

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
May 15, 2018

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, May 15, 2018, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place 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, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Finance Director Nicole Norman, Building Inspector John Warren, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Fire Chief Kent Graham, Police Chief Tony Jones, Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, who recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Steele. Unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council Member Steele made a motion to approve the minutes for the regular meeting held on April 10, 2018, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

CONSENT AGENDA

Town Manager Evans presented the following consent agenda item

1. Audit Contract

Manager Evans advised the approved initial audit contract with Misty Watson was a three (3) year contract which requires renewal each year. Staff has been pleased with the services and recommends renewal. **Audit Contract – Attachment A**

2. Budget Amendment

Budget Amendment Ordinance to account for various bond related items. **Budget Amendment #2018-07 – Attachment B**

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

Old Business

1. Sewer for Chestnut Circle and Grandfather Ave.

Manager Evans advised some residents expressed interest in obtaining Public Sewer at their residences on Chestnut Circle and Grandfather Ave. At the January 2018 Retreat Council directed Manager Evans to survey property owners to gauge their interest in this service. Letters were sent to nine property owners who do not currently have public sewer asking them to respond, indicating they were or were not desirous of obtaining additional information. We received a total of three (3) responses; two (2) indicating interest and one (1) indicating no interest.

In the meantime, a property owner who had expressed interest has sought a sewer service easement across the property of a neighbor, as this is the only way he can access existing public sewer, unless a new public sewer line is installed. The property owner was successful in negotiating an easement.

The enclosures submitted provided by McGill Engineering estimate of cost to install public sewer. They outlined two potential routes. The first (short route) could serve four houses at a cost of approximately \$85,700. The second (long route) could serve eight houses at a cost of approximately \$149,000.

Town Engineer Doug Chapman discussed at length and detailed a few scenarios of options along with the cost of each to provide public sewer on Chestnut Circle and Grandfather Ave.

Council Member Powell asked Mr. Chapman to clarify why this was initially brought up and asked if this is the next area on the sewer master plan. Mr. Chapman advised there aren't any sewer extensions on the master plan. He continued the reason for this to be considered was due to the request from several residents on Chestnut Circle and Grandfather Ave. to connect to public sewer. Council Member Powell asked about residents on Dogwood Lane, Twin Springs, Laurel Park, etc. that have requested connection. She continued that requests come about all the time and wanted to know if there was any plan to have a sewer master plan. Mr. Chapman advised there was not a plan prepared for how to get sewer in each of those areas on the schedule, but there have been some plans and layouts done on how to extend sewer in pieces of Laurel Park.

Council Member Sweeting advised the reason she got involved was because one of the items talked about at Retreat was to look at Laurel Park, which has been requesting sewer for a long time and now Chestnut Circle has requested service too. She advised the last time Laurel Park, four (4) years ago, was looked at the estimated cost was 1.4 million dollars to extend sewer.

Council Member Sweeting further advised what we have not done as a Town is extend sewer to residents and have done other projects instead. She further advised one of the jobs as a Town is to provide water and sewer to the residents.

Council briefly discussed the options people who have septic tanks have when their septic tank fails. If sewer isn't available the septic system must be repaired, but if sewer is available they must connect to public sewer.

Council Member Sweeting asked what income the Town generates when a connection is made. Manager Evans advised the only income is the tap fee of \$750 per bedroom and the bi-monthly water/sewer bill. Council Member Sweeting further asked what kind of income would be generated to help pay for this. A rough estimate was \$18,000.

After further discussion Council Member Sweeting advised she feels like at some point the Town should look at offering sewer to the citizens and when requests come up like this, it's a great way to start. She further stated Laurel Park is going to be the next area to look at as they have been trying for several years. Council Member Powell advised Buxton also would like to get in line as well. She further advised instead of doing it this way there should be a plan put in place with a priority system and approach it that way to make it fair to everyone.

Council Member Steele advised he felt as though if the tax payer's money were to be spent for such a project he would like to have the majority want it and only two (2) people have expressed interest and the rest have not. He further advised if this is something Council wants to look at in the future he felt the areas being looked at need to have at least 51% interested.

Council Member Sweeting asked if the money collected from water/sewer fees is used to fund additional lines. Manager Evans explained that it's an enterprise fund and currently the Town is operating under the cost to operate to cover costs and use toward existing lines and/or maintenance and repair of those. He further explained if Council chose to do so, funds could be put toward building future infrastructure.

Council Member Matheson stated he thought in the past some money was set aside for Capital Improvements. Mr. Chapman advised back in 2005 or 2006 there was a Capital Improvement plan in which most everything on the list was completed, and that there was a small allowance for running new lines, but nothing significant. He further stated there have been small extensions here and there over the years.

Council Member Steele advised he felt as though this would be better discussed in a planning session where next steps could be discussed as well as how such a project would be funded etc.

Mayor Pro-Tem Yount advised this is a specific request and he feels the biggest problem is the Town hasn't budgeted and can't fund a project of this size right now. He further stated in his opinion when the Town starts looking at areas to begin, the line starts forming behind Laurel Park as residents in that area have been waiting twenty (20 years).

After further discussion, Council Member Powell made a motion to complete a comprehensive plan for sewer and Capital Improvements and to discuss in detail further at the Mid-year Retreat, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

New Business

1. Tell AppalCart Where to Go – Comprehensive Transportation Study

Craig Hughes from AppalCart spoke to the board about their comprehensive service review they are conducting to identify ways to manage overcrowding and meet future needs. He advised they are accessing ways to grow and expand as AppalCart is not just for Boone, but for all the surrounding Towns in Watauga County. Mr. Hughes advised they had recently completed three (3) days of outreach, one (1) of which was held in Blowing Rock at the Clubhouse and they received some good input at those sessions. Residents as well as Council Members have requested to have service to Blowing Rock.

Mr. Hughes advised he has already met with staff to provide input for a potential route in the downtown area to ease congestion and help manage some of the parking issues in Town. He further advised this would also bring convenience to the area for tourist. The time frame for the proposed route would be summer to fall.

Mr. Hughes advised some of the feedback received from the survey is to in the future include a round trip route from Blowing Rock to Boone. He advised that route is still in the planning phase. He asked Council for feedback on any additional ideas they may have.

Council Member Sweeting asked what the current route is. Mr. Hughes advised currently it's a rural route and a call-in service. Council Member Powell advised she would like to have a route you didn't have to call the night before to schedule. The need for a regular service route was briefly discussed.

Council thanked Mr. Hughes for his information. No vote was needed.

2. Tree Fund Recognition Proposal

Parks and Recreation director Jennifer Brown advised during the February Town Council Meeting it was approved to have a Memorial Tree Fund to help replace and maintain trees when needed throughout Town maintained areas. Parks and Recreation researched to find a design for a marker to recognize donors of \$2,000 or more.

After researching many different options, it was determined that the attached design was not only a way to recognize donors, but is unique and an appropriate public art piece. The tree trunk and branches are made from bronzite corian and the leaves are gold acrylic that will be mounted to clear acrylic. The entire piece will be backed with ivory dura bond which will be mounted to a piece of steel that is made to look like it is planted in the flower bed. The leaves are 2" x 4" and the overall size of the tree is 67" x 76 ¼".

BRAAC loved the design and has offered to pay for the marker. The cost of the marker is \$6,875 plus shipping and handling.

Council Member Sweeting asked if the piece could be detached from the building. Ms. Brown explained that it would be free standing and further explained the plan is for pavers to be added for a path to walk up and view as well as landscaping. Ms. Brown advised they tried to find a location where it could be seen by everyone.

Council Member Sweeting advised she thought it looked great.

Mayor Pro-Tem Yount asked for the time frame of completion. Ms. Brown advised once approved it will take 12-14 weeks as the piece is handmade.

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the proposal, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

Manager's Report

- Good news. The current phase of the bond was funded today.
- Trusses are installed for the roof on the Parks and Rec building and that project is nearing completion.
- Construction of the new wall behind town hall is complete except for the steps.
- The basketball courts have been totally re-worked with new base and surface. The lower court was widened to accommodate three pickleball courts.
- Memorial Park is really beginning to shine now as SOD was installed today. The footers/and base wall for the north end of the park have been installed.
- The NCLM will have a different type of event this year instead of their typical Town Hall Day. This year they will have Town Hall Day/Dinner on May 29, 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The tentative plan is to do this instead of the traditional Town Hall Day on alternate years. If you plan to attend you need to register
- The Budget Workshop meeting for Town Council will be held Friday, May 18 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss Council Member Sweeting made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m., seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers, Mayor

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Audit Contract – Attachment A

Budget Amendment – Attachment B