

MINUTES

Intergovernmental Retreat

September 28, 2010

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners attended an Intergovernmental Retreat on Monday, September 28, 2010. The Retreat was hosted by Watauga County Board of Commissioners and was held at the Broyhill Center in Boone, NC. Attending from the Town of Blowing Rock were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Phillip Pickett, Doug Matheson, and Jim Steele. Commissioners Albert Yount and Tommy Klutz were unable to attend. Staff members in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

The following were also in attendance:

Watauga County: Bill Winkler, John Cooper, Tim Futrelle, Winston Kinsey, Deron Geouque, Joe Furman, and Anita Fogle

Town of Beech Mountain: Rick Owen and Rick Miller

Town of Boone: Loretta Clawson, Lynne Mason, Andy Ball, Rennie Brantz, Jamie Leigh, Stephen Phillips, Greg Young, Sam Furguele, Blake Brown, Rick Miller, and Kim Brown

Town of Seven Devils: Kathy Copley, Richard DeMott, David Ehmig, and Ed Evans

Appalachian State University: Greg Lovins, Mike O'Conner, and Susan McCracken

Others in attendance: Frank Gioscio, Marty Hemric, Lee Warren, Ed Miller, and Phil Trew

Update on NCDOT Projects - Frank Gioscio, NCDOT Boone Resident Engineer

- Resident Engineer's office oversees construction projects; not responsible for road maintenance

Current projects

1. US 321 below Blowing Rock
 - Project started in 2005
 - Estimated completion date - November 2011 (original estimated completion date - August 2008)
 - \$65m project
2. King Street widening
 - Project started July 2009

- Estimated completion date - July 2011
 - Currently on schedule
 - \$15m project
3. NC 194 - Valle Crucis to Avery County
 - Safety improvements
 - \$7.4m project
 - Will start October 2010
 4. Various resurfacing projects (including West King Street and US 221 near Blowing Rock)
 5. Various bridge replacement projects underway

Future Projects

1. US 321 in Blowing Rock
 - Scheduled to begin March 2011
 - 4.5 miles; \$50-\$60m project
 - Right-of-way acquisition is underway
 - Scheduled to take 3 years to complete
2. US 221 - Deep Gap to Jefferson
 - Scheduled to begin in 2013
 - First phase will be US 421 to Idlewild Road
3. Various bridge replacements - Federal-Aid program funds systematic replacement of bridges throughout State

Watauga High School Initiatives - Dr. Marty Hemric, Superintendent

- In 2009-10, seven of the nine County K-8 schools were Schools of Distinction
- Blowing Rock Elementary was a High Growth School with Honors (09-10)
- Watauga High School had a composite score of 88.7 (09-10)
- Watauga County School system still values innovative skills, arts education, physical education - these skills aren't measured
- Every K-8 classroom has a Smartboard
- Every Watauga High School student has a laptop
- Watauga High School has wi-fi on entire campus
- Watauga School system students interact with students in Chile
- The different K-8 schools interact via the internet
- NC received federal (ARRA) Race to the Top (RTT) Grant
- RTT Grant's goals are to improve teaching effectiveness; increase graduation rate; and improve low-performing schools
- Watauga will receive \$80,000/year for four years through the RTT Grant
- Watauga High School's graduation rate is currently 82% - Thirteen percent increase over past two years

ASU College of Education Building - Greg Lovins, ASU Vice-Chancellor for Business Affairs

- 124,000 square foot building; \$35m project

- Located at corner of East Howard and College Streets
- Anticipated completion - Summer 2011
- Hickory Construction is G.C.
- Will house College of Education - offices and classrooms
- ASU has 2,800 students enrolled in teacher education programs
- Building will have wi-fi and three computer labs

ASU/Boone Water System Interconnect - Greg Lovins, ASU Vice-Chancellor for Business Affairs

- ASU and Town of Boone connected independent water systems for water security
- Project was mandated by NCDENR
- ASU has 360 million gallon reservoir off Rainbow Trail
- Has a 2.0mgd water treatment plant (upgraded in 2006)
- average demand is 400,000 gallons/day at ASU
- interconnect cost \$310,000 - cost split evenly between ASU and Town of Boone
- interconnect can exchange 1,000 gallons/minute between systems

Boone/Blowing Rock Water System Interconnect - Scott Hildebran, Blowing Rock Town Manager

- Blowing Rock started looking for additional water supply source in 1998
- Best option for new source was Payne Branch
- Decided to connect with Boone in 2004; agreement developed in 2008
- Project consists of 5 miles of 12" pipe; pumping station; and 28 fire hydrants
- Ronnie Turner from Hickory is contractor
- \$3.6m project - funding from ARC, Rural Center, ARRA funds, and Town of Blowing Rock
- Anticipated completion date - November 1, 2010
- Interconnect to be used for emergency use only

Town of Boone New Water Intake Project - Greg Young, Boone Town Manager; Rick Miller, Boone Public Utilities Director

- Boone started looking for additional water supply source in 2004
- Examined 27 options - intake on New River near Watauga/Ashe County line deemed most feasible
- Town has purchased 10 acres along river for the project
- Intake will be underneath river - no impediment to fish and boats
- Boone voters approved \$25m bond referendum in 2009 for project
- Project will include intake, 15 miles of transmission pipe, and upgrade to existing water treatment plant
- Town has prepared environmental assessment, and has received FONSI

- Funding includes \$450,000 Rural Center grant; \$1.8m USDA grant; and \$2,388,000 USDA loan (3.25%, 40 years)
- Town has been systematically increasing water rates to afford debt service
- Next step is to have New River reclassified by NCDENR to allow water withdrawal

ADJOURN

With no further questions or comments, Mr. Phil Trew thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

MAYOR _____

J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____

Sharon Greene, Town Clerk