

MINUTES

Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners

Tuesday, February 12, 2002

The Mayor and Board of Commissioners for the Town of Blowing Rock met in regular session on Tuesday, February 12, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor J. B. Lawrence, Barbara Ball, Terry Lentz, Keith Tester, Rita Wiseman, and David Wray. Also present were Town Manager Don Holycross, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Marion Rothrock and Town Clerk Barbara Beach. Other staff members attending the meeting were Director of Public Works Johnny Lentz, Police Chief Owen Tolbert, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Building Inspector John Warren, and Recreation Director Kim Oberle.

Approval of Minutes

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order. Upon motion of Ms. Wiseman, seconded by Mr. Wray, Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes as submitted for the meetings held on January 8, January 24-25, and February 7.

Appointments to Volunteer Boards and Commissions

Planning Board

Mrs. Ball made a motion that the following citizens be approved to serve on the Planning Board, with terms beginning March 1, 2002.

George Snyder – Re-appointed to a three-year term ending in 2005

Cobb Milner - Re-appointed to a three-year term ending in 2005

Albert Yount - Appointed to a three-year term ending in 2005

Bill Parker - Appointed to fill a term ending in 2003

Dennis Quinn - Appointed to fill a term ending in 2003

Mr. Wray asked Mrs. Ball to amend her motion to include the recommendation to the Watauga County Board of Commissioners for **David Cox** to be appointed for a three-year term as the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction representative on the Planning Board. Mrs. Ball agreed to the amendment, and Mr. Tester seconded the motion. Members voted unanimously to approve the action.

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Board of Adjustment

Mrs. Ball moved that the following appointments be approved to fill vacancies on the Board of Adjustment for terms beginning March 1, 2002.

Barbara Wright-Re-appointed to a new three-year term as a full member, ending in 2005

Jim Thirtle - Appointed to a three-year term as a full member, ending in 2005

Mark Klein - Appointed to fill a term as a full member that will expire in 2004

Al Wheeler - Appointed to a three-year term as an alternate member, ending in 2005

Jim Steele – Appointed to fill a term as an alternate member that will expire in 2004

Virginia Stacks - Appointed to fill a term as an alternate member that will expire in 2003

Ms. Wiseman seconded the motion. Mr. Wray requested an amendment to the motion to recommend the name of **David Cox** to the County for approval to a three-year term as the ETJ representative for the Board of Adjustment. Mrs. Ball agreed, and Ms. Wiseman seconded the amended motion. Members voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

ABC Board

Since terms on the ABC Board do not expire until June 30, Council members agreed to wait until the June meeting to make appointments.

Old Business

1. Town Center District Draft Ordinances

Council reviewed two draft ordinances pertaining to authorizing a new zoning district. The first draft ordinance would establish a Town Center district, and the second would provide setbacks for the Town Center, Central Business, General Business and other non-residential zoning districts.

Ms. Wiseman recommended by motion that the Board schedule a public hearing for the March 12 meeting to hear comment on these ordinances as drafted. Mr. Tester seconded the motion, and members began discussion. Council members explained their support or opposition to the setbacks as outlined for a Town Center district. Several were concerned that property values on the west side of Main Street would be adversely affected due to the larger setbacks required on those parcels. After a time of discussion, Mayor Lawrence called for the vote. Voting for the motion: Wiseman, Tester. Voting against the motion: Ball, Lentz, Wray. The motion failed.

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Mr. Wray then moved that both drafts be sent back to the Planning Board for their review, with Council's recommendation that they consider only one Town Center district and only one Central Business district, eliminating the proposed zones of CB20, CB30, Town Center East and Town Center West, reviewing the front setbacks, and eliminating side and rear setbacks. Mrs. Ball seconded the motion. Council discussed the motion at length, debating their preferences in regard to the setbacks for the proposed zoning districts.

Mr. Wray then offered an amended motion that both drafts be sent back to the Planning Board for their review, with Council's recommendation that they propose only one Town Center district and only one Central Business district. Mrs. Ball seconded the motion, and Council members discussed the merits of the draft ordinances. The vote was called. Voting for the motion: Wray, Ball, and Tester. Voting against the motion: Wiseman and Lentz. The motion was approved.

2. Draft Ordinance to Provide Flexibility in the CUP Process

Council considered a draft ordinance that would provide flexibility to Council in granting conditional use permits. Under the proposal, the Town Code would be amended to grant more flexibility to the Council in modifying or adjusting strict provisions of the Code when applying those provisions to conditional use permits. By motion of Ms. Wiseman, second by Mr. Wray, Council voted unanimously to refer the draft to the Planning Board for their review and recommendation.

New Business

1. Report from Town Engineer

Marion Rothrock provided a status report on major projects he is working on for the Town. He reported on bids received for removing the sediment in Broyhill Lake. Bids were received from:

Iron Mountain Construction \$57,977

J. W. Hampton Company 81,105

R & G Construction 81,500

Council discussed the urgency of the project in light of the recent revenue withholding by the State. Members agreed that it needs to be completed before summer, and upon motion of Mr. Lentz, second by Ms. Wiseman, Council voted unanimously to award the bid to Iron Mountain Construction and appropriate the funds from Fund Balance.

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2. Refunding of Sanitary Sewer Bonds

Council reviewed a proposal to contract with Ferris, Baker, Watts, Inc. to serve as financial advisor for the refinancing of sewer bonds. Mrs. Ball moved that the Town Manager and Finance Officer be authorized to contract with Ferris, Baker, Watts for the refinancing and that the Town Manager and Finance Officer be authorized to select bond counsel for the refinancing of the bonds. Mr. Wray seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

3. State Revenue Shortfall

Mr. Holycross reiterated reports from the news media that Governor Easley declared a State fiscal emergency last week and the State will withhold revenues that would otherwise be allocated to cities and counties. Mr. Holycross reported that the League of Municipalities estimates the loss in State revenue for the Town of Blowing Rock at \$65,835. Mr. Holycross reported that based on current financial data, he projects a shortfall of \$87,763 for the current fiscal year.

He asked Council for direction in covering expenditures: whether they would prefer using monies earmarked for future capital expenditures or taking the shortfall from Fund Balance. Ms. Wiseman made motion that funds be appropriated from Fund Balance to cover necessary expenditures. Mr. Wray seconded the motion, and it was

unanimously approved. Council instructed Mr. Holycross to draft a letter from the Mayor to Governor Easley expressing dismay at his decision to cover state budget problems with revenues due to cities and counties.

There was no further business, and Mayor Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

J. B. Lawrence,
Mayor

Barbara G. Beach, Town Clerk