

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DECEMBER 12, 2022 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in a regular meeting on Monday, December 12, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, North Carolina.

Commissioners present were Emmett Casciato, Larry Chapman, Chairman Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman Jake Dalton, and Teresa McCall. Also present were County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Patrick Scott (participating viz Zoom meeting software), and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Media: Jon Rich – *The Transylvania Times*

There were approximately 30 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jason Chappell presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

WELCOME

Chairman Chappell welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Commissioners and staff in attendance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The public comments represent the speaker's opinion or point of view.

Alice Wellborn: Ms. Wellborn emphasized to the Board of Commissioners a recurring concern: the escalating costs of capital projects, notably the courthouse and EMS building. Despite significant increases – from \$31 million to \$57 million for the courthouse and from \$4.6 million to \$5.255 million for the EMS building, plus an additional expense of \$188,482 for a metal roof – the Board has shown no hesitation. However, she pointed out a contrasting reluctance when it comes to funding projects for Transylvania County Schools. Ms. Wellborn urged the Board to reflect on their commitment to public education and the children in Transylvania County.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

Commissioner Chapman requested to add Item D under New Business, Communication Improvements Related to County Issues Both Internally and Externally, for discussion purposes only, and move the Manager's Report to Item E.

Commissioner Chapman moved to approve the revised agenda, seconded by Commissioner Dalton, and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner McCall moved to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, and unanimously approved.

The Board approved the following items:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on Monday, November 28, 2022. Transylvania County held an oath of office ceremony for newly elected County officials on Monday, December 5, followed by an organizational meeting of the Board of Commissioners. The Board approved the minutes as submitted.

CANCELLATION OF THE 2ND BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING IN DECEMBER

Staff recommended the Board of Commissioners cancel the December 28, 2022, regular meeting. Transylvania County offices are closed for the Christmas holiday on Friday, December 23, Monday, December 26, and Tuesday, December 27. There is no pressing business and staff would like to utilize vacation time during the holiday season before the next meeting, which is scheduled for January 9, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. The Board approved cancelling the meeting as requested and instructed the Clerk to the Board to post and publish notice.

INTENT TO DONATE SURPLUS METAL SHELVING TO ROSMAN HIGH SCHOOL

N.C.G.S. § 160A-280 allows a county to donate any surplus property to a nonprofit organization incorporated in the United States. The County Manager has declared metal shelving as surplus. Prior to the donation, the County must post a public notice of its intent to donate the property and then adopt a resolution to donate the property at another meeting. The Board authorized the posting of a notice stating their intent to donate metal shelving to Rosman High School.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

RECOGNITION OF CITIZEN ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

In July 2015, the Board of Commissioners implemented a recognition program to express their appreciation to citizens who volunteer their time and expertise on the County's citizen advisory councils. The Board intends to recognize citizens on a semi-annual basis. This period covered July 1, 2022-December 31, 2022. The Board presented each person in attendance with a certificate of appreciation and a mug with the county logo. The Clerk extended the invitation to the December and January meetings. The Clerk will mail certificates to those citizen volunteers who were unable to attend. The Board recognized the following:

- Libby Freeman Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority
- Paulette Todd Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority
- Hannah DeToma Joint Historic Preservation Commission
- Rebecca Suddeth Joint Historic Preservation Commission
- PJ Boatwright Board of Health
- Tracie Trusler Library Board of Trustees
- Kent Wilcox Transylvania Natural Resources Council

2022 COUNTY EMPLOYEE SERVICE AWARDS

At the request of Human Resources Director Sheila Cozart, the Board of Commissioners honored all employees who qualified to receive a service award. The Board of Commissioners expressed appreciation to all employees who continue to deliver services to the citizens and visitors of Transylvania County, highlighting those who have committed to a career in Transylvania County government. Ms. Cozart read aloud the names and those in attendance came forth to be recognized by Chairman Chappell and the County Manager. The following employees received service awards:

5 Years!

Sheri Blythe	DSS
Katherine Cox	DSS
Jennifer Galloway	Finance
Sherri Griffin	Health
Jacqueline "Delia" McCall	ROD
Shannon Case	Sheriff
Dillon Carter	Sheriff
Micah Bagwell	Sheriff
Colby Hogsed	Sheriff
Hunter Galloway	Sheriff
Gerald Meece	Solid Waste
Cameron "Ryan" Griffin	Tax
Tabitha Galloway	Tax
Michael Jones	Tax
Mahoney, Melissa*	Child Dev.

10 Years!

Jeff Storey	Elections
Sabrina Griffin	Health
Dell Barber II	Sheriff
Brandon Holden	Sheriff
Andrew Shook	Sheriff
Chris Clark	Sheriff
Kris Foster	Sheriff

15 Years!

Trisha Hogan	Admin
Rebecca Morgan	DSS
Laura Rinehart	Health
Mark Ellenberger	Sheriff
AJ Sizemore Jr	Sheriff
Wade Abram	Sheriff
Bonita Freeman	Sheriff
Junstin Bell	Sheriff
Christy Lyday	Tax

20 Years!

Richard Pearson	EMS
Ginger Owens	EMS
Amy Parker	Health
Carla "D'Ree" McCall	ROD

25 Years!

Mike Owen	Building
Jessica McCall	Tax

30 Years!

Mark Norton	Communications
Greg Tinsley	Communications
Kevin Shook	Emergency Mngt
Gerald Grose	Fire
David Mahoney	Sheriff

APPOINTMENTS

BREVARD PLANNING AND ZONING

John Schommer's term on the Brevard Planning and Zoning Board expires on December 31, 2022. Mr. Schommer is eligible and willing to serve another term. There remains one vacancy. Staff will continue to advertise for applications. Applicants must be residents of the City of Brevard's extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Commissioner Dalton moved to reappoint John Schommer to the Brevard Planning and Zoning Board, seconded by Commissioner Chapman and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH MEDICAID DIRECTED PAYMENT ANALYSIS RFP AWARD

Public Health Director Elaine Russell presented this item. Transylvania Public Health is serving as the Region 1 fiduciary for the NC Division of Public Health Regional Workforce Agreement Addendum 621. Region 1 consists of the eight westernmost counties in Western North Carolina. Region 1 was awarded \$1 million in the Agreement Addendum. The ARPA-funded Agreement Addendum intends to identify staff support and development opportunities to assist the seven foundational capabilities of local health departments.

The development and award of a Medicaid Directed Payment Analysis request for proposals (RFP) respond to an identified need of the Region 1 Health Departments and has a direct correlation to the foundational capability of organizational administrative competencies. A group of seven public health regions received three submissions from Delectus LLC, Rich Albertoni Public Consulting Group, and the North Carolina Alliance of Public Health Agencies to deliver the work defined in the RFP. The North Carolina Alliance of Public Health Agencies is a 20+ year administrative and staffing organization designed to serve the needs of local public health departments in North Carolina.

Ms. Russell requested approval from the Board to contract with the North Carolina Alliance of Public Health Agencies for \$15,000 to meet the deliverables defined in the RFP. There is no fiscal impact for the County as all costs of the Public Health Medicaid Billing RFP will be covered through the funds of the Agreement Addendum.

Commissioner Dalton moved to approve staff to contract with the North Carolina Alliance of Public Health Agencies for \$15,000 to meet the deliverables defined in the RFP, seconded by Commissioner Casciato, and unanimously approved.

CONTRACT FOR INMATE MEDICAL SERVICES

Transylvania County holds legal responsibility for providing medical services to inmates under its care at the Detention Facility. In response to this obligation, staff issued a request for qualifications (RFQ), to which four companies responded. Following a thorough review of the responses, staff recommended authorizing the County Manager to negotiate a contract with IMS Correctional Healthcare. The proposed contract is for six months for \$110,000, with funds available within the existing budget. Renewal of the contract is slated for July 1.

Provider	Option 1	Option 2
IMS Correctional Healthcare	\$18,333.33 per month/\$220,000 annually	\$23,333.33 per month/\$280,000 annually

Southern Health Partners	\$19,305 per month/\$231,660 annually	\$22,100 per month/\$265,000 annually
Morse Correctional Healthcare & Consulting	Not specified	\$283,954 annually
Advanced Correctional Healthcare, Inc.	\$29,419.51 per month/\$353,034.11	\$39,505.77 per month/\$474,069.26 annually

Captain Jeremy Queen of the Sheriff's Office reported on the straightforward nature of the contract and the services proposed by the company. Acknowledging his first experience with the RFQ and contracting process, he commended the County Manager and Finance Director for their guidance through the complexities.

Commissioner Chapman raised concerns about the reasonableness of the costs. Captain Queen explained that while the company is profit-oriented, their proposal was deemed the most cost-effective based on staff research. The Manager elaborated, noting the overall increase in healthcare costs, including those for inmate medical services, which presents a challenge for counties due to rising liability expenses.

Commissioner Casciato sought clarification on the differences between option 1 and option 2. Captain Queen highlighted the primary distinction: option 1 offers coverage by a registered nurse for eight hours daily, while option 2 extends coverage to 12 hours daily. He noted that the recommendation opts for minimal coverage but suggested a future discussion for potentially expanding coverage. The Manager emphasized that the current proposal aligns with budgeted funds. Any additional coverage would necessitate the Board's consideration of an increased funding level.

Commissioner Dalton inquired about the possibility of billing Medicare and Medicaid for inmate medical services at the Detention Facility. Captain Queen confirmed that billing is feasible for specific services such as emergency room visits outside the facility. He also shared that coverage under the Affordable Care Act does not extend to inmate medical services.

Further, Commissioner Dalton sought clarification on whether revenue from housing federal inmates assists in offsetting costs. Captain Queen affirmed that it does.

Commissioner McCall inquired about whether the Detention Facility had documented cases of the need for more than eight hours of coverage. Captain Queen shared that one of the main concerns is centered around dispensing medication. Some inmates require medication to be administered multiple times a day and there are times that detention staff are dispensing medication. The detention staff are not trained to dispense medication, especially strong narcotics, and human error could cost the County much more. The potential liability to the County is tremendous.

Commissioner McCall raised a question regarding documented cases at the Detention Facility necessitating more than eight hours of medical coverage. Captain Queen highlighted medication dispensing as a significant concern, noting that certain inmates require medication to be administered multiple times daily. So, at times, detention staff oversee medication dispensing, despite having a lack of appropriate training, particularly for narcotics. The risk of human error poses a significant liability to the County.

Commissioner Dalton moved to authorize the County Manager to negotiate and sign a contract for inmate medical services with IMS Correctional Healthcare for \$110,000 using funds within the existing budget, for six months and to be renewed on July 1, seconded by Commissioner Chapman, and unanimously approved.

Chairman Chappell expressed gratitude for Captain Queen's remarks highlighting the excellent working relationship between the Sheriff's Office and the County Manager and Finance Department. He acknowledged that many counties are not as fortunate.

REVIEW OF COUNTY COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS

The Clerk presented a current list of Commissioner appointments and requested the Board to review and decide whether they wish to continue serving in their current capacities, particularly with a new Commissioner being seated and vacancies left by a former Commissioner. Action on this matter will be taken in January.

Board/Committee	Authority	Meeting Schedule	County Commissioner Appointment
Board of Health	NCGS 130A-35 11-member board to include appointment of a county commissioner who shall serve as long as the member is a county commissioner	2 nd Monday of each month at 6pm in the Community Services Building Conference Room	David Guice
Juvenile Crime Prevention Council	NC 143B-846 Membership shall not exceed 26 members and shall include the appointment of a county commissioner	3 rd Friday of each month at 8am at the Morris Education Center	Jake Dalton
Personnel Board	County resolutions of 1988 and 1997 require appointment of a county commissioner	4 th Wednesday of the months of February, May, August and November at 3:30pm in County Administration Building Conference Room	Jake Dalton
Social Services Board	At request of Board of Commissioners and allowed per NCGS 108A-4 and NCGS 108A-5. Appointment is a county commissioner appointment and does not have to be a county commissioner	4 th Wednesday of each month at 3:30pm in the Social Services Building Conference room	Teresa McCall
Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority	County resolution of 1986 and all amended resolutions require appointment of a county commissioner	4 th Thursday of each month at 8:30am, in the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce Conference Room	Larry Chapman
Work First Planning Committee	NCGS 108-27	As needed	Jason Chappell
Land of Sky Regional Council – Primary and Secondary Member	Normally the Board Chair serves as the primary member and the Board Vice-Chair serves as the secondary member, but it is not required	4 th Wednesday of each month at 1pm at the Land of Sky Regional Council, except November and December. The November meeting is normally cancelled. The December meeting is held on the 1 st Wednesday of the month	Primary-Jason Chappell Secondary-Larry Chapman
Land of Sky Rural Planning Organization (RPO)	Regional Planning Agency	Called by RPO	Larry Chapman
French Broad Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)	Regional Planning Agency	Called by FBRMPO	Larry Chapman

Vaya Health County Commissioner Advisory Council (Regional Board)	NCGS 122C-118.1	2nd Wednesday of each month from 1pm - 3pm	Teresa McCall Amanda Vanderoef
Community Relations Board	Community led	Upon call of meeting	David Guice
School Bond Construction Committee	Per agreement between Board of Commissioners and Board of Commissioners	1 st Thursday following the 1 st Board of Education meeting of each month at 5pm at the Morris Education Center	Jason Chappell Teresa McCall
Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce	Chamber Board of Directors Bylaws calls for appointment of an Ex-officio from organizations within the community, including Transylvania County. The Board appointed the County Manager as its representative.	3 rd Thursday of each month at 8am at the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce	Jaime Laughter
Brevard/Transylvania County Ecusta Trail Advisory Board	Established by resolution of Brevard City Council on 12/6/2021. 2 members of the Board of Commissioners or their designees.		Larry Chapman Addison Bradley

Commissioner Dalton requested the Clerk to update the record to reflect his appointment as the Chief Elected Official to the Mountain Area Workforce Development Board. This position rotates among the counties in the Land of Sky region.

COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENTS RELATED TO COUNTY ISSUES BOTH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY

Commissioner Chapman raised a concern regarding the Board's communication practices, noting instances where lack of external communication resulted in citizen frustration and unfounded accusations. He cited receiving an email accusing the Board of hindering progress on bond projects as particularly insulting, considering their collaborative efforts with the School Board. He stressed the necessity for improved external communication, suggesting options like hosting town halls or contributing monthly editorials in the newspaper.

Additionally, Commissioner Chapman urged for enhanced internal communication among Commissioners to keep each other informed about community issues and major projects' statuses, such as the courthouse. He emphasized the importance of Commissioners sharing information from their involvement in various boards and committees to better inform the public. While acknowledging the Chairman and Vice-Chairman's monthly meetings with the Brevard Mayor, he highlighted the need for transparency by ensuring information from these meetings is shared with all Commissioners.

Commissioner Casciato echoed concerns he encountered while campaigning, emphasizing the importance of communication both externally with citizens and internally among Commissioners. He urged the Board to make decisions on key projects, particularly the location of the new courthouse. He noted that the previous Board's delay of the project has resulted in increased costs which will likely require a tax increase to pay. He encouraged the Board to prioritize making tough decisions and move forward on these critical projects. Additionally, based on his interactions during the campaign, he highlighted public concerns about jobs and housing as key issues for the community.

Commissioner McCall countered accusations that the Board has stalled progress on school bond projects, highlighting efforts to move forward despite challenges with the School System. She emphasized that the

Board has been unfairly blamed for project delays. Referring to public comments about capital projects, she drew a distinction between projects the Board has advanced with viable plans versus the school bond projects due to the lack of adequate funds and misrepresented estimates from the School Board. Despite the Board's efforts to find solutions in public meetings, misinformation persists among some citizens. Regarding the courthouse project, Commissioner McCall noted extensive discussions during a recent capital workshop and plans for further decisions in the new year. While acknowledging the importance of communication, she observed low public attendance at Board meetings.

Commissioner Dalton acknowledged his responsibility for improving communication within the Board, pledging to do better in relaying information from his attended meetings. In response to concerns raised by Commissioner Casciato regarding jobs and affordable housing, he highlighted significant progress in job creation and investment over the past 18-20 months, with over 200 new jobs and \$120 million in company investments. He noted ongoing efforts to address affordable housing issues using grant funds from Dogwood, despite the County's limited water and sewer infrastructure, which typically limits affordable housing opportunities to municipalities. He expressed optimism about the potential for expanded opportunities with the extension of infrastructure from Rosman. Additionally, Commissioner Dalton emphasized the County's improved communication with the City of Brevard, noting it to be the best it has ever been.

Chairman Chappell reinforced Commissioner Dalton's remarks on the communication between the County and the City, also noting regular meetings between the County Manager and City Manager. He commended the diligent efforts of the Manager and staff in ensuring information was accessible on the County's website, with meetings posted and archived for public viewing. Additionally, the Manager's monthly updates on the local radio station further facilitate public awareness. While acknowledging the importance of communication, Chairman Chappell cautioned against assuming the validity of all public comments or newspaper letters. He refuted claims that the Board merely discusses issues without acting, citing ongoing efforts on complex matters such as the school bond projects and the formation of a committee to address school facilities needs. Chairman Chappell stressed that meaningful action takes time and urged the Board to be prepared for decisive action on the courthouse in January.

Commissioner McCall echoed Commissioner Chapman's frustration with receiving emails containing accusations and falsehoods from certain individuals, expressing dismay at public comments accusing the Commissioners of incompetence without understanding the complexities of the issues at hand.

Commissioner Dalton highlighted the low online viewership of the meeting, noting only 13 people were watching.

Commissioner Chapman concluded the discussion by emphasizing that while information is indeed available, the Board of Commissioners must ensure that the message is effectively reaching the public.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager reported the following:

- Transylvania County's economic tier status has been reclassified as Tier 2
 - Great news for the County and opens more opportunities for funding on numerous fronts at the State level
 - The County will continue to lobby for changing the tier designation factors or reinstating factors that were removed years ago
 - Based on current factors, Transylvania County could return to a Tier 3 in the next year or two
 - The County does not factor well based on population estimates in between censuses
- Education Capital Joint Working Group Update
 - The scope of work for retired professionals to assist the working group is being developed

- The scope of work for a building assessment to determine existing building needs is being developed.
- Started drafting an outline of the process to build School Board and County Commission buy-in and to incorporate opportunities for the public to see the results of the assessment
- Congratulations to Emergency Management Director Kevin Shook for receiving the Land of Sky Regional Council's Extraordinary Public Service Award in appreciation of his devotion, commitment, and exemplary service and for his response to the many challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Casciato expressed his honor in joining the Board and welcomed guidance from fellow Commissioners as he navigates his role as a new member. He extended gratitude to the staff for their assistance thus far.

Commissioner Chapman shared his participation in a planning board class in Asheville, highlighting the notable attendance of five Transylvania County residents. He expressed a desire for more educational opportunities like this to foster community engagement. Additionally, he thanked landfill staff for their assistance with disposing of a deceased deer.

Commissioner Dalton celebrated Transylvania County's reclassification to a Tier 2 county, though he expressed skepticism about its permanence. He communicated with the County's delegation in Raleigh, who indicated their intention to address the issue proactively in the next legislative session. The previous Tier 3 classification did not accurately reflect the County's economic status.

Chairman Chappell extended warm wishes for a Merry Christmas to all, hoping everyone could enjoy time with loved ones and celebrate in their own way. He reflected on the blessings of serving the public and expressed gratitude for the opportunity.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Chapman moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:05 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.**

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board