

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 28, 2013 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, October 28, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the downstairs conference room of the Community Services Building.

Commissioners present were Vice-Chairman Larry Chapman, Jason Chappell, Chairman Mike Hawkins, Daryle Hogsed and Page Lemel. Also present were County Manager Artie Wilson, County Attorney Tony Dalton, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: *The Transylvania Times* – Eric Crews

There were approximately 40 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairman Hawkins welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members of the audience for participating in their County government. He introduced the members of the Board of Commissioners and staff.

PUBLIC HEARING

CROWN CASTLE VARIANCE REQUEST

Crown Castle applied for a telecommunications tower permit on August 16, 2013 for the purposes of adding a 25' extension to the existing 85' tower, for a total tower height of 110'. The tower is located on a parcel at 4157 Hendersonville Road. The parcel has a fall area for the existing tower, but does not contain enough land area to accommodate the remaining 25' (110' total) on the same parcel of land. Crown Castle has engineered the tower to fall inwards within the existing 85' fall area. They provided a letter from an engineer stating such.

County Planner Chris Hnatin reported that on September 26, 2013, the Planning Board reviewed the permit application from Crown Castle and denied the application based on Section 13.2 of the Telecommunications Tower Ordinance which reads, "Towers shall be sited to contact all ice-fall debris from tower failure on site. The minimum distance from the tower's base to the property line shall be equal to the tower's height".

It is the recommendation of the Planning Board that the Board of Commissioners grant the variance request. A public hearing must be held prior to approval or denial of the variance. The Planning Office notified the surrounding property owners. The Planning Board held a public hearing as well at which there were no public comments made. It was noted that the Planning Board is reviewing the existing ordinance for possible revision.

Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing open at 7:09. There being no comments from the public, **Chairman Hawkins declared the public hearing closed at 7:10 p.m.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

George Poor: Mr. Poor thanked Commissioners for providing funding to assist the Transylvania Honor Guard. He has decided to step down from his leadership position in the Honor Guard. He introduced Howard Thiele who will be leading the efforts of the Transylvania Honor Guard. Commissioners thanked Mr. Poor for the work he has done in this role over the past several years.

Stacy Peterson: Ms. Peterson is the President of the Brevard High School Marching Band Parent Association. Her purpose for speaking tonight is to share good news with Commissioners. She informed Commissioners that the Brevard High School Band is made up of 89 students, meaning that 12% of the entire student body is in the band and making it the largest student organization on campus. The band participates in various competitions besides playing at football games. This year the band attended four marching competitions and brought home 16 trophies, mostly first and second place, and they have won several other trophies over the years. Ms. Peterson noted how hard the parents in the association work to keep these students involved and reported that these students go on to excel at colleges and universities and become productive members of society. Ms. Peterson invited Commissioners to stop by the school and visit the band. She thanked Commissioners for their support of Transylvania County Schools.

There were several band members in attendance. Commissioners and those in attendance applauded them on their successes.

Lee McMinn: Mr. McMinn invited Commissioners to attend an event celebrating the 203rd birthday of the United States Marine Corps. The event will be held on November 9, 2013 at Connetsee Falls.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

The Manager requested to add Item V.C. Proclamation National Family Caregivers Month under the Consent Agenda and Item IX.A Crown Castle Variance Request under New Business and move the Manager's Report to Item IX.B.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the agenda as modified. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hogsed and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were approved:

DISCOVERY AND RELEASE REPORT

The September 2013 Discovery and Release Report was approved. Total tax dollars released was \$5,034.07. Refunds totaled \$255.94.

PROCLAMATION VETERANS DAY 2013

In 2009, the Board of Commissioners established a Veterans Day Committee that is responsible for developing a program to honor the veterans of this community on Veterans Day. Commissioner Hogsed 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 Monday, November 11, 2013 at 11:00 a.m. at the Courthouse Gazebo. Daniel Nicholson, a young Marine who was severely injured in Iraq, will be the featured speaker.

Commissioners approved Proclamation 37-2013 Veterans Day 2013 which was read aloud by Commissioner Hogsed. Commissioners also recognized the veterans in attendance.

(Proclamation 37-2013 Veterans Day 2013 is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

PROCLAMATION NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

November is National Family Caregivers Month, as designated by proclamations from the President and the Congress. It is estimated that nearly 40% of American adults serve as family and friend caregivers, and that number continues to grow. There are local programs for support of caregivers, both through the County Council on Aging and the Land-of-Sky Regional Council's Family Caregiver Support Program. Commissioners approved Proclamation 38-2013 National Family Caregivers Month.

(Proclamation 38-2013 National Family Caregivers Month is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

JUSTIN HEMBREE-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LAND-OF-SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Justin Hembree was recently appointed as the new Executive Director of the Land-of-Sky Regional Council. He introduced himself and made a brief presentation to Commissioners. He thanked Transylvania County for its involvement in the Land-of-Sky Regional Council. It belongs to the member governments in the four counties. Mr. Hembree presented Commissioners with a membership certificate. He also distributed the 2013 Land-of-Sky Annual Report which highlights its accomplishments and how they have been able to help the member governments in various ways.

The mission of the Land-of-Sky is to provide creative regional solutions for relevant and emerging issues in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties while providing a standard of excellence in the delivery of federal, State and regional services for the member communities.

Mr. Hembree reported that the Land-of-Sky intends to revisit its mission and over the next year enhance its level of customer service to the member governments. They also want to be more flexible, more outcome driven, and in essence shift from being a nonprofit public sector organization to more of a corporate structure and orientation.

Mr. Hembree showed a video that highlighted what the Land-of-Sky does for its member governments and what it plans to do in the future. The Land-of-Sky helps with planning for the aging population, providing opportunities for volunteers, offering job training programs and continues to identify and meet the needs and desires of the region. Their newly named Department of Economic and Community Development is tasked with this goal of regional planning. Planning currently focuses on road management, transportation, housing, grants, clean energy and being responsive to the needs and priorities of the local governments. Land-of-Sky can identify and have access to funding streams that may not often be thought of or utilized; funding that can continue to make the region a better place for families to live and businesses to thrive. Mr. Hembree thanked Transylvania County for being a valued member of the Council.

Commissioner Lemel complemented Mr. Hembree on the Council's Annual Report because it provided a comprehensive overview of all their operations. She found it interesting that 32% of their expenditures go to support the aging population, knowing how important that is for many citizens in this community. She said the ability of Transylvania County as a smaller county to be able to take advantage of some of the services provided by Land-of-Sky is very valuable.

Commissioner Chappell thanked Mr. Hembree and others for heeding the advice of the Council members in terms of what an annual report should like and the information it should contain. It should be professional and tell the story of how the Land-of-Sky serves communities. The current annual report does that. It was noted that Commissioner Chappell is past chair of the Council.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Hembree for his presentation.

TRANSYLVANIA REGIONAL HOSPITAL-BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY

Each year the CEO of Transylvania Regional Hospital (TRH) provides the Board of Commissioners an update on the status of the hospital and its benefit to the community. Bob Bednarek reported that TRH is locally governed despite its recent merger with Mission Health System. TRH's focus is to provide quality services and meet the needs of the community. TRH has enjoyed the benefits of being part of a larger organization in light of the morass of what is happening in healthcare on the national and State level.

TRH has been named a top performing hospital two years in a row. Only 244 hospitals across the country have received this recognition for two consecutive years. Mission Health System is also recognized as one of the top 15 health systems in the nation. TRH falls in the top 100 critical access hospitals, a designation achieved in 2004, which gives them a preferred reimbursement method from the federal government and it also helps the hospital remain viable.

TRH gives back to the community. Being the largest employer, it is important for them to do their part in the community. First, TRH is a safety net and does not turn away those in need. Second, TRH has contributed more than \$6.6 million dollars to this community. Last year, nearly 6,700 people were helped by charity care or their bills were written off as uncollected. TRH also contributes to a myriad of entities in the community and provides leadership for several programs in the community to meet the needs of the underserved.

Mr. Bednarek reported that TRH has been able to attract quality physicians and has recruited several new physicians over the past year. This contributes positively to the local economy. TRH is currently working with the YMCA to study a potential project of creating a medically integrated healthy living center/medical wellness facility and how to pay for such a facility.

The impact of federal and State budget cuts on healthcare has resulted in the elimination of transitional personal care services; however, there are other existing providers in the community that provide the same or similar services. There were 38 employees affected by the transition. TRH made a commitment to take care of the clients and employees that were affected by the elimination of these services. Of the 38 employees affected, 10 were able to find other jobs within TRH or Mission Health System, another five now work for the other providers in the community, eleven entered into personal contracts with their clients without an agency involved. The remaining either retired or chose not to return to work.

TRH has a tremendous economic impact on the community. Their payroll is \$27 million which has an impact on the community of approximately \$110 million. The community and the hospital are important to each other. TRH is committed to serving and providing access to care, growing to meet the needs, operating efficiently and continuing to be an economic benefit in this community. They are embracing change and dealing with the ever-changing healthcare system. Mr. Bednarek hopes the community continues to embrace the hospital with feedback about how they are doing and that the elected officials recognize and support the importance of having a strong and viable hospital in this community.

After a few questions and comments, Commissioners thanked Mr. Bednarek for his report and all of the work that he and his staff do for the people of this community.

REAPPRAISAL PLAN

Tax Administrator David Reid and staff prepared a time line for the revaluation process and gave an update on the progress being made. The next revaluation is scheduled for January 1, 2016.

The reappraisal process will be completed in-house which saves significant taxpayer dollars. An in-house reappraisal is, however, lengthy and time consuming. Mr. Reid reported that sales appear to be down. One particular neighborhood had only one good sale. The other competing properties were foreclosures and short sales. This type of data makes it difficult to appraise property. As a result, Mr. Reid expects the County to lose 5% of its assessed value, unless the market turns around significantly. If sales remain down, a revenue neutral tax rate would be higher than the current tax rate. With this, some property owners will see a decrease in their property taxes; others will see an increase. Mr. Reid noted this has occurred in many counties and is not unique to Transylvania County.

Included in the information provided by the Tax Office is a timeline of action that should be taken by the Board of Commissioners over the course of the next couple of years. This process will be demanding on staff. There are approximately 30,000 parcels in the County. Tax Office staff intends to do several presentations around the community to inform citizens how the reappraisal process works.

Mr. Reid noted that he has not yet hired a reappraisal manager but the recruitment process continues. Commissioners asked Mr. Reid to keep them informed of this process and the needs of his office.

APPOINTMENTS

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW

The terms of Claudia Hawkins and William Wallace expire at the end of January 2014. Both are qualified and it is important to have continuity on this board. There is one application on file but the applicant does not own property in the County which is a requirement to serve on this board.

Commissioner Lemel moved to reappoint Claudia Hawkins and William Wallace to another term on the Board of Equalization and Review. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

CROWN CASTLE VARIANCE REQUEST

Commissioners held a public hearing at the beginning of the meeting at which there were no comments. Crown Castle has requested a variance for a cell tower and the recommendation is to approve their request. It was noted that this request was not on the previous agenda because staff wanted to ensure that the neighbors were adequately notified and that proper notice was posted. Otherwise it is the intention of staff to move through these requests and processes as quickly as possible in order to be more customer-friendly.

Commissioner Lemel moved to approve the variance request by Crown Castle for the cell tower. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hogsed and unanimously approved.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Governance of Smoky Mountain/Western Highlands Managed Care Organization - Chairman Hawkins and he attended a meeting last Wednesday to hear about the new governance structure for the merged entities. NC General Statute requires the new entity to develop a new governing board 30 days after the Secretary signs the merger agreement or prior to April 1, 2014, whichever

date comes sooner. Smoky's Executive Committee and the Western Highlands transition team have created a 21-member slate for the new Board of Directors which allows representation from both Smoky and Western Highlands. The Manager believes that statutes should be changed to allow each county to have a representative on the new Board if they so desire. He intends to bring the slate of recommended members to the Board for approval at a future meeting. In the meantime, the Smoky Board will work on getting the legislation changed.

- Attended the Rural Planning Organization Technical Coordinating Committee meeting in Asheville. The Committee is exploring the possibility of creating a local scoring method to rank roads as required by the State.
- Met with Pisgah Legal Services and Blue Ridge Community Health Services to learn how the navigation process is going with the new Affordable Care Act. It was reported that 44 people had visited the office but none were able to complete the application process. There is a part time office open in the Community Services Building.
- Interviewed, along with Chairman Hawkins, Vice-Chairman Chapman, and Project Manager Larry Reece, three architectural firms to complete a study on the potential expansion of the Courthouse. They selected Moseley Architects to complete the study and they will begin their work soon.
- Carleen Dixon Hascom was selected as the new Parks and Recreation Director. She is a native Transylvanian and has been serving the City of Pasco, Washington as Recreation Services Manager. She will begin on December 2, 2013.
- Work continues on the renovation plans for the old Library. The Manager hopes to bring back some estimates to the Board in the near future.
- Bids for the renovation of the porch at Silvermont are due tomorrow.
- Provided a draft schedule for County Commission meetings for the remainder of the year. The Board intends to hold a workshop on water on November 4 at 6:00 p.m. and a workshop on December 2 to discuss alternatives to a high impact land uses ordinance. These workshops will be held at the Library. The Manager is working on scheduling a joint meeting with the Board of Education on December 16 to discuss school needs and a potential bond referendum. The joint meeting is not yet confirmed.

Commissioner Lemel informed the public that the new Parks and Recreation Director has an impressive resume and the County is fortunate to have her coming on board.

Chairman Hawkins noted that the meeting on mental health he attended with the Manager in Asheville was a complicated and contentious meeting of the representatives from 23 different counties. He thanked the Manager for his leadership during that discussion and for his work on this issue.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Edwin Jones: Mr. Jones is associated with Boy Scout Troop 703 and Brevard Davidson River Presbyterian Church. For many years the Troop has placed flags on veterans' graves on Memorial Day at Evergreen Cemetery. They will now begin to do the same for the Presbyterian Church. Mr. Jones noted that several people helped a young man complete his Eagle Scout project yesterday on Bracken Mountain and recommended everyone to stop by to see the shelter he constructed.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Lemel reported on her County Commission duties over the last couple of weeks. She was a guest of the Chamber of Commerce on a visit to the Town of Belmont to look at their successes after losing 30 textile mills over a 16-year time span. She attended her first meeting with the new supervisor of

Dupont State Recreational Forest where she serves on the advisory board there. Commissioner Lemel serves as a County Commission representative to the Smart Start Board and she participated in their retreat recently. She was invited to take a tour of Davidson River School. On Thursday, Commissioner Lemel will be attending a listening tour by Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker at UNC-Asheville. The topic will be on economic development in Western North Carolina.

Commissioner Chapman will be traveling to New Bern at the end of the week to attend the NC Association of County Commissioners Board meeting. He encouraged everyone to visit the newly resurfaced tennis courts at Silvermont. They are used frequently. He noted that recreation is an important aspect of the community and counties that appear to be thriving have made investments in their recreation amenities. Commissioner Chapman serves as the County's ex-officio member to the Chamber of Commerce but his work schedule seems to conflict with the meeting schedule and he asked Commissioners to discuss his replacement at an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Chappell reminded Commissioners of a meeting tomorrow at the Library at 3:30 p.m. It is a forum on hunger and poverty in the community. While those numbers are staggering, people will learn how much assistance is available in the community as well. Commissioner Chappell bragged on the work the Tourism Development Authority does to promote the community. He encouraged everyone to come out to support the Rosman High School Ladies Volleyball Team. They are hosting the State semi-finals tomorrow night. Lastly, he informed the Board he had met his ethics requirement for his term.

Chairman Hawkins said he was unable to attend the visit to Belmont but all who attended reported positive outcomes. He announced that this coming Wednesday at 8:00 a.m. at City Hall the City will make a presentation on their study of retail sales within their jurisdiction. He served on the Steering Committee for that group. Chairman Hawkins announced that a 3-day conference will be held next March on balancing nature and commerce. This is a joint effort by the Transylvania Natural Resources Council and Brevard College. The conference is designed to take a look at communities like Transylvania County with an abundance of natural resources and determine how to integrate those aspects into commerce while tackling any environmental concerns. Lastly, Chairman Hawkins reported that he has started a Twitter page as a way to be proactive in engaging people with their local government. He intends to experiment with this for three months and talk about those things that happen outside of County Commission meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mike Hawkins, Chair
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board