

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Board of Commissioners
Departmental Meeting-March 10, 2010

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners continued their annual departmental meeting on Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock. In attendance were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Albert Yount, Phillip Pickett, Tommy Klutz, Doug Matheson and Jim Steele. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Finance Director Nicole Norman and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Town Manager Hildebran advised the reason for a deferral of the Telecommunications Ordinance during the March 9th meeting was due to downtown streetscape and view sheds concerns, as well as power lines being buried along Valley Blvd during the Hwy. 321 widening project. Mr. Hildebran also advised that it was possible that multi carriers could be accommodated on the Green Hill Circle water tank site. Council agreed that better cell phone reception was needed in the area.

PARKS & RECREATION/TOWN BEAUTIFICATION ISSUES

Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown discussed future plans for a multi-purpose room to be added in the old fire department building located on Park Avenue. Mr. Hildebran advised that he spoke with Town Engineer Doug Chapman concerning a feasibility study for all three buildings; police department, old rescue and old fire department and possibly the public works warehouse. Mr. Hildebran mentioned there were funds earmarked for the renovation project as well as a feasibility study. Council recommended proceeding with the study.

Ms. Brown updated Council regarding several improvements that were made in the past fiscal year, such as maintaining the old pool, debris removal, renovations at Memorial Park restroom facility, beginning the new pool project, etc.

She also mentioned the Parks & Recreation Department was offering the same programs as in previous years and overall participation had increased in most of the programs.

Ms. Brown stated the Blowing Rock Bridge Club had played a huge part in helping with renovations of the Ruritan Club building and the building was in high demand, which generated rental revenue for her department.

Commissioner Matheson commented that he had heard from several merchants that they would like to see concerts/bands in Memorial Park on occasions other than Sunday afternoons. Mr. Matheson advised this would draw more people to downtown that

would in-turn frequent the shops. Ms. Brown responded that the Chamber sponsored the Concerts in the Park events and that she could speak with Charles Hardin regarding this suggestion.

Ms. Brown mentioned enhancements and repairs she would like to do such as adding more horseshoe pits in Memorial Park for an approximate cost of \$700.00. Commissioner Klutz spoke in favor of this improvement.

Commissioner Klutz also mentioned the need for removal of dead trees at Davant Field. Mr. Hildebran advised that a number of the dead trees had already been removed with more removal planned in the storm clean up.

Commissioner Steele inquired if area hotels paid a fee to the Parks & Recreation Department so their guests could utilize the pool. Ms. Brown advised a letter was sent to all the hotels/motels in Blowing Rock offering the use of the pool for guests for a fee of \$125.00 per year. Commissioner Steele recommended that this offer be extended to the Blowing Rock Country Club as well.

Commissioner Steele also inquired about the Town Clean Up days scheduled. He felt clean up days should be scheduled when summer residents were in town so they could also be involved. Mr. Hildebran mentioned that BRAAC had begun a new program "Flower Keepers" and could certainly use volunteers.

Commissioner Steele had questions regarding the Summer Day Camp Program. He asked if the program was self sustaining. Ms. Brown replied that over the years due to the fee structure, the program had not been self sustaining. She also stated the age group limitation had been changed slightly effective this summer.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT (Administration/Budgetary) ISSUES

Finance Director Nicole Norman presented Council with a FY 09-10 forecast narrative and highlights. She asked that Council review the narrative and she would address any questions they might have.

The forecast narrative given by Ms. Norman showed budget overruns due to legal costs associated with the BRAHM parking facility and engineering costs associated with the downtown streetscape, snow and ice removal costs, etc.

Also highlighted in the narrative were areas of general fund, water/sewer revenue as well as possible items not included in the forecast.

Council thanked Ms. Norman for her presentation and commended her on the forecast narrative.

Mr. Hildebran discussed plans for the storm debris clean up. He advised that the water line between Blowing Rock and Boone would begin as soon as the weather permitted.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES (Emergency Services)

EMS Director Kent Graham reviewed a power point presentation to Council. He stated that Blowing Rock's Fire District encompassed 52 square miles with the actual town limits being 3 square miles. In the presentation, Mr. Graham advised that his department was continuing negotiations for a county medic base co-location. He showed a map of surrounding areas and where the medic bases were located. Mr. Graham stated the County Commissioners decided the location of the medic bases and a base could not be placed too close to a county line. He also mentioned Cove Creek would be receiving a medic base in the near future. According to Mr. Graham, approximately one-half of all calls were inside the limits of Boone and the remaining in areas outside of Boone.

Mr. Hildebran mentioned Blowing Rock taxpayers were paying their share of county taxes with a certain percentage going toward emergency services.

Mr. Graham suggested that Council ask questions and speak with the County Commissioners regarding Blowing Rock's need for a medic base.

Mr. Graham discussed Blowing Rock acquiring Automated External Defibrillators (A.E.D's) throughout the community. He advised the approximate cost would be \$1,700.00 each and some grant funding would be available. He also mentioned that a policy needed to be in place which his department was currently working on.

Next, the need for uniform E-911 house numbering was discussed. Mr. Graham gave several scenarios on how to accomplish this goal.

Mr. Graham mentioned that the Fire Department was in the process of acquiring property in the Aho community to build a satellite fire station.

Commissioner Pickett asked about the uniformity of street signs in town and the need for bigger lettering. Mr. Hildebran advised that federal law would be mandating this in the near future and bigger letters would be required.

Commissioner Yount asked Mr. Graham what the main priorities were for his department. Mr. Graham listed the acquisition of A.E.D's, the requirement of alarm systems in downtown businesses to insure the protection of historic structures, and E-911 house numbering with community participation.

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

Water/Wastewater

Town Engineer Doug Chapman, WTP/WWTP Director Tom McRary, and Public Works Director Mike Wilcox were present to answer questions Council had regarding infrastructure issues.

Priority items in the Public Works Department discussed were; the continuation of the Street Pavement Plan, consideration of replacement of public works warehouse, and developing a plan outlining existing ditches and cost for improvements, right-of-way maintenance funding, dead tree removal from town properties and right-of-ways, debris removal from Middle Ford of the New River, and communicating the use of Safe Salt during snow/ice storms.

Reimbursement for repairing roadways damaged from new construction projects was also discussed. Town Manager Hildebran suggested an engineering study being done to gather information on areas in need of repairs. Council's consensus was to move forward with this study.

Mr. McRary advised that \$1.7 million dollars of renovations and improvements had been made to the WTP/WWTP. Mr. Chapman stated other improvements planned in this department were repairing the exterior wall at the WTP, proceed with water plant filter improvements as mandated by NCDENR, and proceed with the Boone/Blowing Rock water interconnection project which was planned to commence possibly by April 2010.

Mayor Lawrence inquired about the remaining life of the WTP facility. Mr. Chapman advised the facility would continue to serve the area efficiently well into the future, but items would always need replacing.

Town Manager Hildebran advised that energy audits were planned for Town buildings in order to save money. He also stated that he continued to look for a suitable location for a recycling drop-off center in Town, and might possibly look at the cost of having curbside pick-up for recyclables.

Mr. Hildebran updated Council on other items of interest such as the new pool project, which would be open for the up-coming season. The Town reservoir was also briefly discussed.

ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

MAYOR _____
J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Sharon Greene, Town Clerk

