

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
January 9, 2024

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, 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 Cat Perry, David Harwood, Melissa Pickett and Pete Gherini. Others in attendance were Interim Town Manager Kevin Rothrock, Town Attorney Tucker Deal, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Town Engineers Jared Wright, Police Chief Aaron Miller, Interim Planning Director Brian Johnson, Public Works Director Matt Blackburn, IT Director Thomas Steele, Finance Director Tasha Brown and Taylor Miller. Town Clerk Hilari Hubner was unable to attend the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Mayor Sellers verified attendance via roll call.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTE APPROVAL

Council Member Harwood made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2023, regular and closed session meeting, seconded by Council Member Perry. Unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA ADOPTION

Council Member Harwood made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Council Member Gherini. Unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Wayfinding Signage Project – Bid Award
2. Request to Partner with Blowing Rock Country Club – FEMA Grant Funds for Dam Removal

Council Member Perry made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Summary of Green Hill Communications Project

Interim Town Manager Kevin Rothrock gave a summary on the Green Hill Communications Project. He stated at last year's Council Retreat, improvements to the Green Hill building and replacement of the pole were discussed. The project was funded during the current year's budget, roughly \$115,000 was the total budget and of that amount \$46,000 was for the new building. The Town is currently working with Blue Ridge Electric on a new utility pole for antenna mounts for police, fire, EMS and public works. A SUP is required for any non-commercial tower over twenty (20) feet in height and when the pole height is determined, a

SUP application will go through the review process of the Planning Board and then to Town Council.

Interim Manager Rothrock explained he wasn't sure what the pole height would be, but it would be taller than what is currently there.

Council Member Harwood asked what the process or criteria for determining the pole height was.

Interim Manager Rothrock further explained part of what will determine the height would be what type of footer or foundation it would be placed on. There has to be a direct line of sight over what is currently there. He continued that the other option is to remove treetops.

Mayor Sellers stated after conversations about this with Interim Manager Rothrock, he felt the Town needed to follow the Town's ordinance and gave kudos to Interim Manager Rothrock for taking the high road for our citizens and stating this needed to go to Public Hearing. Mayor Sellers further stated he felt it was good Interim Manager Rothrock bought up this need to go to Public Hearing so the public can know what is going on and have a voice when the time comes.

After further discussion, Mayor Sellers reiterated we do not know anything about the height of the tower, the type of the tower, what is recommended or anything until the engineers get back to Interim Manager Rothrock and our Public Safety Management. He wanted to state for the record, Council and staff don't know anything about a pole. Furthermore, thanks to Interim Manager Rothrock and the Council's foresight there will be a Public Hearing once Council and staff know what this will consist of.

No decision was made, this was strictly for informational purposes only.

OFFICIAL REPORTS & COMMENTS

- Mayor Sellers welcomed Council Member Gherini back from his trip to Italy. Once again thanked the current Council and stated he thinks the Council is going to have a good year. Thanks to public works, they were out fixing another broken water line the night before and for their hard work keeping the roads clear during the bad weather.
- Council Member Perry stated she is looking forward to the Council Retreat at the end of the month and Council being able to talk about things that are important to the Town and what they want to do in 2024. She reminded the public the retreat dates are January 29, 30 and 31, 2024 at the American Legion and the meeting is open to the public.
- Council Member Harwood extended his condolences to the Deal family for the loss of Shelia Deal.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson stated the utilities commission issued an electric rate increase of 23.3%, State Bill 299 - late audit bill, the state can start withholding a percentage of sales tax for late audits. Mentioned insurance rate increases.
- Council Member Gherini stated he's glad to be back and looking forward to a heavy agenda for the Winter Retreat. His prayers are with the Deal family for their loss. Welcomed Council Member Harwood back on the board and welcomed Council Member Perry to the board and stated he's looking forward to getting things done.
- Town Attorney Tucker Deal thanked the Council for their support during this time.
- Interim Manager Kevin Rothrock stated there is a state inspection scheduled for

The Blowing Rock Academy the second week of February. Thanked the public works team with their hard work on water leaks and snow removal. Gave an update on the water/sewer project. The lake level had been struggling, but it's now overflowing and there is plenty of water.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:30 PM Council Member Perry made a motion to go into closed session, **NCGS 143-318.11. (a)(3)** – *To consult with attorney retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege*, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:30 p.m. Council returned to open session and with no further business, Council Member Harwood made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers, Mayor

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

Attachments
None

