

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
March 12, 2024

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 12, 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 and David Harwood. Council Members Melissa Pickett and Pete Gherini were unable to attend the meeting. Others in attendance were Interim Town Manager Kevin Rothrock, Town Attorney Tucker Deal, Town Engineer Jared Wright, Interim Planning Director Brian Johnson, Public Works Director Matt Blackburn, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Landscape Director Cory Cathcart, IT Director Thomas Steele, Finance Director Tasha Brown and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner.

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 Perry made the motion to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2024, regular and closed session meetings, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA ADOPTION

Council Member Harwood made a motion to approve the regular meeting agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Perry. Unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Budget Amendment #2024-12**
- 2. 2023 Tax Advertisement Request**
- 3. Mayview Madness Run**

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

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Street Right-of-Way Maintenance Strategy

Interim Town Manager Kevin Rothrock stated staff is developing a process for maintenance of Town streets rights-of-way that have vegetative and other physical obstructions. Chapter six (6) of the Town Code requires town streets be kept free of obstructions and that once notified of the violation property owners have three (3) days to remove the obstruction. Interim Manager Rothrock further stated staff would give more than three (3) days for the property owners to remove the obstructions. A possible strategy to eliminate the safety concerns with street obstructions is for the staff to identify all locations where trees, limbs, shrubs, fences, trash enclosures, etc. protrude into the traveled portion of the street. Staff would then contact all property owners or persons responsible for the obstructions and provide forty-five (45) to clear vegetation and 60 (sixty) days to remove physical (fence/wall/built) obstructions. If not corrected within the prescribed timeframes, the Town Street Maintenance Department will clear referenced obstructions.

Mayor Sellers asked if a specific timeframe should be given to the property owner to remove any obstructions since staff will give more than the three (3) days listed in the Town Code.

Council Member Harwood stated he didn't think so and that should be left up to staff to determine.

Interim Manager Rothrock explained staff could work with the property owner and give them a reasonable amount of time to remove the obstructions.

Council Member Harwood asked if the sight line in the ordinance would accommodate a corner like the one at Henkel Street and Chestnut Drive, or if there was another place in the code that addressed that.

Interim Manager Rothrock explained it would.

Council Member Harwood stated he felt there were some blind corners in intersections that are not safe.

Interim Manager Rothrock assured Council staff will canvas all town streets. Staff knows the ones that are problematic, but will find the new ones staff isn't currently aware of.

Council Member Perry asked if this would start immediately.

Interim Manager Rothrock stated it will start within the week. He explained staff didn't want to start until this was brought to Council for discussion and explanation.

Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

OFFICIAL REPORTS & COMMENTS

- Town Engineer Jared Wright gave an update on the Main Street Water/Sewer project. Work is approximately 1/3 complete. Working with the contractor to expedite the work on the downtown portion to get that part completed before the busy season starts.
- Mayor Sellers stated Council had attended the ribbon cutting of the Blowing Rock Academy earlier in the day. Congratulated and thanked staff for their hard work getting that facility opened. Thanked Public Works who spent over 20 hours over the previous weekend trying to unclog a sewer line in Town. He stated we have the best Town employees of any Town anywhere. Announced Shane Fox will be returning as Town Manager beginning May 1st. He thanked Interim Manager Kevin Rothrock for his hard work and keeping the Town running during the gap.
- Council Member Perry thanked Public Works for their tireless efforts working on the sewer line problem over the weekend and resolving the issue. Very excited about the Blowing Rock Academy, it's a game changer. She further commented it will be a wonderful asset to recruit and obtain good employees.
- Council Member Harwood echoed what has been said about the Blowing Rock Academy. Welcomed Shane Fox back and stated he looks forward to working with him again. He thanked Interim Manager Rothrock for stepping up, putting up with a lot and guiding the town for the last 10 plus months. He stated he's personally indebted to him for all he's done and is very much appreciative to Interim Manager Rothrock.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson echoed everyone's statements as well. Thanked Interim Manager Rothrock and Public Works for their hard work. Update on the RISK Management meeting he attended in Raleigh. Still offering the account software to anyone interested, not looking like a lot of new income coming into the State this year, not looking at anything coming out from the state on housing – looking more for federal on that, no movement this session on medical marijuana, not much movement on interest rates until around June, good time for Bonds, reviewed some insurance changes.
- Town Attorney Tucker Deal attended the Bi-annual Municipal Attorney's Conference at the School of Government. Made a lot of good contacts. Been working with Interim Planning Director Brian Johnson on some easements for the Middle Fork Greenway.
- Interim Manager Kevin Rothrock reported that Finance Director Tasha Brown is at a class all week at the School of Government in Chapel Hill, thanked Public Works for their long hours and hard work on the sewer issue over the weekend. He signed the TDA Wayfinding contracts, Memorial Park bathroom project will tentatively be completed by the end of the week and an update on the school flashing light – it's a battery issue that is being worked on resolving.

Council took a 10 minute recess before going into closed session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 6:35 PM Council Member Perry made a motion to go into closed session, **NCGS 143-318.11.(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 Perry. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers, Mayor

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

Attachments

Budget Amendment #2024-12 – Attachment A