

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners Special Meeting-August 10, 2009

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners held a special meeting on Monday, August 10, 2009. The meeting took place in the Town Council Chambers at Town Hall 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, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, and Assistant Town Clerk Erica Cline.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Blowing Rock Hospital Update:

In July, Council held a special meeting with representatives from Appalachian Regional Healthcare Systems (ARHS) to discuss future plans for a post acute care/skilled nurse facility.

Commissioner Tester began the update by stating he would like to be recused in the event that Council should take any action at today's meeting due to his membership on the Blowing Rock Hospital Board of Directors.

Mr. Tester mentioned that ARHS CEO, Richard Sparks was researching the 3.5 acre parcel of land to determine whether it would be a feasible location for the new facility. Mr. Tester advised over the years there had been several discussions regarding the status of the current facility and the need for a new facility. He stated the hospital is working at a loss ratio of \$1,000,000. Mr. Tester also stated that ARHS wanted to continue with the small town community hospital; however, it would be changed to a post acute care/skilled nurse facility. He stated there has been a change in the environment and the question is whether to support the change or to move the hospital to a different location.

Commissioner Tester then reviewed Blowing Rock Hospital's Articles of Incorporation specifically article VI regarding what would happen in the event of the dissolution and liquidation or other termination of the Corporation. Other materials presented to the Board included a draft support case for post-acute care in the High Country, and a High

Country Magazine article on Charles A. Cannon, Jr. Memorial Hospital. **Articles of Incorporation, ARHF Case for Support, High Country Magazine article- Attachment #1**

Commissioner Bobby Ball stressed the importance of the Town showing support for this facility while speaking with potential donors.

Audience member Kent Tarbutton asked that Council consider how vital a long term care facility was to the Town and the community.

Council agreed the long term care facility should remain because of its importance to the entire community.

Audience member Jim Steel inquired whether the new facility would stand on its own and be self sustaining.

Commissioner Tester replied the new facility would operate as a separate business.

Audience member Pat Fountain asked if the cost for current patients would increase and if Medicaid and Medicare would be accepted.

Commissioner Ball stated Medicare is currently being accepted and would continue to be with the new facility.

Commissioner Yount and Mayor Lawrence inquired as to the cost of the project.

Commissioner Tester replied that Mr. Sparks is researching the cost and land and will give Council a presentation when complete.

Audience member Lou Dessaint, representing S&A Acquisitions, the adjoining property owner stated he has had continuing conversations with ARHS on the project.

Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Charles Hardin emphasized that Blowing Rock Hospital is one of the largest employers in Blowing Rock.

Commissioner Klutz stated he would like to see the hospital remain in Blowing Rock and suggested the Town hold a public informational meeting involving citizens in order to get their perspective on the new facility.

Council concurred with Commissioner Klutz and stated as soon as Mr. Sparks had the information regarding cost, land, etc. a community meeting would be held.

Miscellaneous Update:

Commissioner Tester informed Council of the press release concerning the Hayes Center suspending operations due to the difficult economic environment. He suggested

that Council should meet with the Board of Directors to offer their assistance and moral support.

Town Manager Scott Hildebran provided the following updates:

- The Board of Adjustment denied the Town's request for a variance to subdivide the Tiller-Lane property for mortgage financing purposes. Negotiations were still underway with First Citizens to avoid subdividing the property.
- The NC General Assembly passed Senate Bill 831 which extends approved permits for land development until December 2010. Affected CUPs include Blowing Rock Commons, Robbins Pool, Ransom Street, LLC, and Holiday Lodge.
- Three (3) dog clean-up stations have been ordered to be placed in strategic locations near Town parks. Resident Michael Gray funded two of the stations.

ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

MAYOR _____
J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Erica Cline, Assistant Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS: (8/10/09)

Articles of Incorporation, ARHF Case for Support, High Country Magazine article-Attachment #1