

## **Watauga Intergovernmental Retreat March 4, 2013**

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners attended an Intergovernmental Retreat on Monday, March 4, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. The Retreat was held at the ASU Athletics Center in Boone, NC. In attendance from the Town of Blowing Rock, Town of Boone, Watauga County, Appalachian State University, and the Town of Seven Devils were the following:

### **Town of Blowing Rock**

- Mayor: J.B. Lawrence
- Commissioners: Doug Matheson and Jim Steele
- Staff: Town Manager Scott Hildebran and Town Clerk Sharon Greene

### **Town of Boone**

- Commissioners: Rennie Brantz and Lynne Mason
- Staff: Town Clerk Kim Brown

### **Watauga County**

- Commissioners: Nathan Miller, Perry Yates, John Welch and Billy Kennedy
- Staff: County Manager Deron Geouque, and Clerk to the Board Anita Fogle

### **Town of Seven Devils**

- Mayor: Larry Fontaine
- Commissioners Kay Ehlinger and Brad Lambert
- Staff: Town Manager Ed Evans

### **Appalachian State University**

- Vice Chancellor of Business Affairs: Greg Lovins
- Director for Service-Learning: Clark Maddux
- Dept. of Student Program: Todd Mortensen
- Director of External Affairs & Community Relations: Susan McCracken

The agenda included discussion of the High Country United Way's Vision Council process. Presentations were given by eight Vision Council members.

### **High Country United Way Vision Council Overview – Nancy Riegel**

Nancy Riegel provided an overview of the Vision Council process. Highlights included:

- High Country United Way (HCUW) wanted to change way of allocating funds to service agencies – shift from funding direct services to focusing on funding projects based on outcomes
- Used Buncombe County's recent process as guidance

- In September 2011, HCUW organized stakeholders to determine community focus
- Process covered Watauga and Avery Counties
- Three focus areas were determined – health, income, education
- Councils were formed to address each focus area
- Each council followed same process – create vision, identify barriers, identify needed improvements, develop strategies to obtain improvements
- In 2013, 30% of HCUW funding will go to projects with community impact
- In 2014, 60% of HCUW funding will go to projects with community impact
- In 2013, 90% of HCUW funding will go to projects with community impact
- Each year, 10% of funding is reserved for emergency relief

### **Health Council - Bryan Belcher, Alice Salthouse**

Bryan Belcher and Alice Salthouse described the work of the Health Council. Highlights included:

- Health Council established three priorities:
  - Create an environment that supports health
  - Provide needed healthcare and resources
  - Reduce substance abuse
- 23% of Watauga County residents have no health insurance
- Working to establish a full-time Farmers Market
- Working on Project Lazarus (a prescription drugs abuse prevention program)

### **Income Council – Susan Jones, Joe Furman**

Susan Jones and Joe Furman described the work of the Income Council. Highlights included:

- Income Council wants to address both income of citizens, and cost of living
- Income Council established three priorities:
  - Create affordable housing
  - Attract, obtain, and maintain diverse industries
  - Create sufficient affordable healthcare
- Watauga Community Housing Trust has been established as a non-profit to provide “workforce” housing
- A Housing Summit is being planned for early Summer 2013
- The Watauga County Economic Development Commission annual Economic Development Summit is scheduled for April 17, 2013 in Blowing Rock

### **Education Council – Gary Childers, Dick Jones, Melissa Phillips**

Gary Childers, Dick Jones, and Melissa Phillips described the work of the Education Council. Highlights included:

- Education Council established three priorities:
  - Expand non-traditional education opportunities
  - Increase/change perception of value of education
  - Increase collaboration to align resources
- Watauga County has a 15% dropout rate
- Education Council is not using (lack of) funding as an excuse for educational barriers
- Availability/cost of childcare is barrier to adult education

**ADJORN**

The meeting closed at 6:50 p.m.

**MAYOR** \_\_\_\_\_  
**J.B. Lawrence**

**ATTEST** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Sharon Greene, Town Clerk**