

**MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
July 11, 2016 – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, July 11, 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 Jason Chappell, Chairman Mike Hawkins, Page Lemel and Kelvin Phillips. Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman was out of town. Also present were Assistant County Manager David McNeill, County Attorney Tony Dalton and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Manager Jaime Laughter was not in attendance due to the recent birth of her son. Mr. McNeill facilitated the meeting in her stead.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derrick McKissock

There were approximately 30 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

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

WELCOME

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, June 27, 2016. At this meeting, Commissioners approved the FY 2017 Budget. The minutes were approved as submitted.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

RESOLUTION IN RECOGNITION OF BETH M. HYATT

Beth Hyatt will retire from Transylvania County effective August 1, 2016. She has been an employee of the Department of Public Health since 1992.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve Resolution 23-2016 In Recognition of Beth M. Hyatt. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Health Director Elaine Russell and Commissioners thanked Mrs. Hyatt for her years of service and her advocacy and leadership in the WIC department over the past 24 years. Mrs. Hyatt expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve for so many years. She intends to work part-time to assist the department with its transition. Chairman Hawkins read aloud Resolution 23-2016 In Recognition of Beth M. Hyatt. **The motion was approved unanimously.** Commissioners presented Mrs. Hyatt with the resolution.

TRANSYLVANIA ECONOMIC ALLIANCE SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse was in attendance to present the organization's semi-annual report to Commissioners. He recognized his Board members in attendance. He thanked the County for its support of the organization.

On June 1, 2016, the Transylvania Economic Alliance Board of Directors held a planning retreat to discuss the organization's strategic plan, specifically their short-term, mid-term, and long term obligations, and their focus on economic development. His report tonight will cover their retreat discussions, some of the work done on the strategic planning process, and where the organization expects to go into the future. This is a summary of his report:

FY 15-16: A Year In Review

The organization's core program of work is focused on existing business, marketing and product development.

Existing Business

Short-Term Actions	Status/Progress
Implement proactive Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) visitation program capable of tracking trends and community-related issues	Completed 38 BR&E visitations Ahead of projected 33 visitations
Facilitate business expansions and troubleshoot through direct staff engagements	68 troubleshooting issues, i.e. local regulations, supplier connections, utility needs, workforce/training
Serve as business liaison for area companies	Respond to a variety of issues ranging from real estate to electric outages
Create a database of grants and incentives and post on the website	Developed a document that fills this need and will be made available
Mid-Term Actions	Status/Progress
Facilitate online business development and networking opportunities	Created an online and searchable manufacturing and suppliers database
Include existing businesses in e-communications	Launched the Natural Advantage e-communications newsletter.

Product Development

Short-Term Actions	Status/Progress
Regularly review the sites/building inventory and update	AccessNC database is complete & up-to-date (commercial/industrial properties)
Perform a major transportation corridor study to identify and help create priorities	Completed in Spring, 2016
Prioritize a list of needed infrastructure improvements that will support business park development	Ongoing initiative based on private sector feedback and BR&E activities
Actively engage with Davidson River Village (DRV) ownership	Yes, actively engaged in property efforts
Mid-Term Actions	Status/Progress
Identify land for development by target markets and create strategy for execution; relates directly to major transportation corridors	Underway and working towards mid and long term goals
The Alliance should take an active role in long-term land use planning to ensure that businesses have a place to grow	

Marketing and Business Development

Short-Term Actions	Status/Progress
Perform target sector analysis	Completed analysis Summer, 2015
Coordinate with other area counties to market region to shared target markets	Developed marketing calendar which include coordination with peers and allies
Implement the brand and vision developed by Arnett Muldrow in all internal and external marketing	Completed initial implementation of branding initiative
Launch a professional website	Launched new website Winter, 2015
Implement a comprehensive marketing plan: video, e-brochures, social media, and document templates	E-brochures, social media and request for information (RFI) templates have been developed
Take the Alliance on the road to make presentations to local, state and regional partners	Presented sites/buildings and community information to NCEDP, Carolina West, Mtn. Area Workforce Development Board, county, city and utility allies
Create inventory of photos/videos	Completed initial phase and will continue to build inventory of long-term
Mid-Term Actions	Status/Progress
Leverage customers and suppliers of existing businesses for the recruitment programs	Alliance has become a referral point for local companies and allies who would like to encourage closer supply relationships with business associates and contacts
Capitalize on the Asheville and Greenville markets	Actively engaged in business development activities in both markets including travel, email campaigns and relationship building activities
Participate in trade shows in niche market sectors	Staff are actively engaged in business development activities reflective of target markets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft Beverage Association • Fancy Food Show • Hunter Hotel Conference
Start a lead generation program	Quarterly communications with site selection professionals/developers

Looking to the Future: FY 16-17 Highlights

Existing Business	Product Development	Marketing
Create a business awareness campaign recognizing target markets and unique contributions of local businesses	Implement recommendations and strategies identified in property identification and evaluation strategy	Conduct a cost of services study to show the value of commercial, agriculture and industrial development
Work with public partners to investigate, understand and improve local regulatory environment	Advocate for fast-track permitting process or efforts to reduce development timeline	Continue execution of professional, targeted marketing calendar
Support market development for businesses partners		
Facilitate a business networking group to address issues as they relate to economic development		

Business Expansion Competition

- Marketed to existing businesses with growth opportunities and start-ups who are able to develop and execute a business plan
- Application deadline Friday, September 9, 2016
- Grant Awards:
 - 1st Place \$15,000
 - 2nd Place \$10,000
- Online Application
 - <http://transylvaniainalliance.com/business-expansion-competition>
- Formal Business Pitch:
 - 4th Annual Business Summit (September 29th)
- Winners announced early October 2016

This concluded Mr. Hallingse's presentation.

Commissioner Chappell asked Mr. Hallingse to describe the position that the organization plans to hire. Mr. Hallingse announced that Transylvania Economic Alliance intends to hire a Director for Existing Business Services. This position is specifically tailored to working with existing companies, understanding their challenges, and working with local stakeholders to mitigate those challenges and make the area more business friendly. The County does an incredible job of providing good services to existing companies, so the goal is to be able to listen to companies and be responsive to their needs.

Commissioner Lemel asked if, given the dependence on mobile devices, there was a plan to ensure the website and its features are compatible. Mr. Hallingse said much of the website is accessible from mobile devices; however, they are struggling with the sites and building inventory database which is a tool provided by the NC Department of Commerce. The NC Department of Commerce is in the process of updating the tool and it is a priority for them. With that said, Transylvania Economic Alliance has begun the process of creating pdf documents that are specific to each property/building in the inventory that can be accessed from the website, but it will not be searchable.

Chairman Hawkins asked Mr. Hallingse to explain the difference between the Business Expansion Competition and the former Business Plan Competition that was sponsored by the County when it had an economic development department. Mr. Hallingse said the new competition is focused on existing companies who fit our target markets and is geared toward identifying those companies that have growth

opportunities. The company must make a formal pitch to a selected panel of individuals at the Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center's Annual Business Summit.

Chairman Hawkins inquired about whether or not there is a retail market component within the target sector analysis. Mr. Hallingse said the organization does not actively recruit retail, but they do help with identifying sites and buildings that might be conducive to their needs. He noted that retail typically comes into a market because they have identified densities in population or traffic patterns.

Chairman Hawkins asked if part of the organization's marketing strategy includes a public relations component through press releases and other methods other than just print ads, noting that a recent press release in *The Wall Street Journal* came as a result of the Tourism Development Authority's marketing agency's work with the publication. Mr. Hallingse stated that Transylvania Economic Alliance's marketing strategy involves more relationship building and face-to-face client-oriented visits. Purchasing ads in large publications is more focused on drawing visitors to the area, but that is not to say it is not an effective strategy for economic development. Being that the Transylvania Economic Alliance is a fairly new organization; their goal is to build relationships with State partners and commercial brokers. A recent ad in *Business North Carolina* was geared toward their State partnerships and others to provide an understanding of what our local market looks like and to be used as a material tool to showcase the area.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Hallingse for his presentation and thanked the organization's Board members for their work as well.

APPOINTMENTS

VOTING DELEGATE TO THE NCACC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The NC Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) will hold its 109th Annual Conference in Forsyth County August 11-14, 2016. The NCACC requires counties to elect a voting delegate to the Annual Conference. The voting delegate is authorized by the counties to vote on business items during the conference. Chairman Hawkins and Vice-Chairman Chapman are registered to attend the Annual Conference. Vice-Chairman Chapman serves on the organization's Board of Directors.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Commissioner Chapman to serve as Transylvania County's Voting Delegate to the NCACC Annual Conference, seconded by Chairman Hawkins and unanimously approved.

AREA COUNCIL ON AGING

There are two vacancies on the Area Council on Aging (now referred to as the Regional Council on Aging). There is one application on file and a potential application coming in the near future.

The Clerk has been in contact with the Land-of-Sky for some time regarding questions she had about this council. There has been quite a bit of shifting of positions since long time member Lee Stewart passed away and Louise Koontz retired from Social Services. Louise Koontz served as the County Council on Aging Chair for many years and always assisted the Clerk with appointments to the Area Council on Aging. The Clerk included email correspondence beginning in January in the Board's agenda packet for information purposes only.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Kevin Jones to fill one of the vacancies on the Regional Council on Aging. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips. Commissioner Lemel noted that within the Land-of-Sky region Transylvania County has the highest number of seniors as a percentage of population. Our Council on Aging operates as a volunteer group, whereas the other counties' councils operate as formal stand-alone agencies and provide support and various activities to their senior citizens. Commissioner Lemel intends to work with stakeholders during the fall to determine how to better provide services to seniors in our community. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

The following terms expired at the end of June:

1. Kelley Eyster-Commissioner Appointee
2. Kelsey Farmer-Student
3. Matt Walsh-Commissioner Appointee
4. Brian Weaver-Transylvania County Schools
5. Mandi Bentley-Parks and Recreation
6. William Sullivan-District Attorney Designee
7. April Owenby-Health Director Designee
8. Jerry Stone-Commissioner Appointee
9. Jake Dalton-Member of Business

All are eligible and willing to serve another term. There remain three vacancies that the JCPC chair and facilitator are working to fill.

Commissioner Chappell moved to reappoint the slate of members as presented, seconded by Commissioners Lemel and Phillips simultaneously and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

2015 TAX SETTLEMENT REPORT

Each year, the Tax Collector shall make a sworn report to the governing body of the taxing unit per NCGS 105-373. The report covers the 2015 Tax Year. Interim Tax Administrator Shasta Moretz presented the report as follows:

- Total Levy
 - County – \$26,312,940.19
 - All Districts - \$33,839,435.64
- Total Collected
 - County – \$26,278,111.86
 - All Districts - \$33,795,503.89
- Uncollected 2015 Taxes (as of June 30, 2016)
 - County – \$34,828.33 Bankrupt - \$7,198.83
 - All Districts - \$43,931.75 Bankrupt - \$9,424.44
- 2015 Overall County Collection Rate – 99.87%
- Amount of Delinquent Taxes Collected for 2014 and Prior
 - County - \$35,242.07
- Bank Attachments – \$51,317.22
- Wage Garnishments – \$22,406.54
- Payment Plans - 404
- Collected \$3,366.57 thru Debt Set-Off – Debt Set Off is a program where we intercept State Refund checks and Lottery winnings for delinquent taxes.
- Made over 12,900 phone calls

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the 2015 Tax Settlement Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioners thanked the Tax Office staff for achieving an outstanding tax collection rate once again. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

(The 2015 Tax Settlement Report is on file in the Office of the Clerk to the Board.)

2016 ORDER TO COLLECT TAXES

The Tax Collector must be charged with the 2016 Tax Bills which gives full and sufficient authority to collect taxes with forced collection remedies if necessary, per NCGS 105-321.

Commissioner Chappell moved to approve the 2016 Order to Collect Taxes, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. McNeill reported the following on behalf of the Manager:

1. Jaime and Baby Sam are doing well.
2. At the next meeting staff plans to present a final annual work plan for approval.
3. At the next meeting staff will ask the Board to cancel the first meeting in August.
4. Brevard Music Center received a very complimentary review in a recent edition of the *Wall Street Journal*.
5. The Allison-Deaver House was awarded \$11,000 in grant funds from the FY 2016 Historic Preservation Fund for urgent repairs. Thanks to Planning and Community Development Director Mark Burrows and County Planner Joy Fields for assisting the Joint Historic Preservation Commission with submission of the grant. These grants are one of the benefits of the County having the JHPC.
6. The parking lot used by County Administration staff is being reconfigured to accommodate the new Elections building and comply with the UDO.
7. Parks and Recreation is starting a brand new Youth Flag Football program. The department received a grant from the Carolina Panthers to start this program. The program will consist of 4 categories with age of participation ranging from K-6th grades. Each participant will receive a reversible Carolina Panthers jersey. The season will last for 6 weeks and will begin on Saturday, September 11. The registration deadline is July 31st. Anyone interested in participating in the program should visit www.countyrec.org to sign up.
8. Congratulations to the Tax Administration staff for closing the fiscal year with a 99.87% tax collection rate.
9. Mayor Shelton reported that the Town of Rosman expects to open Champion Pool this weekend. We are very proud of the work that has been done on this project. Kudos to Mayor Shelton and others for their commitment to this project!
10. We are saddened by the unexpected death of one of our own. Please keep the family of John Whitmire in your thoughts and prayers.

Chairman Hawkins inquired about the expected completion date on the Board of Elections building. Mr. McNeill reported that completion is expected for late August or early September. The project is moving along well.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Mayes: Mr. Mayes presented this complaint to Commissioners at the previous meeting. He feels he was singled out and treated unfairly by the Tax Office staff and he is disappointed that the Board of Commissioners is not assisting him to resolve his issue. He reported that he received only 15 minutes to make an appeal to the Board of Equalization and Review on the tax value of the 14 parcels he owns. Mr. Mayes reported that it will be costly to appeal to the State level. He reiterated that he feels he has been treated unfairly and expressed his extreme disappointment with the County and Board of Commissioners.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chappell expressed sadness about the loss of an individual in our community. He expressed appreciation to those who sacrifice so much to keep citizens safe. He encouraged citizens to convey their gratitude to all those in Emergency Services and Law Enforcement.

Commissioner Phillips echoed Commissioner Chappell's comments. He commented that most of us do not comprehend the weight and burdens that Emergency Services and Law Enforcement personnel carry with them most times. Commissioner Phillips suggested inviting Mayor Shelton to a future Commissioners' meeting to share with the Board and public the progress of Champion Pool because they have done a tremendous job. Lastly, he stated that if this Board learns of mistakes made, the Board should do what is necessary to remedy those mistakes.

Commissioner Lemel stated she was profoundly impacted by events across the nation over the past week. There seems to be so much anger and mistrust of one another. She participated in a prayer vigil on Saturday morning at the Courthouse where it was apparent this community is very loving and caring. She believes our country needs real leadership and she said she will strive to ensure strong leadership at the local level with fellow Commissioners.

Chairman Hawkins reported that Commissioners were invited to a meeting last month to talk about local issues. He believes Sheriff Mahoney, Chief Harris and members of the community are being very proactive about ensuring mutual respect between law enforcement and local communities. He expects some tangible items to come from these discussions that everyone can be proud of. Chairman Hawkins attended a meeting in Asheville last week and the topic was how the face of employment is changing and what organizations can do to meet those challenges. He learned that Western North Carolina ranks near the bottom in terms of our preparedness to tackle issues relating to infrastructure, education, workforce readiness, etc. Along those lines, Chairman Hawkins noted that he met with a candidate for NC Commissioner of Labor and the candidate unfortunately did not appear to have a firm grasp of rural economic development. Lastly, Chairman Hawkins reported that recent legislation will change future elections to the Board of Education from nonpartisan to partisan. He believes this is a bad bill for Transylvania County so he contacted the NC House and Senate candidates and asked them to consider repealing the Board of Education bill should they become elected. Three of the four candidates reported to him that they would introduce legislation to reverse this legislation which he believes is very positive.

Chairman Hawkins moved to enter into closed session per NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (4) to discuss matters relating to the location of expansion of business in the area served by this body, after a 5 minutes recess. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.

CLOSED SESSION

Per NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of business in the area served by this body, closed session was entered into at 8:25 p.m. Present were Chairman Hawkins, Commissioners Chappell, Lemel and Phillips, Assistant County Manager David McNeill, Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse, County Attorney Tony Dalton, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse updated Commissioners on potential economic development projects. Commissioners discussed and directed Mr. Hallingse and staff on how to proceed.

Chairman Hawkins moved to leave closed session at 9:21 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Lemel and unanimously carried.

OPEN SESSION

Chairman Hawkins moved to seal the minutes of the closed session until such time that opening the minutes does not frustrate the purpose of the closed session, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Chairman Hawkins moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously approved.**

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board