

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Annual Departmental Meeting
March 22, 2018

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council held an annual departmental meeting on Thursday, March 22, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, N.C. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-tem Albert Yount and Council Members Jim Steele, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson and Virginia Powell. Others in attendance were Town Manager Ed Evans, Public Works Director Mike Wilcox, Public Works Superintendent Matt Blackburn, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, whom recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES

Manager Evans started out by commending and letting Public Works know how proud he was of the hard work their department have provided with the roads this winter. He stated that he has received numerous compliments from citizens as well as some Council Members on the care of the streets and roads and wanted to thank Mr. Wilcox, Mr. Blackburn and staff for their hard work.

Public Works and Utilities Director Mike Wilcox and Public Works Superintendent Matt Blackburn began by updating Council on their accomplishments for the year 2017.

Mr. Wilcox advised that the Public Works Department is continuing with right-of-way clearing. Council suggested sending pictures in the newsletter of a Fire Truck trying to get through problem areas to visually show why this needs to be maintained.

Mr. Wilcox advised the 4" street signs have been replaced with 6" signs and that there is an abundance of those signs. He asked Council if they wanted to sell those signs to make some revenue rather than discarding them. Council discussed and decided to sell the signs on a first come first serve basis. Council further suggested putting in the newsletter to let the citizens know these signs are available for purchase.

Mr. Wilcox updated that Public Works just got a 15-gallon hopper for the paint machine, previously had been using a 5-gallon.

Council Member Sweeting commended Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Blackburn on their work on the sidewalks out on Hwy 321 during the snow.

Mr. Blackburn advised every year they have to clean at least two (2) miles of sewer lines, which is about 10% of the system. He also explained the wanted to distribute more

educational materials to restaurants and homeowners regarding grease and the effects of it in the wastewater collection system.

Mr. Blackburn advised staff will continue work on the water leak audit with the NC Rural Water Association. Matt stated that It is an amazing asset to the Town to have this service available and it is no cost to the Town. He also advised they are identifying the location of water leaks and sewer overflows on the GIS map to identify patterns indicating a line needs to be replaced.

Mr. Blackburn advised they are continuing to identify and prioritize fire hydrants that need maintenance and/or replacement.

Mr. Blackburn advised the isolation valve for the water plant was ordered and received. Staff will move forward and get the valve installed. Council Member Sweeting stated she thought that was going to be contracted out because of the pressure. Mr. Wilcox advised that they are going to do some digging down near the basement door and see if they can do it, but it may have to have someone with some bigger equipment come in and assist. However, his department will be the ones cutting the line in.

Mr. Blackburn advised that currently are looking into installing a SCADA system to provide real-time data on basin levels. Manager Evans reminded reviewing this system is what Doug Chapman presented at the Council Retreat in January. If we were to move forward with SCADA in the future, the wastewater plant would be the first priority.

Mr. Blackburn advised one of the big goals for 2018 at the wastewater plant is to enclose influent areas to help with freezing issues. The barscreen did freeze this past winter and they spent days trying to thaw it out.

Manager Evans advised staff is looking at a more effective and cost-efficient sludge hauling system.

Mr. Blackburn advised per the fleet replacement plan there is several pieces of equipment due for replacement in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Mr. Blackburn advised they are currently working on getting quotes to contract out mowing at Woodlawn Cemetery. The reasoning is because Public Works doesn't have staff to maintain to the level of what is expected.

ADMINISTRATION

Finance Director Nicole Norman updated Council on various items in her department. She advised that staff have continued to monitor the financial market with continued service and fee structure satisfaction with operating accounts being held with United Community Bank.

Currently, the 401K benefit for general employees has remained at its current 5% with the adoption of the FY 2017-2018 budget. Ms. Norman advised the technology/software

upgrades include the Mobile 311 work order system. This will help with getting all departments involved with reporting problems, and when people are out and about if they see something they can do a work order and help the right department know the issue.

Ms. Norman advised credit card processing has been installed and implemented in Parks and Recreation. Planning on renting instead of purchasing a machine for the pool since it is only needed in the summer months. This is a much better cost-effective option.

Ms. Norman reviewed some ongoing projects continued for 2018; front lobby furniture needs to be replaced and is going to be proposed in the FY 18-19 Budget. Another area in Town Hall that needs attention is the flooring. Ms. Norman advised these items were proposed in the FY 2017-2018 budget, but were removed due to budgetary constraints. Ms. Norman further advised the plan is to monitor current year budget and if funding becomes available move forward in the current year, if not will attempt to budget in the FY 2018-2019 budget.

Ms. Norman advised the department continues to function well with our current hardware and currently nothing needs replacement. She further advised staff continues to look for an upgrade/replacement for the central posting system. She explained that currently staff has to utilize three (3) different posting areas to do a daily deposit which generates three (3) separate journals to be balanced. This is an area that having one centralized system would be beneficial. Utility Billing will be the next system in line to upgrade when the time comes.

Ms. Norman stated following Council direction, a Request for Proposals was released, and proposals were reviewed with the audit services contract being awarded to Misty Watson CPA, PA. She explained there has been notice of the difference on the size of the firm and audit team the Town previously worked with, but that the FY 2016-17 audit was successfully completed on time and was accepted by the North Carolina Local Government Commission.

Ms. Norman advised staff remains eager to find a solution for early water leak detection and enhance customer reporting of usage and notification of possible leaks. Council has directed staff to pursue solutions and bring back for review at the Mid-Year Retreat.

Ms. Norman advised cross-training efforts to continue in the finance department, with new cross-training opportunities becoming available. She noted with only four (4) in the finance department cross-training opportunities are limited.

PARK & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Council commented that the Park is starting to look really nice with the planting of the new trees.

Parks & Recreation Director, Jennifer Brown reviewed facility improvements from 2017 within her department with Council.

Ms. Brown advised her department has just finished renovations on the Clubhouse and that it has turned out great. She further advised her goal is to renovate the kitchen which will enhance rentals for this location.

Ms. Brown mentioned how popular the American Legion is and how it's rented every weekend through November 2018. Council discussed a few options with the pricing of the rental facilities which will be further discussed at budget meetings.

Ms. Brown discussed upcoming General Obligation Bond Referendum projects for 2018 including; Davant Field Track repairs, Rotary Pavilion, Parks and Recreation Building, Tennis Court Repair, Basketball Court Repair, Laurel Lane Walkway Drainage and Replace Retaining Wall at the back of Town Hall.

Mayor Pro-Tem Yount commended Ms. Brown on all her hard work and overseeing of the majority of landscape, maintenance and facilities in Town. Council concurred with him and thanked her for all her hard work.

PLANNING & INSPECTIONS

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock advised that 2017 was a big year for construction and that it was the biggest year the Town has ever seen. He advised a project is pending at the Old Blowing Rock Real Estate property on Main Street.

Mr. Rothrock mentioned the owner of the old Moody Building is going to make some cosmetic improvements to the building.

Mr. Rothrock advised the demolition should be starting soon on Cornish for construction to begin at the Inn on Cornish.

Mr. Rothrock mentioned currently staff is working on the sign ordinance to rewrite it and make it compliant with the Supreme Court ruling. Council briefly discussed signs in Town and how to "police them".

Mr. Rothrock briefly discussed short term rentals and enacting some sort rules and standards with areas that are allowed to have short term rentals.

ADJOURNMENT

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

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Annual Departmental Meeting
March 26, 2018

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council continued their annual departmental meetings on Monday, March 26, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, N.C. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-Tem Albert Yount, and Council Members Jim Steele, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson and Virginia Powell. Others in attendance were Town Manager Ed Evans, TDA Director Tracy Brown, Police Chief Tony Jones, Fire Chief Kent Graham and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, whom recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

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

JOINT MEETING WITH THE TDA

TDA Director Brown reviewed the activities and accomplishments TDA was a part of for 2017 and stated it was a record year. Mr. Brown also stated that the January 2018 occupancy report had a 24% increase over January of 2017.

Mr. Brown advised he will do new photos to reflect the updates that have been done to Memorial Park.

Mr. Brown briefly explained and discussed one of the new widget tools the TDA has implemented on the visitor website, "Jackrabbit", which is an online booking engine. Mr. Brown advised they are under contract for three (3) years and will see if this helps increase the bookings.

Mr. Brown discussed STR helper and in length the benefits this service will provide the Town to help with locating illegal short-term rentals in Town.

Council Member Matheson asked for TDA to help promote and advertise on their website and Facebook the "Sledding Hill" on Wallingford.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Tony Jones reviewed some highlights from 2017 for his department.

Chief Jones and Manager Evans reported that they had been asked by the Watuaga County School Superintendent Scott Elliott to consider providing a School Resource Officer for Blowing Rock Elementary in the new budget. Manager Evans advised this is something he and Tony were going to look into and gather more information to present at the budget. Mayor Sellers stated he felt this was something Council should really consider.

Council briefly discussed Dispatch, Manager Evans advised he and Chief Jones are working on exploring another option. Chief Jones briefly discussed with Council putting in for a few new positions in the upcoming budget. Mayor Pro-Tem Yount and Mayor Sellers were both in favor of considering this.

Chief Jones briefly discussed Parking Enforcement. His suggestion would be to add an extra day for the Parking Enforcement Officer. Instead of three (3) days, increase to four (4) days.

FIRE/RESCUE SERVICES

Fire Chief Kent Graham discussed at length with Council the current schedule and updated them on what is currently going on with the ambulance in Blowing Rock. Chief Graham advised he is continuing to provide Blowing Rock Fire's standard of care and level of service.

Chief Graham advised they have become a part of Caldwell County EMS System Plan because Blowing Rock Fire is the primary transport provider for the Caldwell portion of the district.

Fire Chief Graham mentioned he was very proud of his Firefighters/EMT's for completion of the oral exam boards they recently completed. He reported that Dr. McClinton, Caldwell County Emergency Services Director, was "blown away" with them and their knowledge and skills. Chief Graham reiterated how proud he was of his staff and advised that is just confirmation that what they are doing is working well and the right decisions are being made.

Mayor Pro-Tem Yount asked how our involvement with Caldwell County helps Blowing Rock. Chief Graham advised some citizens are located in Caldwell County, and the details in the training level and equipment and supplies benefit them, and the Watauga County portion of Blowing Rock. He further advised Blowing Rock Fire has equipment on their trucks today they didn't have yesterday that is being provided by Caldwell County.

OTHER

None

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk