

# Town Council Meeting - Tuesday, March 8th, 2022

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street Blowing Rock, NC. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-Tem Doug Matheson and Council Members Albert Yount, David Harwood, Melissa Pickett and Pete Gherini. Others in attendance were Town Manager Shane Fox, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Fire Chief Kent Graham, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Police Chief Aaron Miller, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Public Works Director Matt Blackburn, Finance Officer Nicole Norman and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner who recorded the minutes.

Thu, 3/17 5:17PM • 3:08:37

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

move, town, retreat, planning board, put, parking, restaurants, council, talked, ordinance, tonight, outdoor dining, discussed, blowing, calls, process, motion, number, main street, Doug

## SPEAKERS

Ryan Vincent, Hilari Hubner, David Harwood, Aaron Miller, Charles Hardin, Doug Matheson, Jennifer Brown, Emily Brinker, Bill Hall, Jeff Walker, Leticia, Shane Fox, Albert Yount, Melissa Pickett, Pete Gherini, William Brinker, Charlie Sellers, Doug Chapman, Kevin Rothrock

### **Charlie Sellers** 00:00

Moment of Silence for the Ukraine war. Prayers with the families. Alright, do I have a motion to approve the minutes of February 8, 2022, Regular meeting?

### **Pete Gherini** 05:48

So, moved

### **Melissa Pickett** 05:51

Second

### **Charlie Sellers** 05:52

Any discussion? How do you vote Approval of the February 14, 15 and 16 minutes from the Retreat?

### **Albert Yount** 05:58

Yes

**David Harwood** 05:59

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 05:59

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 05:59

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 06:02

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 06:04

Motion to approve

**Doug Matheson** 06:16

Second

**Charlie Sellers** 06:18

Any discussion? Okay

**Melissa Pickett** 06:18

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 06:18

Yes

**Albert Yount** 06:22

Yes

**David Harwood** 06:22

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 06:26

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 06:27

Okay. On the Regular Agenda, Council, there's a request from Shane to add couple of items that you all need to approve. Shane, if you would.

**Shane Fox** 06:40

Thank you, Mayor, and Council. The first item I would like to add to Consent, at the wishes of the Council is the acceptance of our Main Street water and sewer line funding. So, if you recall the \$4.8 million allocation that we were advised that we had received in the state budget, we received a

notification on Friday that that indeed, was in place, and that we just need your approval, along with the approval for McGill to begin on the designing of project to move forward with that. So, I'd like to add that to number four on the consent agenda if we could. Main Street water and sewer line acceptance of the funds and contract with McGill.

**Charlie Sellers** 07:19

Council, a motion.

**Albert Yount** 07:22

So, moved.

**David Harwood** 07:25

Second

**Charlie Sellers** 07:27

No discussion on consent, we can have no discussion. Council how do you vote.

**Albert Yount** 07:42

Yes

**David Harwood** 07:43

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 07:43

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 07:43

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 07:43

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 07:44

Go ahead Shane, you have another item to add.

**Shane Fox** 07:47

I've received written notice from at least two council members to add the outdoor dining discussion to the regular agenda for discussion. Tonight, we discussed it during the retreat. And I believe the hope is would have a open discussion tonight, maybe directive to the planning board. And I did receive those two from two commissioners here in writing prior to the meeting tonight.

**Charlie Sellers** 08:13

Do I have a motion?

**Doug Matheson** 08:15

So, moved.

**Pete Gherini** 08:16

Second

**Charlie Sellers** 08:20

Any discussion on that?

**Pete Gherini** 08:23

Will the public be able to give any input or talk on that?

**Charlie Sellers** 08:28

During the three minutes

**Pete Gherini** 08:30

During the three minutes? Okay.

**Melissa Pickett** 08:34

Where will this be placed on the agenda?

**Charlie Sellers** 08:38

At this time is at the end of the agenda the regular agenda. Now, I will say this. There will be no issues taken up after nine o'clock. That would be contentious or require a lot of discussion. It's not fair to the public. It's not fair to the council to be here 'til midnight, one o'clock. Of course, there again, we do have all the rest of all the restaurants here. Maybe they can serve buffet. So that's where it sets now.

**Albert Yount** 09:23

You will make that call.

**Charlie Sellers** 09:26

Yes, I will Any other thoughts and we have a motion on the table. We have a second.

**Albert Yount** 09:35

Yes

**David Harwood** 09:36

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 09:37

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 09:37

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 09:40

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 09:40

Okay. So that is added to the agenda. Oh, if I may also say if we're not able to complete it, then the council will, I will throw out some dates for a meeting to be held soon. Okay. To discuss any issues on tonight's agenda that has not had that have not been addressed. Okay. All right, Council. Okay. Moving right along, do I have a motion to approve the revised regular agenda.

**Melissa Pickett** 10:17

So moved.

**Charlie Sellers** 10:18

Do I have a second?

**David Harwood** 10:20

Second.

**Charlie Sellers** 10:21

Any discussion on the regular agenda?

**Albert Yount** 10:28

Yes

**David Harwood** 10:29

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 10:29

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 10:29

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 10:32

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 10:34

On the consent agenda, do I have a motion to approve the consent agenda?

**Pete Gherini** 11:03

So moved

**Doug Matheson** 11:05

Second

**Charlie Sellers** 11:07

All in favor

**Albert Yount** 11:09

Yes

**David Harwood** 11:10

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 11:12

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 11:12

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 11:16

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 11:17

Okay. The consent agenda is approved. Okay now we are doing to move to public comments. Ladies and gentlemen, please keep your comments down to three minutes. and during your comments, there's two items on the public hearing that cannot be discussed. One is the Blowing Rock Country Club. And the other is the short-term rentals. But other than that, talk about almost anything. Bill Hall. Come on up Bill. You're all here to speak on powerlines. Bill state your name and address for the record

**Bill Hall** 12:25

Bill Hall 1551 Green Hill Road. I know you are going to discuss this later. So, I may be out of order. I'm here to encourage you all to vote in favor of proceeding with this project. I have lived here for over 25 years full time and had a second home for several years before that. And I have been hoping we could get this done, sometime. I believe that they're obviously big problems throughout the world that are very important. And this is pretty minor compared to those, but I still think it's something that we need to look at seriously. We have an opportunity of a lifetime because we're replacing water and sewer lines and we will have the street opened up. And it would be a shame not to take advantage of this opportunity. This can be done in stages. The main thing we have to do when the street is opened up is to put in the conduit then we can proceed to get rid of the power, I'm sorry, of the telephone and cable lines. That will make a big difference. And then we do the rest of it when we can. I'm wondering if there isn't some government money available somewhere as much as is being given out around the country. And so, I wish we could look into that. And my final comment is that a lot of other upscale Town's have already done this. And we are an upscale Town. I've lived several places and I've traveled a lot of places and obviously Blowing Rock is the coolest place in the whole world and I hope I don't ever have to live anywhere else. So that's the reason I'm here to ask you all seriously consider it. And let's not let this opportunity go by. Thank you.

**Charlie Sellers** 15:21

Thank you Bill. Jeff Walker

**Jeff Walker** 15:36

Hello, I'm Jeff Walker, I live in Valley Crucis. But I am the owner, co-founder of the Blowing Rock brewing company, president of Blowing Rock Brewing Company, and 152 Sunset Drive. And I guess I wanted to address the dining seating regulation that is on tonight's agenda. And in first I want to thank our town administrators for having relaxed the enforcement of the dining table vs parking regulation. This provided much needed and appreciated relief from what had already previously become, at least in my opinion, a challenging and even untenable regulation for many of the newer restaurants in downtown Blowing Rock. I thank the Town Council for considering this regulation on tonight's agenda. As I believe the hospitality trade here in the downtown area Blowing Rock is crucial to the Town's future prosperity as a destination Town. Could you imagine Blowing Rock with half the restaurants as there are now, we should be careful because this could happen if this parking regulation is strictly enforced. Rather than paused this summer, at least until it's rewritten. When we first open in 2013 as Blowing Rocks first destination brewery Blowing Rock wasn't as much of a walking downtown as it is today. And this is a great thing. Today I'm seeing a lot more younger people and families than ever before. Both local county residents and destination visitors and the four-lane highway from Lenoir has helped us help bring Blowing Rock a whole lot closer to Charlotte and the metropolitan areas. At our place our patrons who park in our spaces will commonly enjoy lunch at our place and afterwards walk to the downtown area shop maybe have dessert at Kilwins. I know this because they're gone for a few hours before they come back to reclaim their cars out of our lot. A lot of the time the cars parked on our lot at 11:30 am, they're there for opening, they have lunch and once they've left our place after an hour lunch. We turn our tables every 75 to 90 minutes on peak days. We go on a wait at noon and usually stand wait into the evening. Or waits can be an hour to two hours on Saturdays and Friday evenings. My point is our patrons are parking somewhere they don't just drive to our place and park for lunch. They come to Blowing Rock for the afternoon. And we've turned the same table two to three times since their lunch while the car is still our lot and they're shopping on Main Street. It's no surprise I'm going to get to the solution here. It's no surprise to me that Blowing Rock has had one of its best years the past year while the dining seat regulation was relaxed. People found places to park they got hungry, and they found places to eat outside and stay in Town for a while. People want to eat outside more than ever. Blowing Rock is a destination lifestyle recreation Town why shouldn't we want this? As a local business owner, I'm asking our Town Council to pause relax enforcement of the outdoor dining seat regulation until this regulation can be brought up to the current times integrated into the overall growth plans for the Town. Thank you and Roger Brooks I thought he had a brilliant presentation make the downtown about people not cars. Thank you

**Charlie Sellers** 18:46

Thank you. Emily Brinker

**Emily Brinker** 19:11

Hi, I'm Emily Brinker, 922 Main Street Speckled Trout. So, I've spoken with most of y'all about the outdoor dining and our parking ties and just want to kind of reiterate what we've said what we've

spoken with on the phone, what we've sent in emails. That we're asking that y'all temporarily put a little hold on the ordinance. Allow us to continue seating our outdoor dining as we have been through COVID while Planning Boards doing their job and while y'all are doing your job, and we have the Town and everybody weighing in on what does our new parking plan look like and what's our solution? The push to ask how to just relax it and not enforce it now instead of just waiting for the new solution is our timing. Planning for the summer, we have to hire now, we have to train now, we have to know how many people we can put outside versus inside. We learned in COVID. And you know, people have always wanted to eat outside and Blowing Rock. But since COVID people will eat outside unless it is raining cats and dogs. So, it's not just a summer thing that we need. We're happy to seat people outside anytime we can. And we also have a lot of walking guest, guests that are staying at the new hotels, guests that are at the Airbnb down the street, they've got their own parking and they're walking up to us, and they'd like to sit outside. So just reiterating we would like it if y'all would please put a hold on enforcing the current ordinance until the new one is ready.

**David Harwood** 20:46

Thank you.

**Charlie Sellers** 20:47

Thank you. Latichia

**Leticia** 21:07

Latichia, owner of El Rincon spoke with a request that Council consider allowing outdoor dining to continue. She explained her customers that come to her restaurant like to dine outdoors as many bring along their dogs. She explained it helps give the family community feel to both visitors and locals and keeps them coming back to our Town. Thank you guys.

**David Harwood** 23:17

Thank you

**Charlie Sellers** 23:18

Thank you. I thank you so much for taking your time to come out this evening and voice your concerns. Now we have a presentation, county property tax revaluation.

**Ryan Vincent** 40:24

Owner of Vincent Valuations was contracted by Watauga County to assist them with the 2022 reappraisal. He presented a PowerPoint presentation explaining the re-evaluation process.

**David Harwood** 40:27

Very nice presentation.

**Charlie Sellers** 49:04

Thank you.

**Ryan Vincent** 49:05



Thanks for having us

**Charlie Sellers** 49:15

Alright. We are going to move into the public hearing section. Kevin Rothrock.

**Kevin Rothrock** 49:43

Good evening, Mayor, and Council. I am going to speak briefly about short term. We've got an ordinance for your consideration. Staff recently received advice from the Town attorney that there should be some consideration for modifying the definition of short-term rental found in our ordinance. This definition was revised in 2018. In your packet you received the current definition and a proposed definition and also the other sections the ordinance that needs to be amended, if we follow through with amending the definition. The main issue with our current definition is the word use. The intention of the short-term rental regulations was never to prohibit the weekend use of the home by the homeowner, if they were a second homeowner. Or by their family if their family wanted to come up. But by having the definition, written as it is, with the word use, it could be construed to mean that if you come up and use your home, that short term rental by definition, so the intention of the ordinance was never to do that. So, we proposed staff looked at some other definitions. And something that may fit us a little bit better be a little more clearer. And the proposed definition removes the word use. So, I'll read both the current definition short term rental of a dwelling unit is the rental lease or use of an attached or detached residential dwelling unit for a duration that is less than 28 consecutive days. short term rental use does not include rooming houses boarding houses or Bed and Breakfast establishments which are specifically addressed as separate uses within the table of permissible uses. The proposed definition reads short term rental as the word to use the rental lease or offered to make available any attached or detached residence dwelling unit or portion thereof, by way of a rental agreement lease license or any other means whether oral or written for compensation or consideration for a duration that is less than 28 consecutive days. The other parts or the section that we have devoted to short term rentals and how we established a permitting process. And so that definition will be inserted into that language to make it clear. This was presented to the Planning Board two weeks ago. And the Planning Board recommended approval of the definition as presented to you tonight. The new language in the ordinance that's attachment is underlined. Anything that we're proposing be removed has been struck through. I'll be glad to answer any question. I know the public may want to speak if they so choose.

**Doug Matheson** 52:59

So this cleans up family use, used by family members coming up.

**Kevin Rothrock** 53:09

I think it does and also addresses their own use, the homeowner owns the house and comes up, that would be perfectly legal, and that's what we would want them to do. But it also puts more emphasis on the rental of or an offer to make that rental available. And I think that was something that we needed as well. And I shared the definition with Alan, and he seemed to be favorable to it as well.

**Charlie Sellers** 53:46

All right, this is a public hearing. If you would like to speak on this, you need come over and give Hilari your name. With nobody wanting to speak, Council do I have a motion to close the public hearing?

**Doug Matheson** 54:03

Motion to close the public hearing

**Pete Gherini** 54:04

**Charlie Sellers** 54:05

Alright I have a first and second. All those in favor?

**Pete Gherini** 54:05

Second

**Albert Yount** 54:09

Yes

**David Harwood** 54:09

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 54:13

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 54:14

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 54:14

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 54:15

Moving right along. Do I have a motion?

**Pete Gherini** 54:19

I'll make a motion to approve the language as submitted by Kevin and approved by the Town attorney.

**Charlie Sellers** 54:26

Do I have a second,

**David Harwood** 54:28

Second

**Charlie Sellers** 54:29

Further discussion?

**Albert Yount** 54:31

When does this become effective? Tonight?

**Kevin Rothrock** 54:35

It would be tonight?

**Charlie Sellers** 54:35

Council how do you vote?

**Albert Yount** 54:39

Yes

**David Harwood** 54:39

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 54:39

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 54:42

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 54:43

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 54:44

Okay. Kevin, thank you so much for that. This next one is Blowing Rock Country Club. This is considered to be a quasi-judicial, so whomever would like to speak to this issue needs to be sworn in by our Town Clerk.

**Kevin Rothrock** 55:37

This is special use permit 2021-01. I know it's 22. But they started the process, and we assigned a number last year, but the Country Club halted everything for a period of time. At their request the Country Club is requesting a special use permit to construct a new pro shop at 200 Country Club Drive. And this will be located between the current clubhouse and the cart barn and fitness center and will be in pretty much in the location of the old cart barn. The property is 5.5 acres and has split zoning definitions and is R15. And a portion of it is R6M multifamily and is located in the water supply watershed. The proposed shop requires approximately 20 parking spaces based on the size and the construction of the fitness center cart barn a few years ago, they in the parking area, they added approximately 100 new parking spaces. And so that more than adequately provides a parking for both the pro shop and the cart barn and some additional parking for the clubhouse activities too. That's the rendering shows the view and the bird's eye view, the clubhouse back there, and then the cart barn and fitness center. And that's some of the elevations of the building to match the buildings that are there now there's two other views of it. Now I want to show the site plan. This is where the cart barn use to be, the cart barn was here. So, it's going to go roughly in the same location. We found a few things that they had to move the building back about seven feet. And so, they have a plan that will do that. This is

the site plan that was submitted. So the whole buildings slid back about seven feet had some setback issues there. And also there's ADA accessible spaces here in the current parking lot. And so they're working on route into the first floor and the building will have an elevator. And so municipal engineering is laying that out and what will be able to provide the ADA accessibility that's necessary to meet the building code. As I showed you that the rendering and the elevations it does match the buildings as in their current state are very complementary to those. Nothing major outstanding, really can't find anything that doesn't meet the ordinance. The Planning Board met February 24 and reviewed the project and recommended approval of the special use permit with no conditions. Be glad to answer any questions

**Doug Matheson 59:13**

Kent and them look this over. Everything was good with them.

**Kevin Rothrock 59:17**

I didn't get any comments.

**David Harwood 59:24**

Can you elaborate on the zoning split zoning the residential nature of the zoning that's currently and how this facility is going in an R 15 or an R 6 zone?

**Kevin Rothrock 59:50**

Portion of the cart barn on that end is zoned R6 and then I'm not sure exactly what the split zoning is but In either case, this type of use is allowed in those zoning districts. Privately held country clubs, golf courses, those type of things are allowed in R 15 and R 6.

**David Harwood 1:00:14**

So we don't know where the demarcation line is. Between R 15 and R 6.

**Kevin Rothrock 1:00:22**

I could pull it up on GIS.

**David Harwood 1:00:25**

I don't mean for you to go to a lot of trouble

**Kevin Rothrock 1:00:30**

Yeah, I think it's pretty close about. It runs about through the parking lot of the of the new fitness center

**David Harwood 1:00:38**

But all of this according to GIS, it's all one parcel. Is that not correct.

**Kevin Rothrock 1:00:45**

No, there's multiple parcels. This one is 5.5 acres. And then there's you'll show us on the GIS but there's other parts of the golf course that is on other parts of it. It's over 250 acres I think total. I think

that's a division line. This is the part that's the clubhouse where they're proposing. And this is all one piece 5 1/2 acres. Yeah, you get off in here.

**David Harwood** 1:01:39

Yeah, no, I was just talking about the clubhouse and cart barn. So where are these 100 parking spaces? That's this and that. Okay.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:02:01

Council, anymore questions for Mr. Rothrock

**Albert Yount** 1:02:05

Doug asked a question about Blowing Rock Fire and your answer was you hadn't heard. What does that mean?

**Kevin Rothrock** 1:02:12

I didn't receive any comments. Now the building plans have been submitted just recently, I think, last week. So, they will have an opportunity to review them too. But there was no comments based on this site location. And that's really all they would receive early on. But once they they'll do a review of the full building for building plans.

**Albert Yount** 1:02:35

So, our decision tonight would not be contingent on them.

**Kevin Rothrock** 1:02:41

No, you don't really have much involved in building code review. That's all done by staff. The fire department is involved in that as well. So that's a separate process.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:03:02

All right. Do I have a motion to close this hearing?

**Melissa Pickett** 1:03:08

So moved.

**Albert Yount** 1:03:09

Second

**Charlie Sellers** 1:03:09

Okay. I have a first and a second. Any further discussion? Council how do you vote?

**Albert Yount** 1:03:22

Yes

**David Harwood** 1:03:23

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 1:03:27

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 1:03:28

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 1:03:29

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 1:03:39

Thank you. Okay, we're moving right along to the regular agenda. And retreat recap, Mr. Fox.

**Shane Fox** 1:04:12

Thank you, Mayor and Council. I will move through this topic fairly quickly. In the past, I have stood up here and kind of going back through the retreat. I know tonight with sake of time, we've got quite a bit on the agenda, obviously left here behind me. So again, I'll move fairly quickly, but retreat recap. You'll see a long list of things up here for the audience and for the public. We met February 14th 15th 16th, shared Valentine's dinner together, which was fantastic. And we talked about all these topics over those three days. So, for the public, it's an impressive amount of time for the Council, and staff to submit literally three full days so it's literally from morning until night. Topics are being discussed. As we look through this list here above me. I put them in somewhat of an order. In the past, we've done kind of a top 10 list. This year, we focus more on the topics and then kind of a 10-year plan and a 20-year plan, when I'll show you a few slides in just a few moments with regards to kind of the long-term planning that we discussed. We looked a lot at our wastewater plant water plant, pump stations, meters, talked a lot about parking. Again, some of these things are coming back up tonight. So, the reason I'm doing this first is kind of laying the foundation for a lot of the topics that we've got on the agenda tonight and others that will have on the agenda in the next couple of months, police traffic and pedestrian safety, EMS, which is I think the next topic on the list. For tonight, underground utilities coming up later talked a lot about our parks and the needs there from Broyhill and the lake. Dredging, to the spillway needs and repairing the current condition and situation that we have there. Talked about Annie Cannon, Davant field bathroom needs across the Town, talked about our Part F grant, which we passed earlier tonight. And we'll move forward with that process just as soon as we can talk about our town buildings, most of our buildings, especially in this block have not really been renovated much so in the last decade or two, and there's needs that are going to be had there as we continue to grow. We did look back at 20 years and kind of looked at our growth over the last 20 year process as well to kind of show some metrics and milestones that we've been able to talk a lot about downtown talked about outdoor seating also talked about potentially overlay district and how that may play into the 2024 Comprehensive Plan and decided to go ahead and essentially move forward with the comprehensive plan a little bit sooner than what we thought or at least start that process. Talked about 1888 Museum and the needs, which will be a part of the operating budget that you have coming up this year. Those are fairly minor solar sustainability, we'll start implementing some of those practices, I think as we start putting some of the new designs in place like the park bathrooms, etc., and maybe some solar power and things of that nature that we've not utilized in the past. And then short-term rentals, which we just

talked about a few moments ago. So a long list here of things that we did talk about, we went into depth on every one of these some more than others for several hours. Again, some of these are coming back up tonight, a lot of these have already been started and put into the works. Something that we had not done in the past is kind of looking at long term plans. And I put a couple slides together that may be hard to see, I know they were in the packet, and we've gotten information that we can share with the public. Starting here with streets, so everything that we've done, you know, in the last number of years, a lot of it dates back to the 2014 bond issuance. And so really, since 2014, we hadn't really put together kind of a long-term plan for all of our infrastructure, streets, water, sewer, etc. And so part of what we started to do at the retreat is putting some placeholders in some years along with an estimated cost. And you'll see that as I kind of flip through here. Again, these aren't set in stone, these are just placeholders for us to be able to start planning, especially during the budget season, and what we currently have, and maybe what we have capacity to do when we start looking at debt capacity, and overall kind of debt appetite for what we're looking to do. So streets, you know, kind of running through the list, looking at road pavement, culvert replacements, road failures, ditches, sidewalks, and then kind of a new topic, which would be parking, you know, parking lots within that. And so as we talk through this, we looked through and we didn't have anything that was overwhelming, urgent within the sheriff's department other than probably looking at the North Main sidewalk piece, as we knew the main street water and sewer line, then went over to the big one, this is going to be hard for you all to see, I can tell you because it's someone having memorized our water and sewer needs. And the Council felt like this was by far, I think kind of the most urgent pressing these that we need to get on, thanks to Deanna and Ray we're able to move forward with the 4.8 million on the Main Street water and sewer line replacement. We had increased water rates last year, to start the process of being able to have the capacity to service that debt, for that 4.8 million, we thought about 5 million. And so, what that did by us receiving the benefits from the states of the state budget was allow us to kind of put some things back into perspective that we maybe were going to wait for a couple of years on, mainly with our water and sewer plant needs there. There's about two and a half million dollars that we felt like were fairly urgent. And it's hard to begin to see here that's kind of in column one or column two, column one two Main Street project. So, we looked at our water and sewer plants, and we talked about some of the more pressing needs there. Like I said, it's about 2.4 million, I think 2.5 million total. Within that. Then we looked at our pump stations and we have a pump station in Mayview that is fairly old and continues to provide some issues to us and what the potential replacement cost for that would be and then we looked at water meters as well. And so, we know that we've got an aging water meter system here in town, and combined, those are about four and a half of \$5 million, which kind of fits the placeholder that we had put there previously, and so Council discussed and we talked about moving forward potentially with USDA, that process is not yet been approved. It will be coming to you all in the next couple of months. So, McGill is working on that process. And then we went a little bit further, you'll read the paper across every small town in America. You know, water and sewer line replacements are something that are needed everywhere aging infrastructure, this town is no different other than the fact that I would say this town has done a better job than most replacing water lines and sewer lines that are really failing, Main Street being really the last big one that we have that's in front of us. So, we started looking kind of out further into the years ahead of us, what kind of needs we may have there from galvanized lines, terracotta sewer lines, things that nature. And so, what you see here, and again, it's hard to read here is kind of some placeholders of how we can systematically replace our aging infrastructure over the next, you know, 5, 10, 15, 20 years. And we've done so and put some things here, again, just

placeholders, that kind of put us in line as debt was rolling off to put that back on to be able to start replacing some of those. And so, again, a lot of this stuff is long term. But it's important for us to put out here now and start, you know, potentially talking about a plan. As we move forward with that. I put one slide up here from Parks and Rec, we had two slides, because we have that many wonderful park systems here. Just again, to give kind of an example of what we talked about during the retreat, it's starting to put some placeholders together and some product prioritization into some of the needs. You'll see behind me here, we put a memorial park as being, you know, kind of the top of the list, we know that we have the Part F grant that was approved, and we again tonight, we did approve that contract to move forward. For you that don't that may not be aware of that. That's a fairly major overhaul of our memorial park through the part of application, which is a half a million-dollar grant that we were able to receive in January, thanks to the State. After that, we talked about our spillway and Broyhill lake and the need potentially for dredging along with repairing that spillway. And then bathrooms was a big topic in that conversation. So, I went fairly quickly. Again, I know we've got a lot of things to talk about tonight. But the purpose of me doing this tonight was kind of laying the foundation for some of the things we're going to talk about in a few moments. But then just to re-emphasize the fact that we're appreciative of the time that was spent and the effort that was spent, you know, during those three days to help staff put together the work that you see here behind me and demonstrated earlier, so be glad to answer any questions.

**David Harwood** 1:12:26

I appreciate all the work you and staff did to get us ready for retreat.

**Shane Fox** 1:12:31

Absolutely.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:12:33

Thank you, Shane.

**Shane Fox** 1:12:34

Thank you. I'll say up here.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:12:37

Okay. Moving forward EMS Resolution.

**Shane Fox** 1:12:43

Thank you, Mayor. So, the EMS. topic has been discussed, at least each year since I've been here. And I know it goes back to 1974 when I think the first official records that we were able to find from Mayor Hayden Pitts that was submitted to the county. So, the Town of Blowing Rock has requested at least since 1974. And I don't know how consistently since then, but since I've been here, just about every year, we consistently requested to Watauga County for Watauga County to place and ambulance within the Town of Blowing Rock 24/7. So, we build our fire station, station one out on 321, I guess eight years ago, nine years ten years ago now with the housing and the quarters needed for that particular reason. And so, we have the quarters, we have the housing that was built for that purpose. And we continue to request that a number of years ago Watauga County moved a truck over from the



station by the hospital over here five days a week, nine hours a day. So, we do have a truck here, most weekdays nine hours a day. And that does vary depending on how that truck maneuvers. We still request each year that we have a 24/7 ambulance placed here. We do usually do that. And again, this is hard for you to read it was in your packet, we usually do this by a request of a resolution that you all agree upon tonight vote on and the Mayor signs. It's a formal resolution. This is the time of year that we would do this. As we go into our budget season the county is going to their budget season. So, this resolution does state that it states some facts that I will read to you in just a few moments on another slide. But this resolution states that once again, we asked Watauga County Commissioners if they would consider as a part of this budget process, putting a 24/7 Ambulance Service here within the Town of Blowing Rock. We state facts here that we believe further benefits our calls and supports our calls. Mr. Fox read the resolution. The data that we're utilizing, to put together this resolution I share with you because I think this is important. So, each year Watauga Medics, which is third party contractor that provides Ambulance service to Watauga County provides an annual report and we received that report last week. And the data here I like it if you don't mind me just briefly kind of go over some of these points. So, these are emergency calls. These are not all calls. So, you've heard me stand up here before and talk about the Alpha Bravo, Charlie Delta echo, Charlie Delta echo being the most severe in that order, Charlie to echo being the most severe. These are what I would consider these are what they considered emergency calls. So, these are Charlie Delta echo these your lights and sirens, someone needs emergency help. In 2021, there were 2,820 calls in Watauga County that Watauga Medics considered emergency calls, compared to 2016, where there was 2,281. So, there was an increase of 539 calls over a five-year period, they're in order by the number of calls starting with Boone, which was at 1,448 in 2021. That was up 177 or 14%, from 2016. Second to Blowing Rock with 414 calls, which was 132 up from 232 in 2016, which is a 47% increase. And then followed by that is the code Creek Fire District Fosco, Meat Camp, Deep Gap etc. So, I think this is telling of the fact number one that we have a significant amount of calls increase in calls in the last five years. And that Blowing Rock continues to outpace even Boone with the number of calls from percentage wise over the last five years. Something else to keep in mind. As we think of the bases there's currently three bases within Watauga County to or within the Town of Boone. One is at the intersection of 421 and 321, which is in the Cove Creek Fire District. Why that's important, is you'll see on these response times why Cove Creek has the second-best response time over all is because we believe the positioning of that base is obviously in close proximity to the Cove Creek area. Again, looking at a couple more data points that we put into the resolution is that the overall percentage of calls within the county or outside of the Town of Boone within the county continue to grow and outpace the town of Boone's calls. So, in 2016, the Town of Boone Fire District accounted for almost 56% of the calls, that's now roughly 51%, while the county in 2016, was only 44%. Now almost 49%. And so, the seems to be from the number of calls that we're seeing here on the report, the number of calls outside of Boone are starting to outpace at least percentage wise the calls within but from a growth standpoint. And then the bottom right-hand corner here is our response times looking at the Town of Boone, seven minutes and five seconds, Blowing Rock 11:27 Cove Creek at 9:39, followed by Fosco at 15:03. And then all the way down to the bottom. And so, as we received this report, and obviously, I know it's something that we talked about during the retreat, this is continued to be a priority to continue to ask for. We asked for your action tonight to formally accept the resolution for us to pass that along as part of our budget request to Watauga County.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:19:56

Does anyone have any questions? Yes Albert

**Albert Yount** 1:20:03

Are we open for discussion?

**Charlie Sellers** 1:20:05

Yeah

**Albert Yount** 1:20:07

I want to clarify something about this truck that comes over here, nine hours a day, five days a week. That is a figure that the county relies on and falls back on. That is not a correct statement.

**Shane Fox** 1:20:25

Correct. The truck is supposed to be here, nine hours a day, five days a week. That is correct.

**Albert Yount** 1:20:29

But in reality

**Shane Fox** 1:20:30

In reality, that truck. So in reality, it's a little more complicated than that. Obviously, there's only so many ambulances and service at any given point in Watauga County. And again, that's a county decision or a Watauga Medics decision, as calls are happening throughout the different parts of the county. This particular truck may not be positioned here, it may slide to the Town of Boone or may slide to another position within the county to better position itself. And that's something that happens periodically. So the truck doesn't necessarily sit here nine hours, if there's not a call, the truck isn't just sitting here nine hours a day, the truck is staying active. So the truck is scheduled to be here nine hours a day. But it's in constant motion depending on the number of calls that may be taking place. They also run convalescence services, which is to Foley center, perhaps the Winston Baptist things of that nature. And this particular truck may be utilized for that, or it may be slid into another location because another truck is being utilized for that.

**Albert Yount** 1:21:26

Well, what is the formula for someone else being more important than that truck being here

**Shane Fox** 1:21:33

Couldn't speak on behalf of the Watauga Medics plan, there's obviously a medical plan that's put into place and they follow their guidelines and their operations of how trucks are being slid and position points that are being used for that.

**Albert Yount** 1:21:45

And who makes the call to have that truck going to Boone

**Shane Fox** 1:21:49

Watauga Medics

**Albert Yount** 1:21:50

When it's advertised as being here

**Shane Fox** 1:21:52

Watauga Medics, their operational procedures would do that.

**Albert Yount** 1:21:54

The people that own the service

**Shane Fox** 1:21:57

Correct. Yeah, the County has a contract with Watauga Medics, and without going into a great amount of detail. It's a fairly generic contract doesn't necessarily speak of positioning or operations of the ambulance service. So that's not something that's a piece of that talks about times average times things of that nature, but doesn't go into when a truck would move or not move that will be on Watauga Medics to make that decision.

**Albert Yount** 1:22:20

Well since you have been Town manager, and you had great experience with this in Cleveland County as assistant manager, right?

**Shane Fox** 1:22:28

Correct.

**Albert Yount** 1:22:29

Is this purging of this truck that's advertised being here nine hours a day, five days a week. Is that increasing the purging of it to going somewhere else?

**Shane Fox** 1:22:44

I don't think I can answer that. Because I'm not sure of the exact location or how often that trucks being utilized. I don't think I can answer that particular question I'm not familiar enough with the operations of the service.

**Albert Yount** 1:23:00

Well, I certainly can, but I can guess

**Charlie Sellers** 1:23:05

Any other comments, guys

**Doug Matheson** 1:23:07

I'd like to go back to the resolution. And I was wondering if we could add now therefore it be resolved that the Town of Blowing Rock Town Council formally, again, request that the Watauga County Board of Commissioners approve the funding. Because this is not the first resolution that we have sent in.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:23:33

This is the second or third, is it not?

**Doug Matheson** 1:23:35

So, I was wondering if that would be too knit picky if we added that word in the resolution.

**Shane Fox** 1:23:43

It is your resolution

**Albert Yount** 1:23:45

Well, I'm all in favor of that and Doug's adjunct request. But what if we would get another ambulance over here? Is it going to be purged like this one? I mean, looks like the more ambulances we're supposed to get, the less we have.

**Shane Fox** 1:24:10

We will have no, I mean, even if an ambulance were to be here, 24/7, I'm not so sure that we would have any control over the logistics of that ambulance, that is probably not going to be something that we would have control over with the current situation.

**Albert Yount** 1:24:24

So no one becomes upset overly about this, I want you to give us a statement about our Fire and Rescue's immediate response team.

**Shane Fox** 1:24:38

From a timing perspective, so we're very fortunate here, following current Chief Graham's tenure as chief and Mr. Matheson's and others in the process to have a very top notch first responder program here. So, I know Chief Graham's on the call, roughly 14 full time employees, we have 11 paramedics, which is the highest level that you can get. So, when an ambulance shows up, usually have a basic and a paramedic on that ambulance paramedic being the highest level of that. So, 11 of our 14 individuals are our paramedics, which we utilize the first responder program to its fullest, I can say over the past year, having a chance to really dive in a little bit more and be a part of seeing some of the response times and calls, it is second to none. It is more than likely, under six minutes, especially here in Town, it's a very efficient process. And so, we're able to provide acute care to the individuals until an ambulance is to come on the scene. And so, it's top notch. Like I said, it's unlike anything that I think exists anywhere in this area, let alone perhaps in the state that exist with a number of paramedics and individuals that we've been able to put into service for the Town. And I think it's been done so because of the need that is here. It's not uncommon for us on a Saturday or a Tuesday, for instance, to have, you know, 5,6, 7 potential medical calls in a day within the Town limits, especially as we have busier times, some of those are considered simultaneous calls and where we have calls happening when the calls are being serviced. And so that's when we run into a situation that we would request redundancy, we request some systems within that.

**Albert Yount** 1:26:28

And that is only increased is it not

**Shane Fox** 1:26:31

It does appear as our call volume continues to grow, then just statistically, one would assume that as our numbers continue to grow, the number of times simultaneous calls take place would continue to grow as well.

**David Harwood** 1:26:47

Where would this resolution if we adopt that tonight, tell me the process and it would go from here.

**Shane Fox** 1:26:56

So, we, really two things. So, we receive each year an annual request from the county of items that we'd like to request of the county. So that's a budgetary process, we would attach it for that we would also secondly, send this to the County manager and ask this to be formally introduced to the County Commissioners. So, it would be a budgetary item. It would also be a formal item that will be sent to the County Commissioners as well.

**David Harwood** 1:27:17

Okay, thank you.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:27:22

Doug, would you like to make a motion

**Doug Matheson** 1:27:24

I make a motion that we send the resolution with the addition of that word being added

**Shane Fox** 1:27:32

The word again, correct.

**Doug Matheson** 1:27:33

Yes

**Albert Yount** 1:27:33

Okay.

**Shane Fox** 1:27:34

Second

**Charlie Sellers** 1:27:35

Albert seconds. Any further discussion? Albert

**David Harwood** 1:27:40

Yes

**Albert Yount** 1:27:40

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 1:27:43

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 1:27:44

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 1:27:47

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 1:27:47

Resolution passes. Thank you, Shane. All right, moving right along Board appointments. Mr. Fox,

**Shane Fox** 1:27:57

Certainly. So, we're a little bit late because of moving the retreat about a month late in doing this. We normally do this process during the month of February. But tonight, we have before you a number of candidates for our appointed boards. So, our Clerk is here to pass out ballots. When you have completed the ballot, give to Ms. Hubner and we will about a 10-minute break while she tallies the ballots.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:44:58

All right, what the tally come up with Mr. Fox

**Shane Fox** 1:44:59

The results of ABC Board, Jerry Starnes; BRAAC Bo Henderson and Whitney Brown; TDA Kevin Walker and Greg Tarbutton; Board of Adjustments EB Springs and the four members of the Planning Board are Thomas Barrett, Cat Perry, Christopher Squires and Sam Glover

**Kevin Rothrock** 1:45:31

Cat Perry was an alternate on the Board of Adjustments.

**Shane Fox** 1:45:42

Mr. Rothrock pointed out the Cat Perry is currently a member of the Board of adjustments, and we would need to appoint someone to the Board of Adjustments. I believe we contacted most of these people, and they were willing to serve so do we want to go and do that now. Do you need that in place?

**Doug Matheson** 1:46:15

Do you want to do a nomination, or you just want to go with who is left over?

**Shane Fox** 1:46:27

Who was fifth on the ballot? Do you want to do that?

**Albert Yount** 1:46:29

Yeah.

**Shane Fox** 1:46:30

Fifth on the Planning Board

**Hilari Hubner** 1:46:33

So that would be Paul McGill

**Albert Yount** 1:46:37

And he's alternate

**Shane Fox** 1:46:39

For Board of Adjustments. Does someone maybe want to make a nomination or a motion?

**Charlie Sellers** 1:46:48

Do you want to make motion?

**Albert Yount** 1:46:51

Yeah, I'll move Paul McGill will be appointed to the Board of Adjustments.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:47:03

Okay, do we have a second.

**Melissa Pickett** 1:47:05

Second

**Charlie Sellers** 1:47:07

Any discussion. Okay, we will vote on all the applicants. Albert.

**Albert Yount** 1:47:09

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 1:47:14

Yes

**David Harwood** 1:47:14

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 1:47:14

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 1:47:25

Yes

**Charlie Sellers 1:47:30**

Okay. All right. Very good. Thank you to everyone that sent in their applications. We greatly appreciate your willingness to get involved in the Town Blowing Rock. Okay, moving right along parking committee discussion, Shane.

**Shane Fox 1:48:13**

This time, I will turn it over to Chief Aaron Miller, and allow him to move forward with this agenda topic.

**Charlie Sellers 1:48:21**

Good evening, Chief.

**Aaron Miller 1:48:22**

Good evening, Mayor and Council. Like Mr. Fox said earlier during the Town Council retreat, we did spend some time talking about parking, particularly moving or the possibility of moving to a pay to park plan for Blowing Rock. So, we felt that the next step to move forward in that process would be to select a group of people who represented all the different interest groups, all the different interests in Blowing Rock to help make some recommendations back to the Town Council about how that should work. Particularly some issues would be time limitations on street parking, parking rates, things of that nature. So, I've put together a list of organizations and different interest groups, which I felt would represent everything in Blowing Rock, it did end up being a rather long list. But we felt like it was important that all the different groups have a say the residents, the business interests, the tourists, and visitors, as well as some of the different organizations and businesses that have some larger private parking that may be affected. So, the thought process was we would bring this group together for an initial meeting, talk about the plans, and then maybe break that up into a couple of smaller groups that can work on specific issues. For example, the churches, and some of the businesses that own parking lots may work on more of the for lack of better term public private partnership, part of the parking and people left over could work on some of the other issues like the time limitations, and the parking fees and that sort of thing. So, questions, comments?

**Albert Yount 1:50:21**

I just wonder. So I won't have to listen to it. Why the Catholic Church is not on there?

**Aaron Miller 1:50:33**

That is a good question. And that's mostly an omission on my part. Probably, though, the Catholic Church would not be impacted at all by our pay to park plan.

**Albert Yount 1:50:46**

Yes, I agree

**Aaron Miller 1:50:46**

Yes, I can definitely include them. That's probably just an omission on my part.

**Albert Yount 1:50:51**



I just didn't want them to feel left out.

**Aaron Miller** 1:50:53

Yeah, we can definitely have them.

**David Harwood** 1:51:02

The hotelier, I'm just thinking in terms of where they're located. And if that would be impacted or not.

**Aaron Miller** 1:51:18

We can certainly add or take away from this list any way you like, I spoke with Charles Hardin over at the Chamber and asked him to help choose a couple of businesspeople in Town that would be good representatives on this committee, and he has given me a couple of things. But if we need to include some others, we'll be happy to do that.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:51:42

So tonight, you would like also the Council will determine which two Council Members would like to be on this board. Is that correct?

**Aaron Miller** 1:51:48

Yes.

**Shane Fox** 1:51:50

If I may, Mayor, so we felt like this, rarely do we have more than one Council Member participate in a group who felt like this topic is obviously a large enough topic that perhaps two individuals seemed like a better fit, especially given the fact that we are going into uncharted territory and in discussing town wide this practice. Within that, that was the reason we requested two, again, it's up to you all. Can't do three, obviously, for good reason, we can do one or two up to this Council's decision. And I was going to add these entities listed on here, Chief has done a tremendous job in contacting each one of these entities and asking them to start the process of thinking who their representation would be not for us to pick that obviously. And so that process has already begun at one of the churches and some of the other entities that are listed here to allow them to have perhaps you know more of a say so and what are who they who they think would be a better representation of their entities within that. So, the churches have already started that process.

**Albert Yount** 1:52:53

A president was two of us was on the 321 committee

**Shane Fox** 1:52:58

Correct. That is correct. There was

**Doug Matheson** 1:53:03

I personally would love to serve on it one because I feel like I can bring in the years that I've been working on the shuttle system into this and help with that also. So I personally would love to be considered as one of them

**Pete Gherini** 1:53:17

I volunteer for one of the spots.

**Melissa Pickett** 1:53:19

I was going to say I would be interested being a previous business owner downtown and I feel I could add some experience to it

**Charlie Sellers** 1:53:29

Pete, Melissa could you step in the other room discuss this.

**Albert Yount** 1:53:32

Could you do three not work it out?

**Charlie Sellers** 1:53:38

Look Albert doesn't want to have to vote Okay.

**Albert Yount** 1:53:43

I mean is there a dartboard back there.

**Pete Gherini** 1:53:46

Yeah.

**Albert Yount** 1:53:51

I'm asking you three, you can go in that room and work between you three down to two.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:53:59

Look, we're closing this meeting tonight. Remember?

**Pete Gherini** 1:54:04

If that's what you want us to do?

**Albert Yount** 1:54:05

I mean, that is a question now.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:54:07

No, what? Okay. Doug spoke up first. Doug does have he has a good point. With the shuttle service, and of course years in Town. He's so I think Doug would be good.

**Pete Gherini** 1:54:30

I'll make it easy. I'll retract mine and let Melissa do it.

**Albert Yount** 1:54:35

Good. Thank you.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:54:36

Okay. All right.

**Doug Matheson** 1:54:37

And you are our representative from the TDA Board.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:54:42

David, you okay with that?

**David Harwood** 1:54:44

Yes, sir.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:54:45

Okay So would someone like to make a motion?

**David Harwood** 1:55:09

I'd like to nominate Melissa Pickett and Doug Matheson for the membership on the parking committee is that we're talking

**Albert Yount** 1:55:23

Second

**Aaron Miller** 1:55:23

Parking Advisory Committee

**Charlie Sellers** 1:55:25

May want to put in their allowing chief Miller to go forward with the setting up of the committee.

**David Harwood** 1:55:32

Yeah, that'd be fine with me. But are we going to talk about process? Or is this just as formulating the committee?

**Shane Fox** 1:55:41

Again, all open for discussion. But Chief and I had discussed, you know, first step is kind of perhaps getting this group together and opening up discussion if there's directive that you have now to provide and then we'll report back next month, I guess it kind of how that potential open first brainstorming meeting to place any directive would be more than appreciative obviously moving forward

**David Harwood** 1:56:03

Not so much a directive as an observation that I think getting everybody together but a committee of this size.

**Aaron Miller** 1:56:14

I think, in my, in my opinion, the process would be a much smaller group, maybe even staff with a Council Member or two present. I think this committee is more to come up with some recommendations on some broader issues like parking rates, the parking time limits, residential permits, if any, and those types of things. The process of implementation will probably come later. And we'll narrow that down to a much smaller working group of people.

**David Harwood** 1:56:51

Okay. Then I'll amend my motion to include asking Chief Miller to move ahead with this.

**Charlie Sellers** 1:56:58

Okay. All right. We have a second from Albert any further discussion? Okay, Albert.

**Albert Yount** 1:57:06

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 1:57:06

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 1:57:06

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 1:57:06

Yes

**David Harwood** 1:57:07

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 1:57:10

Okay, Chief thank you. Underground utilities.

**Shane Fox** 1:57:24

Thank you, Mayor and Council. This topic was discussed, obviously, in great detail by a group, led by the Chamber and Mr. William Brinker are both here tonight. And much more detail than I ever could go into and won't go into tonight at the retreat, and so a great deal of work by that particular group. And really that one individual Mr. Brinker solely putting a tremendous amount of work and effort into presentation that you saw at the retreat. And so, I've stolen a few slides from that presentation just to give a reminder to everyone. The math behind me is a scope of the project, essentially leading down around where The Get Away, John Winkler's hotel is currently located up to St. Mary's. And so, what you see behind me is the Main Street kind of corridor. And so, we're talking about underground utilities, we're not talking about all of downtown, we're talking about really this this one section of Main Street, again, from The Get Away, give or take down to St. Mary's. Talking about underground utilities, the picture behind me shows, you know, the spaghetti lines, etc., in different places, the large transformers up on the poles. And so, what we're talking about is the burying of the conduit to be able to move forward with obviously taking those poles and lines down, placing those within the conduit along with

replacing those transformers above ground with green boxes on the ground within that. The group went into a great amount of detail, showing the work that had been done by some of the utility companies and talking about the work that have been put into talking with homeowners and business owners, etc. And went into again, a great deal of detail and the work that they've done to get the word out on the street, so to speak with this project. We had never gone through as much detail as a Town and as much as they did through what you see behind me, which was overall an estimate of about \$4 million, a little less than \$4 million. Previously, we'd had a larger number that was presented again, a much larger scope project included all Mainstreet essentially all of downtown as part of that with McGill, but again, not to this level of detail with kind of what we're talking tonight. And what you see behind me is significant cost savings due to the fact that we are looking at a once in a lifetime timing was what was described by this group because of the Main Street water and sewer project that we discussed earlier tonight and past that acceptance of that contract. And so, as we know as we go into 2022 to 2023, We'll start the Main Street project. And so, the Chamber group presented this as being something that the timing could not have been more perfect. Like I said, it's kind of a once in a lifetime opportunity. So, their cost estimate is \$4 million. Again, that's not an exact number. We do not have biddable documents at this point, we don't have an overall finite scope or design, not we have scope and not design of the conduits, placements, etc. That's coming up in just a few moments. We talked a little bit about potential funding at the retreat, but not really into the detail. We have looked into a couple of different options, utilizing installment financing banknote financing essentially a 10-year, 15-year type look the 10 years, at 2%. Again, these are numbers that are subject to change as of right now it's about \$400,000 annually and debt service 15 year with the we want to hire two and a quarter is about \$315,000 annually. We did put here other options. I know you all have discussed different options, perhaps bonds or things of that nature, some timing gets into play with that and how that looks. It really gets to the point of the ask tonight. So, as it was stated during the retreat, the current need is for Blue Ridge Energy and McGill to work together over the next 90 to 120 days to put together a finite scope, detailed design placements, locations, numbers, etc., of the conduits that need to be put into the ground in order to accomplish the scope of the project. McGill's work is going to be tying those utilities in together along with the project itself that we have before you, which is the water or hadn't for you earlier now, which is the Main Street water and sewer project. BREMCO has a standard 5% cost of what they believe is their estimated number, which is the top number here. So, if you take that top number of \$1.3 million times 5%. That is where you get their \$66,000 number which is a standard 5% cost for them to move forward with a much more detailed design of the conduit plan. And then McGill's cost proposal is \$50,000 to tie those together to essentially produce a biddable document that we can have as an alternate bid when we go to the market to bid out the Main Street water and sewer project. So, we did talk into detail at the retreat. This project, if it moves forward is a separate project in a bidding capacity, its bid as an alternate. It's not part of the Main Street funding that's coming from the state the \$4.8 million this is a separate project so to speak, even though it's going to be potentially consolidated or accumulated within the overall Main Street project. And so, tonight's ask is if the Council chooses to move forward with this is \$116,781 to move forward or allow the BREMCO and McGill to move forward with producing biddable documents essentially over the next 120 days, I believe is our timeline. For that, I'll try to ask answer questions I know in the Chamber groups here as well they're not necessarily on the agenda speak but if there's detailed questions, they're probably more able to answer these questions and I am

**Albert Yount** 2:03:15

There's prohibition against the utilities and what our water sewer unless there're bid separately. Is that Correct?

**Shane Fox** 2:03:28

Correct so that the \$4.8 million that we received from the state is being moved to us through DEQ is that right? So, moving that through so that's water and sewer only. So that has to be a separate document separate bid document, separate design process within that particular product

**Albert Yount** 2:03:47

Is there a prohibition against say contractor X getting both contracts?

**Shane Fox** 2:03:52

No, there is not. We would bid it as an alternate is that the proper

**Doug Chapman** 2:03:57

It is our expectation to bid as one project and we hope to have one contract for the project, but we will track them each fund separately. So, all this would be a completely separate bid divisions is what we call them at McGill. So, we would have a division bid item for underground utility, a division for bid items of water and a division for sewer because the state's already told us that water and sewer need to be tracked separately. Okay, because that's the way they do it.

**Shane Fox** 2:04:33

Same if we ended up moving forward with the North Main sidewalk portion that would be another separate piece to that as well.

**Albert Yount** 2:04:41

That's not here tonight?

**Shane Fox** 2:04:43

That is not here tonight. That is correct.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:04:47

Council

**Doug Matheson** 2:04:50

Where is would you come up with \$116,00 at

**Shane Fox** 2:04:56

Given the fact that we had not budgeted for this previously as part of the budget process it come from fund balance. So, we have typically utilized fund balance savings essentially to pay for items that come up that are unexpected throughout the year.

**Doug Matheson** 2:05:09

And that would be made up how.

**Shane Fox** 2:05:13

Unknown at this point, I mean, the year is obviously still ongoing. So, revenues and expenses are continuing to be generated. So, at this point, where the year may end up is still a little bit uncertain, we know that we're kind of turning ahead a little bit in some different areas that Nicole presented to you at the retreat. And so, we would hopefully have a better year to make that up. Anytime we utilize fund balance, for any expense, obviously, that's dipping into what we call savings. Within that we like to keep a 50% threshold. So that would dip into that savings piece.

**Pete Gherini** 2:05:52

Can ask and ask a question of Charles, or is he going to make a presentation?

**Charlie Sellers** 2:05:59

Yes, you can. But no, he's not.

**Pete Gherini** 2:06:01

Okay. Charles, in terms of funding, is the Village Foundation a possibility for looking at funding.

**Charles Hardin** 2:06:17

I really can't speak to that. They haven't, but there are a couple of places in this budget, that the Village Foundation might be able to assist with some of those items. I am not speaking for the Village Foundation.

**Pete Gherini** 2:06:45

I understand that, but since the Village Foundation isn't here. So, I think that I happen to agree that this is the time to do it. But I also want to understand the cost figures and how we really tie those down. \$116,000 as I've been told, is really something that has to be done so that a contractor would be able to come in and specifically know the detail of what is going to happen. I think there are also potential other pockets of money. And, you know, if we go down the road, I'm happy to explore with some people where that money would come from.

**Shane Fox** 2:07:33

I would add so the \$4 million number that has been generated as an estimate is an estimate. So, until we if we're going to move forward with the project, this would be step number one for us to be able to obtain biddable documents.

**Pete Gherini** 2:07:47

So that would be the what we get from that is what you would give to a contractor to make the bid or bids from various contractors.

**Shane Fox** 2:07:58

That is correct.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:08:01

If I understand correctly, Doug if this money is not spent, there's no moving forward whatsoever with underground utilities.

**Doug Chapman** 2:08:09

We don't know any better information what you already have. And yet, at some point, you'll have to make the decision. Do you want to try to put it in the water and sewer project?

**Melissa Pickett** 2:08:21

And that constitutes this step?

**Shane Fox** 2:08:23

Correct

**William Brinker** 2:08:25

That's correct, can I speak to that?

**Charlie Sellers** 2:08:28

Yes

**Shane Fox** 2:08:29

So again that \$116,000 is part of a rough \$4 million estimate. So, it's not in addition to that's lumped into the Engineering budget, the bottom and top number from BREMCO. But you got to spend that money, right? To take it out to be able to then firm up all these numbers with that contractor, just the same as the water and sewer project. You guys have a \$4.8 million budget. But until McGill finishes the plans and takes it out to bid and itemizes out with the contractor. You might be high or low on that, right? You don't know. You got to spend engineering dollars to then take it out and get firm numbers. So, if you're wondering parallel, from a timing perspective, you do need to commit to spending that money I'll say now, in order to get those drawing sets generated concurrently with the water and sewer that's provided submitted to practically go underground at the same time. So, it really is a timing thing. I would add one of the timing issues that the reason we added to the agenda tonight was that the state produced the letter of intent to fund on Friday with an August 1 deadline for those documents to be presented. So that that is why the conversations happening tonight

**Melissa Pickett** 2:09:50

And these would have to be filed by that August 1 deadline also?

**Shane Fox** 2:09:54

They wouldn't have to be a part of the project. I wouldn't think Doug I mean, I'm not sure

**Doug Chapman** 2:09:57

It will happen in parallel, but it doesn't have to be completed by August.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:10:02



Ok

**Doug Matheson 2:10:03**

It's ironic, the State gave the Town five months to serve by design and get everything ready. And they have four months just to review it.

**Melissa Pickett 2:10:15**

I'm married to that government, I completely understand your pain

**Charlie Sellers 2:10:31**

What do you think Council?

**David Harwood 2:10:33**

Doug, this is probably an unfair question. But do you have an opinion one way or another about this estimate? This \$3.9 million?

**Doug Chapman 2:10:46**

I'll give you a fact.

**David Harwood 2:10:48**

I'll take a fact day over an opinion.

**Doug Chapman 2:10:51**

I filled up my car at the house and gas was \$3.35 a gallon and today it's \$3.99 a gallon. So, when I turned over the magic eight ball, it says, you know, it could be more. It's kind of hard to tell right now. But what I will say is, if you if you don't do this you won't know, you'll still be guessing.

**David Harwood 2:11:20**

And right there's why architects and engineers don't get along

**Shane Fox 2:11:27**

It depends is his favorite word.

**Doug Chapman 2:11:29**

I will say this, if it were my money, I would bet it's going to be a little higher.

**Charlie Sellers 2:11:33**

But we have no way of knowing.

**David Harwood 2:11:35**

Thank you.

**Shane Fox 2:11:38**

It depends is his favorite word is

**Charlie Sellers** 2:11:41

One of you like to, I am sorry Doug, go ahead.

**Doug Matheson** 2:11:42

Yeah, I've got a couple of questions left please sir. And we're looking at what 12 boxes that is going to have to be brought down to what I consider eye level

**Shane Fox** 2:11:53

The answer that I was received was 12 to 16 is kind of the rough number.

**Doug Matheson** 2:11:58

So we're taking something that we don't see and bring it down to where we do see. I mean, how big are those boxes?

**William Brinker** 2:12:07

There's two different size boxes that we're talking about the boxes, you'll generally see, one's a four by four was a four by eight, all boxes would not be located necessarily on Main Street. So again, every time you come off Main Street, you've got to go down a side street. So, a lot of boxes will be located in medians and things on the side street. An example would be, you know, if you pass down Take Heart, you know behind the First Citizens building, there's a median there across from AT&T building where we locate a box that would eliminate the box and the pole that you currently see if you're looking up I guess when you type out what you see is depending on what you're looking at right now, but that you know that one particular would go on a side street. So, it does it depends. I've got an illustrative design already from BREMCO. But that's part of engineering dollars for them to specifically say this is where this one can go this is where that one can go. But we're looking at about 16 boxes.

**Doug Matheson** 2:13:11

Do we have easements

**Shane Fox** 2:13:14

Easements have not been obtained

**Doug Matheson** 2:13:15

For those locations

**William Brinker** 2:13:17

You have some easements already. Of most of the effective properties, so we did identify you know what we deem to be like a truly effective property or similar might be knowingly having to locate a box located guidewire etc. and have gotten strong support verbally from each of those property owners that are there to support a project

**Doug Matheson** 2:13:41

But if we have to buy any is that fingered in this cost?

**Shane Fox** 2:13:45

No right of ways in factoring the cost. In the presentation that we did at the retreat we did allocate about six parking spaces that are owned I'll say by the Town. So no costs per say in dollars out but maybe sacrifice in a space given of which some of those spaces are located on corners you'll notice that several power poles are located on corners or I think the town wants to eliminate parking spaces anyway for public safety so that when you're in a corner you're not looking into a car before look around the corner these boxes are smaller than that of the car so it's not like a total taking up six it's some combination thereof

**Doug Matheson** 2:14:32

Question for you please Mr. Manager. Let's just say we base it on the \$4 million then what would you guess of a tax increase would that would be

**Shane Fox** 2:14:47

So, depending on funding, and Ms. Norman is here as well. And again, these are numbers we requested a couple of our bank contacts that we normally used in the past for installment financing. That's where these numbers have come from. So again, fluctuation with interest rates, etc. could make a big difference within that. So, if we go solely talking tax increase our current value on the penny is 120. So, if you're looking behind me here, at \$400,000, you're talking a little bit more than three and a half, probably three, three and a half cent. On that, if you're talking on 315, then you're talking more like two and a half to three-ish cent. If we're talking the tax rate being utilized for that

**Doug Matheson** 2:15:31

So, I'm looking at just guessing. My fuzzy math probably. Let's take an average home saying \$500,000, then we're looking at maybe \$50 bucks a cent roughly.

**Shane Fox** 2:15:35

Yeah, 50 to 60

**Doug Matheson** 2:15:52

So you're looking at \$200 roughly, there increase

**Shane Fox** 2:15:59

For just the numbers we're talking about.

**Doug Matheson** 2:16:01

Right? So you're looking at \$200 increase roughly right there.

**Shane Fox** 2:16:06

Correct, sir.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:16:13

Council?

**Albert Yount** 2:16:15

I have got something to ask

**Charlie Sellers** 2:16:16

Okay, go for it.

**Albert Yount** 2:16:19

Over this weekend, I managed to find about 25 people who had the courage to say they voted for me. And although I really respect their intelligence, not but two of them knew about this. And I'm being serious. So, who's doing a poor job of informing the public? What's our taxes go up, Doug?

**Doug Matheson** 2:16:46

Well, that was just rough guess If

**Albert Yount** 2:16:49

Yes, there is a lot of ifs. The other thing is, I thought Bill Hall had some good ideas. And there are some hybrid situations that we haven't looked at, because we're being told that this is a onetime thing. Now maybe they have quit making backhoes and concrete saws. But that's bothering me that of those 25 people. I've talked to who are full time residents responsible enough to vote? Only two of them, knew about this? That's a problem with me. I'm not going to get into the weeds about the aesthetics, of course, it will look better. I have no question about that. The transformers bother me. I'm told, rumor has it that they're 10 feet by 10 feet? I don't know. And I'm from the city of Newton always have to get that in here. But they have underground wiring in their what's called the Court Square, that's about a six-block area. And you can only see one transformer in all that area. And it's not 10 by 10. Now Doug may know more about that? I think assuming they're in alleyways, but I drove through Newton only has two alleys in in the downtown fire district. Where would they be Doug?

**Doug Chapman** 2:18:34

I can't tell you for sure even though we've done some work downtown Newton. Some of that is like Blowing Rock. Some of the services are behind the structures, some of what you have here, and what you might be able to answer. Some of them here are also switches. Because I'm telling you from what I remember, there are several circuits that come through downtime. And they can be fed from different directions. So, if there's a problem with the system, somewhere right up here, there's a switch, and it switches the circuit from being one way or the other. Well, that switch has to be in a box somewhere. That switch doesn't go away, when you put utility underground, it still has to stay, it has to be in a box so the guy with the pole you saw in the picture can reach in in switch it. So, some of that sort of things. It's not always just transport and the information that William mentioned, or the things that BREMCO told the group that this would have to be 4 by 4 or 4 by 8. So that's the best information that they have. I mean, everything's not finalized. That's why it has to be designed. I mean, they've estimated how many conduits in different sections, but that's part of the design process is going out and figuring out the details of that.

**Shane Fox** 2:20:10

And I would add that maybe the 10-foot section that was discussed during the retreat is, I think a clearance on some of these boxes, you got to have a 10-foot clearance to be able to see the poles behind me get access to it.

**Doug Chapman** 2:20:21

Some of those boxes have 10-foot clearance on one side, and some of those boxes have to have 10 foot clearance on both sides. Just depends on the boxes.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:20:32

If I recall, there was discussion at the retreat presentation about the this could be done in phases. If I recall, we asked about that, that the first part was getting the conduit in when we had the road tore apart, because most likely the roads not going to be tore apart in any of our lifetimes again. But if we got the conduit in then the lines could be ran at a different time into the conduit. Am I incorrect in that, William?

**William Brinker** 2:21:03

I'm going to say in all likelihood, right. So, we didn't discuss the basic plan. But practically speaking, that's what will happen is they pull circuits down from above ground and do it below. It doesn't all happen at once it's going to happen in phases. The key savings, right? I'm saying the ones that a lifetime is the roads can be dug up for water and sewer, all asphalt, it's got to be put back. Right. So rather than having to go back in at a later date, and disrupt the downtown businesses, the time to get the underground infrastructure is while, we're already going to have that major disruption. That's especially the big savings of doing that project today is versus, you know, kicking the can down the road again. And I think that just like you don't have a crystal ball, I think the only thing we can all probably agree on without having a crystal ball is a long way towards going to cost.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:21:57

But that infrastructure can't be determined without spending this \$116,000.

**William Brinker** 2:22:03

That's right. You know, the I did the best to get as much free engineering out of all five utility providers as I could. You know, to get down to it. Those numbers do include, you know, overages increase, you know, so we thought we had 5,000 feet or 6,000 feet. Right? I'm going to give a budget question. You know, I feel pretty good about budget. Because there's going to be spoilers, there's going to be, you know, left and right turns show on a draw. But it's yeah, I'll say without, without making the next capital commitment. You won't know.

**David Harwood** 2:22:52

I'd like to thank the Chamber for pushing this forward. And everybody that worked on this and special thanks to you, William. We're only here because of your leadership. So, thank you for that. Albert, with regards to your comment, I think you've got 23 people that aren't informed and don't care to be informed, because we have talked about this for 20 years, and we talked about it at retreat, and we've talked about it.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:23:26

That's true, but not this phase of it. But, you know, I'm not going to argue with anybody. You have an opinion yourself and so do I what we got to keep in mind is, this is strictly, it's just like the water, sewer, or anything else we would do in Town. Before a lot of the publics can be made aware of it, we already have firm numbers in place. Okay. So, I would think that you know, because once the comeback, if you all choose to spend the \$116,000 then you'll have firm numbers so the public, we'll probably have to have a public hearing, and people will be better aware of what's going on, I think. But right now, we're kind of at a loss. We don't really get a good estimate, I guess

**David Harwood** 2:24:18

What I was going to say what I was going to finish by saying is, it really comes down to what we think our margin is and what we can absorb. And we've got a lot of infrastructure things that we need to do. We've got a lot of parks things that we need to do. But I don't think there's a Town better position to do this than we are, especially in light of our re-evaluation. So, you know, I've been on the fence about this for a long time, but I'm excited about it and I'd like to see us move at least ahead to get and I'm willing to spend \$116,000 to find that out.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:24:57

Would you like to make a motion?

**David Harwood** 2:24:59

I If no one else has any other discussion, I will.

**Albert Yount** 2:25:04

Now expand on revaluation. That's revenue neutral.

**David Harwood** 2:25:09

I realize that's revenue neutral. But at the same time, there may be a tax increase. Just because we had a revaluation doesn't mean that we may not. We may not consider raising taxes for good reason.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:25:25

Well I really think that's kind of premature right now.

**Albert Yount** 2:25:28

You put parentheses around may

**Charlie Sellers** 2:25:30

I think that's premature right now, Albert You all have to decide on whether to go forward or not, which is the

**David Harwood** 2:25:36

Well, I will make a motion that we move forward with this proposal.

**Pete Gherini** 2:25:40

I'll second it.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:25:41

We have a first we have a second from Pete. Now. Do we have any additional discussion?

**Doug Matheson** 2:25:49

No I just, like said I will second I appreciate all the work has been done. But I'll have to make my vote on the people who I have talked to here in Blowing Rock residents and how they feel about it. And that's how my vote will be.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:26:05

Melissa, any comments?

**Melissa Pickett** 2:26:08

I would just say that I agree with all the comments have been made that I said this in retreat that, you know, we have Shane brought, bless his heart \$48 million worth of projects the Town has \$54 million Over the next 20 years. There's urgency projects, such as our water and sewer plant, but there's also time urgency. And to me this one. Yeah, you know, putting utilities underground might not rank to me over replacing equipment, water and sewer. But the timing is not something that we can look away from. I mean, bless ya'lls heart I don't plan on being here when we rip up Main Street again to replace water and sewer lines. But I just don't think this is an opportunity that we can pass up. So

**Charlie Sellers** 2:27:02

David, you made the motion. Would you like to say anything else before the vote?

**David Harwood** 2:27:06

No

**Charlie Sellers** 2:27:06

Okay, Albert.

**Albert Yount** 2:27:07

Well, I'll feel rushed on this. And no matter what David believes about my constituency. I have confidence in them.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:27:18

How do you vote

**Albert Yount** 2:27:18

I will not be able to vote for this.

**Charles Hardin** 2:27:21

Okay.

**David Harwood** 2:27:22

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 2:27:24

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 2:27:26

As I said, I can't

**Pete Gherini** 2:27:29

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 2:27:30

Okay. It does pass. At least that'll give everybody an idea on what it really going to take. And that's for another day. Thank you for your time.

**David Harwood** 2:27:48

Thank ya'll.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:27:49

Y'all spent a lot of time on that, Charles. And we'll see how it goes moving forward. Okay. All right. Moving right along. We have a Parks Recreation summer camp fees.

**Shane Fox** 2:28:05

Thank you, Mayor. So as we go into each budget season in the February, March, April May timeframe like we are right now. We pass a budget obviously effective July 1, that includes all of our fees, our summer camp fees, and part of that we're coming into a new summer camp season, which registration will begin very soon, with fees that were approved last year for the current budget season. So, we have been in discussion of particularly re-evaluating those fees as we go into registration. Again, this year, which would need a discussion and potential approval from you all given the fact that you did remove the original fees current fees that we have so Park and Rec. Director Ms. Brown is here to present her case on this

**Jennifer Brown** 2:29:00

Good evening, Mayor and Council for over 12 years our summer day camp fee for Blowing Rock taxpayers has been \$70 per week. This includes childcare each day from 7:30am to 5:30pm, camp supplies, field trips pool time, camp shirts, snacks, with the growing cost of goods and services as well as the increase in hourly wages for employees. We are recommending that we increase camp fees to \$100 per week beginning this summer. We have compared our fees with other summer day camps offered in and around our area. We are significantly lower than all of them. Our summer camp will only be offered to Town employee children, Blowing Rock taxpayers and we are also going to open it to Blowing Rock School students. Attached and up on the screen is our price comparison. For each camp, the national average of our summer camps, as well as sort of a breakdown of our costs. So as y'all can see if you look currently right now if you're a Blowing Rock taxpayer, you pay \$70, a non-taxpayer pays



\$120. Watauga County Parks and Recreation if you are a Watauga County resident you pay \$125 per week, and they keep it the same for non like if you are from Avery, or Ashe. Deer Valley is a private club. But if you're a member, it's \$275. and non-members \$350. Beach mountain summer camp is \$240 per week, and non-beach mountain residents \$290 per week. Hours of operations vary greatly. We also have Lenoir who is right down the mountain their member cost is \$250 a week. And if you are not from Lenoir, it's \$375 a week. So we broke it down, we asked if they provide lunch if they provide snacks. Most of them don't provide some do provide Watauga County Parks and Recreation works with the school system. They are an accredited organization so they can work with the school system. And they provide meals for their summer camp programs. Watauga County and ourselves are the only one that's open for the amount of hours that were open from 7:30 to 5:30, which helps cover parents who are working, they have to be at work at eight and don't get off till five at least for their so they can drop them off early and pick them up later. Everybody else's hours are much smaller 8:30 to 5:30. 8:00 to 5:00 Lenoir is even 9:00 to 4:00, the average North Carolina camp this was back in 2017. If you were a member, it was \$215 a week and a non-member was \$425 a week. So do we have any questions.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:29:00

Thank you Ms. Brown

**Doug Matheson** 2:32:11

Are we going to talk also, and this might be something you would discuss the department heads? Or is these the only fees that you're looking at probably raising this summer or we don't talk discuss others later on.

**Jennifer Brown** 2:32:24

We can discuss others later on. The issue that we have right now is that our Registration for summer camp is starting next week. So, I didn't want to have registration start and then go back to them and say Just kidding. It's gonna be more money than what we originally were saying. So, you know, instead of \$70, it's \$100. I felt like we needed to go ahead and advertise what the cost was going to be right now versus changing it on them later.

**Doug Matheson** 2:32:56

And this is your recommendation.

**Jennifer Brown** 2:32:58

Yes sir

**Melissa Pickett** 2:32:59

So, Jennifer, if I read this right, right now, at the rate you're charging. We don't even break even on amp. I'm sorry. You all don't break even

**Jennifer Brown** 2:33:10

Correct

**Melissa Pickett** 2:33:13

You're supplementing \$10,800 a year to run camp. So, at your new rate you are at least going to break even now?

**Jennifer Brown** 2:33:20

Yes, that's the goal.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:33:22

Okay.

**Doug Matheson** 2:33:22

I'll make a motion we move forward

**Charlie Sellers** 2:33:31

All right. Doug's made a motion says we need to move forward with this. Do we have a second?

**Melissa Pickett** 2:33:37

I will second that

**Charlie Sellers** 2:33:39

Do we have any additional discussion? Albert, how do you plead?

**Albert Yount** 2:33:44

Who am I to argue with Jennifer. So yes

**David Harwood** 2:33:52

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 2:33:56

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 2:33:59

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 2:33:59

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 2:34:00

Thank you, Ms. Brown.

**David Harwood** 2:34:02

Thank you, Jennifer.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:34:04

All right, moving right along, we add an addendum to our agenda, which is parking and outdoor seating. Would you like to lead off with this?

**Shane Fox** 2:34:13

Absolutely. Mayor, thank you, coming to our last action item for the night before nine o'clock. So thank you all for them very efficient meeting.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:34:22

They don't want to have a second meeting.

**Shane Fox** 2:34:25

I will turn it over to Mr. Rothrock who led this discussion at the retreat with regards to outdoor dining, current ordinance, and a little bit, maybe a background if that's okay. Kevin, you don't mind coming up and kind of rehashing a little bit of that conversation.

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:34:55

Discussed at the retreat, it was brought up a little bit tonight. We want to take a look at our outdoor dining, our parking requirements based on restaurants, size of the restaurants, square footage, all those things. And understanding that things have changed in the last couple of years due to the pandemic. More people being here in town in an offseason, it seems like I think we can all see that, even to the middle of the week, at times in, November, December. And understanding that it does put additional burden on some of the restaurants and the availability that they have. But with that, we've got an ordinance that's existing, and we need to, it was 12 years ago that we made some adjustments to our downtown parking requirements for restaurants and for retail and office and the full evaluation of those standards back then, and yielded some relief for restaurants, particularly in reducing the amount of parking that they had to have for indoor dining and for outside dining. And we're trying to circle back and enforce what our ordinance says, there are restaurants and other establishments that have a special use or conditional use permit that that defines how many parking spaces that they have to have, how many outdoor seats they have to have. And so, we are trying to be consistent, and also understand the needs of the community. So, with that, we need to take a detailed look at our standards at the environment downtown. Understanding that there's just not simply not as much space in downtown as there is out on the bypass. And we could look at other communities what they do. But the first step would be to start with the Planning Board. And now that we have a full board it would be good to break a committee off of that, establish a subcommittee and dig into those details and involve the community where we can and come up with some other standards that might be accepted. I did include this. This is a little snapshot of the parking standards and how they relate to parking for downtown. So, this is there's two tables in the parking standards. Two different tables. One is for all areas of town, and one is specific for town centering and central business. One thing that may throw you off when this was grouped in use categories, restaurant it says no carry out or drive thru service. That sort of 8.2, there are several use categories in our land use good 8.1 8.2, 8.3. And they're all different and are all different in where districts are allowed. One that includes drive thru is not allowed downtown is only allowed on the bypass. So that may throw you off a little bit. All the restaurants downtown are allowed to have carry out. And so that may be confusing as you read it and we can we can make some

adjustments to the reading of what our code says it still says the same thing. But if it's a little confusing. That's why it says. I'll be glad to answer any questions. I hope that I can summarize what we discussed.

**David Harwood** 2:38:54

So, what is the request? That that we involve the Planning Board in this? Or?

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:39:04

Well, if we're going to have any ordinance come before you. We need to start with the Planning Board. And if you assign that to us to the Planning Board, we'll do the work and bring an ordinance recommendation back to you. If there's no change. That's what we arrive at. We'll bring that too

**Shane Fox** 2:39:25

So, if I would just add that the two Council Members that had asked for this to be placed on the agenda had asked for it to be moved to the Planning Board with open discussion tonight with any directive that would be associated with that recommendation to the Planning Board. I believe that's how it was worded.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:39:46

Kevin, if we send this to the Planning Board tonight, can it move through the Planning Board, and you all have recommendations back to the Council by the May meeting for us to do an approval?

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:39:59

May

**Melissa Pickett** 2:39:59

Yes

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:40:01

We'll try. I can't say for certain we will certainly try

**Pete Gherini** 2:40:06

Considering in listening to what the restaurant people have said they've got planning to do. And I don't think it's fair to them to have this saying I understand the process. But I would recommend that we put a hold on the, on the interpretations of this and tell Kevin, you and the Planning Board and the new Planning Board people make your recommendation and then come back to us. But I don't think it's fair to restaurant people to just be hanging out there waiting for something.

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:40:42

You said interpretations. You mean, enforcement?

**Pete Gherini** 2:40:45

Yeah, enforcement. Sorry. Thank you.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:40:48

Since retreat, you put the notice out that everybody needs to be back in compliance. Correct?

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:40:54

I have not done that yet, that was two weeks ago. I haven't, I knew it was coming back up.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:40:57

Okay. Well, no I was just asking. That was a retreat.

**Albert Yount** 2:41:04

You haven't?

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:41:05

I have not

**Albert Yount** 2:41:06

Why did some of them get into compliance.

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:41:12

I did that in the fall. We did this in the fall. And so, a lot of these came into compliance. There are some that have not. Who's who came into compliance?

**Albert Yount** 2:41:23

Who did not

**Melissa Pickett** 2:41:27

I don't think that should be done in public.

**Albert Yount** 2:41:33

Well, history is an elixir to me, I majored in it. I'll explain that. I do. But I know. We did this late sore in the retreat and a human mind absorb so much. And we had a big retreat. And I went along with what's the history of why they had open air dining, and that's been taken away.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:42:08

COVID

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:42:11

Okay.

**Albert Yount** 2:42:12

And by what authority was that done?

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:42:18

Okay with the original restrictions that were placed on restaurants by the state limiting capacity will go back that far. They were allowed to move some seating outdoors. Yeah. And we said, Sure, it makes

perfect sense. We want to keep people open as much as we can do whatever we can do to help restaurants move along. And then the pandemic is this kind of thing? Well, we're gonna restrict it back, we're gonna come back to what the ordinance says, well, then things take off. Again, it's a well, let's let's hold on, then it looks like well, let's bring it back in and that was this fall. And that's where we are now, we discussed it, and retreat. My understanding is that you want us to enforce what the ordinance says and what everyone's permit requires them to have.

**Albert Yount** 2:43:13

Yeah. And I was involved in saying that. And I have looked at this with a little different eye because restaurant people, Melissa asked you a very valid question. I mean, how long is it gonna take the Planning Board? You don't know. Nobody knows, and I respect that. But these people don't have to start hiring for the season. And they know what the hell to do now. So, I'm of the mindset to stay taking this away from them. Okay, the worst-case scenario would be that when the planning board comes around and presents and we decide, then we might take it away. I'm somewhat doubtful about but these people need to know something. They have got to hire people.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:44:09

Are you making a motion?

**Albert Yount** 2:44:11

I'll make a motion that we stay, suspending of your special compensation that what would you call it? What did you call it?

**Shane Fox** 2:44:24

So, I would add, if I may, the decision was made early on within the state of emergency and the COVID restrictions that we had to eliminate enforcement of the ordinance. So it's an enforcement issue of the current ordinance. The current ordinance that we have is still in place, the one that was put into place, I think last amended, it says here in 2010, it's still in place. It's the enforcement of that ordinance.

**Albert Yount** 2:44:50

Well, that was my motion will stay relaxed on the enforcement.

**Pete Gherini** 2:44:54

Okay, I'll second Albert's motion.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:44:58

Discussions, guys.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:44:59

I'm doing Have a question on that. So, when you look when you lacks the enforcement on the restaurants, was it? Is it done on an individual basis? On judging?

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:45:14

No, it's everyone

**Melissa Pickett** 2:45:15

I understand that but how do you decide? Restaurant A gets four extra tables, restaurant B gets 10 Extra tables? Is it? That's what I'm asking is individually? Yeah. Is it an individual basis? Not saying that that one way or the other is bad. I'm just asking how you're doing it.

**Shane Fox** 2:45:35

So in discussions in which we had early on, we used a lot of other examples. So some some towns were allowing access into public property. So wider sidewalks, common areas, we don't have that luxury here. We discussed not allowing tables to be put onto the sidewalks not allowing access to public was something we did discuss early on as being something that we probably would not allow because we don't have access to that. So we discussed you know, from a current property owner standpoint, parcels that they own, that would be the determination within that was the early own discussion. Others like I said, Town of Boone has wider sidewalks and areas they allow certain people to be in the streets were in the parking places. I mean, there's there was a lot of things going on. We didn't think that we had that ability here from a safety standpoint, clearance, obstruction, etc to do that type of thing. So we focused on the property itself number

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:46:28

Each one is a little bit different.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:46:30

That's what was my question.

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:46:31

You know, we did a count in 2006 for each property in town ahead and current restaurant, how many seats they had outside how many they were authorized to have? If it was there was some type of authorization to do a conditional use permit or some zoning permit. And I've got it tells you how many can have and that's that's kind of our go to we go back to that. If someone had, Speckled Trout had X number of seats approved through a conditional use permit. They would store next door. I mean, there's other they all have a specific number. El Rincon, Leticia was here. We worked with her because she needed some space to have, she didn't have anything. She had more than enough parking in the side lot, that she didn't have to have the parking up front. So that was her opportunity. Okay, we're, there's just a lot I mean.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:47:29

Okay, you answered my question

**Albert Yount** 2:47:33

Well, I want to get this straight in my mind. Now. Okay. I don't want the to two be identified. But say that statement, again, you made about two didn't comply, or something. Leticia has already taken her all of our stuff away. Have others done such an act? Others have? Yes, not everyone. To me, that is pretty prime aphasia evidence that these are responsible people that will act responsibly and to our

direction. So I don't penalize them while we're making sausage, with government. Because they have got to hire people.

**David Harwood** 2:48:18

At the same time, we had restaurants that have thumbed their nose at us and haven't complied.

**Albert Yount** 2:48:23

Well, that is an enforcement fault.

**David Harwood** 2:48:28

Well, okay, so

**Charlie Sellers** 2:48:30

Well, that was reinstated.

**David Harwood** 2:48:32

My question is, I've never seen a Council decide not to enforce something.

**Albert Yount** 2:48:43

Well, then there's endorsement guy right there.

**David Harwood** 2:48:46

Well, I realized his role. So, what are we going to do? Is it the Wild West? Now, I don't understand what the guidelines are. Now that we're discussing abstaining from our ordinance. And because I think that out there, we're dining has a lot of tentacles to it. And your motion doesn't include pushing this to Planning Board for analysis. So outdoor dining, you've got outdoor heaters, you've got pebble lawns filled with pebbles, you've got lights streaming up, you've got music, there's a lot that comes with outdoor dining, other than tables, and chairs. I actually am in support of outdoor dining, but I think that we need to examine all of that. Maybe we do that at a later date and accommodate the restaurants need to do hiring and all of that. So, I'm more interested in What are the rules? That aren't these rules? What are the new rules? I guess would be,

**Charlie Sellers** 2:50:08

Why don't you have Albert make an addendum to his motion.

**David Harwood** 2:50:12

Well, I'd like to hear from okay. And get my question answered here. I mean, what do you anticipate that to look like Kevin? I mean, so

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:50:25

You're asking me what, I don't know what other rules there might be are some building code rules that need to be in place. Surfaces, uneven surfaces, that kind of stuff is related to the building code, ADA, accessibility, all those things are factored in. Which needs to be studied at the Planning Board level, if



that's what you want us to do. If outdoor dining is expanded, or the rules are changed, that's great. But there has to be limits in some way.

**David Harwood** 2:51:04

Well, that's what I'm asking about is what are the limits, in lieu of the ones that we already have?

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:51:12

Just generally speaking, taking up parking, that's required parking that's needed. That if you put tables in those areas, you're not in compliance of parking that's required for your business, I think that would be an issue. I think putting tables in an area that is dangerous, right beside the road or something like that. That is not from a safety standpoint, I think that is something to be enforced. I'm not thinking of anything else. But those are some that if we said here tonight, we want to relax, we don't want to enforce it this moment. If everyone's just gonna go wild, and put tables all over the place, I think that's a bad thing.

**Albert Yount** 2:52:07

Nobody said that.

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:52:11

I am just saying if that happened, I think what? How's it gonna come back to me?

**Albert Yount** 2:52:15

You operate under parameters right now? Three months ago, they were operating under what they were told they could do. Is that correct?

**Charlie Sellers** 2:52:26

On their property correct.

**Albert Yount** 2:52:29

Leticia had seats and tables out there

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:52:34

Yes sir. Sure. Did.

**Albert Yount** 2:52:36

They were operating within your parameters? Yes. I'm saying. When I relay we're there. Let's stay doing anything about that until the Planning Board has come up with a new set of rules

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:52:54

I understand that I'm just trying to answer your questions when y'all figure out what you want me to do? I'm ready. I'll do it.

**Doug Matheson** 2:53:06

I want to add to what David was saying, because I think part of this discussion, and one of the reasons that that I wanted it added to the agenda tonight was to help give some guidance to the Planning Board of what we're asking. And one of the main thing I don't feel like we've given a whole lot of that we've kind of made a decision to let this go. But I don't think we've given, you know, given much guidance to what we would like. Personally, and I've said this before, I like to see it when you do this is that the bypass or Valley Boulevard be treated the same as downtown. I don't want to see, personally, I don't want to see a difference if uptown is allowed X amount of spots, Valley Boulevard should be allowed the same thing? I don't want to see the two treated any different when this decision made. I mean, that's, that's my personal opinion.

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:54:08

So we're looking at going back to 2010 and saying the rules that Council established then it's no longer

**Doug Matheson** 2:54:14

If that's what it takes to make it a level playing field, then that's what I'm looking at, you know, just me personally,

**Charlie Sellers** 2:54:22

I will have to say if I may, David, you know, I do understand where David's coming from. And, you know, I'm sure there's things that he's concerned with a volume two and that is drinking open to containers walking down the street. I don't like that idea, but I do like being able to dine outside and of course, like you had mentioned or has been mentioned about dining on their own property.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:54:58

I would like this to bring up the fact but we're talking about enforcement here. And non-enforcement. I know we're still not enforcing this, the ordinance. But I want to point out that for two years, basically now, Kevin, the staff had been controlling what the restaurants were doing with outdoor seating. And best of my knowledge, there's not been any complaints for the Council. I mean, you know, we've not said, Kevin, you've let this get out of control. So obviously, Kevin is controlling it. So I don't see an issue in letting him along with Shane and the rest of staff keep control of that, while they address the issue through Planning Board. But I do think we need to get this through Planning Board, so they can get ready for the season. On the other side of that I do agree that there's more to this than just seats and how many you can have. That might be a longer issue than just the seats. But that needs to be in the overall scheme of things. Now, if I am the only one that thinks Kevin's doing on that subject. I apologize. But

**Albert Yount** 2:56:13

I don't think it forces the Planning Board. And I know dictate to the Planning.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:56:19

No, I don't want to dictate. And that's why I asked if Kevin thought they could get through. I mean, that gives them this month, that gets his new board seat to get some kind of up to date. Maybe he could put a taskforce together. And that would give them to bring it back to their April meeting, to the full board to discuss and then to us in May. If that's not doable, we'll get it to us in June. I'm just trying to, you know.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:56:43

So essentially you all are putting back on Kevin and Planning to come back with a proposal recommendations, how to amend or not amend the ordinance?

**Doug Matheson** 2:56:58

As soon as, as soon as possible

**Melissa Pickett** 2:56:59

Yes,

**David Harwood** 2:57:00

Yeah, I don't, I think it's a big ask for April. But I'm willing to stay this ordinance. But I'm stepping off of what Melissa said have you indeed been controlling it? And if so, what have been your means to do that? Is what Melissa said accurate statement

**Kevin Rothrock** 2:57:30

We talk with restaurants on the front end, we talked mid-2021, we're gonna start, start bringing it back in, we're gonna start getting back to normal. And we talk about that a couple folks. And then things went haywire again. Alright, keep it as it is, let it go. There's also a limit, I think there's a physical limit on property that they couldn't go beyond a certain point, then it would be off their property or to be some issues, but we really haven't had any problems to deal with anybody. So, no one's complaining. I'm not complaining. But we know, for the people that have met the ordinance and have been consistent with that. Not fair to them. They've done what they're asked to do. So, there's the fairness part. So, we're ready to move along. If we need to change it, fine. You give us directional enforcement. We'll be glad to do whichever.

**David Harwood** 2:58:39

I would ask Albert, if you would consider amending your motion to request Planning Board to examine this issue and bring some recommendations back to us at their earliest convenience.

**Albert Yount** 2:58:52

Absolutely.

**Melissa Pickett** 2:58:54

Can we have a repeat of what was said?

**Charlie Sellers** 2:58:58

Albert your motion is to suspend the enforcement. Okay, stay the enforcement for a period of time until such time Planning Board comes back with recommendations on this ordinance and how to amend this ordinance improve it or keep it the same. You want to put a date on there?

**Albert Yount** 2:59:24

No, I do not

**Charlie Sellers** 2:59:24

Okay. I do not what do you

**Albert Yount** 2:59:27

I don't think you can just fly. I'm just saying the Planning Board. That's when we go.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:59:33

That's right.

**David Harwood** 2:59:35

I don't think so. Because we've got to see the new Planning Board. We've got to get them oriented. And I think this is a pretty important subject to throw them right in so I would leave that discretion Planning Board and Kevin. Okay.

**Charlie Sellers** 2:59:51

So this motion, okay,

**Albert Yount** 2:59:53

What I'm saying is I think Melissa is I haven't seen any problems isn't broke. Yeah.

**Charlie Sellers** 3:00:05

So we have a motion. Pete. Seconded. Are you still good?

**Pete Gherini** 3:00:09

Yeah, I'm okay with the amended motion

**Albert Yount** 3:00:13

And I am out of candy

**Charlie Sellers** 3:00:15

Albert's out of candy. We're not going to recess. Albert, how do you vote?

**Albert Yount** 3:00:22

Yes.

**David Harwood** 3:00:22

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 3:00:24

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 3:00:29

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 3:00:30

Yes

**Charlie Sellers** 3:00:37

Moving right along. Well, official reports, comments, I just want to thank, you know, all the Town employees, Town department heads, Shane Fox and all that bunch for what they did for retreat. And they really, I mean, I thought it was very thorough. Thank you, guys. Thank you so much. I want to thank the Council for the days of patience and sitting through Shane's presentations. But you know, you guys are great, and make some tough decisions, but you make smart decisions. And I like to thank the chamber and all the other organizations in town that do put their efforts fourth, and you know, feet on the ground, doing things that are very much like the rest of his volunteer work. So, I want to thank all those people as well. That's it.

**Albert Yount** 3:01:46

Well, this meeting was very good meeting, I thought. My vote nay on this funding for the study should not be construed as a harbinger of any future vote. I stated my reasons, and I had the courage of my convictions, and that's why I voted the way I did on that issue. When we get to look at it again. And that's about it.

**David Harwood** 3:02:19

No comments

**Melissa Pickett** 3:02:24

I want to make sure we invite everybody to come to the Hometown Harvest and the Town birthday party this Sunday at the Conference Center at 5:30.

**Albert Yount** 3:02:33

You will pick me up

**Melissa Pickett** 3:02:35

Yes grandpa I'll come get you

**Albert Yount** 3:02:41

Last time I was there it was so foggy you couldn't see

**Doug Matheson** 3:02:46

Just quick comments on I attended to North Carolina League board directors meeting and retreat last week. And just some of the things that to be aware of that they're asking is that one to regulate billboards in our own city limits, the view would be ruined when anybody can put him up anywhere, they want to. I will send out a to all the members here I'll send out a link to a PowerPoint that goes over everything that we discussed down there.

**Pete Gherini** 3:03:31

Just glad to see that the work on the pedestrian walkways is moving ahead. It looks like the contractor is being very diligent. So thanks for Shane and the staff for getting that done.

**Shane Fox** 3:04:10

I will quickly give just a few updates. I'll start with the crosswalks. crosswalks indeed have begun started last week. timeline on last May 1, we hopefully expect that to be done. Hopefully sooner. Work is moving along whether it's been very cooperative may not be some in the next couple of days. We'll have to wait and see but with any luck by May 1 we'll have full-fledged signalized crosswalks to 221 Main and Sunset Main into 221 Main and Sunset and then of course the new crosswalk down at Chestnut that's not signalized. The Embers Hotel progress I put that here that continues to move forward, Rainy Lodge was the former name, progress continues to be made. Budget process has begun. So, our annual budgeting process has begun that first start with department heads and then move through revenue projections and then ultimately to you all, in draft form, public hearing, etc. That'll be over the next few months. We've also put out an RFP for audit services. Three years ago prior to my arrival, we chose Martin Starnes and Associates and their three-year contract, initial contract is up. So, we've chosen to go back out for bid to see what type of rates we potentially could get within that. That's an ever-changing market, I'll just say that, especially as new money is being funneled down by the millions from the state and federal government, it does make that process a little more complex for single audit purposes and calls so we'll see what kind of results we get from that. The ribbon cutting for the Bass Lake project is scheduled right now for next meeting. So don't have an exact time from the Chamber yet, unless Charles has one; Charles says 4:30 April 12 is the official date for the ribbon cutting for the Bass Lake sidewalk. And then the last thing I have here is Ms. Tammy Bentley retired officially last week from the Town and so just if you would please just continue to keep her in your prayers. She's been a special, special employee for us for a number of years and has chosen retirement out of necessity. So, we love her and pray for her.

**Doug Matheson** 3:07:43

I'd like a motion before speckled trout close was on was it we adjourn

**Pete Gherini** 3:07:55

Second.

**Charlie Sellers** 3:07:56

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you have a good night.

**MAYOR** \_\_\_\_\_

**Charlie Sellers**

**ATTEST** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Budget Amendment - #2022-04 – Attachment A**

**PARTF Agreement – Attachment B**

**ST Rental Ordinance – Attachment C**

**Blowing Rock Country Club – Attachment D**

**EMS Resolution – Attachment E**

**Budget Amendment - #2022-05 F**