomplished 9 out of 10
  - Did not accomplish Measure #10 for the reasons stated previously; however, staff thought it was possible

Performance Measures				
	Measure	Target	Observed Result	Page # in AAR
1	Time in which the local EOC is fully staffed <i>Report time in hours and minutes for each EOC activated</i>	Within 2 hours from activation	58 minutes	19
2	Percent of public health personnel who arrive safely within target timeframe to perform capability	100%	101%	33-35
3	Percent of volunteer staff acknowledging ability to assembly at a given response location within the target time specified in the emergency notification	Dependent on assigned function	N/A	33-35
4	Time in which public is provided with accurate and consistent information messages regarding POD locations	Within 4 hours from POD opening	1 hour	12
5	Percent of sufficient, competent personnel available to staff dispensing centers or vaccination clinics, as set forth in SNS plans and state/local plans	100%	102%	33-35
6	Time for all first-shift staff to be at the POD and ready	3 hours from notification	2.5 hours	33-35
7	Time for all POD equipment and operational supplies to be in place	4 hours from notification	3 hours	42
8	Percent of security forces designated in the POD-specific plan who report for duty	100%	100%	28-29
9	Time in which clinical staff and volunteers become available at triage station	Within 4 hours from decision to activate site	4 hours	33, 42
10	Percent of PODs able to process patients at the rate (persons per hour) specified in SNS plans and state/local plans	100%	0%	44-45

- Detailed narratives and improvement plans can be found in the After Action Reports
- The Planning Committee committed a year of their time to make this a success

This concluded the presentation. Chairman Hawkins called for comments and questions from Commissioners.

Commissioner Lemel commended the Health Department and the Planning Committee for their work. She was particularly impressed with their self-analyzation and how they immediately looked for opportunities for improvement, including collaboration with other organizations.

Commissioner Chappell stated that having in-house Spanish and other language interpreters is ideal, but suggested as an alternative to use the State's contractors for interpreter/translation services. Ms. Glance responded that the department contracts with an interpreter/translation phone service in the clinics and unfortunately users find it very cumbersome. The Planning Committee concluded that best practice would be to have in-house assistance or to contract with a person to participate on-site during these events.

Chairman Hawkins commended staff for their impressive presentation and quality of work during this process.

## APPOINTMENTS

### AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD

Shelley Heath's eligibility ended April 30, 2016 after serving two full terms. The Clerk advertised for the vacancy. Cooperative Extension recruited for the position as well since it needed to be filled by someone in the farming community. The Clerk received one application from John Blythe and he is qualified to fill the position. There are no other applications on file.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint John Blythe to fill the vacancy on the Agricultural Advisory board, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.**

### LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The terms of Anne Bullard and Karen Cole are expiring. Both are eligible and willing to serve another term. There are no other applications on file.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint Anne Bullard and Karen Cole to another term on the Library Board of Trustees, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.**

## NEW BUSINESS

### BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Finance Director Gay Poor presented this item. 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.

#105: \$109,614 from General Fund Balance assigned for Economic Development to support expansion at Excelsior Packaging, per the Incentive Agreement between the County and New Excelsior, Inc., signed in October 2014.

If approved, this amendment will increase the General Fund budget by \$109,614, bringing it to a total of \$48,842,551.

**Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the requested budget amendment that will increase the General Fund Budget by \$109,614. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman.** It was noted that New Excelsior has met the conditions of the incentive agreement. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Ms. Hogan noted that Ms. Poor will have additional budget amendments for approval at the next meeting.

#### MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Hogan reported the following on behalf of Manager Laughter:

- The Transylvania County Library has been awarded \$48,626 in federal grant funds to be used for strategic long range planning to develop responsive programs and services to meet the needs of current and future citizens of Transylvania County. The press release has been included in the Board's agenda packet. The Library received one of the 48 competitive grants for FY 17. Director Anna Yount is excited to develop services that are aligned in support of our community's goals and that capitalize on our three keys assets: people, place and platform.
- The Transylvania French Broad Stewards is hosting the first annual Upper French Broad Riverfest on Saturday, June 18 from 10am-3pm at Champion Park in Rosman. The event will celebrate the Upper French Broad River and will feature live music, food, local vendors and exhibitors, and activities including a canoe relay, tubing for kids, a family friendly triathlon, a horseshoe tournament and reptile exhibit. Mountain True is a major sponsor of the event. Commissioners and the public are encouraged to attend and participate in the activities.
- The Clerk to the Board scored 100% on her second Clerks Certification exam; the next two sessions will occur in August and October
- Staff will request permission in the near future to cancel the first Board of Commissioners' meeting in August
- Today, on behalf of the Manager, Library Director Anna Yount made a presentation to the Blue Ridge Community College Educators Academy; she reported on the structure of county government in North Carolina; after the presentation she and the Clerk to the Board answered various questions from the participants
- Congratulations to County Manager Jaime Laughter and her husband Geoff on the birth of their son, Samuel Posey Bishop, born on Thursday, June 9 at 6:04 p.m.; he weighed 6 lbs 12 oz and was 18.5 inches long
- The Clerk to the Board will be hosting the Western Regional County Clerks Conference in late September; a one-day educational/fun event; participation is expected by 25-30 County Clerks in the region and representatives from the UNC School of Government and NC Association of County Commissioners; agenda planning has begun

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Edwin Jones: Mr. Jones commented that the Medical Countermeasures presentation was very impressive. He asked what triggers such an event to occur. He also noted there are two types of hemlocks in the County and he wondered if both species are attacked equally by the wooly adelgid. Ms. Walston who spoke earlier during the public hearing informed Mr. Jones that both types of trees are vulnerable to the infestation.

Chairman Hawkins responded to his first question, stating that this particular exercise was based on a mock anthrax outbreak. A real event would be triggered by the hospital communicating with the Health Department that patients are presenting certain symptoms.

### COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Lemel reported on her County Commissioner activities since the last meeting. This is a summary:

- Teens In Crisis
  - Changed its name to REACH, which stands for Resources and Educational Access for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
  - The last meeting featured a presentation by Michael Abshire who runs Only Hope WNC, a homeless shelter for teenage boys that he developed in Henderson County
  - Next meeting is tomorrow and discussion will center on developing potential host homes for children
- Smoky Mountain County Commissioners Advisory Board
  - Attended last meeting which was poorly attended
- Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Task Force
  - Currently reviewing draft of joint strategic plan (City and County)
- Early Childhood Initiative
  - Continues to meet and receiving good press
  - Child Care Forum was highlighted in NC Association of County Lines magazine
  - Transylvania County is leading the State with our efforts in early childhood and other counties are interested in our work
- CARE Coalition
  - Spoke at recent meeting about community collaboration
- Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Task Force
  - Initial meeting kicked off last Thursday
  - Joint project with SAFE and other stakeholders in the community to determine how to manage, assess and support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault
  - Created five work groups that will report back at the next meeting in August
- On a personal note, Camp Keystone has opened for the season

Commissioner Chapman reported he recently attended the Board of Directors meeting of the NC Association of County Commissioners. Secretary of Commerce Skvarla spoke at the meeting and gave a positive report on the economy in North Carolina, such as:

- NC has the 9<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the US
- NC ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in population in the US
- Annual GDP growth has hovered around 3.8% over the last three years, compared with 1-1.5% in the US
- NC has the lowest corporate tax rate in the Southeast which is attractive to businesses
- NC has the fastest growth rate in the US with the establishment of small businesses; most businesses employee less than 25 people and these are the businesses that drive the economy
- The State has spent over \$100 million in infrastructure
- NC has a strong military influence and commitment
- AAA bond rating which enhances the State's ability to borrow money, if needed
- NC is the envy of other states; we should be very proud of that and work to protect that

Commissioner Chapman reported that filing has started for the Board of Education and runs through June 24. There are three seats up for reelection in November. He encouraged the members of the public to get involved. He announced that when he traveled to Asheville to attend the NCACC meeting, he took about 50 of our tourism brochures and they were a hit. He encouraged Commissioners and citizens to take brochures with them when they travel and leave them at various places to help market Transylvania County. Commissioner Chapman encouraged Commissioners to attend the NCACC Annual Conference in August in Winston-Salem. Lastly, he announced that North Carolina is one of a few states has 100% membership in the National Association of Counties.

Chairman Hawkins attended a meeting of the State Economic Development Board last week in Charlotte. People at the meeting were already aware of Gaia Herbs' expansion and they commented about how fortunate Transylvania County is to have such an asset, one that plays to our strengths. He stated that Transylvania County is fortunate to have Commissioner Chapman on the Board of Directors for the NCACC because is heavily involved and represents the County well. Chairman Hawkins serves on the Tourism Development Authority and at a recent meeting learned that FY 16 is going to be the best year ever for them in terms of occupancy tax, despite the fact that our room inventory is less than what it was a few years ago. They expect FY 17 to be even better. Chairman Hawkins congratulated Commissioner Lemel for opening Camp Keystone this weekend. It is the 100 -year anniversary of the camp and it has been family owned throughout its existence; this is a remarkable achievement. Chairman Hawkins commended the Early Childhood Initiative for being highlighted in the NCACC County Lines magazine because it is a testament to the work they are doing. He called attention to the fact that what Commissioner Lemel does for a living with Camp Keystone is try to help young women become confident, strong and successful, and her passion carries over into her County Commissioner duties which is being recognized locally and across the State. Chairman Hawkins encouraged members of the public to file for the Board of Education if they are interested in local issues. It is an incredibly important Board. Both Commissioners Chappell and Phillips have served on it previously. He noted that after this election, the Board will become a partisan board. In response to Jimmy Jones who spoke during the public hearing, Chairman Hawkins said that the fire departments are part of the pool that can access the emergency services reserve. Lastly, he thanked the Clerk for the work she did filling in for the Manager this evening.

### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Chapman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Lemel and unanimously carried.**

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Mike Hawkins, Chair  
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board