

# Town Council Meeting - Wednesday, February 15th, 2023

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

parking, pay, town, retreat, funds, park, meeting, council, board, bids, motion, includes, plan, town council, people, mayor, issuance, TDA, bank, gave

## SPEAKERS

All, Thomas Steele, Hilari Hubner, David Harwood, Aaron Miller, Albert Yount, Wendy Patoprsty, Shane Fox, Nicole Norman, Doug Matheson, Melissa Pickett, Pete Gherini, Charlie Sellers

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, February 15, 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, Police Chief Aaron Miller, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Public Works Director Matt Blackburn, Emergency Services Director Kent Graham, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, IT Director Thomas Steele and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner who recorded the minutes.

### Charlie Sellers

I call this meeting to order this Wednesday February 15, 2023. Thank you for coming this evening and thank you for attending. Roll call. All were present. Please stand for Pledge of Allegiance. Okay, Council do I have a motion to approve minutes from January 9, 2023.

### Melissa Pickett

So moved.

### Pete Gherini

Second.

### Charlie Sellers

Any discussion?

All

All in favor of the motion.

**Charlie Sellers**

Motion to approve the minutes from January 30th, 31st and February 1 from the Council retreat.

**Pete Gherini**

So moved.

**Charlie Sellers**

Do I have a second?

**David Harwood**

Second.

**Charlie Sellers**

Any discussion?

**All**

All in favor of the motion.

**Charlie Sellers**

Okay. All right, moving right along to regular agenda adoption. Council I would ask, David would you make a motion to add to the agenda, it needs to go under the consent portion of the agenda, increase in legal services?

**David Harwood**

Yes, I would like to do that.

**Charlie Sellers**

Okay, so we have a motion. Do we have a second?

**Melissa Pickett**

Second.

**Charlie Sellers**

And we'll go ahead and do a vote on the consent agenda. That's tax released 2022-07, tax refunds 2022-02, Budget Amendment and of course, the addition of the increase legal services fee. Do I have a motion to approve the consent agenda.

**David Harwood**

So moved.

**Charlie Sellers**

Do I have a second.

**All**

All in favor of the motion.

**Albert Yount**

Second.

**Charlie Sellers**

Okay. Consent agenda is approved. Now we're down to the public comments. If there's somebody in the audience that would like to up to three minutes. Give your name to Ms. Hilari. Okay, we did have one that came through via email from Mrs. Lowery. She could not make it this evening. But she asked that this be read. Mayor Sellers read her email. Chief Aaron Miller has a few new Officers to be sworn in.

**Aaron Miller**

Thank you, Mayor and Council for your time this evening. As you know, historically we like to recognize our new police officers formally when they come on board with us. Chief introduced the two newest police officers, William Byrd and William Bradley. Town Clerk Hilari Hubner gave the oath of office to both.

**Charlie Sellers**

I tell you hats off to the Council, the chief, Town Manager. I mean, we've got a great police force, as a citizen I am very proud of it. Middle for Greenway presentation.

**Wendy Patoprsty**

Gave an update on the Middle Fork Greenway, the current progress as well as the upcoming plans for the next phase.

**David Harwood**

That was great.

**Charlie Sellers**

Thank you for all your hard work. We're moving into the regular agenda. This is further update on paid parking. For this evening Council we will have to make a motion to approve this group moving forward to continue assessing paid parking and to take it to the next level.

**Aaron Miller**

The Mayor summarized it pretty well, at the retreat a few weeks ago, we went over this pretty extensively, I can do a quick run through if you'd like for the audience that's here that might not have heard all the information last time. So as a result of a study that was done by the Tourism Development Authority, back in 2021, Roger Brooks, one of his recommendations was that the Town increase the amount of parking, and one of his recommendations to fund that parking was a pay to park program. So as a result of that recommendation from the consultant from the TDA, we began looking at some different options for pay to park that we could present. First thing we did was established a committee

to look at some of the different aspects of parking. Some of the things they looked at was the time the duration of parking in different locations. And what we would charge to park in different locations. We tried to get a group that well-represented our community, we had people from our churches, Town Council members, the TDA, the Chamber of Commerce, we had business owner representatives, we had community representatives at large. So we think we had a pretty well rounded group to make some recommendations. That work went on throughout 2022. Some of the things that committee came up with was they were in favor of recommending to the Town, that we pursue a pay to park program. And that that would include all of our parking areas, with the exception of one in Town. That our pay to park times would be 9am until 5pm, except on Sundays, and it was 1pm to 5pm. So, we could accommodate our church traffic. They recommended that we have a two hour per hour rate for parking on street, which includes Main Street, Sunset Drive, Pine Street, and a couple of other areas. And then we have \$1.50 cent per hour rate for our off-street parking, which includes the Maple Street lot, our parking decks, the Broyhill Park and pool area. One area that we did designate as free parking, to try to alleviate some of the concerns like we heard in the letter earlier, where would the employees for some of our merchant's park and that sort of thing. So, we tried to leave the parking area at Davant Field as a free parking area. That parking area is also underutilized. So, the thought process there was we could try to move some of the parking to the underutilized parking areas and free up the space on Main Street. Some of the goals that we set out to accomplish by having a pay to park program were to provide funds to be used for additional parking to be built to keep our parking program financially self-sufficient to ensure that there's adequate parking available downtown for business customers to help with the flow of traffic through Town and to continue to provide positive customer service. So we tried to come up with a plan that covered all of those goals. It was also recommended by the committee that we have a few spaces in the Maple Street parking lot that were reserved for residents only, they would still be a cost to that you would still have to pay the hourly rate to park. But through a permitting system that would be assigned to residents only. There would be no restriction for any employees of our merchants to park anywhere they like if they want to pay the fee. Many of the businesses have their own parking lots. Some rely on Town parking lots, but again, we did provide a free parking option at the Davant Field. They also recommended that the parking fines for failure to pay for parking would result in a \$25 fine. So, we've been over these recommendations with Council a couple of times and after we presented those findings and that committee wrapped up its work with the staff. We set up another committee that was made up of staff, the TDA, the Chamber was there for a meeting or two. And the purpose for that group was to talk about things like the design, the placement and accessibility of pay stations, phone app requirements, vendor qualification criteria, technical requirements, and integrations for the all the system to work, finance processes and IT requirements. So, our pay to park plan includes being able to pay for your parking spot by two different methods. One would be an app that's on your smartphone, the second would be a multi space pay station, that would be scattered about through town fairly sporadically, but there and available for those folks that do not have a smartphone or would rather pay by cash or some other traditional means. Part of the plan was that the separate parking funds, separate funds would be set up to handle these parking monies. There are some state laws that dictate some of how we have to do that. But these special funds will be set up and those monies to be set aside to offset the cost of our parking enforcement. And also, to build additional parking and maintain the parking that we have. Prior to moving forward with the parking program, we are required to amend our town code giving us the authority to charge for parking and to regulate that. Prior to the town codes being changed, we are required to have a public hearing that's publicized at least 30 days in

advance. So the next step if the Council decides to move forward tonight, would be to move forward with that public hearing. And vote on the code amendments. We've also talked with Mr. Fox, and we think it would probably be a good idea for us to also between this meeting, if you choose to move forward. And the next public hearing to maybe hold a town hall style meeting, we could advertise for the public. The public could come in ask questions, we could cover a lot of things that maybe the public has some concerns about. Some of the concerns that I've heard, that have been relayed back to me recently has been that charging park will ruin our tourism in Blowing Rock. But I'd like to remind everybody that this recommendation comes from the Tourism Development on parking. They're the one that commissioned the study. This recommendation is from their consultant who has a great deal of experience. One of the other things that I've heard recently is we're punishing, and we heard it again in the letter tonight. And it's a valid question, that we're punishing the residents who pay taxes already. One of the purposes of trying to establish a pay to park program is to avoid punishing residents who are already paying taxes. One of the concerns that residents have is that they're already paying to provide the services and the support and the structures for the tourists that are coming in. A pay to park program is a way to share those expenses with tourist without having to have a tax increase for the residence of Blowing Rock to help pay and fund these things that we need. But we do think that a town hall style meeting might be helpful, we would like to get that scheduled between now and the time of the public hearing. Some of the things in the Town Code that would have to be amended would be adding a chapter to deal with pay to park, amending our parking fines and fees. Following those code amendments and approval of the code amendments, we would have some contract approvals for some vendors. We talked in our town retreat about some vendor selection process that we were utilizing. All the vendors that we were interested in and looking at are members of the National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance, that Purchasing Alliance solicits bids, request for qualifications and all that information is there so it would save us duplicating those efforts. We tried to look at a company's particularly our phone payment app. We tried to look at companies who are already established and had a large footprint in North Carolina, where a lot of our visitors come from. The company that we have decided on is passport parking. Another reason for passport parking is they also have an enforcement module enforcement software that's available so that would eliminate the need for a separate company to provide us with software and support for enforcement software. Passport, they've been in business for 12 years through a North Carolina based company. Some of the areas that they're already in is Raleigh, Charlotte, Asheville, Carolina Beach, Hickory, Davidson, Atlantic Beach, I know they are in North Myrtle Beach and some other places where we draw some of our visitors from. The multi space meters, we looked at several different vendors that provide multi space meters, we wanted to select one that was solar, one that would work out from LTE or wireless, so we didn't have to run lines. We also wanted one that was going to be very easy for us to service in house, it was modular, so we could swap out those components. So, we did look at a company flow bird. Flow bird is a company that already works with passport in their back-office system. So, the setup will be very, very easy. Flow bird is an international company. They have meters in 80 countries, 4,350 cities around the world. Some of their meters, if you're in Raleigh I know Raleigh has flow bird multi space meters on their streets, they're a very nice design, very small footprint, so they won't take up much space. We talked during this process many times about the revenue potential. The revenue potential is somewhat of a difficult number to come up with, because we've never done anything like this before. So, there's been multiple projections. I know Mr. Brooks, when he did the TDA presentation, he had a revenue projection, I came up with revenue projection. Ms. Norman also reached out to one of our finance

companies that we work with, they came up with a revenue projection as well. But all these projections are based on a similar formula that was taking the numbers from the TDA, as far as occupancy percentages, and coming up with what we believe would be the percentage of occupancy for our parking spaces at certain times. For example, if our hotel occupancy rate is 60%, in June, we could anticipate that our parking occupancy would be 60% in June as well. So, we took those numbers and were able to come up with some revenue projections. The lowest of those revenue projections was \$1.3 million per year. The program cost are laid out, there will be some initial capital expenses. If the parking program was to be implemented in this fiscal year, there were some costs. We know now that that after our retreat, we discussed that and we know that it will not be implemented before the next fiscal year. But our annual reoccurring expenses would be approximately \$280,000. So, it's very easy. It's we're pretty certain on the program costs, those are easy numbers to come up with and calculate. Although everything is going up at a an extraordinarily rapid rate. So that makes it a little difficult. So, we know that our annual reoccurring costs are somewhere in the neighborhood of \$300,000. Some of our revenue potential, or if we reach our revenue projection of \$1.2 or \$1.3 million, you know, that's \$700,000 or \$800,000 that we shouldn't be able to set aside for additional parking, parking maintenance and that sort of thing. We also have a plan developed and ready to go for public private partnerships. The thought process behind that is we wanted to create revenue for the individual organizations who have surplus parking during certain days and times, identify additional parking that can be utilized by the public and help private parking managers, owners manage their parking areas to prevent abuse. So, we know going into this if the Town elects to move forward with the pay to park plan, we're probably going to put some pressure on private parking lots like Rumble Church, perhaps like for First Citizens Bank. So, we wanted to have a plan upfront to try to help manage those problems. And give those folks and opportunity to make some revenue as well. And hopefully the Town can utilize some of those private parking spaces that are out there. These private parking spaces that are underutilized through the week on the private parking lots are probably as much if not more as the parking spaces in the Town owns. So, to be able to leverage those parking lots is a huge benefit. So that's a quick rundown of what we talked about during Council retreat and the plan that's been proposed. So that's all I have tonight unless you have additional questions.

**David Harwood**

I assume we would set up a separate enterprise fund for this, is that correct?

**Shane Fox**

Yeah, Ms. Norman, if you will.

**Nicole Norman**

We have talked about potentially an enterprise fund and a special revenue fund. The funds that are generated from a parking, they will have to go back into the parking to support as an enterprise. However, funds above that, that are derived could be set up in a special revenue account where they can be utilized later.

**Charlie Sellers**

Someone like to make a motion.

**David Harwood**

Chief, thank you so much.

**Aaron Miller**

If there are no questions, I'll step out and let you discuss.

**David Harwood**

Particularly thanks to the parking committee and all the beyond what you have to do on a daily basis, everything that you have put into this, thank you. Mayor, I would love to make a motion to instruct the parking committee to move forward with their work. And then I guess the next step would be a public hearing?

**Shane Fox**

So, our thought process and it can change, we would have to give a 30-day notice prior to a public hearing, so if we do it at a regular Town Council meeting, April would be the earliest of which we would plan on doing it. So that's two meetings from now, if we would like to do a town hall meeting, I think that may be beneficial. Even prior to that it could be even done on the same day, if it needs to be done an hour earlier, it could be done. You know, days before that. We might want to use a facility like the American Legion or something similar in case we have a good turnout. And that wouldn't necessarily have to be Town Council driven that could be parking committee or staff driven and helping answer some of those questions or at least start gathering some of those comments to bring back to you all for that public hearing. So that was kind of our split balling it, so to speak, of what we would look at as a potential schedule. If that's fair to you.

**David Harwood**

I love you handling it.

**Shane Fox**

Facilitating it, maybe the better word.

**David Harwood**

Motion to approve.

**Albert Yount**

Second.

**Charlie Sellers**

Ok, do we have any additional discussion? Yes, Pete.

**Pete Gherini**

I would echo Aaron's comments about taking care of local residents, because I've heard from a number of people that they would like to see more specifically how we're going to do that. Where we're going to do that. You've mentioned that on field. I think that's good. But I think we need to really hone in on that.

And then Shane, I had asked you some time ago about the use of parking funds, and you went through a litany of things. So would you just repeat that so that the audience will know.

**Shane Fox**

So, parking funds and again, just to kind of further Ms. Norman's point, are a little bit complicated, depending on the location of the parking. So, there's a general statute, I can't recall and recite the exact statute that requires any parking funds that are derived from on street parking. So that would be our Main Street, Sunset, Park Avenue, Wallingford parking would have to go into a special fund or an enterprise fund that would have to then offset the parking cost. The other parking so the parking decks, the pool parking, the parking lots that the town owns, would go into a special revenue zone that could be used for additional parking, capital needs, fundings, things of that nature. And then you have also a potential private public partnership that Chief Miller spoke of, that more than likely would go into that same special revenue fund. So, the on-street parking is an old statute that's still out there that exists that restricts the Town's use of those funds only to pay for the parking enforcement itself, and the parking process parking program. So, we'd have set that up in a separate fund.

**Pete Gherini**

The only thing else I would say is it's really critical that we have this meeting for the public so that they have a chance, and we ought to be prepared for a lot of people to show up because a lot of people are talking about it. So, I don't know if this is the right facility or how you stage it, but that's really important to make sure we do.

**Charlie Sellers**

I think the Legion Hall would be good.

**Pete Gherini**

Yes.

**Aaron Miller**

Well, I realized after our Town Council retreat, and we started having some additional feedback, a lot of people said they hadn't heard about a parking even though we've talked about it, I think six public meetings already, that it might be a good idea to go ahead and have that town hall meeting, answer some questions, let people ask questions, and we'll try and try to answer them. There may be some things that we need to shift in our plan. So, once we have that feedback, and we look at some things that we need to shift we can certainly do that.

**Pete Gherini**

Yeah, no, that's most important, because we may gather from citizens some other things that maybe we haven't talked about or thought about.

**Aaron Miller**

I am quite certain that whatever we implement now will probably have to be tweaked and changed as we go along. And we've never done this before. So, I'm sure that we'll have to make some changes in the upcoming months.

**Doug Matheson**

I would like to know if it would be still worth it to, even though we're looking at, we don't know whether we're going to do paid parking or not do paid parking, as we need to go ahead and still start these code amendments. And look at code enforcement for parking period. Whether we go ahead with pay parking or not, in my opinion,

**Aaron Miller**

You have draft code amendments that are already in the plan. You can look over those will be the identical code amendments that will be presented to be adopted following the public hearing or thinking that will be the April regular schedule Town Council meeting. And we already have that in place in the packet.

**Shane Fox**

If I may, Mr. Matheson, are you referring to the enforcement piece of it?

**Doug Matheson**

Right.

**Shane Fox**

Okay. So, if we, the timing of pay to park we discussed at the retreat was going to be pushed back to next fiscal year, which begins July 1, but more than likely fall is what I believe we all heard is kind of the earliest implementation of pay to park. So, are you referring?

**Doug Matheson**

We are going to need some type of enforcement for this summer.

**Shane Fox**

Okay.

**Aaron Miller**

One thing that Mr. Fox and I have talked about was we do have funds that are in our regular budget for parking enforcement. There are still monies available. We typically start parking enforcement around Memorial Day, is typically when we try to start. So, there are still some funds available to be used during that last part of May and the first part of June. So perhaps we could go ahead if the Town Council moves forward with the plan. You know Town Council moves forward with the code amendments, we could probably go ahead and move forward with hiring at least one of our additional staff that we proposed, maybe bringing them in Memorial Day to be here over those summer months until we fully implement the plan. Would be one suggestion.

**Albert Yount**

Believe me, I've been here long enough to know that people sometimes don't hear what people should sometimes hear. Now I want everybody to know I seconded a motion tonight made by David and I think

David will back me up. Our next move is not approval. Our next move is to hear what the people that own this Town have to say.

**Aaron Miller**

Right, all we're asking for tonight is Council's approval to move forward. We've been working on this for over 12 to 14 months. And there's not been an official vote by Council. So, the vote tonight we're asking for just to approve the plan so that we can move forward to schedule a public hearing and on the code amendments. But until the code amendments are approved the pay to park plan is not approved. Did that answer your question?

**Albert Yount**

It wasn't a question. It was just spitting out how I felt.

**Charlie Sellers**

Alright, so we have a motion we have a second.

**All**

All in favor of the motion.

**Charlie Sellers**

Chief thanks for all your hard work. Thanks to all the committee members and have a good evening. All right moving to Wi Fi expansion, Thomas Steele.

**Thomas Steele**

So, to follow up on what Chief Miller was talking about, a big part of paid parking, and even if paid parking doesn't happen will be expansion of Wi Fi. We currently have it mostly just in the park. So, we're going to try to expand it to both parking decks, up and down Sunset, up and down Main Street, out to Davant and also the Broyhill pool parking area. This will, especially if you do paid parking due to cell service around here will help people to be able to get on the app to actually pay. Or else you're going to have some problems. So, we covered this in retreat, we're just going to go back over it really quick. \$65,000 for everything, install and equipment, about three months to get that hardware, two to three weeks for installation and then we can probably do that in one to two weeks. But the plan is to by the end of June, before the big summertime to have this up and running. We're going to significantly improve the coverage of the Town's Wi Fi, seamless integration with our current system. We don't have to switch anything over, this is not an entire overhaul, we're just integrating with what we have. We can do a summer stress test before paid parking. Less rely on some of that cell service and easier to upgrade in the future because at some point we will probably be expanding even further. I want to point out we do now have up here near Speckled Trout originally that's kind of a dark spot. We are in communications with some business owners down there to utilize their buildings. We have verbal consent. We don't have anything official, but we will get something on that end of Main Street. Does anyone have questions?

**Charlie Sellers**

Any questions Council?

**Albert Yount**

This will be beneficial regardless.

**Thomas Steele**

Yeah, I mean, Tracy has alluded to what people will expect coming into a town as a tourist. Wi Fi availability is now one of the things that is kind of expected. So, we do have it in the park, it's not great right now. So, part of this expansion will also be improving the speed and strength of what we currently have. And really, if you're on a town property or within the park system, you should have access to some sort of Wi Fi through the town.

**David Harwood**

Thomas, does this take into account the private lots that we were talking about?

**Thomas Steele**

It does not, it has no inclusion of the private lots. Now if Rumble were on board, we'll be right next to Rumble so that one would be fairly easy if we wanted to go in that direction. The others would be more difficult, but this is not included private lots.

**David Harwood**

Something we might have to re-address.

**Shane Fox**

It would be so what we felt like, if I may, start with the town property, the public property and the public lots and then we know by the time we get to this point that we need to expand one or two more areas. This system was very easy to expand, right Thomas, it could be done relatively easily.

**Thomas Steele**

Yeah, for the Rumble one, especially the other ones we would have to be a little more creative, but it's not impossible.

**David Harwood**

Are these just repeaters?

**Thomas Steele**

Not necessarily so all of these, we have fiber down to Edgewood so that's not going to be repeating or the one down towards the other side of Main Street is going to be not necessarily repeater we're going to shoot from this building down. And it's wireless, but it's like a wired connection. So, it's not really a repeater. None of these, currently only about two of these are repeaters and that's a big deal because they don't work near as well. So, we have fiber at school as well. So going down Sunset will not be any kind of repeater. Thomas this quote does include the security cameras that we talked about, right? Yes, this also includes security cameras at all the main parking locations.

**Charlie Sellers**

Thomas, how about Glen Burney Trail, at the trail head? Has that been thought about?

**Thomas Steele**

It has been thought about, it's not a part of this, but we could, it's possible but it's not a part of this That would involve finding some electricity down there to tie into. And we could, yeah, we could come off the Legion with a shot to get down there. If y'all wanted to add that we can figure it out.

**Charlie Sellers**

Just a thought. Well, now also we're putting the lift station down there and that's going to be communicating with the plants, is it not?

**Shane Fox**

It will have an alarm system on it.

**Charlie Sellers**

Council, does someone want to make a motion? I make a motion to approve the expansion of the Wi Fi. Albert made a motion to approve the expansion of the Wi Fi and of course the security cameras. Do I have a second?

**Pete Gherini**

Second.

**Charlie Sellers**

Any further discussion Council?

**All**

All in favor of the motion.

**David Harwood**

Thank you, Thomas.

**Charlie Sellers**

Moving right along phase four of the 2014 Bonds approval of bank bids.

**Nicole Norman**

Well, here we are nine years after the bond referendum in 2014. Ready to issue the last of our bonds very exciting times. Following a rate market analysis, in concert with the Town's financial advisors, First Tryon Bank, I'm sorry, First Tryon Financial Advisors, it was determined to be in the Town's best interest to issue our final general obligation bonds via direct bank placement loan versus a public sale. As we have done with the prior issues, the dollar amount, and then the market rates were the main factors and that decision that it was, would be better to do a privately placed bond issuance. So, funds remaining to be issued total \$1,695,000. That's comprised of \$650,000 in the transportation and sidewalk portion of the bonds, \$420,000 in the parks portion of the bonds, \$590,000 in the water, and \$35,000 in the sewer, portions of the bonds. Details on the bond spending and plans for those bonds

were reviewed at the recent Town Council retreat. And then on March 16, 2023, bank bids were received to issue the final debt we sent out as I mentioned at the retreat we've been able to utilize our financial advisors, mailing list for financial institutions. So we've expanded our list to 30 different banks and we did receive bids back from five financial institutions including JP Morgan Chase Bank NA, Zions Bank, Key Government Finance, First Horizon Bank and Huntington Public Capital rates that were offered ranged from 3.29% to 4.43%. And we did receive both 15 year and 20 year term offers. Following an analysis of the proposals as well as an initial discussion of the offers with the local government commission. The recommended award is to JP Morgan Chase Bank NA at a rate of 3.29% in a term of 15 years, that initial term will have a fixed rate and there will be a call option without penalty after the initial 10 years of the loan, so that would be in 2033. There are closing fees of \$5,500 to JPMorgan Chase Bank. And we can also expect LGC closing cost Financial Advisor service fees and bond attorney fees. I will note that looking at our previous issuances on the public market, this is actually a less expensive issuance option. So that is a positive and following Town Council consideration of the proposal the LGC will consider the financing for final approval at their March 7, 2023, regular meeting. Should final approval be received the loan will be scheduled for closing on or before March 16. In order to proceed with issuance of the debt it is necessary for Town Council to adopt the enclosed resolution, including form of the bond authorizing issuance of the bond as well as acceptance of the proposal offered by JP Morgan Chase Bank. There are documents enclosed in this for your review, we have the resolution that provides for the issuance of the funds, as well as the proposal for JP Morgan Chase and bid summary, all the bids received. I'm happy to answer any questions that anyone has on any of these documents.

**Charlie Sellers**

Okay, do we have a motion to approve the bid placed by JP Morgan, which will finalize phase four of the bond referendum moving forward.

**Doug Matheson**

So moved.

**David Harwood**

Second.

**Charlie Sellers**

Any further discussion?

**All**

All in favor of the motion.

**Charlie Sellers**

Thank you very much. Thank you. Retreat update.

**Shane Fox**

Manager Fox gave recap update of the Town Council Retreat.

**Hilari Hubner**

Handed out ballots and gave instructions for voting on the Board Appointment.

**Shane Fox**

Okay, if you're ready I'll read the results: Planning Board does have three spots open, filling those will be Greg Bergstrom, Lindsay Cook and Bill McCarter. The Board of Adjustment has two full time and one alternate the two full time members selected Sarah Murphy and Jerry Starnes with the alternate Brandon Walker. ABC Board has one position open, that goes to Susie Greene. TDA one position open and that goes to Zika Rea.

**David Harwood**

That is the smoothest that has ever gone.

**Charlie Sellers**

Relatively smooth yes. Well, I would like to as Mayor, thank all those that sent their applications in for these boards. I think it means a lot when people jump up to the plate and want to be that involved in the community and as Mayor and citizen, I want to say thank you so very much. Official reports and comments. First off, once again, I would like to thank all those applicants who applied for the boards. If you didn't make this year, please stick around because it's very possible it could happen next year. All these people on these boards through the years have done a lot of work, helped the council accomplish a lot, and the Town. And last but not least, I would like to thank the County Commissioners, they did meet with representatives from our Town, one being myself to discuss 24/7 transport. This was a few weeks ago. And they contacted us, and they want to meet again this week, which I think it's very favorable, the dialogue is good. Moving forward, I feel very positive about this. But of course, as we all know, in government things move slow. But thanks to Doug for all his efforts, and we'll see how this goes moving forward and all the citizens and Shane. So that being said, I will defer to Mr. Albert.

**Albert Yount**

Well, I think in rejoicing that the collegiality of this meeting doesn't always occur.

**David Harwood**

I want to welcome Officer Byrd and Officer Bradley. I appreciate their service. And I think we're very fortunate to have people with their experience come on our force. So, I want to thank you so very much. Again, thanks to Chief Miller and the parking committee for all the work they've done over the last 12 months. That was a heavy lift to assemble all that information. So, thank you to them. I want to congratulate Commissioner Gherini on your new chairmanship thank you for doing that, and, and representing us.

**Pete Gherini**

My pleasure.

**David Harwood**

And then certainly, lastly, but not least, thank you to Manager Fox and the staff for a wonderful retreat. Kept us on track for three days had lots of good information. We appreciate I know, there's a lot of behind the scenes work that goes into that. So, thank you to everybody.

**Melissa Pickett**

David took all mine.

**Doug Matheson**

I echo what David said about congratulating Pete on his new role, wish him a lot of luck and all that. And I'll be heading to where I'm sitting on the Board of Trustees for Risk Management, I'll be heading to our meeting is March 1. And we expect to set the rates for all the municipalities for the risk management insurance this meeting.

**Pete Gherini**

Thank you. Just a couple updates. We had our first Economic Development Commission meeting last week. Very enthusiastic board of people that are serving, and David Jackson, and Joe Furman are integral parts to making things happen. We talk just briefly about some of the issues. And I think we all know the issues, workforce, affordable housing, childcare, and communications, just a small list of things that was discussed. And happy to say that the next meeting is going to be here in Blowing Rock on March 16. And it is open to the public. So, any of you that are interested in what's going on? Happy to have you come, Charlie, will do the welcoming, and then Shane's going to talk about childcare and some things along those natures. So anyway, that's, we have, it's a big task. And it'll be interesting to see how far we get down the road because there's, I won't say obstacles because obstacles are always meant to be overcome. But anyway, I welcome the support for many of you in town talking about issues. So please feel free to yak at me. And finally, a thanks to a local resident Dave Rogers for his letter to the Watauga Board of Commissioners and I think that was copied to the Watauga Democrat and to High Country Press and I think all of it I think Shane sent it to all of you and it's really a good letter. So, thank you.

**Shane Fox**

Thank you, Mayor and Council, a couple of updates from a scheduling standpoint. I'll start by reminding everyone our planning board meeting is tomorrow night at 5:30. We do have a special meeting I mentioned earlier on February 28. That's a Tuesday night at 5 pm to review our bids for our water meter AMR technology that we solicited bids for again, and the bank financing as well. Our next Town Council meeting is scheduled for March the 14th. That's a Tuesday of course of which we are hoping at that meeting to go over the bid results for the comprehensive plan, our PARTF project and then we'll discuss between now and then our Main Street project and what the timeline may look like for that, along with also setting a date for a town hall neighborhood meeting question and answer on paid parking. I also mentioned on March the 16th at 1 pm at the American Legion as the EDC meeting that open to the public so that will be held here at the American Legion at 1pm. I would end by saying I thought this retreat was absolutely fantastic. He put a quote in the paper about this being the best one ever. I thought this was a very smooth retreat. All of town staff spent weeks leading up to it in preparation of getting all the materials ready to be presented. I thought everyone did a fantastic job very concise and efficient retreat and the information that was presented to you all, I thought was

tremendous. And I say thank you to you all for taking three days that is somewhat unheard of, for a town or county retreat to last three days, but it seems to always be filled up and we seem to have plenty of things to speak and talk about and discuss over those three days. So again, thank you to the entire town staff, all the department heads that participated, whether that is through presentations, whether that's through meals and lunches and running errands and all the things that take place for those three days and three nights that we have our retreat. Again, just a thank you for me to them. And thank you to you all for being willing to take time off from work and time away from your other important duties to spend three full days and three nights discussing Town business and setting the stage for us as staff to be able to move forward in 2023 and beyond. That's all I have.

**Charlie Sellers**

Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to go into closed session after we take a ten-minute break.

**Albert Yount**

Under North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11 (a)(3).

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

ATTEST \_\_\_\_\_  
Hilari H. Hubner, Town Clerk

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Tax Releases #2022-07 – Attachment A**

**Tax Refund #2022-02 – Attachment B**

**Budget Amendment #2023-04 – Attachment C**

**Phase 4 of the 2014 Bonds – Approval of Bank Bids – Attachment D**