

**MINUTES  
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
March 10, 2014 – REGULAR MEETING**

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in regular session on Monday, March 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the large courtroom of the Transylvania County Courthouse.

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* – Jeremiah Reed

There were approximately 40 people in the audience.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Mike Hawkins presiding called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**WELCOME**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no comments from the public.

**AGENDA MODIFICATIONS**

There were no agenda modifications.

**Commissioner Hogsed moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Chapman 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:

MINUTES

The minutes of the December 2, 2013 workshop, December 10, 2013 regular meeting and January 13, 2014 regular meeting were approved.

### DISCOVERY AND RELEASE REPORT

The Discovery and Release Report for January 2014 was approved. Total tax dollars released was \$2,205.83. Refunds totaled \$550. Commissioner Lemel requested that each report include the previous month's figures for comparison purposes.

### PROCLAMATION – DECLARING TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY AS A PURPLE HEART COUNTY

The Military Order of the Purple Heart was founded in 1932 and chartered in 1958. The mission of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is "to foster an environment of good will and camaraderie among combat wounded veterans, promote patriotism, support necessary legislative initiatives and most importantly provide services to all veterans and their families". Mr. Lenny Lazzara, Commander of Chapter 639 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart in North Carolina sent a request to all counties in North Carolina asking them to become a Purple Heart County. To date 49 counties and over 100 cities in North Carolina have passed proclamations declaring themselves as a Purple Heart County or City. Transylvania County is very proud of the number of men and women who have served and are serving in the military and especially those who were wounded and made the ultimate sacrifice. By declaring Transylvania County as a Purple Heart County it recognizes the commitment and increasing sacrifices required of military families and especially recognizes the sacrifices made by those who earned the Purple Heart. For the benefit of the public, Chairman Hawkins read aloud the proclamation. Commissioners approved Proclamation 06-2014 Declaring Transylvania County as a Purple Heart County.

(Proclamation 06-2014 Declaring Transylvania County as a Purple Heart County is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.)

### UNSEAL CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners has a policy that the County Manager and the Clerk should review the sealed closed session minutes on a monthly basis with the County Attorney and make a recommendation to the Board about minutes that may be unsealed. They recommended unsealing the sealed closed session minutes from September 23, 2013 {NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (2) to prevent the premature disclosure of an honorary award or scholarship and (a) (3) to consult with an attorney}. Commissioners approved the unsealing of the sealed closed session minutes from September 23, 2013 and instructed the Clerk to make them available for public inspection.

### SMOKY MOUNTAIN CENTER FISCAL MONITORING REPORT

Per NCGS 122C-117 (c), the quarterly Fiscal Monitoring Reports for the Local Management Entities must be presented to the Board of Commissioners in person and read into the minutes of the meeting at which it is presented at least twice a year. The report from Smoky Mountain Center for the second quarter of FY 2014 which ended December 31, 2013 was presented to Commissioners. Commissioners accepted the report.

## **PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**

### UPDATE ON MENTAL HEALTH

Smoky Mountain Center (SMC) began managing Medicaid and State funds for the counties that encompass Western Highlands Network (WHN) in October, 2013. In January, both boards approved the final merger of Western Highlands and Smoky Mountain. This is now the largest Local Management Entity (LME) and Managed Care Organization (MCO) in the State. LME /MCO leaders have agreed on a four region model to further improve operations and administration of the managed care program for Medicaid, Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services. Discussions are already underway to expand Smoky Mountain by bringing in Center Point Human Services and Partners Behavioral Health Management, thus creating a Western Regional Partnership. Ms. Shelly Foreman, Senior Director for

Planning and Public Affairs with Smoky Mountain Center gave an update on the formation of the Western Regional Partnership and the Commissioner Advisory Committee.

Ms. Foreman reported that the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services officially gave approval to the consolidation of Western Highlands and Smoky Mountain approximately one month ago. The new service area comprises 23 counties.

The NC General Assembly redefined the structure of the LME/MCO boards. The new board structure is smaller and is comprised of up to 21 individuals representing specific areas. Smoky Mountain Center filled the board member slots with a mix of skilled and professional individuals. Eight members are at-large slots and are not designated for a particular category of individual or profession. These positions were filled with either Smoky Mountain Center Commission members or County Managers who were active on the Western Highlands Board.

The NC General Assembly also passed legislation to establish a County Commissioner Advisory Council. Smoky Mountain Center will begin working on that process soon and plans to seek input from counties on how to organize the council and its membership.

Ms. Foreman stated that during the consolidation of the two entities Governor McCrory announced an initiative called Partnership for a Healthy North Carolina. The purpose was to create up to three organizations, private or public, that would manage all Medicaid service dollars in the State; however, this could not occur with the way the State rules are written. This is a controversial issue and caused great concern within the medical field and advocacy groups. Governor McCrory has since acknowledged this and his administration is now looking at creating compatible care organizations which will manage the medical part of Medicaid and they will reach out to organizations like Smoky Mountain Center to help manage the services.

Ms. Foreman noted that Smoky Mountain Center works closely with several of the local providers in Transylvania County to ensure comprehensive behavioral health services are being provided. Smoky Mountain Center feels they have a strong local presence in the catchment area and that is something they intend to maintain. As they move forward in the regionalization process and the Governor's mandate to reduce the number of organizations to four, and in order for Smoky Mountain to be competitive, they are working very diligently and beginning conversations with the other organizations to look at standardizing processes so consolidation can occur in 2016.

Commissioner Lemel said one of the biggest concerns in this process was the shrinking of the board size and the fact that some counties felt like they lost their ability to participate in the process. It is important for counties to be engaged and have an understanding of how citizens are being served. She asked how Smoky Mountain intends to balance representation so that everyone feels like they are able to participate. Ms. Foreman stated that the legislation indicates that every county board of commissioners appoints a commissioner to serve. Therefore the County Commissioner Advisory Council will consist of 23 members. Discussions on how to structure the council will take place over the next couple of months. There will also be a Provider Advisory Council and a Consumer Advisory Council, thus providing another opportunity for local citizens and local government to have a voice and ensure the needs of the community are being met.

Commissioner Chapman asked if Smoky Mountain Center had identified any areas where legislative action might be needed. Ms. Foreman said she does not expect any new or changed legislation at this time. She believes if Governor McCrory were to begin pushing in the direction of privatization there would have to be new legislation passed because the current law does not support this.

Chairman Hawkins asked if the same local providers that served this community prior to the consolidation are still here in the community. The Manager informed Commissioners that the local providers remain the same but they are not all contracted with Smoky Mountain Center. There are new providers too. He believes there has been an improvement to services in the community since the consolidation. This was evident during the recent situation at Rodeway Inn.

The Manager talked more about the board structure and said that as Smoky Mountain Center continues to grow the membership can be changed to allow more members. Legislation allows more flexibility once the population served reaches 1.2 million.

Chairman Hawkins thanked the Manager for his leadership role in the consolidation process and the subsequent smooth transition of the Western Highlands Network and Smoky Mountain Center. Ms. Foreman offered her appreciation as well.

#### TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BUILDING PERMITTING PROCESS

Last year the Manager challenged the Building Department staff to review their permitting process and try to make it a more business friendly process. The Economic Opportunity Network (formerly Senior Resource Network) was asked to assist in this process. A team consisting of Joe Wilbanks, Susan Miller and Ruth Harris met with Mike Owen, Building Director and Sherry Reese, Permit Specialist, and thoroughly reviewed the process and made recommendations.

Over the last several months several changes have been implemented to make the permitting process more business friendly. In addition, the process now includes the City of Brevard with anticipated outcomes which will further improve the process.

Mr. Wilbanks spoke on behalf of the team. He said the process the team went through was a business process review of the permitting process. Their scope was narrowly limited to county permitting; however, they learned quickly that the process is much more complicated than that, depending on where one needs a permit and who one needs to talk with about obtaining a permit.

Mr. Wilbanks made a presentation to report on their progress thus far and updated Commissioners on the changes that have been made as well as future steps.

They used a process called LEAN which is a business process improvement that seeks to eliminate non-value added activities or waste. For this process, the goal was to determine how to shorten the process from beginning to end and make the process good, not only internally for those working the process, but also externally. Mr. Wilbanks gave some examples of how the LEAN process works in services, as well as in manufacturing.

The team set out with a background statement to foster economic development within the County as it strives to be business friendly. The team reviewed the commercial permitting process as a good way to test staff with the goal of reducing cycle time and to become more helpful to those seeking permits in the County. The deliverables were to improve process flow, communication and technology solutions.

The team met weekly to map out the existing commercial permitting process with the focus being on customer and staff perspective. They also brought in other entities that were involved in the process like Environmental Health, Information Technology, and a local architect and contractor. The team also consulted with the City of Brevard's Planning Department because any of the County's permitting that occurs within City limits requires the City's approval first. The City has a different level of scrutiny than

the County. County permits must be in compliance with NC Building Codes and City's permits must also comply with its Unified Development Ordinance.

The team's process work included researching County permitting data and best practices in other North Carolina counties. They also evaluated staff inputs and time associated with telephone, paperwork, forms, etc., analyzed the website for improvements, and reviewed proposed process changes with the customers to gain insight and comments.

Mr. Wilbanks noted that the permitting process is complicated and depends on a number of factors. The more the team worked to remove complications; they learned that each case was unique. Certain permitting still requires federal permission, Environmental Health approval, etc.

Mr. Wilbanks stated that if a customer is seeking a building permit in Transylvania County, they are going to be doing quite a bit of traveling between City and County offices. One of the recommendations to deal with this is to implement a technology solution by using a common web application designed to reduce complexity and create a seamless experience for those requesting permits.

Mr. Wilbanks highlighted some of the actual improvements in the process as follows:

<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
Application required detailed information on each subcontractor (i.e. license no., address, etc.)	Subcontractor quick links were added for license numbers and the addresses were removed from application
Construction types and occupancy codes were confusing	Clarified by providing direct links to the appropriate code sections and classifications
Application required data from other state websites or other government offices but provided no links or phone numbers	Application blanks are annotated with website links and phone numbers to access information
Building Department plan reviewers used a compliance checklist to guide their plan review but it wasn't available to the contractor	Designed a new compliance checklist that will be posted online and will be part of the application package
The process to schedule inspections required constant interruptions to staff and impacted efficiency	Modified the phone system to enable inspections requests to be handled without speaking with a County employee. All inspection times are shown on the website with the intent to enable contractor self-service with information readily available.
	Added a contractor workstation in the office to allow contractors to look up codes, license numbers, parcel ID numbers

The team recommended additional modifications, some of which may require funding:

- Convert forms to fillable PDF, including drop down selections
- Created an interactive commercial plan review checklist
- Administrative tab, look up tables enable the ability to change the inspection list
- Allow inspectors to print certificate of occupancy in the field
- Contractor log in to allow contractors to view Permits tab (quick list of permits issued to specific contractor)

- Incoming alert notification for online applications, inspection requests
- Inspection entry form add field for “Requested By”
- Requesting more timely system updates from Automated Results to operate in real time.

The team sees the next steps as being:

- Continue process review focused on City/County interfaces
- Evaluate possible co-location of City/County permitting operations and the co-location of other County support operations
- Evaluate the potential of one permitting system shared by the City and County
- Complete other initiatives directly with the City

Commissioner Lemel thanked County staff and the members of the Economic Opportunity Network for their time and expertise in making the County’s building permitting system more business friendly and thus better serving the citizens. She also thanked Director Mike Owen for his leadership.

Commissioner Hogsed echoed Commissioner Lemel’s comments. He also asked if there will be the possibility of scheduling inspections online. The team responded that it is an option now, but not widely used. They are encouraging the online process.

Commissioner Hogsed asked if permit fees can be paid electronically. Mr. Owen said this is not a possibility at this time. The office currently cannot accept credit card payments but the Manager is working with them on this process.

Commissioner Hogsed appreciated the possibility for collocation of an office for City and County inspections and it is something he supports.

Mr. Owen thanked everyone on the team for the time and the effort they took to make the Building Inspections Department a better and more efficient department.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### CHALLENGE TO THE SILVERMONT CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE FOR FUNDS FOR A PLAYGROUND AT SILVERMONT

The Silvermont Strategic Plan Group has developed a plan to renovate the Silvermont mansion over the next three year period in preparation for its 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday in 2017. The first phase in the renovation is to restore the porch and repair water damage to the outside of the building which is currently underway. The second phase was originally to relocate the basketball court in order to make improvements to the grounds, but after further thought, the committee has made the establishment of a children's accessible playground as its top priority for grounds improvement. The committee and the Parks and Recreation Director would like to apply for a \$50,000 matching grant in the spring for the construction of a children's accessible playground. The proposal is for the Board of Commissioners to commit \$25,000 as a challenge match to the Silvermont Centennial Committee to raise an additional \$25,000 to serve as the match for the \$50,000 grant.

Commissioner Chapman inquired about the timeline for the grant application process. Parks and Recreation Director Carleen Hanscom reported that the grant information should be out in the spring. The exact dates have not been provided. This particular grant is awarded twice per year. The idea behind the grant is to assist communities with building fully accessible playgrounds. If the County is not awarded the

grant, there will be monies from the County's contribution, if approved, and the planning group's challenge match to build a very nice playground; it just will not be fully handicap/wheelchair accessible.

Commissioner Lemel asked if there are other grant opportunities if this grant is not awarded. Ms. Hanscom said there are some grants available, many of which have closed for the year. There are other grants too but they are very specific on need and situation. She continues to seek grant opportunities.

Commissioner Chapman clarified that the approval of the County contribution is contingent upon the group raising the money. The Manager confirmed. He said, for instance, if they are only able to raise \$20,000, then the County allocation would be \$20,000, but he believes the planning committee will be able to raise the funds. This is simply a mechanism for them to have funds in place if the grant is awarded.

**Commissioner Hogsed moved to commit \$25,000 as a challenge match to the Silvermont Centennial Committee to match the County allocation of \$25,000 for the accessible playground. The total of \$50,000 would be used to match the grant, should the County be awarded, or be used toward the cost of building a playground on their own. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chapman.** The Manager noted that these funds would come from fund balance, if approved. Commissioner Chappell expressed concern about allocating funds for a grant match that the County has yet to be awarded. Ms. Hanscom said that even without the grant, they would still be able to move forward with building a great playground. The grant allows for the playground to be fully accessible. Commissioner Chappell asked if playgrounds were listed as a high priority in the most recent recreation study and he wondered if Silvermont was the best location for a playground. Ms. Hanscom said there is a need for multiple playgrounds all over the County. Commissioner Chappell said he understands the County has recreation needs in several areas that have been identified but this project was not one of the priorities. Parks Commission member Jessica Ibarguen added that reports indicate the County is severely lacking in several areas. What makes Silvermont a great spot for a playground is that the property is owned by the County and is located within City limits and therefore easily accessible by the public. Commissioner Chapman reminded Commissioners and the public about the tax increase that was justified by a need to upgrade facilities and infrastructure. He believes this effort is a great example of a joint public/private partnership and is worthy of the Board's support. Commissioner Chappell agreed with his comments but said there are many needs and he wants to ensure that any projects Commissioners commit to meet the needs of the most citizens. **The motion passed by a vote of 4 to 1, with Commissioner Chappell voting against.**

#### PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

The Manager provided a brief update on public health information to the Board of Commissioners in the absence of Health Director Steve Smith. He reported that the Health Department will be going through its accreditation process soon. One of the major tools used by the auditors is the Health Assessment and how the Board of Health and Health Department are meeting the objectives identified in the report. Part of the process includes providing an update to County Commissioners.

Commissioner Hogsed serves as the County Commissioner representative to the Board of Health. He believes the County is well prepared for the accreditation process. He noted that County Commissioners may be interviewed during the process.

The Manager noted that Mr. Smith has been working with other department heads and county departments to meet some of the needs required for accreditation.

DISCUSSION ON 2014 NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
LEGISLATIVE GOALS AND COUNTY ASSEMBLY DAY PLANNING

Each year the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) asks each county in the State to compile a list of key issues of importance. The list is compiled and prioritized for approval by all counties. Each board of county commissioners is also asked to meet with their local legislators and discuss these key issues.

On May 28, 2014 the NCACC will host its annual County Assembly Day where county officials will hear from State legislative leaders and meet personally with their State legislative representatives.

The following are current issues adopted by the NCACC Legislative Goals Committee:

*Priority Issues*

1. Reinstate lottery funds for school construction
2. Oppose shift of state transportation responsibilities to counties
3. Oppose unfunded mandates and shifts of state responsibilities to counties
4. Preserve the existing local revenue base

*Other issues of Importance*

1. Allow more cost effective methods for second primary elections
2. Seek legislation to expand county governments' use of 911 funds; protect and enhance current funding streams and maintain full operational flexibility and autonomy
3. Request the reduction of detention center space requirements in existing and new detention center facilities in all counties in North Carolina

Commissioner Chapman reported that he plans to attend the NCACC Board of Directors meeting this week. He noted that County Assembly Day is scheduled during the County's budget meetings and he suggested revisiting that schedule so Commissioners can attend County Assembly Day.

The Manager spoke briefly about the NCACC's Risk Management report. He noted that the County uses many of the services provided by the Risk Management Pool. It benefits the County by being part of the pool because it spreads the risk across a number of counties.

The NCACC produced a short video as a part of their effort to educate the public about the services county governments provide to their citizens and it was shared with Commissioners and the public during this meeting.

Commissioners instructed the Manager to schedule a meeting with Representative Whitmire and Senator Apodaca to discuss the goals of the NCACC and other issues of importance.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

1. Renovation of the old library progresses.
2. The County and a number of agencies have been working together to find lodging for those being displaced by the closing of Rodeway Inn. The County placed a mobile crisis unit at the Rodeway Inn last Friday as a central place for the approximately 50 residents to go to and make application for lodging and other services. The Manager gave a special thanks to everyone who helped and continues to help out during this crisis.



3. Planning and Economic Development Director Mark Burrows was recently in California attending a Natural Products trade show and promoting Transylvania County. While there he seized the opportunity to visit and make a presentation to Stone Brewery. Stone Brewery has indicated they are looking to expand their operations on the East Coast and have invited responses from interested communities. Mr. Burrows provided them with a package of information about Transylvania County.
4. Transylvania County now provides all full time employees with a living wage of at least \$10.35 per hour with employer provided health insurance.
5. Staff is in the process of sending out a Request for Qualifications to help with drafting a strategic plan for Transylvania County.
6. County staff will be meeting with City staff next week to discuss the possibility of completing a joint recreation needs study. The current study is outdated. Recreation improvements were identified during the strategic planning process as a goal.
7. Reminded Commissioners that beginning today and continuing through March 19 Morris Road will be closed during the day to allow for the removal of several dead trees on County property. Staff has been working with the City of Brevard on the removal of the dead trees that are presenting a safety hazard.
8. Meeting with John Hanselman of Davidson River Village and representatives with the North Carolina Department of Transportation to discuss the Connector Road on Thursday of this week.
9. Sent letters to the principals of the proposed bio-mass facility but there has been no response on whether or not they intend to proceed with the project.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Don Surette: Mr. Surette commented about the report provided earlier on streamlining the building inspections process and believes the potential for this is exciting. He said this is similar to a project he is working on to create a design guide for potential businesses and others when they come to Transylvania County. Having one place for businesses and citizens to go to for this service improves the whole process.

#### **COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS**

Commission Lemel reported on her activities since the last meeting. She attended the conference entitled "Charting the Course for the Next 150 Years: Balancing Nature and Commerce in Transylvania County". The conference was kicked off by a presentation the evening before by Ed McMahon, a leading national expert on economic development. The conference was attended by a group of very energetic individuals ready to launch the County forward, bring development to the community and get the economy back on track.

Commissioner Lemel also reported that she is becoming increasingly frustrated with bureaucracy. She sent letters to State delegation and she spoke personally with US Congressman Meadows about several topics that she feels are of issue to Transylvania County. She noted that the relationships with the elected officials at the State and federal level are of great importance to the community.

Commissioner Chapman noted the importance of Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker visiting the Davidson River Village site. He also reported that Animal Shelter staff will start going into the classroom to teach children and others about animal safety. He encouraged everyone to visit the new animal shelter because it is a wonderful facility. Commissioner Chapman also reported that the County received the Gold Award from United Way, an organization that does a lot to help people in the County.

Commissioner Chappell announced that the Transylvania Honor Guard is holding a yard sale this weekend to raise money for the Honor Guard. The Transylvania Honor Guard provides honorable services for families and other groups around the County and they should be commended for their service.

Chairman Hawkins mentioned that the road project at Davidson River Village is crucial for the development of the site and he commended the Manager for the tremendous amount of work he has done to help make the project a reality. He also recognized the efforts by the Land-of-Sky Rural Planning Organization. Chairman Hawkins also noted there was a meeting to discuss NC 215 which is being studied by a number of different stakeholders who have to devise a plan in which they all agree. Chairman Hawkins also attended the conference at Brevard College on balancing nature and commerce. He said one of the recurring themes from the speakers was about the tremendous natural assets here which makes Transylvania County unique. The members of the conference thought strategically and thoughtfully about how to leverage those assets while still protecting them. Chairman Hawkins is very optimistic about the future of Transylvania County. He also mentioned the fact that Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker visited the Davidson River Village site which is very important to Transylvania County.

Commissioner Hogsed commended all those involved for the efforts the community made this week in relocating the residents at the Rodeway Inn.

#### ADJOURNMENT

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

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Mike Hawkins, Chair  
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

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Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board