

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners Budget Work Session-May 15, 2012

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners continued their budget work session on Tuesday, May 15, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. The meeting took place in the Town Council Chambers at 1036 Main Street Blowing Rock. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Albert Yount, Tommy Klutz, Dan Phillips, 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.

DISCUSSION ITEM

As a follow-up to the May 14th meeting, Mr. Hildebran presented Council with itemized expenses for FY 2010-2011 that were paid to McGill Associates. He also presented a handout listing all building permits that were issued over the previous year for Council's review.

Mr. Hildebran then presented the upcoming Street Pavement Schedule and reviewed it for Council consideration. He advised that staff recommended low bidder, MidState Paving, be awarded the bid for paving Spruce Road, Fairway Lane, Henkel Street and Elliott Circle for the amount of \$63,308.00. Commissioner Klutz made a motion to approve the Street Pavement Plan and award the bid to low bidder MidState Paving. The motion received a second from Commissioner Steele. Unanimously approved.

Street Pavement Plan – Exhibit A

Town Manager Hildebran then reviewed the water/sewer expenditures with Council. While Mr. Hildebran briefly discussed the betterments that would be completed during the Hwy 321 widening process, he mentioned that residents within the required distance of the Town's sewer system would be required to hook while work was being done along that area.

Council briefly talked about the addition of sewer to the Gideon Ridge area that was presently being served by a private system that serviced Blackberry Condos as well as future sewer extensions in Laurel Park.

In reviewing the proposed TDA Budget, Mr. Hildebran advised that the Maple Lodge and Cliff Dwellers Inn were now back in operation after being closed for a period of time which would affect occupancy tax collections in a positive way. Mr. Hildebran stated that he expected an increase in occupancy tax collections for the upcoming year.

Fees for Parks and Recreation programs and Robbins Pool at Broyhill Park were also reviewed. Council felt that Town residents should pay less than others who frequent the pool. Mr. Hildebran advised that Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown could put together a proposal regarding the fees if Council wished for her to do so. Council decided to wait and revisit this issue during the next budget year.

At this time, Planning Director Rothrock entered the meeting.

In review of the FY 2012-13 Fee Schedule, Commissioner Phillips began discussion regarding fees that were paid into the Town's parking fund when a new business was constructed that didn't have adequate space to meet the Town's parking requirements. He questioned the rationality of charging the parking fees now that the Town had adequate parking with the additional parking decks in town. Commissioner Klutz agreed.

Planning Director Rothrock explained that approximately 18 months ago, Town Council had reduced parking ratio requirements which greatly provided for more flexibility. Mayor Lawrence then explained that each property determined how they would meet the parking requirement, on-site, satellite or via a parking in-lieu payment to the parking fund. He mentioned a new business that paid the parking fees due to the fact they wanted to build a larger building on the property than what the code allowed and therefore they did not have adequate space for parking on-site. After some discussion, Council agreed to continue to monitor the issue.

Council then discussed the position allocation for the Police Department. Commissioner Phillips inquired about the number of police officers employed by the Town. Town Manager Hildebran explained that two officers were on duty at all times and the current staffing levels included 11 sworn officers and 4 dispatchers. The recently approved consolidated dispatch agreement would reduce overall staffing from 15 to 12, which includes an administrative assistant. Commissioner Yount inquired about the competitiveness of salaries.

Commissioner Steele expressed some concern about "across-the-board" raises to all employees; he felt a merit system should be utilized. Mr. Hildebran reviewed the various employee compensation methods utilized by the town over the years. He also stated that additional suggestions may be presented by the new Customer Service Initiative process underway.

After further discussion regarding salaries, Council inquired as to when they would receive a report regarding the Customer Service Initiative. Town Manager Hildebran stated that he hoped to have a showcase for Council in early July.

Mr. Hildebran then reviewed capital expenditures. Mr. Hildebran advised that the proposed budget included funding for initial salt bin work at the Public Works Facility, Town Hall roof replacement as well as funding for Streetscape Phase III (St. Mary's to Storie Street). He also stated that a meeting would be scheduled in July for Council to prioritize other Town facility projects. Commissioners Yount and Steele concurred that such a meeting would be helpful.

Council suggested the Town look into the costs of purchasing an industrial car wash in order to keep Town vehicles clean.

Commissioner Steele suggested that budget charts be included in the Town's newsletter *Around the Rock* to taxpayers showing them how the General Fund expenditures are broken down between all the Town departments.

Commissioner Yount inquired if staff had checked into the cost for a charging station. Mr. Hildebran stated that grant funding for this item was still being sought.

Commissioner Phillips suggested the Town include information regarding the tax revaluation process as it evolves over the next year or two in the *Blowing Rocket*.

Mayor Lawrence thanked staff and Council for their input on the proposed budget.

ADJOURN

With no further discussion on the FY 2012-13 Budget, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

MAYOR _____

J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____

Sharon Greene, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS (05-15-12)

Street Pavement Plan – Exhibit A