

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 28, 2019 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, October 28, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. in Commissioners Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC.

Commissioners present were Will Cathey, Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman David Guice, Chairman Mike Hawkins and Page Lemel. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan. County Attorney Misti Bass participated remotely.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Derek McKissock

There were approximately 25 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairman Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the audience for participating in their local government. He 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 Lemel moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Guice and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on April 22, 2019 and September 9, 2019. Following a regular meeting on June 24, 2019, the Board met in closed session in which the minutes were sealed. Commissioner approved the minutes as submitted.

DISCOVERY, RELEASE AND MONTHLY SETTLEMENT REPORT

Per NC General Statute § 105-312 (b), it is the duty of the Tax Administrator to see that all property not properly listed during the regular listing period be listed, assessed and taxed. The Tax Administrator shall file such reports of discoveries with the Board of Commissioners. Per NC General Statute § 105-381 (b), it is the duty of the Tax Administrator to provide a monthly report to the Board of Commissioners of the actions taken by the Tax Administrator on requests for release or refund, which shall be recorded in the minutes. For September 2019, tax dollars released totaled \$3,125.31 and there were \$1,334.60 in refunds. Commissioners approved the Discovery, Release and Monthly Settlement Report for September 2019.

PROCLAMATION – VETERANS DAY 2019

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. For many years, former Commissioner Larry Chapman served as chair of that committee. This year, Emmett Casciato, Curator for The Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas has headed up the planning for the event.

The proclamation will be presented and read at the Veterans Day Ceremony on Monday, November 11 at the Courthouse Gazebo. The Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas is featuring an exhibit in November that honors women who served in the military. While Veterans Days honors all veterans, in keeping with the theme, this year's featured speaker at the Veterans Day Ceremony will be Maureen Copelof, Captain, US Navy, Retired, who also serves as a Councilwoman on the Brevard City Council. Chairman Hawkins read aloud the proclamation. Commissioners approved Proclamation 31-2019 Veterans Day 2019.

**PROCLAMATION #31-2019
VETERANS DAY 2019**

WHEREAS, the freedoms we enjoy as Americans have been purchased and maintained at a high price throughout our history; and

WHEREAS, since the establishment of the original 13 States, Americans have been willing to fight and die to preserve their individual rights as guaranteed in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, we owe a great debt to those who have served in defense of this nation; and

WHEREAS, throughout the generations, their sacrifices have preserved our unique form of government dedicated to human rights and respect for the individual; and

WHEREAS, for many, that sacrifice had ended in permanent injury or death, yet their spirit remains in continued preservation of our freedoms and the promise of liberty established as an example for all the oppressed persons of the world; and

WHEREAS, in honor of these dedicated men and women, we pledge our continued defense of our nation so that their sacrifice will stand before the entire world as a tribute to the spirit and determination of people dedicated to the principles of freedom and democracy;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County does hereby call upon the citizenry of Transylvania County to participate in services and to observe the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month with expressions of gratitude to all veterans known to them and to further extend this gratitude to the families of the deceased veterans and to solemnly remember the sacrifices of all those who fought so valiantly, on the seas, in the air, and on foreign shores, to preserve

our heritage of freedom, and let us re-consecrate ourselves to the task of promoting an enduring peace so that their efforts shall not have been in vain.

This the 28th day of October, 2019.

S: //Mike Hawkins, Chair

Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the Transylvania County Finance Department for its comprehensive annual financial report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018. Out of 100 counties in North Carolina, 52 annually apply and receive this distinction. It is unique in that it is the only local government unit in our community which regularly receives this distinction. Approximately 200 governmental units in North Carolina organize their financial statements and apply for the Certificate of Achievement of Excellence in Financial Reporting. Other notables include:

- This is the 34th consecutive year that Transylvania County has received this distinction from the GFOA.
- Transylvania County's record is the 11th longest chain of consecutive financial reporting awards, behind only large urban counties such as Mecklenburg, Wake and Durham.
- Transylvania County's financial statements have now received this distinction more times consecutively than the State of North Carolina's financial statements (24 consecutive years).

The Manager recognized Finance Director Jonathan Griffin and the staff of the Finance Department and commended them for the hard work they put into the budget process and their daily duties to ensure the County's financial reporting is appropriate and excellent.

Commissioners recognized and congratulated the staff of the Finance Department for being awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. They were appreciative of their accomplishments.

APPOINTMENTS

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL

There are currently four vacancies on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. Brian Weaver with Transylvania County Schools has been recruiting for the student positions. The other vacant positions include a Commissioner Appointee, Student, and United Way/Nonprofit. Due to the resignation of Louis Negrón as Executive Director of the United Way, the leadership is in interim status. The Clerk to the Board will continue to work with the appropriate agencies and staff to recruit applicants to fill the membership slots. Staff's recommendation was to appoint Kristen Thrower to fill one of the vacant Student positions.

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Kristen Thrower to fill one of the Student positions on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioner Lemel was very impressed with Ms. Thrower's application. She is very engaged and will be a tremendous asset to this council. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING

The terms of April Alm (Transportation), Sylvia Petit (DSS), John Winston (Mental Health), and Kathe Harris (Senior Citizen) expired at the end of August. Two Senior Citizen positions also expired at the end of August. The citizens who filled those positions resigned earlier this year so they remained vacant. There are three additional vacancies that staff is working to fill. The positions should be represented by Adult Care Services, Community Action Opportunities, and Affordable Housing.

Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint April Alm, Sylvia Petit, John Winston and Kathe Harris to the Transylvania County Council on Aging, seconded by Commissioner Chappell. Commissioner Lemel appreciated their commitment to the needs of senior citizens. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Commissioner Lemel moved to appoint Delores Stroup and Al Vissers to fill the two Senior Citizen vacancies, seconded by Commissioner Guice. Commissioner Lemel commented that Ms. Stroup has been highly engaged with senior citizens' services for many years and she was pleased to see her returning to serve on this council. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

OLD BUSINESS

NC DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE GRANT APPLICATION FOR GAIA HERBS SEWER EXTENSION PROJECT

The Manager stated that the Board of Commissioners' Strategic Plan identified a desire to invest in economic development and partner with other organizations to meet community goals. This led to the partnership with the City of Brevard and Transylvania Economic Alliance to construct the Sylvan Valley Industrial Building. The Board of Commissioners also dedicated capital funds for infrastructure that cultivated a partnership with the Town of Rosman and Gaia Herbs. The infrastructure project involves the construction of a sewer line that will allow Gaia Herbs to expand, as well as support the community and future growth along the corridor.

Last year Gaia Herbs indicated a need for public sewer service to ensure the future viability of its manufacturing facility on Island Ford Road. Transylvania County applied for a NC Department of Commerce Industrial Development Fund grant totaling \$880,750 to support this infrastructure need. The Appalachian Regional Commission awarded \$300,000 toward this project to be administered by the NC Department of Commerce. In addition, Transylvania County has dedicated \$396,250 from fund balance to provide the local match requirement.

The immediate impacts of this project include retention of the company's current employment and the addition of 10 new, full-time jobs over a two-year period. The availability and use of grant funds are dependent on the Board of Commissioners' approval, formal submission of the final grant application, and willingness to administer the project.

Staff recommended the Board of Commissioners approve the final grant application and direct staff to submit it to the NC Department of Commerce for a formal award of funds to the project.

Commissioner Cathey moved to approve the final grant application and directed staff to submit the package to the NC Department of Commerce for processing and a formal award of funds to the project, seconded by Commissioner Lemel. Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse felt this is an opportunity to serve an existing company and to place infrastructure in a corridor that currently does not have access to a public sewer system. He reported that the Alliance worked alongside Gaia Herbs and a civil engineer to develop a pre-engineering report for the Town of Rosman to ensure strategic investments in the infrastructure to accommodate growth. The project involves

constructing a 3.5 mile sewer line extension from the Town of Rosman’s wastewater sewer plant to Gaia Herbs. The company must also build an extension on their property to connect to the sewer line. As a manufacturer, Gaia Herbs’ waste stream is different than a typical household. Gaia Herbs has therefore installed a pretreatment facility on their site that is designed for its type of industry. Commissioners were appreciative of the various partnerships that occurred to make this project happen. The project spurs job creation, makes investments in the community and allows for future growth opportunities. They saw promise in how this project could spur future infrastructure projects through partnerships with government agencies and private businesses. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

NEW BUSINESS

SMOKE-FREE GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

This item was presented by Beth Hyatt on behalf of the Transylvania County Employee Wellness Committee, referred to as EWE (Employee Wellness Everywhere). EWE is comprised of 15 members representing 11 County departments, including the Wellness Center and Mark III Brokers.

Ms. Hyatt asked Commissioners to ensure written policy is consistent with current practices. All County buildings are currently smoke-free. There are no designated areas within County buildings for smoking. However, the County’s ordinance, adopted in 1993, allows the Board of Commissioners to designate areas inside buildings for smoking. Ms. Hyatt requested as the Board’s first action to remove such wording to reflect current practices.

In January 2010, NC General Statute § 130A-498 gave local governments clear authority to regulate smoking on local government grounds and enclosed public places. In 2013, the Board of Commissioners amended the ordinance to include e-cigarettes and vaping as part of the definition of smoking. In 2017, the Board of Commissioners approved a 50 ft. no smoking perimeter (or within County-owned property) around the Community Services Building for the purpose of complying with accreditation standards. The implementation of the smoke-free perimeter has gone well and has not caused any complaints or issues. It has resulted in less smoking around the perimeter of the building.

Several employees, including those working in the Courthouse, the Library, Child Development, and Parks and Recreation, have sought assistance from EWE to combat smoking. Those departments want to curb people from smoking in the entryways, on playgrounds, etc. In September, the Parks and Recreation Commission voted to make all recreation facilities and grounds smoke- and tobacco-free.

In 2017, EWE conducted an employee survey and received 180 responses. Nearly half expressed an interest in “places at work where people can’t smoke or use tobacco”. EWE surveyed other departments to inquire about issues with smoking. From that inquiry, EWE received letters of support from Parks and Recreation, Solid Waste, Public Health, Employee Wellness Center, and the Library, as well as verbal support from committee members representing Public Safety, Social Services, and Tax Administration.

Ms. Hyatt reported that EWE’s proposal aligns with several components of the Board of Commissioners’ Strategic Plan:

- Strategy 5B: Provide resources, infrastructure and services that improve public health, mental health, wellness and safety to ensure a vibrant community.
 - Smoke-free facilities reduce exposure to secondhand smoke and improve public health.
- Strategy 6A: Provide facilities that allow for efficient service delivery to the public while creating a secure, inviting and customer-friendly environment for customers and citizens.
 - Moving smoking away from entrances is more inviting and customer-friendly.

- Strategy 6B: Assure compliance with state mandates for service provision along with state regulatory requirements.
 - Several facilities require smoke-free policies to comply with state regulatory requirements.

Ms. Hyatt asked the Board of Commissioners to consider the following three measures:

- Make all County buildings smoke-free (to reflect in written policy current practices)
- Make all County grounds smoke-free or consider a 50' smoke-free perimeter around County buildings
- Make all County parks tobacco-free per the request of Parks and Recreation

Ms. Hyatt noted that in the Board's agenda packet is a draft version of the ordinance highlighting the proposed changes. This concluded her presentation and she asked for direction from the Board.

Commissioner Lemel stated that as a self-insured County, the Board of Commissioners is paying for the wellness of its employees. She felt if the Board failed to move forward with making County grounds smoke-free, then they are contributing to the poor health of County employees by maintaining a position that allows smoking on grounds to continue. She inquired if the County would be exposed to any liability for allowing smoking on County grounds when there are County employees with asthma and other ailments forced to walk through secondhand smoke. The Manager stated that most of the County buildings in downtown are accessed from a public sidewalk that the County does not own. Thus, it was difficult to determine a direct linkable for liability. A decision on this matter should be based on what the Board thinks is appropriate for the community and employees while on County property.

Noting that the Community Services Building is the only building in which the Board has imposed a 50 ft. non-smoking perimeter, Commissioner Lemel asked if the same action would protect the entrance to the Courthouse and other buildings. Ms. Hyatt affirmed it would.

Commissioner Lemel asked if the County had any obligation to accommodate employees who smoke. Ms. Hyatt reported that the Wellness Committee intends to provide an education component and support employees seeking to quit smoking.

Commissioner Lemel moved that County buildings be smoke-free with a 50 ft. perimeter around those buildings, seconded by Commissioner Guice. Commissioner Chappell asked for clarification on the motion because it adds further restrictions than simply updating the ordinance to reflect current practices. Commissioner Guice saw value in adding a perimeter, especially to departments such as the Library and Child Development, because it would ban people from smoking directly outside of the entryways. He questioned whether a 50 ft. perimeter was doable at the Courthouse, noting that many smokers congregate at Walker Park, and he was concerned there would be no place for smokers to go. Commissioner Cathey asked if there had been a survey or study conducted to indicate where the 50 ft. perimeter would lie at each facility, as well as where the perimeter might abut with private property. Ms. Hyatt reported that staff has not yet conducted a survey to indicate where the perimeter would lie. She felt an appropriate action would be for the perimeter to be 50 ft. or where the County's property line ended, whichever was first. Commissioner Lemel asked about how this action would be enforced if approved. Ms. Hyatt stated that, if approved, staff would post appropriate signage on County properties. Mountain Wise has agreed to provide free signage to the County at no cost. She noted that when people have been asked to comply with a smoking regulation, they have generally been cooperative. The Manager stated that the enforcement of most ordinances is the responsibility of the County Manager. She suggested the Board add an enforcement section to the ordinance to define the process should someone be

in violation of it. Commissioner Chappell shared that he works for an organization that transitioned to a smoke-free campus that experienced issues with enforcement and he felt the County would experience the same. He was supportive of updating the wording in the ordinance to reflect current practice but he did not support further restrictions. Commissioner Cathey said he did not feel comfortable voting for any further restrictions without a survey of the County properties. Chairman Hawkins suggested the Wellness Committee bring back detailed recommendations for adding perimeter protections. The Manager responded that staff will provide maps of all County properties with the 50 ft. perimeter and property line clearly delineated. Based on the Board's discussion, **Commissioner Lemel moved to amend the motion to remove the 50 ft. perimeter pending further investigation and charting of said perimeter, seconded by Commissioner Cathey and unanimously approved. The main motion (to update the ordinance to reflect current practice of smoke-free buildings) was unanimously approved.**

Next, the Board discussed the recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Committee to make all County parks and recreation facilities become smoke- and tobacco-free. Following a lengthy discussion, the Board instructed the Manager to find out more about the rationale behind this request and the problem they desire to address with this ban.

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEMBERSHIP EXPANSION

The Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA) requested to increase its membership by two members. While the current board is efficient and effective, the current membership feels they have a need for additional input and coverage as they continue to expand their efforts. Additional members would also allow for more community involvement. If approved, the new terms would take effect January 1, 2020.

Because the TCTDA was created by the Board of Commissioners via resolution, the makeup of the TCTDA is not set by statute and therefore it is legal and permissible for the Board of Commissioners to modify its membership. It can be done by amending the 1986 and amended 1991 resolutions.

If the additional members are approved, staff would be asking Commissioners to consider the appointments in November or December, along with any other TCTDA terms that expire in December 2019.

Staff asked the Board to consider the TCTDA's request and the following options:

1. Approve the request by the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority to add two members effective January 1, 2020, with approval of a modified resolution at the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
2. Deny the request to expand the membership.

Chairman Hawkins reported that the TCTDA met last week and expressed support of any action taken by the Board. If added, it is the recommendation of TCTDA that the two new members not have a particular designation, such as accommodations owners. In addition, the Board of Commissioners would be responsible for appointing these two positions.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the addition of two members to the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority as at-large members effective January 1, 2020 with the approval of a modified resolution at the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners, seconded by Commissioner Cathey. Commissioner Chappell agreed that the two new positions should have no restrictions placed on them in terms of who can be appointed. He pointed out the Interested Individual designations on the TCTDA indicate they cannot be accommodations owners/operators and he did not wish to place the same restriction on the two new positions. He was concerned about the Board's ability

to fill the positions. Commissioner Chappell also inquired about the terms. Commissioner Lemel asked that staff specify the terms in the revised bylaws and resolution for approval at the next meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

RESCHEDULE NOVEMBER 12TH BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Due to Veterans Day falling on Monday, November 11, the Board of Commissioners' meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, November 12 at 4:00 p.m. The Manager had been called for jury duty selection on that day and her availability for the meeting would have been unknown. As of today, the Manager has been excused from jury duty.

Commissioner Guice moved to reschedule November 11 meeting to November 12, seconded by Commissioner Cathey and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- GetSet Transylvania Family Activity Zone in partnership with Sesame Street in Communities at Halloweenfest was a great success! Some highlights include:
 - Comments from leadership at SSIC, Senator Edwards, Representative Johnson and Commissioner Page Lemel to celebrate a year of partnership working on early childhood issues
 - Blue Ridge Community College President Dr. Laura Leatherwood and Brevard College President Dr. David Joyce emphasized the importance of early childhood and highlighted the matriculation agreement allowing students to study to be early childhood educators
 - Cookie Monster took pictures with children and families
 - Huge kudos to all the GetSet partners for the work throughout the year and for remaining committed to working together
 - Kudos to Brevard High School students who volunteered to assist
 - Huge kudos to County staff for their work to pull off the event; booths included Health, DSS/New Adventure, CARE/Opioid Response Team, Emergency Management, EMS, Solid Waste, Library and Parks and Recreation; great turnout of children and families
 - All County departments would like to thank Maintenance for making set-up and take-down go wonderfully smooth
- The Courthouse had some plaster from the original ceiling fall over the weekend through the suspended ceiling in the stairwell. Fortunately, the building was unoccupied at the time.
 - Operated today under a modified room capacity
 - Building Inspections, Maintenance and Administration responded first thing this morning to devise a plan to continue operations and repair the issue
 - Asbestos test was negative; contracted to have the remaining material removed by 8 a.m. tomorrow morning to maintain operations; structural engineer to look at the building tomorrow morning as a precaution; expected cost to complete demolition, clean-up and repair is approximately \$15,000
- The Veteran's Day Ceremony is Monday, November 11 at 11 am at the Courthouse Gazebo
- Department Head retreat scheduled for this coming Friday at Gorges State Park to review changes to Human Resources procedures, finance software and how the County can better serve its citizens

Chairman Hawkins elaborated on the Courthouse damage. He explained that what fell was the original plaster in the oldest section of the building. He made it clear that the issue did not occur due to moisture or roof problems, but simply age. He said this is an example of the issues with functional obsolescence in

the building. He reminded Commissioners a couple of months ago they talked about forming a group of people to help reach a resolution on the Courthouse situation for both the short- and long-term. He felt that this issue illustrates the urgency in coming up with a solution.

Commissioner Guice asked if the original plaster remains in other locations of the building. The Manager stated that the original plaster is limited to the stairwells and the small room to the side of the large courtroom. The structural engineer intends to review those areas for potential issues.

Commissioner Guice pointed out this issue has been discussed for many years and there is no easy solution. He felt the Board needs to make a decision regarding the location of a new facility. He said it is difficult to look for short-term solutions when the long-term solution is uncertain. The limited space available downtown, along with the desire of some to keep the Courthouse downtown, adds to the challenges. Others prefer a new facility be constructed adjacent to the Public Safety Facility which needs to be considered as well. He mentioned this information because Commissioners need to work to determine the best possible solution. No matter the decision on future operations, he felt it was important to correct any structural issues in the current facility to ensure the building's future use in some capacity. Commissioner Guice assured the public that this issue remains on the forefront.

Chairman Hawkins intends to continue discussions with Commissioners, staff and stakeholders. The Board of Commissioners should be thinking about how to deal with the current court space shortage while determining a long-term solution. The two are interrelated so the Board must think seriously about it and commit to making a decision.

Chairman Hawkins thanked staff for their quick action today. He also thanked court staff for working around today's difficulties.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Edwin Jones: Mr. Jones shared that he has visited several parks and recreation facilities in Georgia to see his grandchildren participate in sporting activities and all those facilities have been designated as tobacco-free. He questioned the rationale for a 50 ft. perimeter and how to enforce it and suggested an easier decision is just to make County-owned campuses smoke- and tobacco-free. In terms of space for temporary court operations, he suggested the County seek use of the former Kmart facility for this purpose. Commissioner Guice responded that the issue with this facility is that the owners do not want to lease the building for court operations use. They have plans for the building already. Therefore, it is off the table for consideration.

Larry Chapman: Mr. Chapman thanked Commissioners for their approval of the Veterans Day Proclamation. He felt it was very important that veterans are recognized. He announced there are several events scheduled over the next week related to veterans' activities: Thursday night concert at the Porter Center, 244th birthday celebration of the US Marine Corps on Friday, celebration of actual Marine Corps birthday at Brevard Brewing Company on Sunday, Veterans Day on Monday with a ceremony at the Courthouse Gazebo and Captain Maureen Copelof as the guest speaker. Mr. Chapman shared that the Military History Museum has dedicated an exhibit to honoring women in the military. Again, he thanked Commissioners for the support they give to military and veterans in North Carolina.

Kristi Brown: Mrs. Brown is the Clerk of Superior Court. Piggybacking on Mr. Chapman's comments, she encouraged everyone to visit the Military History Museum because it is an amazing place. She gave kudos to Sergeant Benny Frady (who provides security for the Courthouse), the County Manager, Chad Owenby, and County Maintenance for their quick action to address the issue with falling plaster. She recalled that on August 26, 2019 she addressed the Board during a regular meeting where it was reported

that the Courthouse issue would be placed on an agenda for an October meeting. She expected the Courthouse to be a topic of discussion at one of the October meetings, and while she has been patient, the issue with falling plaster this morning has caused her to rethink her stance. She was thankful the plaster failure did not occur during operating hours because someone could have been severely hurt. Mrs. Brown implored the Board to take action. She stated that she and the staff feel responsible for the safety of others while in that building and she felt the current condition of the building is unsafe. She asked the Board to hear the pleas of court staff and keep them in the lines of communication. She understood the Board has a difficult decision before them, but the discussion on a solution has been in the making for more than 20 years. She stressed that now is the time to make a decision and she offered the input of her department to help guide the Board in the right direction.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Lemel shared the excitement from this past weekend during HalloweenFest and the Sesame Street/GetSet activities. As of today, there are 378 families enrolled in the GetSet toolkit program. GetSet has given out two toolkits to date. Those 378 families represent 560 children in our community. Commissioner Lemel was very happy about this level of engagement with young families. She was grateful for how Transylvania County has come together to make life better for young families and children.

Commissioner Chappell announced that tomorrow there is a regional job fair being held at the US Cellular Center from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Over 150 employers will be in attendance.

Commissioner Guice wanted the public to understand that the Board is not “dragging their feet” on the Courthouse issue. He said the Board of Commissioners, over the course of many years, has continually addressed the needs as they arise. In his tenure as a public servant, the Board built a new jail, added a second entrance, connected the old jail and courthouse, renovated space for court offices and added space for operations, moved departments out of the building to free up space, etc. Thus, he felt the Board has been very active over the years in addressing those needs. With that said, Commissioner Guice said he believes a new facility is needed and he agreed with the Clerk of Superior Court that there are certain court functions that cannot be addressed because court operations are housed in a building that is outdated. There are several issues that cannot be addressed until a new facility is built. He recalled the Board was ready to move forward until a group of citizens came to a meeting of the Board and expressed their concern about the location. He said the fact remains that a new facility is needed and it is going to cost a lot of money. Thus, it is important that the Board listen to all the stakeholders, users and public. Commissioner Guice was dismayed with the structural issues that happened today and he wanted to assure everyone that the Board is committed to continuing efforts to ensure there is appropriate space for court operations and addressing safety measures.

Chairman Hawkins shared that he and staff met with Superintendent of Transylvania County Schools Dr. Jeff McDaris and President of Blue Ridge Community College Dr. Laura Leatherwood to talk about commonalities of both entities' capital needs. They talked about potential synergies that might occur as the School System works through their construction plans for the bond projects.

Chairman Hawkins and Commissioner Chappell serve on the School Bond Construction Committee. They have yet to meet, but one is scheduled soon. It will be open to the public and both he and Commissioner Chappell intend to provide regular updates to the public during County Commission meetings.

Chairman Hawkins reminded Commissioners about the need for holding a capital needs workshop before the end of the year. He will work with Commissioners to get this meeting scheduled. He pointed out the County has significant needs across many facets that need to be addressed.

Lastly, Chairman Hawkins commended Commissioner Lemel, the Manager and staff for all their work to prepare for GetSet's participation in HalloweenFest. The work they are doing changes peoples' lives.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Cathey moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Lemel and unanimously carried.**

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board