

**MINUTES**  
**Town of Blowing Rock**  
**Special Departmental Work Session**  
**Monday, March 11, 2013**

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners continued their annual Departmental Work Sessions on Monday, March 11, 2013. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock N.C. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Albert Yount, Dan Phillips, Tommy Klutz, Doug Matheson and Jim Steele. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Public Works Director Mike Wilcox, WTP/WWTP Director Tom McRary and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

**UPDATES**

Town Manager Hildebran presented Council with a draft resolution previously discussed during the work session held on March 5<sup>th</sup> requesting an act to require payment of delinquent taxes before deeds may be recorded. Mr. Hildebran stated that 77 counties had already enacted legislation requiring tax certifications be obtained before the transfer of properties and that Stacy Eggers, IV, Town Attorney for Beech Mountain drafted a resolution.

Commissioner Steele made a motion to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by Commissioner Matheson. Unanimously approved. **A Resolution Requesting an Act to Require Payment of Delinquent Taxes for the Town of Blowing Rock Before Recording Deeds Conveying Property Subject to the Delinquent Taxes – Exhibit A**

**PLANNING ISSUES**

Planning Director Rothrock began the discussion by stating that he was in the process of sending a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for consulting services for the update of the Town Comprehensive Plan. He commented that once they were sent, he should have them back within a 3 week period and the updates to the Comprehensive Plan should be completed by the end of the year. Once the Comprehensive Plan was updated, a link would be placed on the Town's website.

Commissioner Phillips made a motion for staff to move forward with sending a RFQ for consulting services for the update to the Comprehensive Plan, seconded by Commissioner Steele. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Rothrock stated that his department strived to accommodate any new businesses with expediting their permit process. Mr. Rothrock stated his department's motto was "do more than expected." He also mentioned that building activity had increased somewhat.

Next, Mr. Rothrock advised that his department was currently working on developing options regarding short-term rentals. He updated Council briefly on the Hwy 321 Widening Project. Commissioner Phillips suggested that Council meet with NCDOT in the near future for an update on the status of the project.

Mr. Rothrock also gave a brief update regarding the need for improved cellular telephone coverage in the area. Mr. Hildebran advised that he and Mr. Rothrock would be attending a meeting soon in Asheville regarding this issue.

Commissioner Phillips then asked if the Town needed to have both the Planning Board as well as the Board of Adjustments. Mr. Rothrock explained the need for both boards.

Commissioner Yount stated the City of Hickory had joined these two boards, but he didn't recommend the Town follow suit.

Commissioner Matheson stated these Boards didn't cost the Town anything and he was in favor of citizen involvement on both boards.

Commissioner Steele commented that he felt the Board of Adjustment members were slightly dissatisfied since this board didn't meet on a regular basis. Commissioner Yount recommended a "mock case" be held at least once a year. Commissioner Phillips stated in his opinion, term limits should be placed on these boards so that new people with new ideas could be introduced.

It was the consensus of Council that a "mock case" be held once a year and that term limits be considered on membership.

Council asked if the fence situation on Ransom Street had been resolved. Mr. Rothrock stated an agreement had been reached and it should be completed very soon. Commissioner Klutz made a motion for this situation to be resolved by Friday, seconded by Commissioner Matheson. Unanimously approved.

Council was presented with a draft RFQ for the American Legion Building for their review. According to Town Engineer Doug Chapman, this would be discussed further during the work session held on March 13<sup>th</sup>. Commissioners Phillips and Steele stated it was the Town's fiduciary responsibility to do this project right and a good architect was needed.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES**

Council received an update from Public Works Director Mike Wilcox regarding infrastructure issues such as plans to continue the Street Pavement plan while coordinating the paving with any water/sewer improvements as well as ditch repairs. Staff would also continue with the Storm Water Improvement Plan, the residential recycling program and expansion of the Woodlawn Cemetery.

The Town Facilities Improvement Study was also discussed; Mr. Hildebran stated the salt bin at the Public Works Facility had been completed and as funding was available, Phase II would begin.

He also advised that prioritization of needed improvements to the Police and Parks & Recreation Departments would be evaluated.

Mr. Hildebran commented that funds were being set aside to correct inflow/infiltration (I&I) issues. He also mentioned the Town would continue to implement the replacement of water meters with electronic read devices as funds allowed. He further explained the pilot program with the meter replacements were working well and much more information could be obtained with radio read meters.

Renovations at the Water Treatment Facility were discussed. Mr. McRary mentioned that the windows and doors needed to be replaced, and work in the basement area was needed.

Commissioner Klutz inquired if there were plans for these improvements. Mr. Hildebran responded that in the next 18 months or so, work would begin.

Council also discussed bids that were received for the purchase of two trucks in the Public Works Department. Mr. Hildebran explained that the Town was not required to go through a formal bidding process if the purchase price was below \$90,000.

Public Works Director Mike Wilcox explained that it had been his experience that Chevrolet trucks had a smaller turning radius than Ford trucks which helped when plowing snow.

At 6:15 p.m. Commissioner Phillips made a motion to move into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters, seconded by Commissioner Steele. Unanimously approved.

At 6:20 p.m. Council reentered their regular meeting and began discussing the feasibility of outsourcing the Planning and Inspections Department. Some members of Council voiced their concerns regarding the need for this department. Mr. Hildebran explained that customers would have to travel either to Watauga or Caldwell County in order to get a building permit, etc. and Caldwell and Watauga County would not enforce zoning. Commissioner Phillips stated he had studied the monthly reports for that department and felt the number of inspections were low. Commissioner Steele also voiced that it was nice not having to travel to receive these services.

At 6:25 p.m., Council once again entered into Executive Session to further discuss personnel matters.

### **ADJOURN**

At 6:40 p.m., Council reentered their regular meeting. With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned.

**MAYOR** \_\_\_\_\_ **ATTEST** \_\_\_\_\_  
**J.B. Lawrence** **Sharon Greene, Town Clerk**

**ATTACHMENT** (03-11-13)

A Resolution Requesting an Act to Require Payment of Delinquent Taxes for the Town of Blowing Rock Before Recording Deeds Conveying Property Subject to the Delinquent Taxes – Exhibit A