

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock

Board of Commissioners

Special Meeting-February 15, 2006

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners held a special meeting on Wednesday, February 15, 2006. Attending were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Rita Wiseman, Terry Lentz, Keith Tester, and Tommy Klutz. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

Call to Order

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Parks & Recreation Issues

Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Gore updated Council on 2005 department accomplishments and to review the Parks & Recreation Retreat Priorities and Action Plan.

Parks & Recreation Retreat Priorities & Action Plan:

- Improve telephone etiquette
- Proceed with Swimming Pool Engineering Study/Recommendations and present plan to Council
- Pursue PARTF Grant for Swimming Pool Project
- Improve/Enhance overall park maintenance and town beautification
- Increase Part-time funding for landscape/beautification
- Increase Tree Planting funding on Main Street and in Parks (Plant larger caliper trees) & seek Tree City, USA designation

- Continue support to American Legion for building (\$3,000)
- Continue to work with BRAAC in beautification of the Town
- Work with Watauga County Parks & Recreation on maintenance of Davant Field
- Continue P&R Master Plan Implementation

Ms. Gore touched upon several items of interest within her department, such as improvements to Memorial Park, temporary repairs to the cracks in the tennis courts, and repairs to the bridge and gazebo in Broyhill Park; as well as redoing the trail down to Broyhill Park. She also spoke of an area around the gazebo in Memorial Park they were having trouble getting grass to cultivate; she wanted to see that area improved. Other areas with need of improvements were to the sandboxes and the volleyball area.

After a short discussion regarding improvements to the pool and tennis court, Council instructed Ms. Gore to move forward with those plans.

Town Manager Hildebran spoke of possible plans to construct a small shelter in Memorial Park in the picnic area. Mr. Hildebran stated the Rotary Club might possibly assist with this project.

The contract between the Town and Watauga County Parks & Recreation for maintenance of Davant Field was also discussed. Ms. Gore said she would like to see improvements made to that area too and was working with Watauga County Parks & Recreation on the issue.

Ms. Gore also updated Council regarding special events. She advised that Christmas in the Park was a great success with approximately 1,700 persons attending. She stated the kinder programs offered were well attended usually having a waiting list for these programs. Ms. Gore stated they also had a good response to senior citizen trips offered to places like the Biltmore House in Asheville. She stated that several people had expressed interest in other trips.

Maintenance of Memorial Park bathroom facilities was discussed briefly. Town Manager Hildebran stated that once the full-time maintenance/cleaning position was filled this could possibly alleviate some of the problems with maintenance of the restrooms.

Commissioner Wiseman also reminded everyone that the restrooms at the Village Shoppes were supposed to be for public use, and wanted staff to check on the signage.

After a short discussion regarding Christmas decorations, Council agreed to shorten the duration of the display, to the first week in January, in order to preserve the life of the decorations.

Ms. Gore also made a recommendation to Council that pool fees be changed to an admission fee of \$2.00 for persons under twelve (12) years of age, as well as senior citizens age fifty-five and older; and an admission fee of \$3.00 for all others. Ms. Gore also expressed an interest in offering aquacise classes for a fee of \$3.00.

Commissioner Wiseman made a motion to approve the fee recommendation as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ball. Unanimously approved.

Public Safety Issues (Police/Emergency Services)

Council met with Police Chief Owen Tolbert to discuss the 2005 accomplishments of his department as well as the Retreat Priorities and Action Plan as follows:

Police Department-Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Initiate process for selection of police chief-due to pending retirement
- Consider In-car camera units replacement funding in FY2006-07 budget process
- Consider Part-time staffing funding increase in FY 2006-07 budget process
- Continue with House Numbering Project-look at all options

Chief Tolbert stated his department was currently advertising for a part-time dispatcher and that he would also like to see this position upgraded to full-time in the next budget year. Chief Tolbert encouraged Council to maintain competitive salaries/compensation for law enforcement officers.

Chief Tolbert reminded Council of his pending retirement scheduled for October of 2006. He stated that he would like to see a decision made regarding his replacement several months in advance for a smoother transition.

Emergency Services

Council met with Director of Emergency Services Kent Graham to discuss the 2005 accomplishments of his department as well as the Retreat Priorities and Action Plan as follows:

Emergency Services Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Proceed with Emergency Services Building Project
- Consider negotiations with County regarding Medic Base co-location
- Consider Part-time staffing funding increase in FY 2006-07 budget process
- Continue with House Numbering Project-look at all options

Mr. Graham updated Council on several accomplishments within his department. He stated he was making progress in improving relationships between the town and the fire and rescue departments.

Mr. Graham asked Council to consider increasing funds for part-time staffing in his department for the upcoming budget process. He stated there was a need for more staffing to cover his department when the full-time employees needed time off to fulfill educational needs or take vacation, etc.

Mr. Graham stated that Blowing Rock was next to the largest, other than Boone, call volume-wise. He also stated that less and less were interested in volunteering for fire and rescue services due to training requirements and time demands.

The Child Passenger Safety Program, Emergency Fest, and the 911 House Numbering program, were a few items mentioned, by Mr. Graham, that involved his department.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Mayor _____

J.B. Lawrence

Attest: _____

Sharon H. Greene, CMC