

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Annual Departmental Meeting
March 23, 2017

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council continued their annual departmental meetings on Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, N.C. Present were 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 and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro-tem Yount called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Mayor J.B. Lawrence arrived at 6:40 p.m.

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

Public Works and Utilities Director, Mike Wilcox began by updating Council on their accomplishments for the year 2016.

Mr. Wilcox advised that the Public Works Department began the zones schedule pick up for chipping and collecting leaves/yard debris to help improve efficiency. Council members asked Mr. Wilcox if this plan had been working, he advised that it had worked well. Council discussed in detail the brush collection process as well as how and when to charge for the service.

Council Member Sweeting thanked Mr. Wilcox for his work on the storage yard on Cone Road across from the Town Shop.

Mr. Wilcox reviewed the snow removal process for the Town maintained streets.

Mr. Wilcox advised his department remodeled the bathroom at the Police Department, renovated the old kitchen in Town Hall and turned it into an office and currently are in the process of constructing the new kitchen in Town Hall.

Council Member Matheson commented on how pleased he was with the way Mr. Wilcox and his Public Works Department staff have taken very good care of the new facility.

Mr. Wilcox discussed with Council the removal of the speed bump on Sunset Drive near the four way stop and Council directed Mr. Wilcox to add stop signs at the Possum Hollow/Sunset intersection.

ADMINISTRATION

Finance Director Nicole Norman updated Council on various items in her department. She advised that the 401K employee benefit was up to 5% which was Council's goal. Ms. Norman noted she was still very pleased with the Town's relationship with United Community Bank. She advised the website redesign had been completed and was functioning well.

Currently, the Public Works Department was in the process of working on the Town Hall kitchen/breakroom renovation project, with the newly constructed office in the old kitchen now complete.

Ms. Norman updated that the new payroll system is in place and explained there are some things that are not ideal with the system, but she is glad to have the updated system as the old one needed to be replaced and was very out of date.

Ms. Norman advised phase one of the asset tagging system is complete. She explained a template had been created and sent out to departments to start working on tagging their assets that meet the \$5,000 and above dollar amount.

Ms. Norman stated the department is continuing with "friendly" visit rotation with OSHA to keep up to date on safety in all departments and prevent consultative violation fees. Ms. Norman advised that it would be beneficial for a safety officer to be designated for each department to keep all departments better in sync with OSHA regulations in their field of work. A coordinated schedule and funding would also be needed for necessary training of the designees.

Ms. Norman mentioned working on having all the Town Seals on signage throughout Town Hall uniform, and proposed updating the seal in front of Town Hall and the two seals in Town Council Chambers to the black colored seal now being used on the website and letterhead and other signage in Town. Council briefly discussed and advised getting a price quote.

Ms. Norman reviewed some upcoming projects proposed for 2017; currently working on getting pricing to replace the front counter, new furniture for the lobby area and new flooring for all of Town Hall.

Ms. Norman advised she is currently working on getting final pricing on credit card processing. Ms. Norman advised originally Town Hall was going to be the department to launch credit cards, but Parks and Rec has requested to be the first department, so it is planned for them to have two machines, one at the pool and one at the Recreation Center. Ms. Norman advised she was currently trying to secure state contract pricing through our current banking relationship with United Community Bank.

Ms. Norman mentioned updating the look of the Around the Rock Newsletter to be consistent with the new design of the website. She also advised a health fair/benefits open enrollment expansion with vendor booths, raffles, vendor demos, health checks etc.

PARK & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Parks & Recreation Director, Jennifer Brown reviewed facility improvements from 2016 within her department with Council.

Ms. Brown advised her department has been working on renovating flower beds and adding a rock wall around the lake.

Ms. Brown reviewed and discussed with Council facility fees and proposed fee increase options. Ms. Brown advised movies in the park had been a huge success and a few more movies had been added. Ms. Brown further advised the Blowing Rock Rotary Club donated a sound system to Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Brown mentioned her staff would like to add some additional programs at the request of people in the community.

Ms. Brown advised Council of a new potential position she would like to add to Parks and Recreation. Council Member Matheson stated he would like to have a full job description as well as a salary range for this potential position.

Council discussed with Ms. Brown and Town Manager Evans options for storing the equipment that is currently in the old Fire Station.

Ms. Brown reviewed with Council potential options related to the pool hours and operations.

Town Manager Evans advised the dredging of Broyhill Lake may not happen. Mr. Evans explained McGill put the project out for bid and received no bids on the project. He further explained McGill may potentially put the project out for bid a second time, see the results and decide what the next steps will be.

Ms. Brown mentioned pickle ball has been a huge success and discussed options for improvement on expanding the pickle ball court.

PLANNING & INSPECTIONS

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock updated Council on the Coach Lighting to be installed on Hwy 321. He advised that Town staff, NCDOT and the State Historic Preservation had a slight disagreement on the brightness of the bulb. He explained Town staff recommended the 4,000K LED bulbs whereas the Historic Preservation wanted 3,500K LED bulbs. Mr. Rothrock advised the 3,500K LED bulbs are not available and the request is 3,000K LED bulbs lighting which would only be along the historic district from Country

Club Drive to Green Park Inn. Mr. Rothrock commented the rest of the lights through Town will be 4,000K LED bulbs. Council advised Mr. Rothrock he had the authority to go ahead with the 3,000K LED bulbs through the historic district.

Mr. Rothrock briefed Council on a recommendation involving Speckled Trout restaurant. Mr. Rothrock explained the side parking of the restaurant located on Hwy. 221 will be eliminated due to NCDOT right-away when the Bass Lake sidewalk is installed. He continued to explain he suggests adding a retaining wall approximately 2 feet in height, installing curb & guttering and landscaping, he explained the restaurant owners could then have a patio for outdoor dining. Council discussed various options including parking with Mr. Rothrock.

Council briefly discussed the status of the Bass Lake sidewalk project.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

MAYOR _____
J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk