

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock

Board of Commissioners

Special Meeting – May 5, 2008

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners were invited to a meeting on May 5, 2008 at 12:00 Noon by the Hayes Performing Arts Center. In attendance were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Keith Tester, Albert Yount, Phil Pickett, and Tommy Klutz. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, and Clerk Assistant Erica Cline.

WELCOME

After Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order, Mr. Terry Lentz was asked to come forward to receive an award presented by State House of Representative Cullie Tarleton on behalf of North Carolina Governor Michael Easley. Representative Tarleton presented the Old North State Award to Mr. Lentz for his 19 years of public service as a member of the Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners on his previous service on the Planning and Zoning and Parks and Recreation boards, Mr. Tarleton also commended Mr. Lentz for his service in other aspects of the community and his church involvement.

Mrs. Cullie Tarleton also attended the presentation to Mr. Lentz as well as Mr. Lentz's wife Teresa and daughter Tara.

After the presentation, past Chairman Chip Williamson thanked Council for agreeing to meet with members of the Hayes Community Art Center and stated they would like for the Town to be a bigger partner with the Hayes Center.

After welcoming Council, Mr. Williamson introduced Chairman Ron Bryson and asked that he say a few words. Mr. Bryson updated Council on the Hayes Center and asked for any feedback they might have. He spoke of the center's desire to enrich the culture of Blowing Rock and make Blowing Rock even better.

Hayes Center Director of Marketing & Communication Rick Suyao spoke to Council and encouraged them to ask any questions they had regarding marketing and communications and share any ideas they might have.

Next, a power point presentation was given by Hayes Center Executive Director Jeff Clark updating them on events such as the Blowing Rock Winterfest, Blue Ridge Wine Festival, Mitford Days in Blowing Rock, etc. He also spoke of the many civic organizations that had utilized the center. Mr. Kay advised that approximately 43,000 guests had attended events and performances with 37 states had been represented, 5 countries and 57 N.C. Counties had been represented.

Producing Artistic Director Ken Kay then spoke of the many performers who had graced the stage at the Hayes Center, the activities, and the 4 million+ visitors that had visited their website. Mr. Kay acknowledged two historic world premiere plays were presented, Moses Cone, The Denim King and Jan Karon's, Journey to Mitford. Mr. Kay also proudly advised the Hayes Center was number two in the state for productions.

Education Director Kim Cozart Kay stated over 5,000 students had attended performances at the center through the TOPS educational program and that 343 youth had performed on stage and participated in classes. Some of the youth programs were LEAP N.C., Rocket Youth Players, Teen Actor's Guild (TAG), etc.

Mr. Clark talked briefly on presenting events such as the Inaugural Signature Series and the Inaugural Mountain Heritage Music Series featuring such performers as Glenn Bolick, John Cowan, Mike Cross and John McEuen. He also advised the economic impact of the center had surpassed their expectations of \$ 5 million dollars with \$9.1 million. Their fundraising efforts were also discussed, Mr. Clarks stated that \$10,293,458 had been raised to date and the center had over 650 donors.

Mr. Clark concluded the presentation by summarizing how the Hayes Center had benefited Blowing Rock, by the economic impact, drawing visitors to the area, tax dollars, new jobs, etc.

Mayor Lawrence inquired what the center's expectations were. Mr. Williamson responded they desired for the Town to be a bigger partner with the center and to be placed on the Town's yearly budget.

Commissioner Tester advised that justification would need to be made to the community and asked what approach they thought would be appropriate. Mr. Clark responded, at Council's request, he would be glad to come and explain their future plans. He advised on June 16, 2008 a community meeting was scheduled to update citizens of the center's plans for the future.

Commissioner Ball inquired as to what percentage of the 650 donors resided in Blowing Rock. She also thought their marquee sign needed to be more visible to inform the public of their events and activities.

Mr. Suyao stated the center was planning a more aggressive fundraising campaign this year. Commissioner Ball suggested their annual report be available to the citizens so they would be better educated on the center's goals and plans.

Mayor Lawrence stated the more successful the Hayes Center was, the more successful the Town would be.

Commissioner Yount asked how much money the center was requesting from the town. Mr. Williamson stated they would like to receive \$100,000 - \$150,000 per budget year.

After further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

MAYOR _____

J.B Lawrence

ATTEST _____

Erica Cline, Assistant to the Clerk