

MINUTES

Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners

Monday, February 23, 2004

The Mayor and Board of Commissioners for the Town of Blowing Rock met in special session on Monday, February 23, 2004 at 4:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Pro-tem Terry Lentz, and Commissioners Barbara Ball, Keith Tester, Rita Wiseman, and David Wray. Also present were Town Manager Scott Hildebran and Town Clerk Barbara Beach. The purpose of the meeting was to hold departmental work sessions with the following departments: Recreation, Landscaping, Police, and Planning.

Mayor J.B. Lawrence arrived later due to a work scheduling conflict, so Mr. Lentz opened the meeting.

Recreation

Director Jamie Saitta reviewed the annual report for her department, including facilities improvements made during the prior year. She cited the need for renovations to the gazebos at Memorial Park and Broyhill Park during the upcoming fiscal year. She reviewed programs offered during 2003 and plans for 2004 programs and events. Mr. Tester asked her to provide a breakdown of enrollment for Blowing Rock citizens, Blowing Rock School district families, Watauga County and surrounding county residents, vacationers, and grandchildren of residents in terms of funding sources including user fees, budget allocation, etc.

Ms. Saitta advised that she has contacted pool consultants about renovation or replacement of the pool. At Mr. Hildebran's suggestion, Council agreed to wait on this decision until the master plan Requests for Proposals are returned.

She also requested direction from Council concerning a request from the Watauga Swim Team to practice at the Blowing Rock pool each morning of the summer. The Watauga County Pool is being remodeled and is not available for team practice. Mr. Lentz suggested that in the spirit of cooperation with the County, the team be allowed to use the pool for a fee to recover the costs associated with lifeguards' salaries, etc. and no other charges be applied.

Council will consider purchase of a new vehicle for the department at budget time.

Landscaping

Director Perry Davis reported on various projects he has worked on during the year, including plantings, Broyhill Lake treatment and maintenance, the Maple Street project, and the Tree Ordinance Subcommittee. He gave an overview of plans for 2004.

Council discussed the Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission (BRAAC) and agreed to review the current structure of BRAAC appointments and the Commission's relationship with Town staff. Mr. Hildebran will set up a meeting of Council to scrutinize the Town Code related to BRAAC.

Police

Chief Owen Tolbert outlined the highlights of the 2003 yearly report of the Police Department. He also reviewed items he would like to request in the budget for fiscal year 2004-2005: one Taurus (or similar vehicle) and one four wheel drive vehicle. With the assistance of Angie Gregg, he is attempting to obtain a grant for a radar trailer, a vehicle, and other equipment. Also, he is considering ordering two Taser guns in the new budget

year, and would like Council to appropriate money for a merit increase for the DARE officer upon completion of DARE training school.

Planning

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock detailed information from the department's annual report, including accomplishments for the year, certification of personnel, and the work completed for the GIS project. Mr. Rothrock informed Council that the GIS work is now on hold until more funds are available in the 2004-2005 budget. Council members indicated their desire to authorize a budget amendment to pay the vendor to keep them working on the project.

Mr. Rothrock advised that the Crown Vic currently used by the department needs extensive repair work or a new vehicle should be purchased. He and Council members discussed the possibility of obtaining a vehicle, new or recycled from another department, to be utilized as a "pool vehicle" for Town staff to travel for inspections, meetings, training schools, etc. Council members asked Mr. Hildebran to submit a recommendation with the proposed budget for purchasing or allocating vehicles for all departments.

There was no further business to discuss, and Mayor Lawrence adjourned the meeting at

7:00 p.m.

J. B. Lawrence, Mayor

Barbara G. Beach, Town Clerk