

**MINUTES**  
**Town of Blowing Rock**  
**Town Council Mid-Year Retreat**  
**June 26, 2017**

The Blowing Rock Town Council held a Mid-Year Retreat meeting on Monday, June 26, 2017. The retreat was held at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, NC. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Mayor Pro-tem Albert Yount and Council Members Jim Steele, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson, and Ray Pickett. Others in attendance were Town Manager Ed Evans, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, Town Engineer Doug Chapman and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, who recorded the minutes.

**CALL ORDER**

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

**DISCUSSION TOPICS**

**Memorial Park Trees**

Town Manager Ed Evans requested Council accompany him to the Park to look at the dying and/or dead trees. Town Manager Evans walked Council to all the trees in question and explained the condition of each according to the Arborist report. Council discussed options and decided to have an arborist come back and re-evaluate the report and bring it up to date, get a price from several tree firms to come in and thin out the branches that are deemed a hazard and have our landscape department give an overall plan as to timing of what trees need to be replaced and what kind of trees will be replanted.

**Post Office Recycling**

Town Manager Evans advised to Council, that when the recycling program was first implemented, the temporary plan was for the Town to provide recycling bins. Post Office staff were going to inquire through their Greensboro office about taking over this program. Evans further advised that when staff called Republic, we were told the Post Office had started their own contract and would be taking over recycling costs. Since then he has learned that information is incorrect and that the Town is still paying for the Post Office recycling. Evans stated he spoke with the Post Master and she advised they do not want to take over the cost of the recycling and stated that if the Town doesn't want to continue to pay for the recycling program, then the recycling containers should be removed. Council discussed a few options and decided to have Town Manager Evans find out the cost difference between the landfill fee and the recycling fee and see which is the cheaper option. Council unanimously agreed to wait for the price comparison before making a decision on how to proceed.

**Trash and Recycling Cans**

Town Manager Evans advised he has received numerous complaints about residents leaving trash and recycling cans at the street for weeks on end. Evans explained that the complaints all center on the unsightly appearance, and that an inquiry has been made

into implementing an ordinance to prohibit this practice. Council briefly discussed and decided to have the Planning Board do some research as to what other Towns do and after they have the results, Council will discuss further.

### **Wall and Sidewalk at Speckled Trout**

Town Manager Evans advised the Town got pricing for building a wall along the side of Speckled Trout which would be the approximate size of the wall in front of Mellow Mushroom, which was built by the Town as part of the street scape. Staff solicited estimates for the wall, which yielded a \$21,000 and \$30,000 estimate. Council discussed various options including the cost, liability and involvement in building a wall on private property. It was the consensus of Council not for the Town to pay for building the wall.

### **Moody Building**

Town Manager Evans briefly updated Council on the status of this project. Town Manager Evans advised the property owners were given a CUP in October of 2015 and by statute they have two (2) years to do something. Evans further advised the owners of the property have until October of this year to make a decision on what they want to do with this property and/or seek an extension.

### **Speeding and Noise on Valley Blvd**

Town Manager Evans gave Council an updated speeding chart. Evans advised one of the Police Officers took a radar gun and went to one of the concerned businesses and had them estimate speed as the officer used the radar to clock speed. It was determined most of the motorists were going the speed limit. Town Manager Evans stated he had spoken with Kipp Turner of Maymead about the number of speed limit signs on Valley Blvd. and that Mr. Turner advised they will put speed limit signs back in place as they finish sections of the road, but will not be able to put them back while they are working on the shoulders.

### **News/Magazine Racks**

Town Manager Evans reported the News/Magazine racks were sold via GovDeals and will be picked up within the week.

### **NCLM Insurance**

Town Manager Evans advised a few years ago the Town switched property and casualty insurance from the NCLM (North Carolina League of Municipalities) to Snipes Insurance. This was due to a large claim that caused the insurance to go up significantly in price. Town Manager Evans further advised that it is in the Town's best interest to change insurance back to the NCLM, as there would be an approximate \$17,000 price savings. Council briefly discussed the benefits including additional services offered to their insureds. Council Member Pickett made a motion to move back to the NCLM insurance pool, seconded by Council Member Steele. Unanimously approved.

### **Budget Amendments**

Finance Officer Nicole Norman reviewed the Budget Amendments request. Council Member Pickett made a motion to accept the Budget Amendments as presented,

seconded by Council Member Matheson. Mayor Pro-Tem Yount asked for an explanation for the request to purchase a backup pump at the Chestnut Ridge Sewer Lift Station. He explained he was under the understanding this was a duplex pump when it was initially purchased. Town Manager Evans called Town Engineer Doug Chapman to discuss and get his opinion as to the need for the Town to purchase an additional pump. Mr. Chapman advised he felt it was not necessary to purchase. Council Member Pickett withdrew his motion and made a new motion to accept the budget amendment with the removal of the backup pump for the Chestnut Ridge Sewer Lift Station, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved. **Budget Amendment Ordinance 2017-05 – Attachment A**

### **Dumpsters**

Town Manager Evans advised the Town has an issue with the company that provides the dumpsters for the Town's commercial customers. Council briefly discussed a few options and decided to do an analysis of how many commercial customers this would involve and what the costs would be to have another company take over.

### **Sunset Drive Gateway**

Town Manager Evans stated the Town has reached the end of the contract with Destination By Design for services requested. Evans advised Council needs to decide if they wish to continue services with Destination By Design. Council discussed briefly and the consensus was to continue and move from concept to plan with Destination By Design and involve Planning Board and BRAAC for feedback and input.

### **Recycling Building Storage**

Town Manager Evans advised the recycling building storage located at the Wastewater Plant is in much need of repair, as the building is in danger of collapsing. The FY 2017-2018 Budget has \$30,000 budgeted for repairs, but it has been determined spending the money on the building may not in fact be worth it compared to the net worth of the building. Council discussed a few options and asked Town Manager Evans to determine what needs to be kept and what can be discarded from the current storage and report back to Council so it can be determine what amount of storage will be needed before a next step decision is made.

### **Old Fire Department**

Town Manager Evans advised the engineering firm has determined that the water seepage into the building is because of inadequate drainage due to a bathtub effect created by the clay and washed gravel with inadequate outflow, so the water has nowhere to go. About 15 years ago, this was dug out and thought to have been fixed, but the problem was not fixed. Council discussed briefly what the repairs would be and the estimated cost of repairs at approximately \$50,000. Council determined this does have to be done in the future, but is not in the upcoming budget and decided to put off the repairs and discuss during the FY 2018-2019 budget process.

### **Blowing Rock Market**

