

**MINUTES**  
**Town of Blowing Rock**  
**Town Council Meeting**  
**April 14, 2020**

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met via Zoom virtual/phone session for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 14, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-Tem Sue Sweeting and Council Members Albert Yount, David Harwood, Doug Matheson and Virginia Powell. Others in attendance were Town Manager Shane Fox, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Public Works and Utilities Director Matt Blackburn, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Fire Chief Kent Graham, Police Chief Aaron Miller, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Finance Officer Nicole Norman and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner who recorded the minutes.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Mayor verified attendance via roll call.

**REGULAR AGENDA ADOPTION**

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

**MINUTE APPROVAL**

Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 12, 2020 regular and closed session Council meetings, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting. Council Member Harwood advised he would like to request a correction to the regular meeting minutes; on page 5, in the 7<sup>th</sup> paragraph it stated, "*Council Member Harwood advised he did have communication written or verbal*". Correction is: "*Council Member Harwood advised he did not have communication, written or verbal.*" Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting made a new motion to approve as amended, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

**SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR**

None

**BUSINESS MATTERS:**

**1. Remote Meeting Policy**

Manager Shane Fox advised staff put together a policy for "Remote Meetings" to use during this time as well as potential use for the policy in the future. The proposed policy had been reviewed and approved by Town Attorney Allen Moseley. Manager Fox explained the policy allows Council to meet remotely either via audio or video as well as allows Volunteer Town Boards to conduct the meetings the same way. He further explained staff utilized a number of resources across the state including the School of Government and the policy was a standard one that has been passed around the State.

Manager Fox advised the policy does suffice under open meeting laws per NC General Statute Chapter 143.

Manager Fox explained the policy would go into effect when a State of Emergency is declared, both now and in the future.

Council Member Powell stated she didn't want to make this the new normal for the way meetings are conducted. She explained in her opinion it is "healthier" to meet face to face when possible.

Council briefly discussed and all understood this policy is for cases of the declaration of a state of emergency and if approved will be available for future use.

Council Member Harwood asked if the policy should include language stating that a meeting can be called by the Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem or two Council Members. Manager Fox advised he could add that if Council would like him to.

After brief discussion the consensus amongst Council was to add that to the policy.

Manager Fox advised he wanted to reiterate to make sure all were aware that two ways were provided to the Public for them to be a part of the meeting, either emailing their questions/concerns or mailing them to the Town's address. No questions or concerns were sent this time. He further advised that is part of the policy, so he wanted to make sure all were aware of that.

Council Member Harwood made a motion to approve the policy with the addition to 5 1B; inclusion of the language a special meeting may be called by the Mayor, Mayor Pro-Tem or two Council Members, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

- Mayor Sellers – Thanked Council Members, staff and everyone who had gone above and beyond. He felt the community had really pulled together.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting – Stated she had been concerned with businesses in Town suffering during the shutdown. She wanted Council to think about having a celebration when this is over to bring people back to Town. She advised she could discuss with the Chamber and see what their thoughts were. Thanked Manager Fox for his leadership and staff for their hard work.
- Council Member Matheson - Advised this was one of the first times he has ever known a time like this in our Town with it being so empty. He stated he was so very proud of the way everyone has had each other's back a keeping an eye out during this time. He reminded Council is asking people just coming into Town to quarantine for fourteen days to protect the people in Town. He further stated he was so proud of the way the Town and the county came together in the unique way to show support for the Greene family with "William's Parade". He also

thanked all the heroes in Town; Fire/EMT, Police and Town employees all working during this time.

- Council Member Yount – Thanked Manager Fox and Staff and stated Manager Fox is carrying a huge personal burden, which he personally is aware of how difficult that can be, but Manager Fox has not let that get in the way.
- Council Member Powell – Advised this pandemic has personally given her family a perspective on where they want to be in such a situation. She explained she feels safe and proud to be on Council. Felt Council has been kept well informed by Manager Fox and the County. She further thanked all of Council and staff for their hard work during this time.
- Manager Fox – Thanked Council for their leadership during this time and well as thanked staff for all their hard work. He advised the projects that were approved prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Paving, Bass Lake Sidewalk Project and Memorial Park, will still be happening.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 6:45 p.m. Council Member Yount made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Council Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

**MAYOR** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Charlie Sellers**

**ATTEST** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk**

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Remote Meeting Policy – Attachment A**