

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
NOVEMBER 12, 2024 – REGULAR MEETING

The Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County met in a regular meeting on Tuesday, November 12, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose Chambers at the County Administration Building, located at 101 S. Broad Street, Brevard, NC. (Monday, November 11, 2024, was Veteran's Day, and County offices were closed. The Board's Rules of Procedure states that when a regular meeting date falls on a holiday, the meeting will be held on the next business day.)

Commissioners present were Larry Chapman, Chairman Jason Chappell, Vice-Chairman Jake Dalton, Teresa McCall, and Chase McKelvey. County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney John Kubis, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan were also present.

Media: Dan DeWitt – *Brevard Newsbeat*
Jon Rich – *The Transylvania Times*

There were approximately 40 people in the audience.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jason Chappell presiding declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

WELCOME

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following remarks reflect the opinions and points of view of the speakers.

Mike Privette: Mr. Privette, a resident near Connestee Falls on Highway 276, recounted his difficulty returning to the County during the recent storm. With Highway 276 closed, traveling back and forth to town posed challenges, which, while manageable for him, could have been critical for others needing emergency services. He commended the Board for its work in reopening the highway, highlighting Senator Corbin's involvement. Mr. Privette humorously mentioned that Senator Corbin credited Chairman Chappell's "arm twisting and threats of bodily injury" for expediting the process. Mr. Privette expressed appreciation for the Board's direct efforts in ensuring safety for those in the affected area. Additionally, he acknowledged the recent election results, stating the overwhelming victories for candidates reflected the community's satisfaction with the Board's work despite occasional criticism.

AGENDA MODIFICATIONS

There were no agenda modifications.

Commissioner Dalton moved to approve the agenda as submitted, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey, and unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

The Board approved the following:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on September 23, 2024, and following met in a closed session in which the minutes were sealed. The Board of Commissioners met in a regular meeting on October 14, 2024. The Board approved the minutes as submitted.

OUT OF STATE TRAINING REQUEST

The Board of Commissioners requires prior approval before allowing staff to attend training out of state. Finance and Administration budgeted in FY 2025 for two employees to attend TylerConnect 2025 in San Antonio, TX. This is the national conference put on annually by Tyler Technologies, the provider of Enterprise ERP (previously Munis). The conference provides hands-on training sessions, forum sessions to discuss current products with peers and developers, as well as informational sessions on upcoming features in the software we use. The Board authorized one employee from Finance and one employee from Administration to attend TylerConnect 2025, the national software conference for the County's financial software, Enterprise ERP.

PROCLAMATION - ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH AND NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2024

At the request of DSS Director Amanda Vanderoef, the Board of Commissioners approved Proclamation #32-2024, recognizing November as Adoption Awareness Month and designating National Adoption Day 2024 to highlight the critical need for adoptive families for children in foster care. This proclamation aligns with the nationwide effort to raise awareness about the importance of adoption, advocate for the well-being and permanency of children through adoption, and recognize the thousands of children in foster care across the United States still waiting for loving, permanent homes.

PROCLAMATION # 32 - 2024

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH AND NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY 2024

WHEREAS, the youth are our most precious resource and hope for the future, and all children deserve a safe, loving, and nurturing place to call home; and

WHEREAS, there are 39 children and youth in Transylvania County's foster care system with 2 waiting to be adopted; in 2023, Transylvania County had 4 children and youth adopted from foster care; and so far in 2024, 5 children and youth have been adopted from Transylvania County's foster care; and

WHEREAS, for our children who have lost their birth families, adoption can provide the home life, parental love, nurturing and security that they would otherwise be missing; and

WHEREAS, caring adults and committed families can make all the difference in the lives of young people, sibling groups, children with special needs, and teenagers; and

WHEREAS, Transylvania County families are encouraged to share their hearts and homes with older youth at risk of aging out of foster care waiting to be adopted; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous individuals, communities, and public and private organizations working to increase public awareness of the unique needs of children and youth in foster care waiting for permanence by participating in efforts to recruit permanent, loving families; and

WHEREAS, Adoption Awareness Month is an opportunity to recognize the families who open their hearts to provide children with a sense of connection, security, and ties to their culture, family, and community, as well as child welfare professionals, and advocates working to ensure children’s safety, permanence, and well-being, and to spread awareness on behalf of the children waiting; and

WHEREAS, the Transylvania County Board of Commissioners and the Transylvania County Department of Social Services encourage residents to volunteer their time, energy, and talents on behalf of children in foster care and their biological families, kinship caregivers, and foster parents during this month and throughout the year;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County does hereby proclaim November 2024 as “**ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH**” and November 23, 2024, as “**NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY**” in Transylvania County, and commends its observance to all citizens.

This the 12th day of November 2024.

S://Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

CANCELLATION OF NOVEMBER 25, 2024, BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

The Board of Commissioners unanimously voted to cancel the meeting scheduled for Monday, November 25, 2024, due to the proximity to Thanksgiving and the absence of pressing business. The Organizational Meeting will take place on Monday, December 2, 2024, following the swearing-in of newly elected officials. Staff plans to request the scheduling of a special public hearing on the same day, immediately following the Organizational Meeting, to receive public input on the Schedule of Values for the 2025 Reappraisal. The Board instructed the Clerk to the Board to publish and post public notice of the cancellation and the updated schedule.

APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED EDUCATION CAPITAL FUND ORDINANCE

The Board of Commissioners approved updates to the Education Capital Fund Ordinance, which includes capital projects for education exceeding \$50,000, as approved by the Board, and amendments and new projects, including those associated with the Step One Investment Bond Projects. These updates reflect all changes made since the ordinance's last version, created in Fall 2023, ensuring the fund remains aligned with the Board's approved priorities and projects.

Commissioner McCall observed that several projects on the cash-funded projects list were marked as complete. She requested an updated list that includes the year of initial approval for each project and the progress status of projects still ongoing. The Manager acknowledged the request and will provide the updated information.

**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY
EDUCATION CAPITAL PROJECT FUND**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County, North Carolina, the following Education Capital Project Fund:

SECTION 1. The Transylvania County Board of County Commissioners hereby establishes a capital reserve fund for managing the financial affairs of capital projects that renovate or construct educational facilities pursuant to NC G.S. 159-18.

SECTION 2. The County Manager is hereby directed to proceed with the capital projects within the terms of the approved projects contained herein and any applicable interlocal

SECTION 3. A list of projects are hereby authorized by this ordinance, with revenues anticipated to be available. Exhibit E of this resolution shall include the budgets and anticipated revenues of each project.

SECTION 4. The Finance Officer is directed to report cash balances on the fund quarterly and life to date expenditures and revenues for each project annually.

SECTION 5. The Education Capital Reserve fund is to remain operational for a period not to exceed ten years beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2029.

Amended this 12th day of November, 2024

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY EDUCATION CAPITAL PROJECT FUND EXHIBIT E

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County that the following projects are authorized in the Education Capital Projects Fund:

Cash-Funded Projects (Sales Tax Reserve) - FY2020 to FY2025

<i>project description</i>	<i>amount authorized</i>
Brevard Campuses - HVAC Contracts	\$ 412,121
Brevard Elementary - Air Handlers (complete)	\$ 245,000
Brevard Elementary - Flooring (complete)	\$ 255,948
Brevard Elementary - Playground	\$ 300,000
Brevard High - Bond Scope #1 Design	\$ 205,488
Brevard High - Chiller (complete)	\$ 289,778
Brevard High - Gym Beams	\$ 106,000
Brevard High - Rewire Office/Classroom	\$ 60,000
Brevard High - Services (complete)	\$ 2,026,255
Brevard High - Softball Lighting	\$ 150,000
Brevard High - Turf Field (complete)	\$ 400,000
Brevard High - Wrestling Facility	\$ 1,200,000
Brevard High and Plant Ops - Roof Scope	\$ 2,889,600
Brevard Middle - Air Handlers	\$ 210,000
Brevard Middle - Fan Coils (complete)	\$ 89,547
Brevard Middle - Rear Road Paving (complete)	\$ 53,382
Pisgah Forest Elementary - Playground (complete)	\$ 60,000
Pisgah Forest Elementary - Roof	\$ 200,000
Rosman Campus - Cafe Air Handling Unit	\$ 75,000
Rosman Campus - Field Drain	\$ 325,000
Rosman Campus - Football Field Construction	\$ 2,100,000
Rosman Campus - Mechanical Electrical Plumbing (MEP)	\$ 1,620,350
Rosman Campus - Roof (complete)	\$ 471,855
Rosman Campus - Services (complete)	\$ 1,163,560
Rosman Campus - Storage Tank Removal	\$ 165,000
Rosman Campus - Support Wall	\$ 50,000
Rosman Elementary - Air Handlers	\$ 273,821
Rosman Elementary - Gym Floor (complete)	\$ 24,000
Rosman Elementary - Playground	\$ 500,000
Rosman High - Greenhouse (complete)	\$ 50,800
Rosman Middle - Roof Repair	\$ 70,000
Systemwide - Air Quality Services	\$ 200,000
Systemwide - Annual Projects Scope	\$ 2,409,390
Systemwide - Asphalt Improvements	\$ 456,285
Systemwide - Boilers	\$ 395,270
Systemwide - Bond Issuance Professional Services	\$ 250,000
Systemwide - Capital Repairs	\$ 598,270
Systemwide - Ceiling Tile Replacement	\$ 110,000
Systemwide - Education Capital Work Study Group	\$ 220,000
Systemwide - Shingle Roof Replacements	\$ 359,960
Total Cash Revenue Allocated:	\$ 21,041,679

Capital projects listed are in addition to the annual school funding approved in the General Fund.

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY EDUCATION CAPITAL PROJECT FUND EXHIBIT E

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Transylvania County that the following projects are authorized in the Education Capital Projects Fund:

Bond-Funded Projects - FY2020 to FY2025

<i>project description</i>	<i>amount authorized</i>
Bond Step 1 - Brevard Campuses - Renovation	\$ 14,673,792
Bond Step 1 - Brevard High - Construction Scope 1	\$ 2,764,797
Bond Step 1 - Brevard High - Construction Scope 2	\$ 9,559,278
Bond Step 1 - Rosman Campus - Renovation Scope	\$ 16,707,282
Bond Step 1 - Systemwide - Asphalt Improvements	\$ 1,255,784
Bond Step 1 - Systemwide - Fencing	\$ 364,678
Bond Step 1 - Systemwide - Security System Upgrades	\$ 2,954,495
Bond Step 1 - Systemwide - Storage Tank Replacement	\$ 2,249,940
Total Bond Revenue Allocated:	\$ 50,530,046

Lottery-Funded Projects - FY2020 to FY2025

<i>project description</i>	<i>amount authorized</i>
Pisgah Forest Elementary - Piping Project	\$ 1,728,589
Total Lottery Revenue Allocated:	\$ 1,098,589
Total Cash Revenue Allocated as County Match:	\$ 630,000

Capital projects listed are in addition to the annual school funding approved in the General Fund.

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR LAND OF SKY REGIONAL COUNCIL'S NCIMPACT APPLICATION

The Board of Commissioners approved a letter of support for the Land of Sky Regional Council's application to participate in the Our State, Our Homes initiative led by ncIMPACT and partners. This program is designed to help North Carolina communities address challenges related to affordable housing by building capacity, analyzing local issues, and implementing effective strategies. If the application is approved, Transylvania County Planner Ashley Minery will join the core team representing the County. Participating communities will gain an enhanced understanding of local housing issues, tools to foster improved community discussions on housing needs, asset maps of local partners and resources, and increased knowledge and capability to execute housing affordability strategies.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS**PRESENTATION OF THE 2025 REAPPRAISAL SCHEDULE OF VALUES**

Tax Administrator Jessica McCall presented the 2025 Reappraisal Schedule of Values, which establishes the standards and rules for appraising all real property in Transylvania County, as required under N.C.G.S. § 105-317(c). The Schedule of Values will be available for public inspection starting tomorrow during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday–Friday) at the following locations:

- Tax Administration Office: 20 East Morgan Street, Brevard
- County Library: 212 South Gaston Street, Brevard
- County Administration Office: 101 South Broad Street, Brevard

- A digital copy will also be posted on the County website.

A public hearing will be scheduled to allow input on the Schedule of Values, as required by law. Staff recommended holding the hearing on December 2, immediately following the Swearing-In Ceremony and the Board's Organizational Meeting, to meet statutory deadlines.

Commissioner Chapman inquired about assessing storm-related property damages. Ms. McCall explained that appraisers are evaluating affected properties now and will assess values as of January 1, 2025. Damaged properties were identified using a list provided by the Building Inspections Department.

Commissioner McCall asked about changes to the Schedule of Values since the last revaluation. Ms. McCall stated that while there are minor adjustments, the language and valuation formulas have remained consistent.

Commissioner McCall moved to schedule a public hearing on December 2, 2024, immediately following the Swearing in Ceremony and Board's Organizational Meeting to receive public input on the 2025 Schedule of Values, with adoption on December 9, 2024, seconded by Commissioner Dalton and unanimously approved.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM HELENE

The Manager provided an update on the emergency response and recovery efforts related to Hurricane/Tropical Storm Helene, emphasizing that recovery will be a prolonged process. She detailed recent actions and anticipated activities to address ongoing challenges.

Cooperative Extension Emergency Response

- 2,500 bales of hay have been received and distributed to producers. A shortage of 500 round bales remains, but efforts are underway to meet the need by January 1, 2025. Locating quality horse hay remains a significant challenge as horse owners do not qualify for assistance through the Farm Service Agency (FSA).
- The WNC Communities Grant process is closed, with 425 applicants seeking support. Several local producers have benefited from this program to aid recovery efforts.
- Cooperative Extension is finalizing a fencing grant that includes \$100,000 worth of materials and labor. Transylvania County producers are expected to receive assistance from this program.
- The total value of supplies distributed by Cooperative Extension stands at \$113,100, reflecting the significant support provided to the agricultural community during the recovery.

Housing

- Housing recovery remains the most challenging aspect of the County's storm recovery efforts.
 - 247 properties were identified as damaged due to flooding, landslides, or fallen trees, with estimated damages exceeding \$28 million (subject to updates). Residents with unreported damage are encouraged to contact the Building Permitting Department for damage assessments. These assessments are vital for the FEMA application process and will impact upcoming property revaluations. Flood-affected areas were easier to identify; however, landslide and tree damage heavily rely on citizen reports.
 - The County has been advocating for needs on behalf of its citizens.
 - The County is collaborating with FEMA and NC Emergency Management (NCEM) to address housing challenges.
 - One local hotel is now accepting FEMA vouchers.
 - FEMA approved up to 200% of Fair Market Rent, making 11 additional properties eligible. Currently, six families are receiving rental assistance.

- Case Management: Approved by NCEM to provide personalized recovery plans, including housing and wrap-around services. However, implementation is delayed until the State hires case managers. County staff created a unified database of housing needs for collaboration among nonprofits, County departments, and State/Federal agencies. The County has requested improved coordination between FEMA and NCEM to align applicant data with local needs.
- FEMA Dashboard Summary for Transylvania County:
 - 185 individuals approved for housing assistance.
 - 183 for repair or replacement assistance, totaling \$1 million.
 - 6 families receiving rental assistance.
 - 1 family is set to receive a FEMA unit this week.
 - 3,240 were approved for transitional sheltering, but only 53 checked in—due to limited acceptance of vouchers locally and residents opting to stay in damaged homes rather than relocate.
- FEMA requires approval letters verifying the ability to place travel trailers at floodplain sites. County staff are working with the City of Brevard and the County Building Department to expedite site approvals.
- FEMA applications are open through January 7, 2025. Residents needing assistance should submit their applications promptly.
- Staff highlighted frustrations with inconsistent guidance from FEMA and NCEM on housing processes, including site submission for unit placement. Efforts continue to ensure State and federal partners are aware of these challenges to improve efficiency and communication. Despite slow progress, the County remains committed to supporting residents and addressing housing challenges through consistent advocacy and collaboration.

Other

- On November 8, Commissioner Chapman and the County Manager attended a special recovery convening in Morganton. Hosted by NCACC, NCLM, and regional COGs, the event brought together local, state, and federal leaders to discuss immediate and future recovery needs. Transylvania County raised concerns about communication challenges with FEMA and NCEM, which were echoed by other counties in the region.
- County staff met with NCEM Assistant Director Joe Stanton to address critical needs, including debris removal, housing, and damage to private roads and bridges.
- On October 23, the County requested Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) funds from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for debris removal and infrastructure restoration. These funds aim to mitigate hazards from debris buildup, erosion, and watershed impairments.
- FEMA and NCEM are addressing an increased number of funding requests for private roads and bridges, though details remain limited. Staff continue to advocate for solutions to these unique challenges.
- The County requested US Army Corps of Engineers assistance for debris removal from rivers, private properties (via right-of-entry forms), and HOA rights of way within developments. If approved, debris removal could begin within two weeks. Using USACE to transport debris out of the County would help preserve landfill capacity, a significant benefit given the limited space in the current cell. Residents may need to move debris to public rights of way and sort materials for pickup. The County is awaiting further details before notifying the public.
- The County submitted three potential sites for FEMA housing units. Site evaluations are ongoing but delayed by the complexity of FEMA's processes and staffing constraints.

- The Moore County Board of Commissioners has formally adopted Transylvania County to aid and support recovery efforts. County officials expressed gratitude for this generous gesture and look forward to collaborating with Moore County.

The Manager concluded the presentation and invited questions or comments regarding the County's ongoing recovery efforts.

Commissioner Chapman emphasized the emotional impact of the debris piles seen throughout the region, noting that these often represent the remnants of people's lives—their past, history, and future. He urged citizens to remain mindful and sensitive to the profound losses their neighbors may have experienced while driving around the county and surrounding areas. Commissioner Chapman shared a positive update following his meeting with Representative Mike Clampitt after the Veterans Day Ceremony. Representative Clampitt offered to share excess dog and cat food donations from Swain County. Upon consulting with the Transylvania County Animal Shelter Manager, it was agreed the County could accept the donation and utilize available storage space to act as a distribution hub for local organizations in need. Representative Clampitt transported the food from Avery County with a trailer load of pallets, set to deliver the donations today. Commissioner Chapman expressed appreciation for the leadership of State representatives like Representative Clampitt and the ongoing collaboration among counties, including Moore County. He encouraged residents to contact the Transylvania County Animal Shelter if they were aware of animal organizations needing food assistance.

Commissioner McCall asked for clarification on the NC Emergency Management (NCEM) case manager mentioned by the County Manager. Specifically, she inquired whether this position would be based in western North Carolina or if it would be local to Transylvania County. The Manager explained that the request for case management was specifically made for Transylvania County. However, exact details about the case manager's operations remain unclear. In the interim, the County has been addressing case management needs through nonprofit partners working alongside NCEM. Nonprofits, including Habitat for Humanity and Baptist Housing Mission, have placed seven travel trailers for housing needs outside of FEMA processes. The County has developed a shared spreadsheet for all partners to avoid duplication and ensure that housing needs are met efficiently.

Commissioner McCall acknowledged ongoing frustrations expressed by citizens attempting to navigate the FEMA application process, including repeated denials and the need to reapply. She commended the faith-based organizations and nonprofits for their substantial work filling gaps while governmental responses remained slow. Commissioner McCall stressed the critical role these groups play in disaster recovery, particularly in western North Carolina.

Commissioner McCall confirmed with the Manager that one FEMA travel trailer is scheduled to arrive in Transylvania County this Thursday. The Manager added that the process for FEMA housing assistance begins with offering rental assistance, which has limited success due to the high cost of available rental units. However, the increase in fair market rent benchmarks recently added 11 new units to the rental assistance pool. Some individuals are staying with family or have had their needs met through local nonprofits, but discrepancies remain between the needs identified by the County and the numbers reported by FEMA.

Commissioner McCall highlighted concerns about discrepancies between FEMA-reported data and the actual needs observed locally, noting that FEMA's reported numbers are underestimating the reality. She encouraged residents who have been denied assistance to reapply.

Commissioner McCall shared that the Davidson River Campground had waived its usual 14-day campsite limit for storm-affected residents, allowing extended stays through February 2025. While this provides temporary relief, it presents challenges for those in travel trailers, including the need to manage water and

waste disposal at dump stations. Commissioner McCall acknowledged that these options, while not ideal, offer better alternatives than having no shelter.

The Manager highlighted a unique challenge tied to the Appalachian culture, explaining that many residents in the region are resilient and accustomed to "making do." Many individuals are choosing to remain in flood-damaged homes rather than relocate outside the region, even if offered vouchers. The Manager expressed concerns that winter conditions may increase the number of people needing to vacate their homes, as repairs could render living conditions unmanageable. Educating NCEM and FEMA about these cultural tendencies has been a priority, as it affects how assistance is allocated and how true needs are assessed.

Commissioner McCall expressed deep appreciation for the Manager and County staff, recognizing their extensive efforts to care for citizens during recovery. She credited the team's hard work for ensuring Transylvania County has made significant progress in its recovery compared to what might have been expected otherwise.

Chairman Chappell expressed support for Commissioner McCall's comments and reiterated appreciation for the Manager and County staff's efforts during the recovery process. He highlighted the delayed response time, noting that it has taken nearly eight weeks since the storm to receive the first travel trailer, which is scheduled for delivery on Thursday. He emphasized the urgency and scale of the situation, referencing the 170+ significantly impacted homes, and acknowledged the frustration caused by the lengthy wait for federal and state assistance. Chairman Chappell shared his experience in "uncomfortable meetings" where the Manager strongly voiced her frustrations about the slow response and lack of coordination from agencies. He commended the Manager for proactively requesting trailers and other assistance even before the full magnitude of the storm's impact was understood, recognizing her foresight and persistence in advocating for the County.

Commissioner McKelvey sought clarification regarding the 183 properties approved for repair or replacement, specifically about properties within the ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) that are impacted by the City's grace period for floodplain compliance. He noted conflicting feedback about whether the County's Building Inspection Department is keeping up with progress related to the city's actions. The Manager responded that for properties under the City's floodplain jurisdiction, the County is coordinating closely. Once the City provides clearance for temporary permits, the County immediately issues those permits to allow repairs to begin. For areas where the County is both the floodplain administrator and the building inspections department, the process is entirely internal. The floodplain review is completed, and property owners sign an acknowledgment form to agree to comply with flood ordinance requirements within the designated grace period. The Manager reported that many property owners are struggling with decisions related to elevating structures, particularly single-family homes, as raising them is often significantly more expensive compared to mobile units. The lack of clarity around funding options through FEMA or hazard mitigation grants complicates decision-making for property owners. The County is working with the State to accelerate the process for hazard mitigation grants and ensure residents have access to critical information about grant eligibility for mitigation (e.g., raising structures) and voluntary buyout grants for those who may prefer to sell their damaged property rather than rebuild. The State team will visit the Public Safety Facility to meet directly with residents, review eligibility, and help start the application process. Each case will be reviewed individually, and final decisions about funding for raising structures or buyouts will depend on the specific circumstances of each homeowner. At present, the exact costs and available assistance remain uncertain.

Commissioner McKelvey asked how many permits have been issued for the 58 properties affected by both County and City ordinances. The Manager noted she would need to follow up with the Building Inspections Department to confirm numbers but emphasized that any property cleared through the City should encounter no issues at the County level.

Commissioner McKelvey asked whether there is a discrepancy in the City's approval versus denial rate for applications. The Manager clarified the County does not have access to data on applications denied by the City but can confirm permits issued for applications that have successfully cleared the City's process.

Commissioner McKelvey stressed the importance of ensuring residents are housed rather than left searching or occupying unsafe, unrepaired homes. The Manager reinforced that the County's primary goal is safe housing for residents, especially heading into winter.

The temporary certificate of occupancy provides up to 24 months for property owners to repair structures and bring them into compliance while maintaining temporary occupancy. Commissioner McKelvey noted the City allows up to 36 months and asked whether the County could match this flexibility. The Manager confirmed the County is open to aligning with the City's approach with plans to implement similar progress checkpoints to assess homeowners' compliance. She assured Commissioners that if homeowners demonstrate steady progress but need additional time, extensions beyond the initial 24 months would be granted.

Commissioner McCall asked if the fees for permits related to storm damage repairs have been waived. The Manager confirmed the fees are being waived per State statute, and the County will seek reimbursement from FEMA. She emphasized that the County is tracking all fees waived due to the storm. While State legislation limits fee waivers through December, the County intends to waive fees for all storm-related damage, even for permits issued after December.

Commissioner McCall highlighted the inequity between FEMA's lengthy processes (sometimes taking up to two years) and homeowners' limited timeframes to complete repairs. She pointed out that this imbalance leaves homeowners "held hostage." The Manager acknowledged the significant challenge homeowners face in making major life decisions with limited information from FEMA or the State. She stated that County staff are actively advocating at the State level and with FEMA for clearer and faster responses. She recognized that while FEMA's processes may work well in other communities, they are not effective for Transylvania County's needs.

Commissioner McKelvey expressed understanding that various costs, like waived fees and debris removal, are incurred by the County and asked about the expected turnaround time for reimbursement from FEMA. The Manager responded that the County could expect a 2-3 year wait for full reimbursement from FEMA, based on past experiences (such as with Tropical Storm Fred). While FEMA will reimburse many costs, some expenses will not be covered. The State has provided additional funding to cover both the required FEMA match and potential funding gaps. The Finance and Emergency Management teams are putting in considerable effort to ensure the documentation is accurate and thorough, as errors could result in denied reimbursement.

Commissioner McKelvey inquired about the total amount the County has spent so far due to the storm. The Manager reported that over \$1 million in damage to County property and buildings has been identified, with some expenses potentially covered by insurance. The debris removal cost is still uncertain, depending on contracts processed through the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and the County might bear some costs. The immediate emergency costs are over \$1 million, but the full financial impact of recovery remains uncertain. The Manager expects the Board will need to earmark money from the fund balance to ensure the County can fund recovery needs over the next year while waiting for FEMA reimbursements.

Commissioner McKelvey asked how the significant road and bridge damage across Western North Carolina (WNC) might affect the priority list of transportation projects managed by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Specifically, he wondered if these projects would be delayed or remain on schedule. The Manager responded that NCDOT is currently focused on repair work and unable to provide a clear sense of potential delays for planned projects. The State has not clarified how repair costs will be

managed alongside scheduled projects, though repairs are expected to be covered under FEMA reimbursement. The repair work may affect NCDOT's ability to manage scheduled projects due to capacity constraints, even if funding is not directly impacted. The State is determining how to balance funding repairs upfront while awaiting FEMA reimbursement versus using funds from the state's trust fund. Major damaged infrastructure, such as I-40, is a top priority. NCDOT is aiming to restore at least two-way traffic by January 1, 2025, using 24/7 contracted work to meet this target. NCDOT is not currently conducting debris removal, even though it falls under their responsibility, to focus resources on repairs.

Chairman Chappell stressed the importance of maintaining a sound County fund balance, highlighting that if the County only adhered to the minimum level required by the State, it would lack the funds to sustain recovery efforts. He noted the same principle applies to the State's rainy-day fund, which is enabling current recovery efforts.

Commissioner McCall asked about updates regarding State relief funding, noting the State legislature has already approved preliminary relief and is expected to allocate additional funding when it reconvenes. She specifically inquired if Representative Clampitt and Senator Corbin were keeping Chairman Chappell informed about the County's needs. Chairman Chappell confirmed ongoing communication with State representatives, stating they have been engaged from the beginning. The County has consistently provided a list of needs for itself and its partners, including the School System.

The Manager Clarified that the State relief package has not provided direct appropriations to counties. Instead, funds were allocated to State agencies, leaving local jurisdictions waiting for details on how to request funds. Some funds may be structured as loans rather than grants, adding further uncertainty.

Chairman Chappell expressed gratitude to the Manager and staff for their continuous efforts. He emphasized the importance of providing regular updates during each Board meeting to keep citizens informed about the progress of recovery efforts. He acknowledged that the recovery process will be long-term and requires sustained attention and effort from the County and its partners.

APPOINTMENTS

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The term for the Accommodations Owner/Operator currently occupied by Dana Antonuccio expires on December 31. She is eligible for a second term and has expressed an interest in serving again. There are no new applications on file that qualify for this position.

The term for the Interested Individual currently occupied by Issac Allen expires on December 31. While he is eligible to serve another term, he has decided to step down at the end of this year. There are two applications on file for the Board to consider for this position.

The term for the County Commissioner position occupied by Larry Chapman expires on December 31. The County Commissioner appointment will be revisited during the Board's annual review in January.

Dee Dee Perkins is completing her first year as chair. This has historically been a two-year appointment. She has expressed a desire to serve as chair in 2025.

Staff recommended the Board reappoint Dana Antonuccio to the Accommodations Owner/Operator position, appoint applicant Catherine Lemel to the Interested Individual position, and reappoint Dee Dee Perkins as chair, all effective January 1, 2025.

Commissioner Chapman moved to reappoint Dana Antonuccio to the Accommodations Owner/Operator position, appoint applicant Catherine Lemel to the Interested Individual position, and reappoint Dee Dee Perkins as chair, all effective January 1, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Dalton. Commissioner Chapman highlighted the importance of camps to the local economy and community and emphasized the value of Ms. Lemel's connection to Keystone Camp. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Commissioner McCall expressed frustration over the limited applications for citizen advisory councils. She encouraged public participation in boards and committees to ensure broad representation across the County.

OLD BUSINESS

SCHOOL BOND PROJECT MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT AND CONSIDERATION OF TABLED ITEMS FROM AUGUST 26 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Transylvania County Schools Superintendent Dr. Lisa Fletcher requested funding for a part-time (temporary) project manager for school bond projects and for covering overcommitted HVAC contracts and the FY 2025 Capital Repairs budget. These requests were tabled by the Board of Commissioners at their August 26 meeting. The Manager and Dr. Fletcher have negotiated a proposed interlocal agreement to govern the bond-funded projects, including addressing the tabled requests.

Under the proposed agreement, the County will hire and fund a project manager for a minimum of two years. The project manager will exclusively manage County-assigned projects under the agreement and provide reports to both the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners. Transylvania County Schools may request additional projects be managed by the project manager at their own cost. In addition, the County will provide regular printed reports of revenue and expenditure from the Education Capital Fund. Both organizations' Finance Directors will work collaboratively to resolve questions about sales tax expenditures, ensuring transparency and accountability.

To address the tabled requests, the County will appropriate funding into the Education Capital Fund for the following:

- Brevard Campus HVAC Contracts: previously approved \$412,121; additional funding of \$500,000; payments will be made directly to vendors or as reimbursements to TCS for prior invoices.
- Pisgah Forest Piping Project: additional funding of \$100,000 to ensure all project contracts are fully covered.
- FY 2025 Capital Repairs: funding for \$220,000; future fiscal years will account for adequate capital repair funding.

The negotiated framework will be formalized into a standard interlocal agreement document by the bond counsel.

Exhibit A outlines the school projects approved for funding, distinguishing between those managed by the County and those managed by Transylvania County Schools (TCS). The County will manage the projects highlighted in yellow, including the major renovation projects impacting all campuses and the systemwide asphalt improvements and storage tank replacements. TCS will manage security system upgrades, additional recommended fencing, and other specific projects, including retaining wall investigation, glulam beam repair, HVAC boilers, and athletic facility improvements identified in the study.

Exhibit A

project description	amount authorized
Bond Step 1 - Brevard Campuses - Renovation	\$14,673,792
Bond Step 1 - Brevard High - Construction Scope 1	\$2,764,797
Bond Step 1 - Brevard High - Construction Scope 2	\$9,559,278
Bond Step 1 - Rosman Campus - Renovation Scope	\$16,707,282
Bond Step 1 - Systemwide - Asphalt Improvements	\$1,255,784
Bond Step 1 - Systemwide - Fencing	\$364,678
Bond Step 1 - Systemwide - Security System Upgrades	\$2,954,495
Bond Step 1 - Systemwide - Storage Tank Replacement	\$2,249,940
<i>cash funded</i>	
RES Playground	\$500,000
Systemwide HVAC Boilers	\$395,270
BHS Glu Lam Beam Repair	\$106,000
RHS Retaining Wall Investigation	\$50,000
BES Playground	\$300,000
BHS Pre-engineered wrestling facility	\$1,200,000
RHS/RMS Football Field Turf	\$2,100,000
TCHS Pedestrian Bridge and Playground	\$203,500
BHS Softball Lighting	\$150,000

Orange Highlight are county-managed projects under the agreement.

The proposed agreement establishes a joint committee to oversee and facilitate the efficient management of school bond projects. The composition of the committee will be the Superintendent, County Manager, and two members from each Board. They will be tasked with the following responsibilities:

- Interviewing final candidates for the project manager role.
- Reviewing professional service RFQs and recommended selections for bond projects.
- Reviewing changes in project scope pre-bid.
 - Validate that scopes align with original project intentions.
 - Assess proposed scope changes for necessity and feasibility.
- Reviewing architect plans at 50% completion and before bidding.
 - Ensure plans stay true to the project's intent and provide feedback.
- Reviewing major modifications during construction.
- Receiving and reviewing quarterly updates on project progress.
- Addressing and resolving any concerns raised by the Board of Commissioners or Board of Education regarding bond projects.

The Commissioners entrusted the Manager, and the Board of Education extended the same trust to Dr. Fletcher, to negotiate a fair and effective agreement. The document includes provisions that emphasize adherence to State-mandated contracting processes and other best practices, ensuring transparency and accountability. The agreement reflects commitments both parties already follow, which the Manager felt was essential to formalize in writing for public reassurance. The purpose of the agreement is to create a framework for collaboration and project management between the two Boards and provide a clear pathway for completing school improvement projects efficiently and effectively.

The Manager expressed confidence in the swift execution of the agreement, noting alignment in priorities and understanding between her and Dr. Fletcher. While not seeking formal approval of the agreement itself, the Manager requested Board approval of the associated budget amendments outlined in the agreement. These amendments would take effect upon the agreement's execution by the Superintendent and the Manager. The Manager expressed enthusiasm about the agreement's potential to serve as a bridge between the two Boards. She believed it would enable the successful completion of necessary school improvements while maintaining mutual trust and accountability. The Manager invited questions or comments from the Board to address any concerns or provide clarity before proceeding with the budget amendments.

Commissioner McCall expressed appreciation for the collaborative efforts between the Manager and Dr. Fletcher, emphasizing the significance of reaching an agreement. She also stressed the importance of carefully selecting the two members from each Board to ensure they ask pertinent questions on behalf of their respective Boards. She noted previous challenges with committees making decisions outside public view, highlighting that the subcommittee's public meeting format would improve transparency. She expressed confidence in the clearer charge to the subcommittee, believing it would help both Boards move forward collaboratively.

Commissioner Chapman asked how the subcommittee's discussions and outcomes would be reported to the Boards. He suggested implementing a review mechanism to assess the committee's productivity and effectiveness over time.

The Manager addressed the concerns raised by Commissioners McCall and Chapman. The subcommittee's meetings will be public, with minutes taken as required by statute. These will be made available after the meetings. Meetings will be advertised in the same way as other Commissioner or committee meetings. The project manager will provide regular, in-person updates to both Boards during their respective meetings. The Manager highlighted the effort to balance the subcommittee's role of resolving concerns while ensuring effective project management. The agreement allows for future evaluations of the process to identify potential improvements. The Manager acknowledged that circumstances and operational needs may evolve over the next five years. She and Dr. Fletcher are committed to maintaining open communication to address any challenges and refine processes, as necessary.

Chairman Chappell inquired about the timeline for establishing the subcommittee members from both Boards. The Manager responded that the agreement would be sent to bond counsel for preparation and then reviewed by the attorneys of both Boards to ensure no outstanding issues. She expected a quick turnaround for this process. The Manager suggested the appointments could be made as early as the December or January meetings. The first subcommittee tasks, such as project manager hiring and RFQ reviews, will align with the RFQ process currently being finalized. The RFQ process has been delayed due to the recent storm but is expected to resume shortly. Once issued, it will take about six weeks to gather responses, making the earliest point at which the subcommittee would need to convene. The hiring process for the project manager is also anticipated to take at least six weeks. If it does not delay the process, Chairman Chappell recommended waiting until the first meeting in January to make subcommittee appointments, aligning with other Board appointments. However, he emphasized not wanting to slow the process unnecessarily. The Manager confirmed that waiting until January would not pose a problem or delay the process.

Chairman Chappell expressed appreciation for the diligent collaboration between the Manager and Superintendent and acknowledged the progress in fostering a strong working relationship between the two Boards.

Commissioner McCall asked whether the recommended budget amendments resolve all outstanding payments based on the review of invoices. The Manager confirmed that all known outstanding payments have been addressed. She credited Dr. Fletcher and her interim Finance Director for ensuring all financial issues were resolved. She highlighted that new procedures have been established to prevent future discrepancies. The Manager stated that the County is prepared to move forward with a clear financial plan for the five-year bond project timeline and that annual discussions on capital needs (e.g., furniture, fixtures, athletic equipment) will continue during the budget cycle.

Commissioner McCall praised Dr. Fletcher for her proactive approach in reviewing invoices to facilitate resolution.

Commissioner McCall moved to approve the financial commitments outlined in the interlocal agreement negotiated by the Superintendent and County Manager to be effective upon execution of the agreement by the Superintendent and County Manager, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey.

Commissioner McKelvey described the agreement as a “win-win” for the Boards, staff, faculty, and students, enabling a fresh start. Commissioner Chapman encouraged citizens to review Exhibit A for insight into the projects identified and the work involved. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

Chairman Chappell called for a 10-minute recess at 5:20 p.m. The Board reconvened at 5:30 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

SPENDING AUTHORIZATION RESOLUTION FOR OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

Public Health Director Elaine Russell introduced Kristen Gentry, Project Director of the CARE Coalition and Coordinator of the Opioid Settlement Funds, and Sheriff Chuck Owenby recognized as a key partner in the County's jail-based initiatives. She highlighted the long-standing efforts of the CARE Coalition in securing federal grant dollars to address community needs related to substance use and mental health. She emphasized the importance of maintaining federal funding to support their initiatives and noted the pending status of a large federal grant application. Ms. Russell asked the Board to consider a resolution that would ensure ongoing support for Ms. Gentry's role in managing the Opioid Settlement Funds, provide funding flexibility to continue jail-based programs in the absence of federal grant funding, and reinforce the County's commitment to tackling the opioid crisis and supporting the CARE Coalition's work. Ms. Russell turned the presentation over to Ms. Gentry to provide further details on the Coalition's achievements and strategies for utilizing settlement funds and the critical importance of continuing programs within the jail.

Ms. Gentry reported there is currently \$1.6 million in the County's special revenue fund from the North Carolina Opioid Settlement and additional payments from the Kroger settlement are expected in early 2025 that will increase the total funds. The settlement funds roll over year-to-year and can offset declining allocations. She highlighted that the Board has an opportunity to stabilize and expand long-standing programs addressing opioid-related issues. Funds can be allocated to strategies listed in the North Carolina Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), leveraging stakeholder engagement. The proposal draws interventions from both MOA-approved lists of strategies.

The CARE Coalition identified three immediate focus areas:

1. Increased access to treatment and reentry services for justice-involved individuals
 - a. Current jail-based program funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance until March 2025
2. Educational programs to address stigma and substance misuse understanding

- a. Funded by Dogwood Health Trust and Drug-Free Communities grants through January 2025
- 3. Expansion of MOUD and behavioral health services
 - a. Collaborating with partners to enhance Medication for Opioid Use Disorder accessibility and community organizing efforts.
 - b. Achievements: Increased peer support specialists by 200% (11 individuals pursuing certification)

In addition, the CARE Coalition identified five longer-term strategies:

- 1. Harm reduction
 - a. Increased accessibility of Narcan through local partnerships
 - b. Notable decrease in EMS overdose calls since 2022
- 2. Criminal justice supports
 - a. Progress toward employing a community-based reentry specialist to complement jail-based efforts
 - b. Facilitate warm handoff for individuals leaving incarceration
- 3. Recovery court development
 - a. Ongoing discussions with neighboring counties to establish a court focused on addiction recovery
- 4. Workforce capacity building
 - a. Expansion of peer support specialists to aid specific populations, such as young families
- 5. Transitional housing
 - a. While CARE is not directly involved, the County supports ongoing community-led efforts

Substance use disorder (SUD) affects individuals across all sectors of society, making it a challenge that requires a person-centered, multidisciplinary approach. Effective solutions demand active participation from all community sectors. For over a decade, the CARE Coalition has spearheaded efforts to address SUD through federal grants, enabling it to facilitate and coordinate multisector collaborations aimed at providing services and resources and driving policy changes. Since hiring a full-time coordinator in 2014, CARE has expanded its team to a staff of five, increased community engagement and reduced stigma around substance use, developed a strategic plan, and secured a 400% increase in funding for SUD initiatives.

CARE's efforts have laid the groundwork for ongoing and future initiatives. The jail-based reentry and treatment program, backed by the Sheriff's Office with enthusiastic support, and the recruitment and retention of two talented local staff members are significant successes in aiding justice-involved individuals. The presentation transitioned to Sheriff Chuck Owenby, who shared his observations on the program's impact.

Sheriff Owenby began by recognizing the two reentry specialists who play a pivotal role in the jail-based program. The specialists provide a wide range of services to incarcerated individuals, emphasizing substance use disorder (SUD) treatment, education, and reentry preparation. The specialists focus on assessment and treatment for individuals with SUDs, offering assessments and diagnoses with tailored treatment recommendations, individual counseling and case management, and Narcan training and overdose education for high-risk inmates. In addition, they train officers in key areas to improve care and understanding, including recognizing substance use and mental health concerns, understanding local and online resources, trauma-informed care, and harm reduction benefits, and navigating dual diagnoses such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and SUDs. A cornerstone of the program is education and skill-building, equipping inmates with tools for a fresh start.

The program collaborates with outside agencies to expand opportunities. Blue Ridge Community College offers GED preparation, and credentials in hospitality, tourism, digital literacy, and financial literacy programs. NCWorks provides employment training in resume building, interview skills, and career readiness.

These initiatives empower former inmates with the resources and confidence to reintegrate successfully into the community.

Sheriff Owenby shared statistics on the program's effectiveness:

- 47% decrease in arrests within the year following program engagement for individuals incarcerated for over a year.
- 40% reduction in violent incidents among participants within a year.
- Recidivism rates decreased overall by 5-6%.

Sheriff Owenby quoted testimonials from current and former participants and concluded by leaving letters with the Clerk, written by inmates, which detailed how the program had positively impacted their lives.

Commissioner Chapman emphasized the critical issue of transitional housing for inmates reentering the community without stable living arrangements. He inquired about current resources to address this gap. Sheriff Owenby acknowledged the limited availability of transitional housing in Transylvania County but highlighted collaboration with community-based and faith-based organizations to secure temporary housing or rehabilitation placements, transportation support for inmates upon discharge, ensuring they can access housing or rehab facilities in neighboring counties, and specialists' role in coordinating with a network of providers to connect inmates with housing resources before their release. Ms. Gentry added that although Transylvania County lacks dedicated transitional housing, partnerships with neighboring counties allow access to these services. Community volunteers and faith-based organizations play a pivotal role in supporting inmates during the transition, including arranging transportation and housing placements.

Ms. Gentry outlined the proposed funding priorities for addressing the opioid crisis and its related challenges:

1. Stabilizing infrastructure and programs:
 - Sustain the jail-based reentry program.
 - Support a coordinator to leverage funding opportunities and foster strategic partnerships.
2. Expanding interventions along the SUD continuum:
 - Enhance evidence-based prevention programs and recovery support for justice-involved individuals.
 - Increase peer support services, particularly for young families.
 - Establish a recovery court.
 - Improve access to care via mobile clinics.
 - Increase the availability of transitional housing.

Ms. Gentry proposed a funding allocation of \$800,000 from the Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Fund through June 30, 2028, leaving \$850,000 unspent. An additional \$4.3 million in settlement funds will be received through 2039. The allocation will fund a Substance Use Systems Coordinator (half-time position) at \$59,000/year (salary, benefits, professional development, and supplies) and the Jail-Based Reentry Program at \$182,000/year (covering two full-time staff salaries, benefits, software, assessment tools, and supplies). The proposal incurs no burden on taxpayer funds, relying entirely on settlement monies. If external grants are secured to fund the jail-based program, CARE will recommend reallocating the settlement funds toward other identified strategies.

Chairman Chappell opened the floor for comments and questions regarding the proposed spending authorization.

Commissioner Chapman shared his concerns about a significant portion of funds being allocated or personnel-heavy strategies. He suggested focusing on sustainable programs like transitional housing that provide ongoing benefits without as much dependency on staffing costs. He also warned about the need to address funding gaps when the settlement funds are depleted, urging proactive planning to avoid reducing or

eliminating services. The Manager emphasized the importance of person-to-person support in achieving meaningful outcomes, such as wraparound services for transitional housing or reentry programs, and stressed the importance of setting realistic expectations about the funding model for substance use recovery.

Commissioner McCall shared Commissioner Chapman's concerns about personnel costs but acknowledged their necessity for service delivery. She sought clarification about the funding for the two current jail-based program positions. Ms. Russell confirmed that the request would fund two existing positions currently supported by federal grants. She highlighted CARE's ongoing efforts to secure additional federal funding, such as the COSSAP grant, and reassured the Board of their commitment to securing external grants to sustain programs beyond 2028.

Commissioner McCall inquired about the progress made in overdose responses. Ms. Gentry noted a decline in EMS overdose calls, with numbers peaking in 2020–2021 at over 100 incidents annually. By 2022, calls slightly exceeded 100 but have since dropped to the 80s.

Commissioner McCall commended the staff for their commitment and hard work in addressing the opioid crisis. She pointed out that while the funds are designated for opioids, addiction often involves other substances such as alcohol and fentanyl. Ms. Gentry acknowledged this reality, emphasizing that the MOA recognizes polysubstance use as a factor and permits funds to address co-occurring substance use disorders. She further highlighted the role of social determinants of health, including housing, employment, and family stability, in breaking the cycle of addiction. Programs like transitional housing, transportation, and recovery court are vital to addressing these underlying issues.

Commissioner McCall inquired about the existence of a recovery court in the County. Ms. Gentry explained that Henderson County launched a recovery court in February 2023 using its settlement funds. Preliminary discussions have begun in Transylvania County to explore replicating Henderson County's program. Ms. Gentry has engaged with Henderson County's coordinator and judicial officials to evaluate implementation strategies.

Commissioner Chapman questioned whether there had been any measurable reduction in drug availability within the County. Sheriff Owenby acknowledged that while his team is highly active, with three narcotics officers consistently executing warrants and arrests, the flow of drugs remains persistent. Despite this, his team remains dedicated to daily efforts to combat drug-related issues.

Commissioner Dalton recalled discussions from earlier meetings, particularly about Option B in the MOA, which prioritized transitional housing but came with significant costs. He asked whether the County could incorporate transitional housing into future strategies funded by the opioid settlement. Ms. Russell emphasized the critical importance of transitional housing in supporting those recovering from substance use disorder. She noted the importance of building networks and collaborating across county lines to provide these services. Hurricane Helene has further exacerbated the County's housing challenges, underscoring the urgency of addressing the issue.

Commissioner McKelvey asked about the possibility of the half-time Substance Use Systems Coordinator position evolving into a full-time role. Ms. Russell explained that the coordinator, Ms. Gentry, has been working full-time for several years, supported by federal funding and grants. As some of those grants near their conclusion, the opioid settlement funds will supplement the shortfall. Other funding sources, such as the Dogwood Health Trust and smaller grants, are expected to provide additional support over the next couple of years. She noted the patchwork nature of funding for such roles, emphasizing the importance of leveraging multiple funding streams rather than relying on a single source.

Commissioner McKelvey highlighted that 50% of the proposed settlement funding will be allocated to staffing over the next 3.5 years, covering 2.5 positions. While this allocation seemed substantial, he recognized that the County's model is gaining attention from other counties, suggesting that their efforts are effective and worth emulating. He commended the Coalition's work for its impact on both the community and as a model for others. Commissioner McKelvey also stressed the importance of avoiding over-reliance on staffing costs. However, he recognized the critical role that skilled staff play in making a difference and changing lives.

Chairman Chappell inquired about the anticipated additional opioid settlement funds, asking if they would come as an increased annual allocation or a lump sum. Ms. Gentry stated that she had recently been notified of the potential funds but would gain more clarity at an upcoming statewide conference with opioid coordinators from all 100 counties. Chairman Chappell emphasized the importance of understanding any potential sunset clauses tied to the additional funds to ensure they are utilized appropriately.

Chairman Chappell asked if federal or other grant funding opportunities were being pursued to extend program longevity. Ms. Russell assured him that settlement funds would only be utilized as a last resort, with federal and other grant dollars prioritized to maximize the settlement's duration.

Chairman Chappell expressed gratitude for the Coalition's hard work, noting his regular updates through NC Works, where he hears about the weekly progress of the programs. He thanked the Coalition for their ongoing efforts and partnerships, emphasizing the positive difference their work is making in the community.

Commissioner Dalton moved to adopt a resolution to direct the expenditure of \$800,000 from the Opioid Settlement Special Revenue Fund through June 30, 2028, to support a Substance Use Systems Coordinator and the Jail-Based Reentry and Treatment Program, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey and approved unanimously.

**RESOLUTION #33-2024
A RESOLUTION BY THE COUNTY OF TRANSYLVANIA
TO DIRECT THE EXPENDITURE OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS**

WHEREAS Transylvania County has joined national settlement agreements with companies engaged in the manufacturing, distribution, and dispensing of opioids.

WHEREAS the allocation, use, and reporting of funds stemming from these national settlement agreements and bankruptcy resolutions ("Opioid Settlement Funds") are governed by the Memorandum of Agreement Between the State of North Carolina and Local Governments on Proceeds Relating to the Settlement of Opioid Litigation ("MOA") and the Supplemental Agreement for Additional Funds from Additional Settlements of Opioid Litigation ("SAAF");

WHEREAS Transylvania County has received Opioid Settlement Funds pursuant to these national settlement agreements and deposited the Opioid Settlement Funds in a separate special revenue fund as required by section D of the MOA;

WHEREAS section E.6 of the MOA states that, before spending opioid settlement funds, the local government's governing body must adopt a resolution that:

- (i) indicates that it is an authorization for expenditure of opioid settlement funds; and,
- (ii) states the specific strategy or strategies the county or municipality intends to fund pursuant to Option A or Option B, using the item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to identify each funded strategy; and,
- (iii) states the amount dedicated to each strategy for a specific period of time.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, in alignment with the NC MOA and SAAF, Transylvania County authorizes the expenditure of opioid settlement funds as follows:

1. First strategy authorized
 - a. Name of strategy: Collaborative Strategic Planning
 - b. Strategy is included in Exhibit A
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to the MOA: 1
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$ 200,000
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date January 31, 2025 through End date June 20, 2028
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: Funding will support salary, benefits, expenses, and equipment to support Substance Use Systems Coordinator. This 0.5 FTE position will plan, organize, and manage Transylvania County's strategic plan and NC MOA requirements. The Substance Use Systems Coordinator will provide oversight of county programs, contracts, and grants related to substance misuse and behavioral health.
 - g. Provider: Transylvania County

2. Second strategy authorized
 - a. Name of strategy: Jail-based Reentry Services
 - b. Strategy is included in Exhibit A
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to the MOA: 12
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$ 265,000
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date March 31, 2025 through End date June 28, 2028
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: Funding will support a 1.0 FTE Reentry Specialist embedded in the Transylvania County Detention Center. The budget for this strategy includes salary, benefits, software, and supplies for the position and delivered services. The Reentry Specialist will connect incarcerated persons to SUD treatment, recovery support, harm reduction services, housing, employment, healthcare and other resources they need upon release from jail, or that provide any of these services or supports.
 - g. Provider: Transylvania County

3. Third authorized strategy
 - a. Name of strategy: Jail-based Treatment Services
 - b. Strategy is included in Exhibit B
 - c. Item letter and/or number in Exhibit A or Exhibit B to the MOA: D4
 - d. Amount authorized for this strategy: \$ \$335,000
 - e. Period of time during which expenditure may take place:
Start date March 31, 2025 through End date June 30, 2028
 - f. Description of the program, project, or activity: Funding will support a 1.0 FTE licensed Therapist embedded in the Transylvania County Detention Center. The budget for this strategy includes salary, benefits, software, licensing, professional development, and supplies for the position and delivered services. The Therapist will provide psychosocial treatment to incarcerated persons with SUD and co-occurring mental health disorders.
 - g. Provider: Transylvania County

The total dollar amount of Opioid Settlement Funds appropriated across the above named and authorized strategies is \$ 800,000 .

Adopted this the 12th day of November 2024.

S:/Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF BREVARD ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF AN EDA GRANT TO PISGAH LABS FOR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES EXPANSION

On November 4, the Brevard City Council accepted a \$2.4 million US Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant to extend utilities to Pisgah Labs, Inc., a pharmaceutical manufacturer outside the City's Extra-territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). In September 2023, the County committed \$593,189 as the required match.

The City will accept Pisgah Labs as a utility customer under a special agreement, delaying annexation and tax revenue. The City will assume responsibility for infrastructure upkeep and maintenance and will receive all revenue from utility services. The County will waive revenue-sharing expectations from the project. The County must fund any project costs exceeding the \$2.4 million budget, as estimates are outdated.

The engineering contract will be held by the County, which will work with City staff for design and bidding. The City will oversee the construction contract. The County will cover any project costs exceeding \$2.4 million, with a proposed allocation of up to \$800,000 beyond the original budget. If the budget significantly increases, staff will return to the Board for further approval. The Manager suggested utilizing part of the \$10 million state grant allocated to the County to start drawing those funds.

The project supports industrial development by strengthening the pharmaceutical cluster in Transylvania County. It benefits the local economy and tax base by securing jobs and fostering business growth. The utility expansion could serve additional customers along its route in the future.

The Manager recommended the Board approve the interlocal agreement with the recommended changes. The County Attorney may make minor, non-substantial adjustments. She also recommended the Board approve a commitment of up to \$800,000 beyond the \$2.4 million grant budget.

Commissioner McCall asked whether the City was consulted regarding the Manager's proposed changes to the agreement. The Manager confirmed discussions occurred with the City Manager. The City Manager verified that the grantor approved the proposed process. Since the grant is awarded to the City, the construction contract must remain with them to ensure accurate documentation and adherence to grant requirements.

Commissioner Chapman asked to confirm whether the City is contributing additional funds or if the County's benefits extend beyond tax base and employment opportunities. The Manager confirmed the City would not contribute additional funds. The County's primary benefits remain tax revenue growth and job creation.

The Manager highlighted the opportunity provided by \$33 million in State infrastructure funding shared among the City, County, and Town. She has requested the asset inventory studies from the City and Town, funded by previous State grants. These studies will guide capital improvement plans (CIPs), offering a roadmap for infrastructure priorities and funding allocation and will equip Commissioners with comprehensive data to make informed investment decisions that benefit the County as a whole.

Chairman Chappell asked whether there is a guarantee the City will maintain the line after the project's completion, particularly in the event of a disaster (e.g., a natural disaster affecting the expanded section). The Manager assured the Commissioners that the agreement explicitly states the City's responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the infrastructure. It is similar to the US 64 water and sewer project agreement with the Town of Rosman. After project completion, ownership, and maintenance obligations transfer to the municipality. The infrastructure generates revenue for the entity long-term.

Chairman Chappell highlighted the significance of the project as a long-standing economic development initiative for the County. He expressed satisfaction that the project is reaching implementation, recognizing its potential to foster local economic growth.

Commissioner McKelvey asked how many future opportunities for economic development are tied to the utility expansion. The Manager responded that Pisgah Labs' initial commitment is a \$50 million investment and the creation of 50 jobs. Pisgah Labs has significant capacity for future growth, including additional lab space and manufacturing. This utility expansion enables the feasibility of their long-term plans in the U.S. market. The line will provide access to additional privately owned properties along its route. While specific economic impacts depend on how those properties are developed, the growth potential is substantial. The full economic impact is difficult to quantify at this stage due to uncertainties regarding the future development of the properties along the expanded line. However, the infrastructure lays the groundwork for substantial industrial and economic expansion in the region.

Commissioner McCall asked for confirmation that the City is responsible for maintaining the line despite the property being within the County's jurisdiction. The Manager responded, yes, the infrastructure will be fully turned over to the City's system. The arrangement is comparable to economic incentives such as tax benefits, where a delayed annexation creates long-term benefits in property tax revenue and job growth while enabling immediate economic contributions.

Chairman Chappell reiterated the significance of the County maintaining control over the engineering contract to manage potential cost overages effectively and ensure fiscal responsibility.

Commissioner Dalton highlighted Pisgah Labs' long-term commitment and phased plans and emphasized that the utility expansion is critical to the feasibility of these plans and their future economic impact.

Commissioner Dalton moved to approve the interlocal agreement with changes recommended by the Manager and County Attorney, and a commitment of up to \$800,000 over the original project budget with the funds to come from the County's allocation of State funds for infrastructure projects, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey. Chairman Chappell expressed strong support for the project, emphasizing its importance as a long-term economic development initiative for the County. **The motion was approved unanimously.**

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS - NCDEQ AT-RISK FUNDING

The Board of Commissioners reviewed updates on the utilization of NCDEQ At-Risk Funds for critical infrastructure projects, focusing on projects that deliver significant countywide benefits. These funds must be fully expended by the end of 2026.

Completed and Ongoing Projects:

1. US 64 Water and Sewer Project (Completed):
 - o Successfully handed over to the Town of Rosman for ownership and operation.
 - o Rosman has begun gaining new customers, generating additional revenue for the town.
2. City of Brevard and Town of Rosman Interconnect Project (In Progress):
 - o Designed to improve water resiliency by allowing the two systems to support each other during emergencies, such as those caused by natural disasters like Hurricane Helene.
 - o Funded partially from savings achieved on the US 64 water and sewer expansion project.
3. Watershed Study Process (In Progress):
 - o Aims to secure water availability for County residents for the next 40 years of projected growth.
 - o The process includes evaluating the designation of an additional watershed to ensure long-term sustainability.

4. Boys and Girls Club, City of Brevard, and Transylvania County Sewer Project (In Design Phase):
 - Under design by engineers for the Boys and Girls Club’s expansion project.
 - Addresses sewer service improvements for a section that supports approximately 30% of City sewer customers, including areas with duplex and multifamily units, the Boys and Girls Club, and County-owned Gallimore Road property.
 - Enables the Boys and Girls Club expansion, enhancing after-school programming for more county students.
 - Partially funded by savings from the US 64 water and sewer expansion project.

The Board of Commissioners reviewed additional project recommendations for the utilization of NCDEQ At-Risk Funds. Due to funding limitations and regulatory requirements, adjustments were proposed to prioritize achievable projects with countywide benefits.

Rejected Proposal:

- Direct Leachate Line to Town of Rosman Wastewater System:
 - While initially considered, the cost of a direct leachate line exceeded available funding.
 - Alternative approaches were reviewed to address regulatory requirements, particularly for PFAS ("forever chemicals"), and to protect Rosman's wastewater system.

Newly Recommended Projects:

1. Leachate Pre-Treatment Project:
 - Addresses pre-treatment requirements to ensure leachate quality meets evolving regulatory standards, including PFAS.
 - Provides a cost-effective solution for protecting the Town of Rosman wastewater system while supporting County landfill operations.
 - Aligns with expenditure deadlines and regulatory demands.
2. Stormwater Infrastructure – Morris Road Improvements:
 - Supports the stormwater management needs of the new courthouse site along Morris Road on the City of Brevard property.
 - Builds on lessons from addressing stormwater issues at the Public Safety Complex and related Sylvan Valley Industrial Building Phase One project.
 - Can be completed within budget and expenditure deadlines.

The Manager endorsed the proposed projects for their feasibility, alignment with funding deadlines, and countywide benefits and emphasized the importance of timely execution given the 2026 deadline for NCDEQ At-Risk Funds. She highlighted the ongoing collection of project data from the Town of Rosman, the City of Brevard, and other entities to inform decisions regarding the County’s separate \$10 million State allocation. These funds provide a longer spending window, allowing more extensive project planning. The Manager invited input from Commissioners regarding the proposed updates or concerns about the projects.

Chairman Chappell sought confirmation on the ability to meet the 2026 deadline for fund expenditure. The Manager affirmed the confidence of County staff in completing the projects on time and within budget, noting the plans are well-defined and realistic. She added that while unforeseen issues may arise, the projects include flexibility for adjustments if needed by year-end.

The Manager highlighted the long-term benefits of key projects. The Watershed Study is a critical initiative with a 50-year impact, ensuring sustainable water availability for all of Transylvania County. The Interconnect Project enhances water resiliency across multiple jurisdictions, providing broad and lasting benefits.

Commissioner Dalton stressed the importance of safeguarding the County's water resources, emphasizing the risk of external interests exploiting them if not proactively protected.

Commissioner McCall moved to approve updated projects for NCDEQ At-Risk Funding as presented, seconded by Commissioner Dalton, and unanimously approved.

Chairman Chappell requested periodic updates on the progress of infrastructure projects. The Manager agreed to integrate these updates into the capital project updates, ensuring the Board remains informed as projects advance.

REQUEST FOR FUNDING TO COVER INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLE PAYMENTS TO REPAIR DAMAGE TO PUBLIC PROPERTY BY HURRICANE/TROPICAL STORM HELENE

The Board of Commissioners reviewed a funding request to cover insurance deductibles and necessary expenses for repairing damage to County-owned facilities and assets caused by Hurricane/Tropical Storm Helene, which resulted in over \$1 million in damages. The County is processing insurance claims for the damages sustained. The Manager noted there were no budgeted funds to cover deductibles for unforeseen events like this.

To ensure repair work can commence promptly, the Manager requested the Board allocate \$200,000 for deductible payments and other related expenses. She assured the Board that if costs exceed the allocated amount, she will return to seek additional approval. Periodic updates will be provided to the Board regarding claim processing and repair progress. The Manager plans to propose future financial strategies to establish a disaster recovery reserve fund to address costs incurred while awaiting FEMA reimbursements.

Commissioner McCall moved to approve up to \$200,000 for the Manager to authorize insurance deductibles and other necessary expenses to begin repair of County facilities, seconded by Commissioner McKelvey, and unanimously approved.

SCHEDULE SWEARING IN CEREMONY AND ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners reviewed the schedule for the swearing-in ceremony and organizational meeting for newly elected members and other elected county officials. As required, the meeting will take place on the first Monday in December of even-numbered years, scheduled for December 2, 2024. Following the organizational meeting, the Board will conduct a public hearing to gather public input on the Schedule of Values to be used for the 2025 property revaluation in Transylvania County. The Board agreed by consensus to begin the meeting at 9:00 a.m. The Clerk will notice the meeting and notify elected officials.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager provided updates on the following:

- Extended congratulations to re-elected County Commissioners, Register of Deeds, Soil & Water Board members, and newly elected Board of Education members.
- The Swearing-in Ceremony is scheduled for Monday, December 2, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners/Multipurpose Chambers. At the organizational meeting, the Board will elect its chair and vice-chair, approve bonds for certain staff, and hold a public hearing on the Schedule of Values for the 2025 property revaluation.
- The quarter-cent sales tax referendum was defeated with 65.66% voting against and 34.34% in favor. The Manager noted that Hurricane Helene's recovery efforts likely overshadowed educational outreach on the referendum. If the Board wishes to revisit the measure, it cannot appear on the ballot again until the 2026 General Election.

- Work continues at the County Administration Building on the roof and storm damage caused by Hurricane Helene. Temporary access restrictions to the Chambers courtyard may be needed; updates will be communicated to the public.
- The County has successfully closed on the bond sale, with \$50 million now available for investment in schools.
- A regional job fair hosted by Land of Sky will take place on November 19 at Blue Ridge Mall in Hendersonville. A recent fair in Asheville attracted over 840 job seekers, featuring 75+ employers and 15+ service organizations.
- The County participated in a regional recovery meeting on November 8 with NCACC, NCLM, and state/federal legislators to address policy and funding needs.
- FEMA Disaster Recovery Center at Community Services Building operating hours:
 - Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
 - Saturday: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
 - Sunday: Closed
- Upcoming NCEM Program on Hazard Mitigation Grants will provide voluntary assistance for flood-impacted homeowners, including elevation compliance and buyout options for total losses.
- Properties with flood determination postings should contact the City of Brevard Planning Department or Transylvania County Building Department for follow-up.
- The landfill expansion project received one bid, significantly exceeding the approved budget. Staff are working with engineers to identify solutions. The Manager emphasized the urgency of this project due to the limited overlap between the existing permit and new cell construction, compounded by storm debris impacts.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David Morrow: Mr. Morrow expressed gratitude to the Board of Commissioners and citizens for their support during the Veterans Day Ceremony held yesterday. He emphasized how the community's involvement and backing make these events meaningful and voiced his hope that services and ceremonies honoring veterans will continue in the future.

COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Chapman thanked the military museum for organizing yesterday's ceremony, noting their valuable contribution. He asked David Morrow to extend the Board's appreciation to the museum's board and staff. The event was a success, and Commissioner Chapman highlighted the museum's growing international recognition, particularly for its work with World War II veterans, which brings attention to Brevard and Transylvania County.

Commissioner McKelvey expressed gratitude to everyone for their support during the race and thanked those who did not support him, hoping they would in the future. He appreciated the smooth transition and teamwork within the Board, emphasizing the shared vision and collaboration. Commissioner McKelvey thanked the leadership for their support and looks forward to accomplishing great things in the next two years.

Commissioner McCall thanked the voters for their continued support, acknowledging it as a reflection of the Board's hard work. She expressed frustration with FEMA's response to housing needs following Hurricane Helene. She referenced a recent FEMA presentation where it was stated that priority would be given to those without shelter, yet housing units are not being deployed quickly enough. Commissioner McCall pointed out that over a month ago, the County Manager had requested 30 units, but only one unit has arrived so far. She expressed disappointment with the slow progress, particularly after seeing the devastation in western North Carolina. Commissioner McCall emphasized the need for more efficient action, criticizing the bureaucracy

and red tape that has hindered recovery efforts and called for a better response to ensure quicker assistance for those in need.

Chairman Chappell thanked the Board for the opportunity to continue serving, expressing his honor in working with such dedicated individuals who always prioritize Transylvania County's best interests. He highlighted the collaborative efforts between the Board of Education and the County Commissioners, particularly the teamwork between the Superintendent and County Manager to advance essential projects that support economic development and infrastructure. Chairman Chappell also praised the CARE Coalition's impactful work with the reentry program in the jail, changing lives. He encouraged everyone to share information about the upcoming job fair on Tuesday, noting its importance for those who have lost their jobs. Lastly, he announced the cancellation of the second November meeting and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, **Commissioner Dalton moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m., seconded by Commissioner McCall and unanimously approved.**

Jason R. Chappell, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board