

**MINUTES**  
**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**March 13, 2018 – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Jason Chappell, Mike Hawkins, Vice-Chairwoman Page Lemel and Kelvin Phillips. Chairman Larry Chapman was traveling to Washington, DC to attend a NC Association of County Commissioners meeting and meet with our legislators. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Misti Bass, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derek McKissock

There were approximately 25 people in the audience.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairwoman Page Lemel presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

**WELCOME**

Vice-Chairwoman Lemel welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the public for participating in their local government. She introduced Commissioners and staff in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public.

**AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

There were no agenda modifications from Commissioners or staff.

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in regular session on February 26, 2018 and following met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed. Commissioners approved the minutes as submitted.

### NOTIFICATION OF VOTING EQUIPMENT TESTING DURING 2018 PRIMARY ELECTION

The Board of Elections budgeted funds to purchase new voting equipment this fiscal year in order to meet statutory requirements. The Board of Elections has seen demonstrations of the DS200 and Automark equipment sold by Electronic Systems and Software and intends to test such equipment during the upcoming 2018 Primary Election. Prior to purchasing the equipment, the Board of Elections must inform the Board of Commissioners of its intentions. Following the testing phase and if the equipment is satisfactory, the Board of Elections will come back before the Board of Commissioners to seek approval to purchase the voting equipment. Commissioners were in agreement to allow testing of the DS200 voting equipment during the May 8, 2018 Primary Election.

### PROCLAMATION-NATIONAL SERVICE RECOGNITION DAY

National Service Recognition Day is honored on April 3, 2018. This initiative is led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the National League of Cities, the National Association of Counties, and Cities of Service. Land of Sky Regional Council's Area Agency on Aging has set a goal for each city and county in its region to support this day in recognition of the positive impact of national service in communities and therefore requests the Board of Commissioners approve a proclamation honoring National Service Recognition Day. Commissioner Lemel read aloud the proclamation for the benefit of the public. Commissioners approved Proclamation #05-2018 National Service Recognition Day and presented it to Transylvania County Council on Aging member Betty Rogge.

### AUDIT CONTRACT

The Local Government Commission requires the date that the local governing board approves an audit contract to be stated on the contract. Accordingly, the Finance Director submitted for the Board's approval the FY 18 audit contract from Martin Starnes & Associates for Transylvania County. FY 18 marks the final year of a three-year extension to the contract between the County and Martin Starnes & Associates. Due to changes in requirements from the Office of State Auditor and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB), Martin Starnes expects the audit fieldwork and reports to take considerably more time to complete and has adjusted its fee accordingly. There is no additional financial impact in FY 18 as interim billings are capped at 75% of the prior year's fee. Commissioners approved the audit contract as submitted.

## **PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**

### BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE UPDATE

Dr. Laura Leatherwood, President of Blue Ridge Community College addressed the Board of Commissioners. In attendance with her were Glenda McCarson, Dean of the Transylvania County Campus, Kevin Spradlin, the College's Career Coach, and Duke Woodhull, a member of the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Leatherwood reported that last night the Board of Trustees approved an operational and capital budget for FY 19 and a copy was presented to the Board of Commissioners. She thanked the County for its past support of Blue Ridge Community College and for future support. She also expressed appreciation to Assistant County Manager David McNeill, County Manager Jaime Laughter, and the Parks and Recreation department for the assistance they provide to the College.

Dr. Leatherwood reminded the Board that last year they approved allowing the College to use reserve funds to provide matching dollars for a Career Coach position. She stated this position has been significant in helping the College integrate into the high schools and guide the County's future workforce. She introduced Career Coach Kevin Spradlin to give the Board an update on the program and to show that the investment into this program was worth it.

This is a summary of Mr. Spradlin's presentation:

#### What is a Career Coach?

A Career Coach assists high school students with defining their career aspirations and to recognize Blue Ridge Community College courses and programs that can help achieve their educational goals. This position is not a recruiter for the College.

#### What is Career and College Promise?

A unique program for high school students to take college transfer courses or technical programs while still in high school, tuition-free (other than registration fees and text books for some courses), allowing them to get a jumpstart on their college preparation or job training.

#### College and Career Development

- College and industry visits
- FAFSA/application/scholarship assistance
- Development of internship and apprenticeship opportunities

#### Career and College Promise

- Counseling about available classes, assistance with paperwork, and course registration
- Counseling about soft skills
- Promote opportunities and growth across all demographics in Transylvania County Schools
- More than 25 completers/graduates of the Welding Certificate anticipated for this year
- Enrollment numbers of students/classes per school year has grown
  - 325 students enrolled in 740 classes during FY 17-18; up from 197 students enrolled in 430 classes the previous year

#### Other Work of Career Coach

- Facilitate professional development for teachers connecting industry and the classroom
- Organize guest speakers from local businesses
- Promote connections to local relevant events

This concluded Mr. Spradlin's presentation.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if Mr. Spradlin expects the participation in this program to continue to rise. Mr. Spradlin responded there are only so many students in the high schools, but he expected the enrollment to reach a point where there is an appropriate level of students taking each class. He is unsure what that point is, but noted there are opportunities for growth in some classes. Commissioner Lemel noted the increase in participation from the previous year was 65% in the number of students and 72% in classes.

Commissioner Lemel asked if there are opportunities for the textbook fees to be covered. Mr. Spradlin would like to see the College develop a library of textbooks to make available to students because textbooks are expensive.

Commissioner Chappell commended Mr. Spradlin for the work he is doing in the School System. He stated this program is a wonderful resource for students and he is excited about opportunities for his daughter who is an upcoming high school freshman.

Commissioner Phillips inquired about the course length for the auto and welding classes and types of certificates earned. Mr. Spradlin responded that students graduate from the auto program with certificates

in specific areas. It is a full-year half-day program. The welding course is certificate-based as well and is completed in five courses over two semesters.

There was no further discussion. Commissioners thanked Mr. Spradlin for his informative presentation.

### FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF COUNTY BUDGET

The Manager reported that this presentation comes as a result of the analysis completed and presented on education funding last fall. The Board and staff found it helpful to compare how Transylvania County funds education to its peer counties and saw it necessary to perform the same analysis of County operations. This is a summary of the Manager's presentation:

#### Financial Analysis of County Budget

- Budget is a tool to assure that resources necessary to accomplish policy decisions and deliver services are available
- Components to budget need to be in line with community goals and managed in order to accomplish broad initiatives, from mandated services to meeting demands of changing demographics
- Presentation will look at service deliver demands alongside changes in budgetary spending and revenue generation to open discussion amongst Commissioners on fiscal policy

#### Budget Is Not a Bad Word

- Examining revenue and expenditure growth is important to make sure that decisions are not driving future tax increases and helps the Board develop sound fiscal policies
  - County government responsible for many different services
  - Transylvania County government has approximately 24 departments that provide services to the community
  - About 85% of the services provided by Transylvania County and associated budget expenditures are related to State mandates.
- Compare to peer counties to see what categories they prioritize by percentage of budget and spending per capita
  - Major variances to peer counties open up opportunities for further exploration into best practices or explanations (example-Transylvania County has a higher retirement population than some of its peer counties)
- Understanding service needs, mandates and citizens' priorities help prioritize the County's strategic plan and budget growth areas to make the budget a resource for accomplishing results
- County budget is primarily funded through property tax; funding from the State is designated for specific purposes
  - When outside entities request County funding, it is very important to emphasize the funding will come from property taxes and those citizens the County is seeking to serve with its budget

#### Study Summary

- After the education funding analysis, the Manager charged the Management Analyst with comparing to peer counties for County Funds for 2016 to see how Transylvania County compared; Reevaluated Scotland County – they have a higher weekly wage reflecting working population bringing home more income; utilized the base economic peer counties used previously adding in Ashe County because they had many similarities to Transylvania County
  - Other jurisdictions should be dealing with same cost-driving measures, except for demographic differences

- Requested known data tracking measures from 2003 to compare to 2017 where possible; some dates varied so factored an average annual increase to level the playing field and smooth short term increases or decreases (i.e., Building permits during housing crisis)
- Asked Finance Director to compare Transylvania County spending patterns from 2007 to 2017 with average annual increases using audits and the spending categories required by the State
- Compared known data to spending patterns over the last 10 years on a per annual percentage increase basis for comparison
  - Does not take into account changing the cost of services due to changing legislative requirements, mandates, increase in cost to provide service (impact of fuel, competitive wages, etc.)
- General Fund analysis; does include Solid Waste or fire departments

#### Peer County Comparisons

County	County Population June 30th, 2016	General Government Per Capita	Public Safety Per Capita	Economic and Community Development Per Capita	Human Services and Recreation Per Capita	Culture and Education Per Capita	Debt Service Per Capita	Total Spending Per Capita	
Dare	35,495	\$256.93	\$666.83	\$30.18	\$446.21	\$136.60	\$607.76	\$502.62	\$2,873
<u>Transylvania</u>	<u>33,749</u>	<u>\$153.46</u>	<u>\$350.91</u>	<u>\$34.93</u>	<u>\$277.56</u>	<u>\$67.29</u>	<u>\$390.88</u>	<u>\$73.37</u>	<u>\$1,403</u>
Scotland	35,806	\$60.80	\$228.15	\$45.09	\$313.92	\$30.49	\$335.16	\$42.85	\$1,128
Jackson	41,268	\$219.74	\$274.18	\$16.83	\$326.74	\$71.52	\$269.75	\$95.39	\$1,363
Macon	34,855	\$200.56	\$333.23	\$17.00	\$330.55	\$69.38	\$246.91	\$125.78	\$1,338
Bladen	35,152	\$141.23	\$282.11	\$26.01	\$374.47	\$23.17	\$240.69	\$82.15	\$1,165
Montgomery	27,839	\$137.82	\$221.56	\$19.97	\$265.76	\$15.58	\$212.36	\$77.79	\$1,092
Ashe	27,482	\$144.68	\$248.29	\$54.99	\$389.67	\$43.95	\$196.25	\$117.71	\$1,246
AVERAGE	33,736	\$151.18	\$276.92	\$30.69	\$325.53	\$45.91	\$270.28	\$87.86	
MINIMUM	27,482	\$60.80	\$221.56	\$16.83	\$265.76	\$15.58	\$196.25	\$42.85	
MAXIMUM	41,268	\$219.74	\$350.91	\$54.99	\$389.67	\$71.52	\$390.88	\$125.78	

- Transylvania County has a higher per capita spending rate than its peer counties
  - Where are the higher expenditures?

- Each column above shows Transylvania County compared per capita to its peers in each of the categories one expects to see in the audit based on the State requirements
- Compared to average and viewed minimums and maximums for each per capita spending category, but removed Dare County because it is an outlier in the dataset
- Compared percent of budget by category
- Per capita and percentage of budget differences remained roughly the same when ranking to peer counties

#### Peer County Summary Results (least to greatest ranking)

- General Government: Spending in Transylvania County is 3<sup>rd</sup> of 8 ranking least to greatest for % of the budget spent on general government and below the average of the database. The category is the 5<sup>th</sup> in per capita spending and below the average.
- Public Safety: Spending in Transylvania County is 7<sup>th</sup> of 8 ranking least to greatest for % of the budget spent on public safety and above the average. Spending per capita for public safety ranking is 7<sup>th</sup> and above the average.
- Economic Development: Spending in Transylvania County is 6<sup>th</sup> of 8 ranking least to greatest for % of the budget spent and at average for the database. Spending per capita ranks 5<sup>th</sup> and is above the average.
- Human Services: Spending in Transylvania County is 2<sup>nd</sup> of 8 ranking least to greatest for % of the budget spent and below the average. Spending per capita ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> and is below average.
- Culture and Recreation: Spending in Transylvania County is 5<sup>th</sup> of 8 ranking least to greatest for % of the budget spent and above the average. Spending per capita ranks 5<sup>th</sup> and is above average.
- Education: Spending in Transylvania County is 7<sup>th</sup> of 8 ranking least to greatest for % of the budget and above the average. Spending per capita is ranked 7<sup>th</sup> and is above average.
- Debt Service: Spending in Transylvania County is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> of 8 ranking least to greatest for % of the budget spent and far below average. Spending per capita is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and far below the average.

Commissioner Hawkins said he would have assumed that Human Services would be the most mandated service, yet the chart shows Transylvania County ranking at the bottom compared to its peer counties. The Manager stated that mandates fall in most of the categories. Human Services is a heavily mandated service and is primarily funded by the State. Counties can provide services above and beyond mandates. It is hard to tell from the spending categories alone where the mandates lie.

Commissioner Hawkins commented that Transylvania County ranks low in debt service, but that will change in the near future. The Manager confirmed, noting the County is not paying debt service on many active capital projects; however, there are capital needs that have been deferred that the County needs to address that will cause the debt service ranking/percentage to change. The Manager noted that when the debt service percentage changes, all of the percentages will be reevaluated to equal 100%.

#### General Fund Spending Category Changes FY 2008 vs FY 2017 (Audited)

- Increases over nine year period primarily found in education and public safety
- Decreases over nine year period found in human services and debt service
- No annual increases in taxes
  - Partly due to decrease in debt service
  - As debt rolls off, some jurisdictions earmark those funds for future debt service payments because they understand there are always improvements that need to be made and areas to maintain
  - However, for Transylvania County, historically the debt service roll off has gone toward operational spending in the growing categories of education and public safety

### 2007-2017 Annual Spending Change (Audits)

- Staff reviewed the audits and calculated spending to determine the 9-year average change and 5-year average change for each category and the total budget
  - Revenue: 9-year average-1.68%; 5-year average-4.62%
  - Expenditures: 9-year average-1.82%; 5-year average-3.81%
- Key issue is that expenditures growing faster than revenues over 9-year average
  - Do not have to keep revenues and expenditure growth in line, but if they are not in line the Board has to be able to look at available revenue sources for more growth
  - Property tax is the only revenue the Board of Commissioners can impact directly
  - Having expenditures on an annual basis to outpace revenue growth will drive an increase of the property tax
- Over the 5-year average, revenues outpaced expenditures
  - Kept in line by taking debt service roll off and shifting to operational funding
  - Debt service percentage is very low and that opportunity will not be available in the next couple of years
- Largest percentage increases in Transportation, Culture and Recreation, Public Safety and Public Schools
  - Transportation mostly State funded; County contribution has not increased much; County has accessed additional grant funding
  - Spending more on percentage wise in Economic Development, but the dollar amount is not as dramatic for this time period
  - Largest dollar growth in Education and Public Safety
  - Blue Ridge Community College saw a decrease in the dollar change due to a capital improvement

### Service Demands Snapshot

- If there is growth in the budget, there is an expectation that the growth would match with service demands
- Staff therefore looked at areas of growth in services; do not have information across the board in all departments
  - Library, 2003-2004 comparison to 2016-2017; average annual growth varied depending on the measure; total circulation has an average annual growth of 2.12%, while the average daily internet use has grown at 8.74% average growth rate
  - Building Permitting, 2003 comparisons to 2017; period covers housing boom and recession; 2.49% annual growth rate; annual increase in demand that is not consistent with how revenues are growing in the community over the same time period
  - Communications, 2003 comparisons to 2017; total dispatch at 4.9% growth, but law enforcement dispatch significant at 12.68% annual growth, which can be reflective of why this area would be a spending priority over this period
  - EMS, 2003 comparisons to 2017, calls have grown an average of 3.47%
  - From 2003-2004 to 2017-2018, Blue Ridge Community College saw approximately 2% increase in number of students in fall and spring, and a slight decrease over the summer months, although the figures are small; unable to track continued education
  - From 2002-2003 through 2017-2018, Transylvania County Schools has seen a steady student population decrease that is roughly less than 1% annually
  - Social Services, 6-month snapshots from 2007-2017; CPS Reports at 9.26%, although CPS Screen-outs high at 7.18%, which could be due to referrals; Children in Custody up 1.79%, but does not include kinship care
- For this snapshot important to look at annualized growth in order to smooth out significant ups and downs

### Compared Spending Patterns and Service Demands

- Are spending patterns and service demands matching each other?
- No full set of data, but there are categories in most areas in which staff can make comparisons
- Education and Public Safety have been the higher spending categories
- Average annual growth for service demands in Public Safety only looked at areas of dispatch; so this is an area that could be explored further
- Mismatch in Education
- Mismatch in Human Services; higher annual growth rate in the number of services that are being demanded or utilized in the community, but not seeing the same growth rate in expenditures; concern is if this area being underfunded with the demand the department is experiencing

### Comparison to Data Snapshot

- Transylvania County spending ranks high compared to peers on total spending per capita and specifically on both percentage and per capita spending for Public Safety, Education, Economic Development, and Culture and Recreation in the 2016 comparison spending above the average of peer counties in those categories (removing Dare as an outlier)
- From 2007 to 2017 Transylvania County grew share of the total budget for categories substantially in Education and Public Safety with decreases in Human Services, Debt Service and Blue Ridge Community College; even growth throughout the organization would have kept those percentages roughly stagnant so this is an indicator of areas of the budget growing faster than others as a funding priority for those years
- The data snapshot is limited in scope at this time, but this type of comparison does appear to show variances that warrant additional analysis to understand; it is also a strong reason to be tracking data year to year to see if growth in demand is consistent with growth in operational costs to provide services
- DSS numbers show a high rate of service demands growing annually, but Health and Human services is among the lowest annual rate of growth in the budget, so this warrants further examination; DSS not the only department in Health and Human Services
- Education funding for operations has grown at one of the higher annual growth rates, but with a slightly declining number of students to serve
- All indicate that further analysis is warranted to see where costs can be managed differently and meet service demands
- The intent of this exercise was not to penalize any of categories or departments where spending has grown over time, but to help encourage those areas to compare operations to their peers to determine best practices to control costs or to explore reasons what cost is higher in our community

This concluded the presentation. The Manager called for discussion by the Board.

Commissioner Phillips cited a possible anomaly with Building Permitting and Environmental Health. He felt the output from these departments is cyclical and that the average growth rate per year is not truly indicative of the service demands. The Manager responded that is not the case for this budget year. If looking at the budget priorities for a single year, we would want to compare the last three to five years. When looking at spending categories over a more protracted time frame, we would want to smooth those fluctuations to see if ranges are keeping in line with the budget. Commissioner Phillips pointed out the Environmental Health department lost a staff person due to the cyclical changes he referred to, and now he feels they are in need of having that person back on staff.

Commissioner Hawkins asked the Board should take into account the characteristic that Transylvania County grows by 10,000 people for six months of the year. This creates demands on a lot of government

services from non-residents and do not fit into the per capita analysis. The Manager reported that when staff compared to the peer counties, we also pulled data on housing units trying to address this very issue. Assuming the seasonal population is not going to be counted in the per capita figures, but they would be counted per housing unit. The rankings did not change based on the number of housing units. This may be due to the fact the some of our peer counties experience the same phenomenon.

Commissioner Phillips requested information for future reports the per capita household income. This figure many times drives what counties can budget for and the services they provide. The Manager added that the picture of Transylvania County is different when comparing per capita income, median income and average weekly wage. Transylvania County has one of the lowest average weekly wages out of its peer groups. Transylvania County fares better in the per capita income category. This is important to keep in mind because many of the services the County provides is for the working population and we want to make sure we are not making it impossible for them to live here because of the tax rate.

Commissioner Chappell requested staff post the charts online because the data is very informative. The Manager stated that staff intends to post the handouts, charts, and slide show presentation on the website for citizens to see how the County ranks against its peers and where funds are spent. Furthermore, she would like to use this information with the Board of Commissioners moving forward to help refine priorities within the strategic plan that would also feed the annual work plan and budget priorities.

Commissioner Lemel inquired about our ability to analyze our fixed costs due to services provided to year-round residents versus variable costs that occur with the summer population. She noted that 8% of our tax bills go out-of-county, 30% go out-of-state, and 18% of the tax base is owned by non-individual entities located out-of-county, so there is an interesting discussion to be had about this. Unlike South Carolina that has the differential rate for second homes; North Carolina's Constitution prevents us from assessing a higher property tax rate on second homes. The Manager added it would also be helpful to track figures on a monthly basis and determine where the fluctuations are. She thought it would be interesting to see the seasonal differences as well.

Commissioners thanked the Manager and staff for the work that went into creating this support. It was an opportunity for Commissioners to understand the complexity of services the County provides and to realize that the budget is a policy statement about what the County values and wants to invest in and how the County can best be of service to the citizens.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **LIBRARY POSITION RECLASSIFICATION**

Library Director Anna Yount presented this item to the Board. She reported that the Library's longest-serving staff member recently retired from her position as a Library Associate in the Technical Services area and the vacancy was filled with a qualified internal candidate. She requested that the Library Assistant position (Grade 10) vacated by this internal promotion be reclassified as a Library Associate position (Grade 12). The reclassified Library Associate position will serve as the department's Community Engagement Coordinator. This position will, by necessity, work scheduled hours at both the Reference and Circulation Desks; however, it will have primary responsibility for the Library's public relations, social media, public displays and will share responsibility for the website. The responsibility for scheduling our meeting rooms will also be shifted to this position. Additionally, this individual will have the duty of managing the Library's volunteer program. The Community Engagement Coordinator will be the primary point of contact for partnerships and collaboration within the community. As such, this position will help the Library make great strides in meeting its goals of raising community awareness, expanding the Library's publicity network, developing enriching multi-generational volunteer opportunities, and delivering a rich array of programs for all ages to all areas of Transylvania County.

Ms. Yount also requested that \$6,536 be transferred to the part time salary line item to allow the department to backfill at the public service desks. This would provide approximately eight hours per week for the reclassified Library Associate position to focus on community engagement activities. This request allows the Library to move forward without any additional increases to headcount or increases to the budget.

**Commissioner Phillips moved to approve reclassification of the vacant Library Assistant position to a Library Associate position and that funds remaining as a result of these changes be utilized in the Library's part-time salary line. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell.**

Commissioner Hawkins reported that he had inquired with the Manager earlier about why this item needs to come before the Board for approval and he asked the Manager to share her response to him. The Manager has been the practice that Commissioners approve any salary grade changes so anytime staff requests reclassifications of positions, it comes before Commissioners for approval. Staff continues to evaluate its departmental operations and look at ways to improve functions and levels of service. The Manager pointed out this is also a great opportunity for the Board to see how Department Heads make thoughtful decisions for their departments to better serve the community. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF RESTRUCTURING

The Manager presented this item to the Board. Consistent with an ongoing project to evaluate the internal structure of departments after positions, staff evaluated the structure of the Parks and Recreation Department. Currently, the Parks Maintenance part of the Parks and Recreation Department reports up to the Parks and Recreation Director, but collaborates throughout the year with other County departments such as Maintenance and Housekeeping. Parks Maintenance staff has even assisted as necessary with ongoing efforts at Solid Waste.

Upon reflection and analysis, the separation of Grounds Maintenance from Facilities Maintenance functions does not make sense for our organization for a county of our size and for the size and number of properties we maintain. It is more efficient if Grounds Maintenance and Facilities Maintenance are coordinated under a single individual, with the ability to shift employees between functions as the County's needs require it. Such a structure is also broadly consistent with how smaller rural counties in Western North Carolina structure their in-house grounds maintenance.

This would also reduce the reliance on Maintenance on additional part-time positions during the year, resulting in a net decrease in headcount across a new combined functional department. This proposal should also streamline operational expenses on maintenance and upkeep across all County facilities and grounds and the estimated impact on operational costs for next year have been estimated to be as high as \$20,000. The Parks Manager and Recreation Manager offered feedback on the pros and cons of making a change or keeping the same structure and those comments were taken into account.

This proposal recommends the following changes:

- Reassign existing Grounds Maintenance Personnel (currently classified Parks Maintenance Workers and Landscape Technicians) as Maintenance Technicians, to report to a Building and Grounds Manager;
- Reassign the current Parks Manager to report to the Assistant County Manager with a new title and functional duties as Operations Support Manager;
- Reclassify the current Lead Housekeeper as Housekeeping Supervisor, assuming supervisory duties for the Housekeeping function; and
- The Housekeeping Supervisor to report to the Operations Support Manager.

The Manager noted that the Parks and Recreation Department would continue to have programming functions and proceed with long range planning and master planning of parks. The Director would continue to report to the County Manager and supervise the Recreation Manager. The Recreation Manager will carry on with recreation programming and master planning of individual parks, as well as collaborate with the Maintenance Department on scheduling capital improvements and ensuring facilities meet the needs of the programming.

The Manager recommended Commissioners approve the proposal as presented.

**Commissioner Hawkins moved to approve the restructuring of the Parks and Recreation, Maintenance and Housekeeping Departments as proposed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips.** Commissioner Chappell said he agreed with the new structure. He was reminded when the structure was changed to its current state and was frustrated that the argument given to enact the changes was opposite from this proposal. The Manager said another proposal at that time was to break out every park in the budget, but staff found this did not facilitate the best management of funds, so staff is looking at modifying this budgeting method. Staff will continue to budget for some of the parks maintenance items as a separate line item because it should fall under the Culture and Recreation budget category. The funds will be tracked separately, but will be managed under Buildings and Grounds and Operations Support so that staff can operate more efficiently. The Manager commended the Board for looking at creative ways of managing the department differently, but said when staff realized the structure was not working and was driving up costs, it only made sense for staff to come back to the Board and request a reorganization of functions. Commissioner Chappell emphasized his message to departments that if there is a better way to operate to bring recommendations forth for consideration. Commissioner Phillips agreed with the recommendation as well. He asked how the restructuring impacts the budgets for these departments. The Manager said she expects the operations of these departments to fall within the current budgeted amounts with no net increases in any line item. The reorganization eliminates a part time position. She believes the proposal will create more efficiency. Staff also expects a future decrease in the operational budget and hopes Commissioners will proceed with their commitment to the master plan. Once the new Parks and Recreation Director is hired, staff will be discussing future capital improvements and whether or not projects can be completed in-house using Maintenance and Parks staff before contracting for services. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

The Manager updated the Board on the search for a Parks and Recreation Director. Now that the reorganization of the department has been approved, staff will be working with Interim Parks and Recreation Director Jonathan Griffin to survey stakeholders about what they believe the priorities should be in a Director, in addition to being competent in programming and strategic planning to help move forward the master plan. After the surveying portion, staff will advertise for the position and begin interviewing. With an aggressive schedule, a new Director could be in place by June.

#### SILVERMONT FIRST FLOOR RENOVATIONS AND REPAIRS

Management Analyst Jonathan Griffin presented this item. In January 2018, members of the Friends of Silvermont board approached Parks and Recreation staff about allowing them to contract with qualified individuals to perform renovation and repair work on the first floor of the Silvermont Mansion. The Friends of Silvermont has done some fundraising and created a \$25,000 budget for the project.

The Friends of Silvermont proposed a limited scope project focused primarily on improving the look of the first floor. Their project outline identifies four focuses: the replacement of some floorboards and the refinishing of all flooring on the first floor, the replacement of aging wallpaper with painted walls, a new window treatment (shutters to replace the aging curtains), and also a minor change to the women's restroom on the first floor. They have identified qualified professionals to perform the first three of those four tasks.

In order to mitigate impacts on the Western Carolina Community Action-operated Silvermont Opportunity Center, they proposed to have this work done primarily on the weekends, but for the sake of efficiency, requested that Transylvania County consider at least a temporary closure of the Silvermont Opportunity Center. In response, staff began to communicate with other stakeholders onsite who frequently use the first floor to determine the viability of allowing them to proceed with this project. WCCA indicated they would be willing to close the Senior Center the first week of April (4/2/2018 through 4/5/2018), and relocate the Lunch program offsite. After exploring a temporary relocation to the Recreation Center on Ecusta Road, they opted to relocate offsite to a church facility.

They have requested to move forward beginning on weekends later in the month of March, with the major work to be done the first week of April. Some work will be done on the weekends shortly thereafter to complete any unfinished parts of the project. Before they begin, the Board of Commissioners needs to approve the proposal.

**Commissioner Phillips moved to allow the project to proceed and instruct staff to oversee the renovation work. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell.** In response to Commissioner Hawkins, Mr. Griffin agreed these are much needed repairs for the Silvermont Mansion. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### ECUSTA ROAD PROJECT-STORM WATER IMPROVEMENTS

The Manager presented this item to the Board. Neighboring properties to the Public Safety Facility have been reporting issues related to storm water runoff since before 2010. County Maintenance has worked with property owners over the years to repair driveways and other impacts related to the storm water runoff. Staff and Commissioners have explored options that were outlined in a 2010 engineering report and set aside funds into reserve to address the problem. The current reserve amount is \$233,042. Some of the funds have been utilized over the years to implement short-term fixes.

During discussion of relocating the courthouse to Morris Road, Commissioners directed staff to include in the budget for the project to improve the storm water management for the entire site which is reflected in the current estimate. The engineering component has not been completed on the project so the exact cost of storm water management is an estimate at this point.

During the development of the Ecusta Road Industrial Project, staff took advantage of an opportunity to work with the engineer to design storm water measures that will be necessary for the industrial building as well as to handle storm water from the existing buildings on County property and for future development. The engineer has prepared storm water plans that will accommodate future development on site, improve the current storm water direction and serve the industrial project now and for future phases. The plans call for obtaining easements from the nearby church on Morris Road. Both storm water retention ponds on the property would be rerouted into a larger pipe appropriately sized to handle higher levels of storm water in the future. Staff has obtained verbal agreements with the property owners and will be formalizing easements with each before construction.

The total to complete the work results in an expense of \$405,744.46, including a credit back for funds budgeted in the Ecusta Road Industrial Project. The original bid documents included storm water measures only for the existing site. It made sense from the staff perspective to look at ways of addressing all the storm water concerns together to better utilize the public funds going toward improving these sites.

Staff recommended Commissioners allocate the funds in reserve of \$233,042 and \$172,702.46 from Fund Balance to fund the work and amend the Ecusta Road Industrial Project Ordinance accordingly. This work will reduce the amount of storm water changes anticipated in the courthouse development and

therefore decrease the total project cost, yet that amount is unknown at this time. Staff requested authorization to approve the work to be completed by Harper Construction.

**Commissioner Hawkins moved to allocate the funds in reserve of \$233,042 and \$172,702.46 from Fund Balance to fund the work and amend the Ecusta Road Industrial Project Ordinance accordingly and authorize staff to approve the work to be completed by Harper Construction. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell.** Commissioner Chappell publicly thanked the neighboring property owners for working with County over the year. He said he understands the situation has been frustrating at times. He was appreciative of them for agreeing to allow the County the easements that are necessary to ensuring this problem is resolved. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### SELECT ARCHITECT FOR COURTHOUSE DESIGN AND FIRM FOR FINANCIAL FEASIBILITY

The Manager presented this item. She reported that past Boards of Commissioners have discussed the need for a new courthouse since 2005. A detailed analysis has been conducted to inform the decision to build a new courthouse on Morris Road, including a third floor shell for future expansion. Key issues with the historic courthouse have been raised by State and local officials over the years and include, but are not limited to:

- Circulation and space challenges that endanger safety of court officials, the public and inmates as required by law;
- Adequate ability to secure inmates and provide confidential access to legal counsel as required by law;
- Inability to assure equitable participation in court function for persons with disabilities. While the structure meets the ADA code as of the last major renovation, a person with disabilities must be in court prior to seating of the judge and jury and cannot leave the court room except during official breaks, which majorly limits their mobility and ability to leave the courtroom; and
- Safety concerns with those waiting for court gathered in hallways due to lack of space.

The Manager stated all of this information is archived on the County website. Anyone questioning why a new facility is needed can evaluate this information going back to 2005.

Upon Commissioners' selection of the Morris Road site for the new courthouse, staff issued a Request for Qualifications for an architectural firm. RFQs were sent to 11 architecture firms and five firms responded including Moseley Architects, Little Diversified, ADW Architects, Smith Sinnett and CDesign-Fentress Architects. A selection committee convened to review the proposals to make sure they met the minimum requirements and to rank them based on experience and quality of the proposal as submitted. Staff is recommending that Commissioners select Moseley Architects to design the new courthouse and to authorize the County Manager to negotiate a contract and fee so that work may commence. Previously Moseley Architects performed the programming for the County, but the contract did not allow an amendment to continue with the design work, so staff had to issue a second RFQ in order to be compliant with the USDA loan regulations. Additionally, the selection committee evaluated the length of time each responding firm has been in existence. Moseley Architects is one of two that have been in existence for 49 years. The selection committee also reviewed the references and paid specific interest to comments about stakeholder involvement. Most of the staff that works in the Courthouse is State staff, not County staff, so it is important that we be able to accommodate the court processes so they are able to function. In addition, Moseley Architects put forth a great project team, per the opinion of the selection committee, with extensive background on courthouse projects.

The Manager noted that staff will update the website with any approved information that comes from this meeting. In reference to that site, she noted that some citizens have voiced their concerns on the site through the public input section and she responded to those individually as well as here at this meeting.

1. Why not vote on courthouse? Bonds only for 20 year term, so a bond referendum vote would increase the cost of the project as far as tax impact; USDA loans up to 40 years in length which is being proposed for the project; citizens only vote in the case of bond financing by State law
2. What about property for sale by College? Property behind the Courthouse owned by the College would add to expense for structured parking and for land purchase.

Commissioners also directed staff to pursue USDA loan funding. One requirement for USDA loan funds is to have a financial feasibility report prepared by an outside firm. Staff worked with USDA on a Request for Proposal detailing the requirements of the report and sent it to three qualified firms that have experience preparing the document. One firm responded, Thomas, Judy and Tucker with a total fee proposed not to exceed \$35,000. Staff reviewed the proposal and agreed it meets the requirements of the RFP. Staff recommended Commissioners authorize staff to contract with Thomas, Judy and Tucker for a financial feasibility report with fee not to exceed \$35,000, with fees to come from contract services in the Commissioners' budget.

Commissioner Phillips inquired why the other two firms did not respond to the RFP. The Manager did not know why, but noted there is quite a bit of USDA loan activity going on so it is likely they are busy with other projects. She noted that Thomas, Judy and Tucker is the same firm conducting a financial feasibility report for Brevard Academy which probably made the County a likely fit.

**Commissioner Hawkins moved to select Moseley Architects and authorize the County Manager to negotiate a contract and bring back before the Board for execution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chappell.** Commissioner Hawkins inquired about the direction in which the Manager intends to negotiate the fees. The Manager responded she anticipates the fees to be a percentage of the programming amount of \$31 million. She has had discussions with other jurisdictions about their experience on large construction projects so she has idea of the fee percentage. She noted that other jurisdictions have experienced a wide range of fees depending on the jurisdiction and whether or not an architect of record is being used. Commissioner Hawkins thanked the Manager for her explanation on why the decision was to choose Moseley Architects, noting all the firms that submitted proposals are well respected and would have done a great job. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

**Commissioner Chappell moved to authorize staff to contract with Thomas, Judy and Tucker for a financial feasibility report with fee not to exceed \$35,000 to be paid from fund for contract services in the Commissioners' FY 18 budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Phillips and approved unanimously.**

#### MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Update on Commissioners' charge to work with the School Superintendent and selected architect Clark Nexsen on a full scope of work, contract and fee
  - Initiated contact morning after Commissioners' meeting
  - School System not interested in changing proposal as presented
  - Recommend full, not to exceed fee to be negotiated so that there is an upfront understanding on the total for architecture services as a percentage of the project before committing funds and avoiding an open ended contract
- March is Social Worker Appreciation Month; thanks to all our Social Workers at the Department of Social Services; hosting appreciation breakfast later this month

- Courthouse page is live on the website with all information from 2005 when the discussion began
- Fire Department Funding Options online along with input form; public input being shared with Commissioners

Commissioner Hawkins, for clarification, stated the difference in what the Board directed the Manager to do with the Courthouse Architect and what the School System wants to do with their architect, is the County intends to negotiate a full scope of work with the entire price outlined upfront. Whereas the School System is choosing to take two different tracks: a preliminary component to assist with the bond and second component to complete the remaining work. This is a concern for the County. The Manager confirmed. She stated the School System would be negotiating design fees as a next step. If the bond were to pass, they would be negotiating for the remainder of the work separately from the \$375,000 fee that has been proposed, with the assumption the School System would be using Clark Nexsen for the full design process.

Commissioner Chappell asked Commissioner Lemel to repeat the information she offered in reference to the number of tax bills sent outside of the County. He received a message from a FaceBook Live participant who requested the information to be repeated. She repeated the following and added some information she read from an email dated December 7, 2017:

- 62% of real estate bills go to addresses within Transylvania County
- 8% of the bills are mailed out-of-county
- 30% of the bills are mailed out-of-state
- 17.83% of the tax base is owned by non-individual entities located out-of-county in-the-state
- Out-of-state tax bills make up 46.93% of the total tax base amount
- 19,477 housing units in the 2016 census with about 24% not being owner-occupied

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

#### **COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commissioner Chappell reported that on Monday, March 19 there will be a Hospitality and Tourism Job Fair from 11am-6pm in the Rogow Room at the Library. Employers will be seeking all levels of employment positions. He also thanked the Sheriff and Superintendent for hosting a school safety presentation at Rosman High School. Another presentation will be held next week at Brevard High School. Commissioner Chappell emphasized how fortunate we are to have such a robust school resource officer program.

Commissioner Lemel was at the UNC School of Government in Chapel Hill yesterday attending the final in-person meeting of the Social Working Group prior to submitting their report to the Legislature. This is an effort to look at the quality of Social Services delivered across the State and how North Carolina can improve the quality, particularly in the area of child welfare. North Carolina does not have a good track record at the federal level and this is an effort to remedy the situation before the federal government sues the State. Commissioner Lemel stated it has been an honor to represent Transylvania County on this committee. Commissioner Lemel reported that she, along with Chairman Chapman and Commissioner Chappell attended a legislative breakfast two weeks ago, cosponsored by the Henderson and Transylvania County Chambers of Commerce, where Senator Edwards and Representatives Henson and McGrady spoke about legislative activities revolving around business in WNC. In addition, she, along with Chairman Chapman and Commission Chappell attended the reception for David Knight, the new Outdoor Recreation Recruitment Officer for the State which was held at SylvanSport. SylvanSport owner Tom

Dempsey was instrumental in working on developing this office at the State level. North Carolina is now the fourth state in the nation to have an outdoor industry office on the state level. Mr. Knight spoke about opportunities for outdoor industries to be successful in North Carolina. Lastly, Commissioner Lemel announced that Transylvania County has received a lot of great attention for its efforts in early childhood. She was interviewed for a podcast by Leslie Boney, the Executive Director for the Institute for Emerging Issues. IEI has a podcast called First in Future. The focus of the podcasts is on great ideas from around the State. Transylvania County has been able to do a lot in the area of early childhood efforts without spending a great deal of money, and hence Commissioner Lemel was invited to participate in the podcast. It is posted on the IEI website.

Commissioner Hawkins congratulated Commissioner Lemel on her work. Commissioner Lemel commented the work has been a collective effort and she commended the Manager for her guidance in getting this work started.

### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Chappell moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:45 a.m., seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously carried.**

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Larry L. Chapman, Chairman  
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board