

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 24, 2016 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, October 24, 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, and Page Lemel. Chairman Mike Hawkins was out of town and unable to attend. Kelvin Phillips was absent due to illness. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter and County Attorney Tony Dalton. Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan was not in attendance because she was attending NC Clerks Certification courses in Chapel Hill.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derrick McKissock

There were approximately 64 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

WELCOME

Vice-Chairman Chapman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the public for participating in their local government. He introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance.

PUBLIC HEARING

FY 17-18 SECTION 5311 TRANSPORTATION GRANT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING

The County Transportation Department is requesting to apply for its annual allocation of Section 5311 grant funds. This year the State required separate public hearings and separate approvals of the applications for administrative and capital funds. Staff will ask the Board of Commissioners to approve the applications later in the meeting. The department intends to apply for \$174,795 in funds to cover administrative costs which requires a local match of 15% totaling \$26,220. The public was invited to complete the Voluntary Title VI Public Involvement form which will be included in the grant application packet.

Vice-Chairman Chapman opened the public hearing at 7:05 p.m. There were no comments from the public. **Vice-Chairman Chapman closed the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.**

FY 17-18 SECTION 5311 TRANSPORTATION GRANT FOR CAPITAL FUNDING

The County Transportation Department is requesting to apply for its annual allocation of Section 5311 grant funds. This year the State required separate public hearings and separate approvals of the applications for administrative and capital funds. Staff will ask the Board of Commissioners to approve the applications later in the meeting. The department intends to apply for \$63,669 in funds to cover capital costs (vehicles and other) which requires a 10% match of \$6,637. The public was invited to complete the Voluntary Title VI Public Involvement form which will be included in the grant application packet.

Vice-Chairman Chapman opened the public hearing at 7:07 p.m. There were no comments from the public. **Vice-Chairman Chapman closed the public hearing at 7:08 p.m.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Morrow: Mr. Morrow is the Chairman of the Board of Elections. Mr. Morrow reported that as of 6:00 p.m. this evening 3,127 people have voted during the early voting period at the new Elections Center. Elections has also received several hundred mail-in ballots. The turnout thus far is ahead of the last presidential election. Rosman Town Hall will open as an early voting site on Thursday at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Morrow thanked Commissioners for the wonderful new facility.

Tim Petit: Mr. Petit stated his strong opposition to the County charging for the use of parks and recreation facilities. He stated that parents already pay for these activities, so in a sense they are being charged twice. He hopes Commissioners will consider this fact when they make their decision about fees. Mr. Petit noted that when he helped facilitate the County entering into a lease with Sharon Hogsed for the Rosman Community Park, it was never his intent for the County to charge for the use of the facility. He also stated that many of the design aspects of Rosman Community Park have not been completed and he urged Commissioners to finish the project as planned.

Sharon Hogsed: Ms. Hogsed owns the property which the County leases for Rosman Community Park. She reminded Commissioners that it has been nine years since former Parks and Recreation Director Rick Pangle and Tim Petit asked her to consider leasing some farmland for a park. She said her late mother would be pleased to see the progress that has been made. Ms. Hogsed said it was never the intention of the park to be the cause of tension or hardship for anyone using it so she charges the County a minimal amount of rent with the hopes that it would become what it has today. She asked the Board to consider not charging fees to those that use the facility.

Lee McMinn: Mr. McMinn serves as the Chair of the Board for the Bread of Life. He reported that last spring the Bread of Life applied for and received a grant from the County to help the organization feed the hungry in our county. The organization provides roughly 4,000 meals each month with the help of 400 volunteers and a small number of paid staff. He thanked Commissioners for their generosity and invited them to attend lunch at the Bread of Life. He intends to come back before the Board about future plans for the Bread of Life.

Brian Stretcher: Mr. Stretcher is president of the Transylvania Youth Soccer Association (TYSA) and he addressed Commissioners regarding the proposed fees for the use of parks and recreation facilities. He said he first learned about the fees from a recent article in the local newspaper and noted there was never discussion with the organization about the potential for being charged fees for future use of the facilities. He noted that TYSA is a nonprofit organization that has been in operation for about 15 years and serves all local children that want to play soccer. TYSA's annual budget is about \$30,000 a year which pays to employ one person to handle all administrative functions, uniforms and equipment, and referees/officials; otherwise, the organization is operated by many volunteers. Mr. Stretcher said it would cost TYSA over \$4,000 annually to rent the fields which represents a 15% increase in their budget. Because TYSA is a nonprofit organization, it would have no choice but to pass those costs along to parents. Mr. Stretcher asked Commissioners to consider his and other comments made with respect to the proposed fees.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

Following the regular business of the August 22, 2016 Board of Commissioners' meeting, Commissioners met in closed session as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11 to consult with their attorney, discuss potential economic development projects and contemplate the potential acquisition of property. These minutes were sealed. (The minutes for the regular business session were approved on October 12.) Commissioners met in regular session on September 12, 2016. The minutes were approved 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 September 2016, total tax dollars released was \$4,785.34 and refunds totaled \$1,833.77. Commissioners approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Report for September 2016.

VETERANS DAY PROCLAMATION

In 2009, the Board of Commissioners established a Veterans Day Committee that is responsible for developing a program to honor the veterans of our community on Veterans Day. Commissioner Chapman serves as chair of that committee. For several years, Commissioners have approved a proclamation honoring Veterans Day. The proclamation will be presented and read at the Veterans Day Ceremony on Friday, November 11, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. at the Courthouse Gazebo. Commissioners approved Proclamation 30-2016 Veterans Day 2016 and encouraged citizens to attend in honor of the veterans in our community.

(Proclamation 30-2016 Veterans Day 2016 is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PRESENTATION ON WILSON ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) Division 14 Engineer Ed Green, Design Construction Engineer Steve Williams and Project Development Engineer Brian Burch presented information on the Wilson Road improvement project. Commissioners invited NCDOT officials to make a presentation for the benefit of the citizens who have concerns and unanswered questions about this project. This is a summary of the presentation:

History

- First appeared in the Thoroughfare Plan for the City of Brevard in September 1998
- Referenced in the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) for Transylvania County, adopted in May 2007
- Project is in prioritization process which NCDOT refers to as SPOT

- In 2014 this project was included in the State Transportation Improvement Program, known as STIP
- Feasibility study is underway and nearing completion
 - Looked at 3 alternatives which were presented recently to the public

Alternatives

- Common to all 3 Alternatives
 - Replace bridge over the French Broad River at Ecusta Road
 - Add 4 feet of paved shoulder
 - Realign Wilson Road to intersect with Ecusta Road
- Alternative 1
 - Minimal upgrade based on NCDOT's Resurfacing, Restoration, and Rehabilitation (known as 3R) Guidelines
 - No major grade work or realignment
 - Posted speed 40 mph
- Alternative 2
 - Upgrade to "Major Collector" design standards; Wilson Road is designated as a major collector by the French Broad MPO
 - Modify existing vertical and horizontal curves to major collector standards
 - Corrects flooding by moving road out of 50-year floodplain
 - Posted speed 40 mph
- Alternative 3
 - Upgrade to "Principal Arterial" – US Route; Wilson Road would become the primary route at the US 276 intersection
 - Modify existing, horizontal and vertical curves to principal arterial standards
 - Corrects flooding by moving road out of 50-year floodplain
 - Posted speed 55 mph

Cost Comparison (Preliminary Estimates)

- Alternate 1
 - Construction costs \$21 Million
 - Right-of-Way (ROW) costs \$4,042,500
- Alternate 2
 - Construction costs \$27 Million
 - ROW costs \$5,055,000
- Alternate 3
 - Construction costs \$81 Million
 - ROW costs \$17,987,000

Properties Affected (Preliminary Estimates)

- Alternate 1
 - Relocations: Residential-12, Business-1
 - Easements and ROW-40.8 Acres
- Alternate 2
 - Relocations: Residential-15, Business-1
 - Easements and ROW-49.5 Acres
- Alternate 3
 - Relocations: Residential-53
 - Easements and ROW-90.1 Acres

These are worst case scenarios. Once NCDOT decides upon a design alternative, the details will be tweaked as the design is finalized.

Next Steps

- October 26, 2016 - Public Comment Period for Public Workshop complete
- November 18, 2016 - Select design alternative
- December 2020 - Right-of-Way Plans complete
- January 17, 2023 - LET Date

It was reported that this project is going back through the SPOT process. It has received the support of the County through the RPO and from the NCDOT Division office; however, compared to other projects in the region, the project ranking is on the borderline and may or may not be funded. However, NCDOT is confident it will be funded.

This concluded the presentation. Vice-Chairman Chapman called for questions and comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Lemel asked for an explanation of the difference between the “major collector” and “principal arterial” design standards. NCDOT explained that the “major collector” design is simply a road to accommodate rural traffic, but it also collects traffic from other state roads. Travelers along US 64 or US 276 may use Wilson Road to bypass Brevard so it is seen as having collector characteristics. A “principal arterial” is a primary US highway that would be used to move traffic around Brevard instead.

Commissioner Lemel asked if the “principal arterial” design standard involved rerouting US 276 along Wilson Road. NCDOT confirmed that this would fall under alternative 3 and is part of the previously proposed Sylvan Bypass which rerouted US 276. The cost of this option is almost 4 times the cost of alternative 2.

Commissioner Lemel inquired about current daily traffic counts along Wilson Road. NCDOT officials did not have the figures with them.

Commissioner Lemel stated it is unfortunate that the realization of this project is unknown, especially knowing how much work has gone into developing the alternatives and the anxiety it has caused many of our citizens whose personal property might be at stake. NCDOT confirmed that the project is on the threshold and they cannot say with certainty that the project will be funded. The prioritization process occurs every two years, so if it does not get funded it will be considered again in the next cycle. However, NCDOT officials feel confident it will be funded.

Commissioner Lemel asked if the funding must be secured before the rights-of-way are acquired. NCDOT stated that the funds will be available for the project prior to purchasing rights-of-way.

Commissioner Chappell asked for confirmation that all three alternatives intend to change the entrance to Wilson Road from Ecusta Road. NCDOT confirmed.

Commissioner Chappell inquired about where the majority of residents would be affected. NCDOT officials stated that several mobile homes would be impacted at the Wilson Road/Ecusta Road entrance.

Commissioner Chapman asked which budget cycle the project would be funded under. NCDOT stated that they intend to finish the SPOT process in December. They should know by the end of the year where

the project ranks. In January 2017, the draft TIP will be made available for public comments. The plan would then be adopted in June. They should know soon thereafter.

Commissioner Chapman asked what the main factor is driving this project (safety, better traffic flow, etc.). NCDOT responded that the project came to be part of the prioritization process from the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). The CTP mentioned safety issues and the need for guardrails, wider pavement, and raising the road out of the floodplain. The project was included because it was a priority for the City of Brevard and Transylvania County at the RPO level.

Commissioners thanked NCDOT officials for their presentation and encouraged citizens to submit their comments and concerns about this project to NCDOT.

2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Planning Board Chair Mike West introduced Planning and Community Development staff, former and current Planning Board members, and community advocates in attendance. He reported that the Planning Board began the process of developing a draft comprehensive plan in 2014 by first reviewing the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and then studying plans from other counties and states while keeping in mind that Transylvania County is unique. The Planning Board agreed that the new plan should rely heavily on public input and participation and that the data and discussions with the public and community leaders would drive their decisions on a final plan. The Planning Board recruited members of the public from all over the County to serve as community advocates and then proceeded to host a series of more than 30 community meetings. Next steps including developing, distributing and compiling the results of a communitywide survey. While no single member of the Planning Board was completely happy with every aspect of the plan, the Planning Board unanimously approved a draft comprehensive plan that they feel meets the expectations of the Board of Commissioners and can help guide the County into the future and therefore recommended its approval. Mr. West thanked all those who participated in the process. He turned the presentation over to Planning and Community Development Director Mark Burrows.

Mr. Burrows noted that the amount of work that went into the draft 2025 Comprehensive Plan exceeds the 2005 plan and truly captures Transylvania County. He stated that Planning Board members have many different interests and viewpoints and they used this fact to determine how to better engage the public. To ensure the survey was widely distributed, the Planning Board developed an online video, produced a skip ad that would pop up on various sites inviting users to participate in the survey and was paid for by a community advocate, and mailed a copy of the survey along with all tax bills. They also took the time to meet with citizens to determine what they wanted for their respective communities.

Mr. Burrows reported that the Planning Board studied many different areas to assist with drafting the plan, to include economics, infrastructure, transportation, community facilities, environmental/natural resources/agriculture, public safety, advocacy/cooperation, land use, recreation, and arts and culture. Next the Planning Board created a vision statement that reads: *Through leadership and community engagement, Transylvania County preserves the county's natural beauty and cultural resources while developing our built environment to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of our county. What is critical here is that Planning Board understood that Commissioners wanted to focus on the County's built environment. There was a real emphasis on how to accomplish that with goals and strategies. The vision statement is the guiding piece to the plan.* The focus areas of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan include: Economic Health, Environment Health, Land Use and Livability, and Health, Culture and Equity.

Next, County Planner Joy Fields talked about the various goals related to the aforementioned focus areas and briefly highlighted the objectives and strategies. This is a summary of her presentation:

ECONOMIC HEALTH FOCUS

Economic Health Goal: Transylvania County has a diverse and vibrant economic base that is business-friendly and is supported by exceptional infrastructure.

Economic Health Objectives:

- Actively supports efforts to promote and grow existing businesses and create places and policies to attract new businesses
 - Supported by 12 strategies
- Initiates efforts to maintain and enhance infrastructure in order to improve our unique quality of place
 - Supported by 9 strategies, including a strategy to support efforts that provide water and sewer infrastructure for new and existing businesses

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FOCUS

Environmental Health Goal: Transylvania County preserves, conserves, protects, enhances and utilizes its environmental and agricultural resources to provide access for outdoor experiences while increasing recreational and economic development opportunities.

Economic Health Objectives:

- Actively supports efforts to conserve and protect the natural resources
 - Supported by 9 strategies
- Promotes and protects a diversity of agricultural, working lands, and forestry operations throughout the county
 - Supported by 6 strategies

LAND USE AND LIVABILITY FOCUS

Land use and Livability Goal: Transylvania County recognizes and supports private property rights while actively seeking ways to promote new growth and development through citizen driven policies and procedures that include, but are not limited to, safety, livability, extension of utilities, road improvements and community character. (The Planning Board used the definition of livability as a measure of opportunities for a health, safe and prosperous life.)

Land Use and Livability Objectives:

- Supports land use that increases the economic opportunities while preserving the cultural and natural resources
 - Supported by 7 strategies
- Ensures public safety efforts are financially supported, well-coordinated and prepared for future growth
 - Supported by 11 strategies
- Promotes exceptional community facilities throughout the county
 - Supported by 7 strategies

HEALTH, CULTURE AND EQUITY FOCUS

Health, Culture and Equity Goal: Transylvania County is an inclusive, healthy and well-rounded collection of communities and neighborhoods that all have access to the cultural, recreational, educational and service-oriented resources that support a high quality of life.

Health, Culture and Equity Objectives:

- Values the physical and mental health of all citizens, and is recognized as a leader in Western North Carolina for actively providing access to excellent health care facilities and services
 - Supported by 8 strategies
- Recognizes and actively advocates for the diverse interests and cultures of the community and fosters cooperation between citizens and communities throughout the county, while valuing the county's rich cultural and historic heritage
 - Supported by 7 strategies
- Actively encourages and supports high-quality art (music, performing, and visual) and recognizes the cultural, economic and educational impacts of these cultural resources
 - Supported by 4 strategies
- Promotes the health and well-being of its citizens, by providing and actively supporting high-quality and well maintained parks, recreational facilities, programs and services throughout the county
 - Supported by 6 strategies
- Supports life-long learning and personal advancement that enables the county to retain an educated workforce and maintain the high-quality of life
 - Supported by 9 strategies

Mr. Burrows proposed the next steps in the process. He asked Commissioners to schedule a public hearing in the near future so that the Board can officially receive comments from the public, although the draft document is completely filled with public comments and suggestions. Another step would be for the Board of Commissioners to make changes they feel are necessary to the success of the plan. He noted that staff has already made corrections and additions in order to strengthen it, but did not feel comfortable making changes to the goals and strategies. Following these steps, staff recommends adoption of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Burrows noted that staff has developed a performance matrix for accountability purposes to ensure the plan is carried out. He thanked everyone that participated in the process. This concluded the presentation.

Commissioner Lemel said she appreciated the first section of the report which included the narrative. She learned some information she was previously unaware of and also found the report to be very positive, despite our community problems. She said she is encouraged by the collaborative, positive spirit in the community. She thanked the Planning Board for the tremendous amount of work that went into creating this document.

Commissioner Chappell thanked the Planning Board members for putting so many hours of their time into this process. Because the Planning Board is made up of such diverse members, he said he was surprised that the Planning Board voted to accept it unanimously. He encouraged the public to read the draft plan so they can also see the diverse thoughts and opinions that went into crafting it.

Vice-Chairman Chapman echoed statements made thus far, adding that the comprehensive plan should be a living and therefore workable document. He noted that the strategies included will drive the Board's budgeting process and plans for the future. He thanked staffs, Planning Board members and community advocates for their time and efforts.

Mr. Burrows stated that the draft plan is available online for review and will be advertised prior to the public hearing.

APPOINTMENTS

DANGEROUS DOG REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Transylvania County Animal Control ordinance established a Dangerous Dog Review Committee for appeals of dangerous dog declarations by Animal Services. The membership of the committee has changed and requires official appointment by the Board. It is the recommendation of Animal Services Director Elma Rae Greene to appoint Dr. Glenn McPherson, DVM (Animals of Eden Veterinary Hospital), Captain Kevin Creasman (Sheriff's Office) and Sgt. Jason Page (Brevard Police Department).

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Dr. Glenn McPherson, Captain Kevin Creasman and Sgt. Jason Page to the Transylvania County Dangerous Dog Review Committee, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

NURSING AND ADULT CARE HOME ADVISORY COMMITTEE

There are two vacancies on the Nursing and Adult Care Home Advisory Committee. Through a recent advertisement, the Clerk received two applications. It is the recommendation of the regional ombudsman that these two applicants be appointed to fill the vacancies.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Susan Cothorn and Dr. Debbie Felker to fill the vacancies on the Nursing and Adult Care Home Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioner Lemel was impressed with the qualifications of these applicants and stated the County is fortunate to have them serve on this committee. Vice-Chairman Chapman thanked citizens for stepping forward to serve and he encouraged others to apply. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

There are five vacancies on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council: Chief of Police or Designee, two Students, and two Commissioner Appointees. The Clerk advertised for the Commissioner Appointee positions and received two applications. It is the recommendation of JCPC Chair Alan Justice to appoint Julia Smith and Rhodney Norman to fill the vacancies.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Julia Smith and Rhodney Norman to fill the two Commissioner Appointee vacancies on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Vice-Chairman Chapman serves on this council. He stated it is a very robust council with members representing various professions. They are working to improve the lives of juveniles in the community. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS

SUSPENSION OF PARKS AND RECREATION FIELD USER FEES

At the October 10, 2016 Board of Commissioners' meeting and at the request of Commissioners, Parks and Recreation Director Carleen Dixon presented information about how fees are assessed to users of parks and recreation facilities. There were some user groups that were given a year transition period to determine their usage and applicable fee amounts. Those users were set to start paying field reservation fees on January 1, 2017. All other users were being charged the fees as approved in the fee schedule.

In order to better understand how these fees impact users, Commissioners requested an agenda item at this meeting that would recommend suspension of the field user fees at least until the next fiscal year and in the meantime obtain additional information about the types of users and how they could potentially be categorized in a new fee schedule.

Staff is currently preparing a comprehensive list of users for Commissioners' review and suggestions for how to proceed. One suggestion might include a timeframe to apply for an annual exemption of fees for user groups which should be done during the budget process, similar to the new nonprofit procedure for funding requests. Information for consideration could include nonprofit status, number of annual participants, whether an organization is volunteer based and/or additional criteria set by the Board. If supported by the Board, this could be vetted for recommendation by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Staff recommended suspension of the parks and recreation field user fees through June 30, 2017. Staff will continue to gather information for future discussion. It was noted that the recommendation does not impact other fees that are part of the regular fee schedule.

Commissioner Lemel moved to suspend the parks and recreation field user fees through June 30, 2017. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioner Lemel felt that based on comments received over the last few weeks that it is very important to identify our primary youth programs that are field users and include them in the future conversations. Commissioner Chappell asked that staff not include fee revenues in the projected budget analysis. Vice-Chairman Chapman states he does not want to do anything that will impact children from participating in recreation activities. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

NEW BUSINESS

FY 17-18 SECTION 5311 TRANSPORTATION GRANT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDING

Support Services Administrator Keith McCoy presented this item. A public hearing was held as required at the beginning of the meeting. Staff recommended approval of the grant application for administrative funding totaling \$174,795 with a 15% local match of \$26,220. The amount is \$2,000 less than the previous year and this trend is expected to continue.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the FY 17-18 Section 5311 Transportation Grant for Administrative Funding, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

FY 17-18 SECTION 5311 TRANSPORTATION GRANT FOR CAPITAL FUNDING

Support Services Administrator Keith McCoy presented this item. A public hearing was held as required at the beginning of the meeting. Staff recommended approval of the grant application for capital funding totaling \$63,669 with a 10% local match of \$6,637. Capital funding will be used to purchase a new high-top lift-equipped van.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the FY 17-18 Section 5311 Transportation Grant for Capital Funding, seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously approved.

COUNTY EXTENSION BUDGET UPDATE AND CONTRACT REVISIONS

County Extension Director Bart Renner explained how local and State changes will impact funding for the Transylvania Extension Service. He presented three points to consider.

In July 2016, NC Cooperative Extension implemented its State strategic plan. This plan, which was accepted by the Board of Commissioners, made Transylvania County responsible for a higher percentage of Extension's overall salaries. It has been noted that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be updated to accurately reflect the current situation. Since the acceptance of the 2016-17 budget Extension employees have received a cost of living and equity increase in wages. These increases, along with proposed changes in staff responsibilities, are still within the allocated budget for 2016-17.

The horticulture position has been moved from two days in Transylvania County to one day a week in order to take advantage of State funding and provide the horticulture agent with programming requirements that accommodate certain health issues. The horticulture program has already been focused on a wide variety of programming efforts at a district level, which both directly and indirectly benefit Transylvania County. Mr. Renner does not expect this adjustment to significantly change the level of service available to Transylvania County's horticultural professionals or Master Gardener program.

Although the Extension Service is consistently receiving requests for health and nutrition education, the office will no longer be able to meet the student attendance and evaluation numbers required of a full time EFNEP program assistant. This is due to a variety of issues, including recent changes in the School System's policies dealing with outside organizations. This provides the Extension Service with a valuable opportunity to adjust the responsibilities of the EFNEP program. The Extension Service is proposing to move the EFNEP Program Assistant position to 20 hours with EFNEP and 20 hours as an Agricultural Program Assistant. The designation will give the program assistant much more freedom to create a wide variety of educational programs, including local foods and nutrition, home forestry, and 4-H programs. While this would result in an increase in the County's contribution to the program assistant position, it is still within the current allocated budget. The Extension Service has the approval of its advisory committee to implement the change, understanding that the office is responding to the needs of clients and making the organization stronger.

The Extension Service expects to see an approximate savings of \$15,000 from moving the horticulture position to more district programs, but a higher cost by moving the program assistant position to more local foods and 4-H programming. Overall, these changes are still within Transylvania County Extension's budget and Mr. Renner does not see a need to request increases in the future. Mr. Renner stated that the proposed changes are vital to the Extension Service's ability to provide clients with the best customer service and expertise possible and he recommended approving the changes to the program assistant's responsibilities and updating the MOU to reflect the changes.

Commissioner Chappell moved to approve the changes to the program assistant's responsibilities, update the MOU to reflect the changes and authorize the Chairman and/or the Manager to sign the appropriate documents. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lemel. After brief comments, the motion was approved unanimously.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ON WILSON ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Planning and Community Development Director Mark Burrows and County Planner Joy Fields presented this item on behalf of the County's Transportation Advisory Committee.

Over the past several years, NC Department of Transportation (NC DOT) has explored ways to improve the safety and functionality of Wilson Road (SR 1540). On September 26, 2016 NCDOT representatives and consultants presented three different alternatives to improve Wilson Road. In addition, Mr. Steve Cannon, NCDOT District Engineer, met with the County's Transportation Advisory Committee on October 4, 2016 and outlined the different alternatives in more detail. Following his presentation, the Advisory Committee voted to recommend that the County support Alternative 2 with reasons for the support highlighted in a letter from David Carter, Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee. Those reasons included the need to raise the road out of the flood zone and other safety concerns.

Staff requested Commissioners officially receive the recommendation from the Transylvania County Transportation Advisory Committee and, if appropriate, vote on the recommendation and forward their response to the NC DOT as part of the public input process that is due by October 26, 2016.

Commissioner Lemel moved to forward the recommendation of the Transportation Advisory Committee to the NC Department of Transportation as part of the public input process. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioner Chappell asked staff to reach out to Dr. Folger, another member of the Transportation Advisory Committee, because he had offered some suggestions on specific alternatives. He wanted to ensure Dr. Folger's comments were included as public record. Mr. Burrows noted that Dr. Folger's comments have already been conveyed to the NCDOT along with his contact information. Dr. Folger's suggestion was based on an old recommendation for an entirely new road and was not part of the three alternatives offered by the NCDOT. Mr. Burrows noted that projects of this nature take years to come to fruition, but if no action is taken now, it is almost certain that improvements will not be made, which in turn does not support the Comprehensive Plan which calls for improvements in infrastructure. Commissioner Lemel noted that her motion is simply to forward the comments of the Transportation Advisory Committee to the NCDOT and does not commit the Board of Commissioners to taking a stance on any of the three alternatives. She feels their work is important and should be entered in as public record. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

NC DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION 2017 BICYCLE PLANNING GRANT

Planning and Community Development Director Mark Burrows presented this item. Staff recently learned from Land of Sky and NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) officials about a grant that is available for the comprehensive study of bike and pedestrian needs. The grant will allow us to explore connectivity to other communities in the County, and also to our corridors and other regions. Having a comprehensive plan in place will make Transylvania County more attractive for future grant opportunities.

Staff has prepared a grant application for submission to NCDOT with help from advocates in the biking community. The grant amount is \$65,000 to include a 30% match (\$50,000 from NCDOT and \$15,000 match from County). Blue Ridge Bike Club has agreed to commit \$5,000. Staff is exploring other funding opportunities as well.

For a viable grant application, staff needs approval from the Board of Commissioners and a commitment to provide the local match up to \$10,000. The application deadline is November 10

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve Resolution 31-2016 In Support of 2017 Bicycle Planning Grant for Transylvania County and the local match up to \$10,000 for the bicycle planning grant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioner Lemel believes this is a great opportunity and stated that if these efforts will help alleviate the frustration among motorists, pedestrians and cyclists it will be positive for the community. Vice-Chairman Chapman noted that the Comprehensive Plan makes significant references to bike paths and how they benefit the health of the community. This action helps to accomplish some of those strategies. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Early voting continues through the Saturday before Election Day
- Commissioners will convene Friday, at 4:00 p.m. to hear feedback from the Tax Administrator assessment center
- Energy Assistance funds available December 1 through Department of Social Services
- Health Department will have Annual Staff Training November 3
- Health Department is working to have Mission Mental Health professionals work in the field with them

- Auction of public surplus items from today through November 3 and can be found on www.PublicSurplus.com

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Hardy: Mr. Hardy lives off Wilson Road and he wanted to address the proposed changes to Wilson Road by the NCDOT. Mr. Hardy is very concerned that citizens will no longer have input once the public comment period is closed. He hopes Commissioners will support citizens' efforts to slow down the process so other alternatives can be considered. Mr. Hardy stated that Wilson Road is no different than other roads in the County and he is concerned that the proposed improvements will change the character and surroundings and that the area will lose its charm and rural beauty, which is one of the reasons he and his wife retired here. He believes changes to the road will impact the County in a greater sense through lost tax revenues from homes that will no longer be on the tax rolls. He again asked Commissioners to urge NCDOT to halt this process and allow time for consideration of other options and additional citizen input.

Joe Skowron: Mr. Skowron lives on Wilson Road. He found it interesting that the NCDOT cited accident rates and safety concerns as reasons for proposing improvements to Wilson Road; yet the NCDOT has not taken actions such as reducing the speed limit or placing "curve ahead-reduce speed" signs along the road which he believes could improve the safety of the road. He reported his concerns to the NCDOT, but said no action was taken.

Susan Fosmire Davis: Ms. Davis lives on Wilson Road. She thanked the Board of Commissioners for taking the time to listen to her concerns. She has forwarded her comments to the NCDOT already. She also thanked the County's Transportation Advisory Committee for their study of the proposed alternatives. Ms. Davis expressed appreciation to NCDOT officials for responding to her inquiries. She also stated her opposition to alternative 3 and thanked the Board of Commissioners for agreeing to forward the Advisory Committee's comments and recommendation of alternative 2 to the NCDOT.

Edwin Jones: Mr. Jones spoke about the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. Although it is vast, he imagined there are some areas of the plan that are revenue neutral. In his opinion, that would be a way to start prioritizing and implementing the plan.

Carrol Parker: Mr. Parker stated that he frequently uses Wilson Road as a bypass around Brevard and he expects others to learn that it is a faster way to travel around Brevard as well. He agreed that the layout of the road and the fact that it is frequented by motorists and cyclists sometimes creates dangerous driving conditions. Rather than treating Wilson Road as a bypass around Brevard, he suggested NCDOT treat it as a scenic route with lower speed limits and additional landscaping incorporated into its improvements. He believes this viewpoint will accomplish the goal of having a safer road without negatively impacting the rural vista views and character of the road. Therefore, he supposed alternate 2, but with these modifications.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Lemel reported that about 60 people attended the mental health forum last Monday night at the library. It was an opportunity for citizens to learn about services that are offered in Transylvania County and how to access those services. The forum was hosted by the County and Smoky Mountain/VAYA Health. She thanked the agencies that helped sponsor the event: Health Department, Hendersonville Pediatrics, and SAFE, Inc.

Commissioner Chappell announced that the State intends to recognize the Back Pack Buddies nutrition program for offering excellent customer service. He will have further information to share soon so that the Board can properly recognize the program as well. Commissioner Chappell stated that he had the privilege of attending the grand opening of the military history museum display at the Aetholwold Hotel on Saturday. He encouraged everyone to take time to visit the tremendous display.

Vice-Chairman Chapman offered condolences to Commissioner Lemel on the loss of her father-in-law. He reported that Brevard High School recently unveiled a 30' x 60' American flag. The Marine Corps JROTC was very instrumental in making this happen. He thanked Mr. and Mrs. Patton for their generous donation which provided the funds to purchase the flag. Vice-Chairman Chapman encouraged everyone to educate themselves on the candidates and exercise their right to vote on November 8. He also encouraged citizens to read the draft comprehensive plan.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Lemel moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Chappell and unanimously carried.**

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board