

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Board of Commissioners
April 13, 2009

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners held a special meeting on Monday, April 13, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. The meeting took place in the conference room located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Keith Tester, Phillip Pickett, Albert Yount, and Tommy Klutz. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

PLANNING ISSUES

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock began discussion regarding the documents Town Manager Hildebran gave to Council prior to the meeting. Mr. Rothrock asked that Council review the draft Event Guide for Memorial Park and the draft guideline for Special Events in Public Spaces and let him know of any comments or questions they might have regarding the documents. Commissioner Klutz had questions regarding fees for groups such as Boy Scouts and church groups to use Memorial Park. Mr. Hildebran explained that Memorial Park would predominantly be used for Town or Chamber events and small groups such as these would continue their use of Memorial Park at no charge.

Mr. Rothrock updated Council on several issues related to his department. He advised his department was continuing code enforcement of dilapidated structures, working on a customer survey to be distributed in the near future, and items pertaining to the Retail Study. Mr. Rothrock advised he would be getting in touch with Blowing Rock School regarding the use of their parking areas from June 15th through August 1st each year.

Also, Mr. Rothrock spoke in reference to banners in the Park. He felt a better way of letting visitors know of events taking place in town was needed and suggested signs be erected at strategic areas.

Mr. Rothrock mentioned the Town's GIS system now had aerial photos. He also spoke briefly regarding computer models and simulations for new projects. Commissioner Tester stated due to this being costly this should only pertain to larger projects. Mr. Rothrock said to aid with public awareness, information regarding any new code changes were being put in the town newsletter.

Following a brief discussion regarding outside dining and signage for businesses located on side streets, this portion of the meeting concluded with Council thanking Mr. Rothrock for the great job his department was doing.

PUBLIC SAFETY (EMERGENCY SERVICES)

Emergency Services Director Kent Graham spoke in reference to the fire whistle located in Memorial Park. Mr. Graham stated the fire department no longer needed this whistle and did not want to continue to pay the power bill each month but it was his understanding the majority of citizens wanted the whistle to continue to blow at noontime. Mayor Lawrence advised the whistle could be moved to another circuit. Council consensus was to continue to allow the whistle to be blown at noon each day and to possibly have the circuit changed.

Town Manager Hildebran spoke regarding a bill passed by the General Assembly effective July 1, 2009 in reference to the consolidated dispatch system. Mr. Hildebran advised since Blowing Rock was not a primary dispatch center approximately \$20,000 would be lost should the consolidation happen. He also advised an appeal had been made to the State and he hoped to hear from this in the near future. Mr. Hildebran stated all 911 calls would go to Watauga or Caldwell County depending on where the call originated. Mr. Graham spoke regarding the pros and cons of the consolidated dispatch program.

Mr. Graham updated Council on the status of the new satellite station under construction on Hwy. 221. He advised the Fire Department was currently searching for property in the Aho area for another satellite station. Therefore, all residents located in the Blowing Rock fire district would be within a 6-mile radius of a fire station which would assist in lowering insurance premiums. Commissioner Ball suggested that information about the satellite stations be put in the town newsletter to help educate the public. Mr. Graham also anticipated that within a 5-year period a satellite County medic base would be located in Blowing Rock.

Council thanked Mr. Graham for his hard work in assisting with the Fire/Rescue merger.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Director Johnny Lentz updated Council on various projects that his department had completed. Mr. Lentz advised a large leak had been detected on Hwy. 321 that had been repaired which had helped with some of the unaccountable water loss. Mr. Lentz explained the curbs and sidewalks in town were in disrepair and he anticipated work to begin in conjunction with the Streetscape Plan soon. Mr. Lentz also spoke regarding work that had been completed in reference to the town sewer system.

Also discussed, was the lack of a suitable location to dispose of yard waste which resulted in a large cost in landfill fees to his department. Mr. Lentz also mentioned he had recently spoken with three paving companies to get an idea of the cost of paving streets that were on the Town paving schedule.

Town Manager Hildebran addressed new projects in Town and the need for some cost recovery for repairs to roadways when water/sewer systems were being installed for

these projects. Mr. Hildebran advised he had discussed this issue with the Town Engineer and hopefully a document could be drafted for Council's review and adoption.

Mr. Lentz spoke briefly regarding future capital needs for his department.

Mr. Hildbran advised a permanent location had not been found for the recycling center. Mr. Lentz explained the center was an unmanned site and regular garbage waste was sometimes thrown into the recyclables which contaminated all the contents of that dumpster and could no longer be recycled. Several members of Council felt the recycling center should be closed and residents should take their recyclables to the County sites since an attendant was there at all times helping to alleviate contamination from happening. Council suggested that Mr. Lentz speak with Watauga County regarding this issue. Mr. Lentz also clarified that his department would continue to pick up recyclables for businesses each week on Thursday.

Council thanked Mr. Lentz for his hard work and congratulated him on his upcoming retirement in December.

NC RURAL CENTER GRANT

Town Manager Hildebran presented Council with a request from the Chamber of Commerce asking the Town to apply for a grant in the amount of \$25,000 to the NC Rural Center for a Wine and Culinary Feasibility Study. He advised the Chamber would raise the matching funds and this request would be at no cost to the Town. A motion to approve the request was made by Commissioner Pickett, seconded by Commissioner Klutz. Unanimously approved.

OTHER

Council briefly discussed the future of the American Legion building and concluded that further discussion was needed with Mr. Ron Oberle.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

MAYOR _____
J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Sharon Greene, Town Clerk